

PRE-SERVICE EFL TEACHER QUESTIONING STRATEGIES DURING PRACTICUM: A CASE STUDY IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

The role of teacher questioning in EFL classrooms is pivotal for fostering student engagement and language development. However, research on questioning strategies during school-based teaching practicum, a crucial phase in pre-service teacher education, remains scarce. To address this issue, a qualitative single-case study was conducted with one pre-service EFL teacher teaching 11th grade students in East Java, Indonesia. It explores the types of questions and questioning strategies employed by the teacher during teaching practicum. Data were collected through classroom observation and field notes. The findings reveal the use of five primary question types-referential, comprehension checks, display, confirmation checks, and clarification checks-alongside strategies such as rephrasing, repetition, decomposition, and simplification. These strategies were instrumental in promoting classroom interaction and supporting student comprehension. The study underscores the need for more targeted training in questioning techniques within teacher education programs to better equip pre-service teachers for effective classroom management and interaction.

Keywords: Classroom Interaction, Pre-Service EFL Teachers, Questioning Strategies, Teaching Practicum, TEFL

INTRODUCTION

Interaction is central to communicative language teaching (CLT), especially in EFL contexts where authentic language exposure is limited (Karima et al., 2020). Building on foundational theories such as Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1980) and Comprehensible Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1985), recent research continues to affirm that classroom interaction-through negotiation of meaning, feedback, and output modification-significantly enhances L2 learning (Walsh, 2011). In this line of nature, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, emphasizing the role of social interaction and mediated assistance, has been further developed in contemporary scholarship, highlighting scaffolding and collaborative dialogue as key mechanisms for language development (Lantolf & Poehner, 2020). In this view, the classroom is not merely a site for the transmission of knowledge but a dynamic space where knowledge is co-constructed through interaction between teachers and students. The teacher, in this context, assumes a pivotal role as the primary initiator and facilitator of classroom interaction (Brown, 2007). The teacher's ability to orchestrate and sustain

meaningful interaction is thus central to the success of CLT and to the broader goals of language education.

In teacher-fronted classrooms, questions are central to creating opportunities for language use, scaffolding learner participation, and guiding attention to specific linguistic and conceptual features (Kleinsasser et al., 1995; Schmidt, 1990). In the I-R-F cycle, questions initiate exchanges, guide attention, and scaffold participation (Kleinsasser et al., 1995; Lawson et al., 1977). Through questioning, teachers can elicit a wide range of student responses, from simple recall of factual information to more complex, elaborated contributions that reflect higher-order thinking and personal engagement (Erdogan & Campbell, 2008; Kleinsasser et al., 1995). In this case, distinctions between display and referential questions matter because referential, open-ended prompts tend to elicit longer, more authentic responses (Brock, 1986). Additional question types include comprehension checks, clarification requests, and confirmation checks (Kleinsasser et al., 1995). Beyond type, the cognitive level of questions is consequential: moving from lower-order recall to higher-order reasoning aligns with Bloom's revised taxonomy and supports deeper thinking. Yet classroom studies in EFL contexts continue to report the predominance of display and low-cognitive questions (Brock, 1986; Davoudi & Sadeghi, 2015; Mustika et al., 2020; Tan et al., 2017; Truong, 2024; Yude & Zainil, 2018). This overreliance may limit students' language production and reduce opportunities for cognitive challenge and communicative engagement.

A less examined but pedagogically crucial dimension is how teachers modify questions in real time—through repeating, rephrasing, simplifying, decomposing multi-part prompts, or probing follow-ups—to align with learners' current understandings and sustain dialogic exchange (Fitriati et al., 2017; Karima et al., 2020; Wu, 1993). These adaptive moves operationalize scaffolding and enable responsive, cumulative dialogue (Lantolf & Poehner, 2020; Walsh, 2011), where teachers dynamically adjust their questions based on real-time student responses (Huang et al., 2025; Pan et al., 2024; Smit et al., 2022). In relation to this, recent studies (e.g., Arinda & Sadikin, 2021; Jocuns, 2021) underline the need for more dialogic and dynamic uses of questions to promote deeper learner involvement, negotiation of meaning, and the co-construction of knowledge.

Despite extensive work on question types and cognitive levels, little is known about pre-service teachers' on-site modification strategies during school-based practicums in Indonesia; most studies focus on in-service teachers or rely on surveys/interviews rather than fine-grained classroom observation. Consequently, we lack evidence of how novice teachers adapt questions moment-by-moment and what functions these adaptations serve in EFL interaction. In this line of matter and given the centrality of questioning in promoting effective EFL instruction, it is critical that pre-service teachers are equipped with strong questioning skills (Brown, 2007). It is emphasized that teacher education programs should not only introduce questioning typologies and strategies but also provide opportunities for practical application and reflection.

Addressing this gap, this case study investigates an Indonesian pre-service EFL teacher during her school-based teaching practicum, with two aims: (1) to identify the types of questions posed during classroom interaction, and (2) to describe the *real-time modification*

strategies (e.g., repetition, rephrasing, simplification, decomposition, probing) and their interactional functions. By foregrounding modification strategies alongside question type, the study contributes a more nuanced account of questioning as adaptive scaffolding in initial teacher education, offering implications for curricula that emphasize dialogic teaching, adaptive expertise, and reflective practice.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative single case study design to explore the questioning strategies of a pre-service EFL teacher during a school-based teaching practicum. The case study approach allowed for an in-depth examination of classroom interaction patterns, consistent with best practices in recent EFL research.

The participant was a pre-service EFL teacher enrolled in an EFL teacher education program at a university in East Java, Indonesia. The participant was undertaking a school-based teaching practicum as one of the final requirements in accomplishing a bachelor degree in teacher education program. The practicum took place in a senior high school EFL classroom during the 2024 academic year. The class consisted of 32 eleventh grade students, reflecting a typical Indonesian EFL context (Karima et al., 2020). Concerning the ethical consideration, written informed consent was obtained from the pre-service teacher and school administration prior to data collection. To protect confidentiality, the participant's name is pseudonym, and any identifying details in transcripts or still images were removed. Audio-video files and transcripts were stored on a drive accessible only to the researcher.

Data were collected through non-participant classroom observation utilizing video recording, observation checklist, and detailed field notes over four consecutive lessons. Each lesson lasted approximately ninety minutes, yielding a total of six hours of video data. Video recording was utilized during the observation to document the details of the teaching learning process happening in the classroom particularly the questioning strategy employed by the pre-service teacher. The lessons were recorded using a fixed camera positioned unobtrusively at the back of the classroom to capture whole-class interaction, with on-board audio. Equipment was tested before each session; a brief pre-lesson was used to check framing and sound levels. After each lesson, files were transferred immediately to secure storage and the SD card was cleared. Further, recordings were verbatim transcribed by the author. Bahasa Indonesia segments were retained in the original and translated into English for reporting where necessary; transcripts were checked against video for accuracy. Further, an observation checklist targeting: (a) question type (display, referential, comprehension/clarification/confirmation checks), and (b) modification strategies (e.g., repetition, rephrasing, simplification, decomposition, probing follow-ups) was employed. The field note was utilized to support the data from the video recording. Besides focusing on the types of questions posed and the questioning strategies employed by the pre-service teacher, it was also used to document salient interactional episodes and contextual factors taking place during the teaching learning process.

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis with a hybrid deductive-inductive approach, informed by the taxonomy of question types and questioning strategies (Fitriati et al., 2017; Wu, 1993). The unit of analysis was the teacher's questioning move within an

interactional sequence. Deductive codes captured question type; inductive open coding captured modification strategies and their interactional functions (e.g., eliciting elaboration, checking comprehension, focusing form). Further, a structured codebook was developed to define each code with inclusion and exclusion criteria and examples from the data. The codebook underwent iterative refinement across two pilot transcripts. To enhance credibility and dependability, a second coder, who was trained on the codebook, independently double-coded a 30% purposive sample of transcripts spanning different lessons. Coded segments were then collated to identify patterns across lessons as a process of searching and reviewing the themes. Lastly, final patterns were defined to show the question types and modification strategies employed by the pre-service teacher. Triangulation was achieved by cross-checking field notes and observation data, following recent qualitative research standards.

RESULTS

Types of Questions Used

The four observed lessons demonstrated that the initiation of interaction between the participant and the students primarily follows the I-R-F pattern. In this sequence, classroom interactions typically begin with the teacher’s question, followed by the students’ answers, and conclude with the teacher’s feedback. The analysis revealed that the pre-service EFL teacher employed a range of question types throughout the observed lessons, with the total of 282 questions. The pre-service teacher employed various types of questions, including referential questions, comprehension checks, display questions, confirmation checks, and clarification checks. Referential questions were the most common, making up 37% of all questions asked, followed by comprehension checks at 27%, display questions at 25%, confirmation checks at 6%, and clarification checks at 4%. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Figure 1 visualizes the distribution of question types; Table 1 provides frequencies, percentages, and representative examples.

Table 1. Frequency, percentage, and examples by question type (N = 282).

Question type	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Representative example from data
Referential	108	37	“What kind of letter have you ever got?” (Excerpt 1)
Comprehension check	76	27	“Do you understand?” (Excerpt 2)
Display	70	25	“Who is the receiver of the letter?” (Excerpt 3)
Confirmation check	17	6	“So... is it the second one?” (cf. Excerpt 6 follow-up)
Clarification check	11	4	“What is it called?” (Excerpt 8)

Referential Questions

Referential questions were used by the pre-service EFL teacher in inviting students to share opinions, experiences, or predictions, fostering authentic communication and higher-order thinking. Further, the referential questions posed were mainly lesson-related inquiries. This aligns with calls in the literature for more referential questioning to promote engagement.

Excerpt 1: Referential questions

T : Alright, before going to the material, I am going to ask you something. Have you ever got a personal letter?

Ss : Yes (all students)

T : Okay, okay. That's similar. What kind of letter have you ever got? What kind of letter?

Ss : Um...

T : What? Invitation? Pardi, what did you say?

S1 : Wedding

T : Okay, that's wedding invitation. And any other letter?

S2 : Love letter

T : Owh, love letter? Love letter.

Ss : (laughing)

Comprehension Checks

It is noteworthy that comprehension checks were the second most frequently used type of question by the pre-service teacher, making up 27% of all questions asked. The pre-service EFL teacher used comprehension checks to ensure students understood instructions or content. The participant often checked her students' understanding by asking, "Do you get it?", "Do you understand?", or "Okay?". Interestingly, the students consistently responded with "yes" whenever these questions were posed.

Excerpt 2: Comprehension checks

T : So, if you have finished, collect it to me to the front please. Do you understand?

Ss : Yes

Display Questions

Display questions accounted for 25% of all questions asked during the lesson, making them the third most common type. Most of the display questions posed by the participant aimed to elicit information from students. However, a few form-related display questions, intended to assess students' recall of factual information, such as vocabulary and grammar points, were also observed. These questions accounted for the third most frequently asked of total questions, consistent with findings in recent EFL classroom studies.

Excerpt 3: Information-related display question

T : Who is the receiver of the letter?
Ss : Nathan
T : Okay, the receiver is Nathan. The second one, who is the sender?
Ss : Angela
T : Yes, Angela is the sender of the letter.

Excerpt 4: Form-related display question

T : Okay, what is town in Bahasa Indonesia?
S : Kota
T : Ok, good. Kota.

Confirmation Checks and Clarification Checks

Accounted for approximately 6% of the total questions asked by the teacher, confirmation checks were utilized to confirm students' responses or understanding. Further, as the least type of questions asked by the teacher, approximately 4%, clarification checks were employed to address misunderstandings or unclear answers.

Question Modification Strategies Employed

The pre-service teacher demonstrated adaptability by modifying questions using several strategies. It was revealed that there were four types of question modification employed: rephrasing, repetition, decomposition, and Simplification. From the total of 96 appearances of questions modification deployed by the participant, the most frequently used was rephrasing (50%), followed by repetition (25%), decomposition (17%), and simplification (8%). Figure 2 shows the relative distribution; Table 2 summarizes counts and functions.

Table 2. Frequency, percentage, and brief function notes for modification strategies (N = 96).

Modification strategy	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Illustrative function / example
Rephrasing	48	50	Reformulates a question using simpler wording to elicit a response: "Where... what are the places in Japan are you visiting?" (Excerpt 5)
Repetition	24	25	Repeats the prompt after silence to increase uptake: "Which one is it? ... Which one is it?" (Excerpt 6)
Decomposition	16	16	Breaks a complex question into smaller steps to scaffold answers: "What is the first component? ... the second?" (Excerpt 7)
Simplification	8	8	Reduces linguistic complexity to match proficiency: "So, this is called as... What is it called?" (Excerpt 8)

Rephrasing

Reformulating questions using simpler language or alternative structures to enhance comprehensibility, in line with adaptive questioning practices. Rephrasing was used to help the students understand better by expressing the question in another way. Thus, the expected responses from the students can be elicited. The excerpt below shows the sample of the rephrasing strategy used by the participant.

Excerpt 5: Rephrasing strategy

- T : (Moving to the other group) Where are you going?
Ss : Japan..
T : To Japan.. Ok. Where..., what are the places in Japan are you visiting?
Ss : Tokyo, Disneyland..
T : Oh, Disney, so, there is Disneyland in Japan?

Repetition

Repeating questions verbatim to prompt student responses, especially when initial responses were absent or hesitant. The pre-service teacher's next strategy for eliciting the desired responses from students was repetition, which accounted for 25% of all question modifications used. This approach has also been identified in recent research. The teacher employed repetition not only to enhance the clarity of the questions but also to increase students' chances of responding. Specifically, the teacher repeated questions to ensure students fully understood them and reiterated the questions after a pause when students did not provide the expected answers.

Excerpt 6: Repetition

- T : Which one is it?
Ss : (silence)
T : Which one is it?
S : Second...
S : The second...
T : Yes, the second one. Good.

Decomposition & Simplification

The other two questioning strategies employed were decomposition and simplification. The participant used decomposition to break down complex questions that required equally complex responses. The complex questions are broken down into smaller, more manageable sub-questions to scaffold student understanding. In contrast, simplification was applied to make questions easier, enabling students to provide answers. It was used to reduce linguistic complexity to match students' proficiency levels, a strategy highlighted in recent EFL research. Additionally, simplification served as a modification strategy when students failed to give the expected responses. This approach was used when the teacher felt the original questions were too long or unclear, so they were shortened or

rephrased to help students respond more effectively. These strategies were often used in combination, particularly when students struggled to respond, reflecting a responsive and student-centered approach. Examples of these strategies are illustrated in the following excerpts.

Excerpt 7: Decomposition

- T : Alright, can you tell me what the components are?
Ss : (silence)
T : What is the first component?
Ss : The opening.
T : Good. The second component?
Ss : Message.
T : Good. Third component?
Ss : Concluding statement
T : Wonderful!

Excerpt 8: Simplification

- T : The first one, 54 west Sydney Australia (pointing to the visual aid). So, this is called as? You know?
Ss : (silence)
T : What is it called?
S : Address?
T : Yes, good! This is address.

The questioning strategies contributed to varied patterns of classroom interaction. Display questions typically elicited brief, choral responses, while referential questions prompted longer, individualized answers and greater student engagement. The use of clarification and confirmation checks supported negotiation of meaning and deeper processing, consistent with sociocultural and interactionist frameworks (Lantolf & Poehner, 2020).

DISCUSSION

This study explored the questioning strategies employed by a pre-service EFL teacher during a school-based teaching practicum in Indonesia. The results demonstrate that across four lessons, the pre-service teacher used a range of question types within an IRF pattern. Referential questions were most frequent, followed by comprehension checks and display questions. Four modification strategies were observed, with rephrasing most common, then repetition, decomposition, and simplification. These findings both confirm and extend prior research, reflecting persistent patterns and emerging trends in EFL classroom questioning practices (Fitriani et al., 2016; Namaziandost & Imani, 2020; Rahayu & Suharti, 2023). The comparisons with recent literature reveal that while display questions continue to dominate pre-service teacher discourse, there is evidence of experimentation with referential and higher-order questions as teachers gain confidence and experience.

Interpreting the Pattern of Question Types

A key finding is the predominance of referential questions, which accounted for the largest proportion of questions posed. These questions encouraged students to share opinions, experiences, and predictions, thus fostering authentic communication and higher-order thinking. This aligns with recent calls in the literature for greater use of referential questioning to promote student engagement and deeper learning (Pan et al., 2024; Rahayu & Suharti, 2023). While display questions remained common—often used to check recall and comprehension—referential questions were particularly effective in eliciting extended, individualized responses and supporting dialogic interaction.

Underlining the dominance of referential questions, three factors likely converged. First, the task/topic ecology (e.g., work on personal letters) naturally invited experience-based prompts (“What kind of letter have you received?”), making referential questions an efficient way to activate schema and personalize content (Carlsen, 1991; Nassaji & Wells, 2000). Second, CLT-oriented goals encouraged the teacher to elicit extended turns and authentic information, aligning with the lens of the Interaction Hypothesis and Sociocultural Theory accounts of learning through negotiated, meaningful use of language (Long, 1996; Swain, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978). Both frameworks emphasize the importance of interaction, mediation, and scaffolding in language development. Third, as a novice, the teacher appeared to use referential prompts to gain quick entry into dialogue while maintaining lesson momentum in a large class (Walsh, 2011). Furthermore, the association between referential questions and more elaborate student responses supports the value of dialogic, open-ended questioning for fostering critical thinking and learner autonomy.

However, the findings also suggest that despite the CLT orientation, display questions remained necessary for form-focused work such as terminology, grammar, and layout features, as well as for quick progress checks within IRF sequences (Butterfield & Bhatta, 2015; Kellem & Halvorsen, 2018). Their continued use reflects the dual demands of meaning- and form-oriented objectives in exam-aware classrooms (Zare et al., 2024). Further, Nggawu & Thao's (2023) study acknowledges that even within CLT approaches, teachers require structured strategies to monitor comprehension and track progress, which supports the pedagogical necessity of display questions for targeted purposes. In this sense, successful CLT implementation does not imply the complete abandonment of form-focused questioning but rather its integration into communicative practices to ensure systematic checking of student learning, particularly in relation to form-focused elements (Eisenring & Margana, 2018). Ellis et al. (2019) underline that form-focused instruction can be integrated into communicative activities, suggesting that focus-on-form and focus-on-forms represent points along a continuum rather than entirely separate categories.

Comprehension checks, confirmation checks, and clarification checks were also regularly employed, serving to monitor understanding, confirm responses, and address ambiguities. The frequent use of comprehension checks highlights the teacher's attentiveness to students' grasp of instructions and content. However, frequent “Do you understand?”-type prompts suggest classroom management and pacing priorities typical of novice teaching: they provide rapid assurance that instructions landed, but often yield

superficial “yes” responses (Day & Park, 2005). These checks also function as low-risk procedural monitoring moves in moments of uncertainty about students’ comprehension or task readiness—paralleling findings that such routine-oriented questioning supports instructional flow (Nicholson, 2014; Walsh, 2011; Zhou, 2018).

Further, while in accordance with sociocultural and interactionist perspectives (Lantolf & Poehner, 2020), clarification and confirmation checks facilitate negotiation of meaning and deeper processing, the low rates of these reactive moves likely because many student responses were brief or choral. Therefore, opportunities for repairing meaning were fewer and the teacher often opted to *rephrase* proactively rather than pursue repair sequences. This is in line with previous studies which pointed out that the reduced frequency of clarification and confirmation checks due to brief or choral student responses and teachers’ preference for proactive rephrasing over reactive repair sequences to maintain instructional flow in time-constrained classrooms (Ardini, 2018; Shomoossi, 2004).

The Role of Modification Strategies

In terms of questioning strategies, the teacher demonstrated adaptability by modifying questions in real time. The frequent use of modification strategies mirrors findings from Jusoh et al. (2020) and Rahayu & Suharti (2023) that emphasize the importance of adaptive questioning for maintaining engagement and ensuring comprehensibility in diverse EFL settings. Rephrasing was the most frequently used strategy, enabling the teacher to restate questions in simpler language or alternative forms to enhance comprehensibility. The dominance of rephrasing shows sensitivity to learners’ proficiency and the need to maintain intersubjectivity in which the teacher reformulated prompts to lower linguistic load while keeping task demands intact (Ekawati et al., 2021; Fitriani et al., 2016; Milawati & Suryati, 2019). Repetition was also common, particularly when initial student responses were absent or hesitant, ensuring that all students had the opportunity to participate. Repetition functioned as a participation nudge in moments of hesitation, and—paired with longer wait-time—can convert silence into uptake (Fitriani et al., 2016; Gülten, 2023).

Decomposition and simplification were used to break down complex questions into manageable parts or to reduce linguistic complexity, thereby scaffolding student understanding and accommodating varying proficiency levels. Decomposition was pivotal when tasks were cognitively dense, enabling stepwise scaffolding of complex targets (e.g., genre components). Simplification surfaced when initial questions over-taxed processing; used judiciously, it prevents breakdowns, though overuse risks narrowing the cognitive challenge. Together, these moves instantiate *contingent scaffolding* central to sociocultural accounts of learning: support is adjusted in real time to the learner’s evolving contribution (Gülten, 2023). These adaptive strategies reflect a responsive, student-centered approach and are increasingly recognized as hallmarks of effective teaching (Fitriani et al., 2016; Jusoh et al., 2020; Rahayu & Suharti, 2023). The observed use of clarification and confirmation checks, as well as real-time question modification, demonstrates the teacher’s emerging ability to provide contingent support and facilitate meaningful classroom discourse (Lantolf & Poehner, 2020).

Pedagogical Implications for Teacher Education

The findings of this study highlight the importance of preparing pre-service teachers with explicit training in questioning techniques, as many still rely heavily on display questions due to insufficient preparation in this area. While display questions play a role in form-focused checks, teacher education programs should provide systematic opportunities for candidates to practice generating referential and higher-order questions that stimulate reasoning, justification, and elaboration (Shafeei et al., 2018; C. C. R. Yang, 2010). Such training should also cultivate adaptive expertise by equipping teachers with strategies like rephrasing, decomposition, and simplification, which can scaffold learning and ensure equitable participation. Moreover, fostering a dialogic classroom environment through purposeful questioning can strengthen students' communicative competence, critical thinking, and metacognitive awareness (Chow et al., 2023; Z. Yang & Brindley, 2023).

In line with contemporary calls for reform, teacher education programs need to reorient curricula to include explicit instruction on questioning, reflective practice, and classroom-based inquiry (Cavanagh, 2021). Digital tools and video-based reflection have proven especially effective in heightening pre-service teachers' awareness of their questioning strategies and in promoting data-informed refinement (Cavanagh, 2021; Sydnor et al., 2020). To translate these insights into practice, several key directions emerge including designing purposeful balances of question types, upgrading comprehension checks into diagnostic probes, developing a repertoire of modification moves, embedding video-based reflection, and assessing questioning as a competency.

In more elaborative sense, firstly, pre-service teachers should be trained to plan "question maps" aligned with lesson phases: referential prompts at the lead-in stage to build common ground, display questions during input/analysis to support noticing and accuracy checks, and higher-order referential questions in practice/production to push reasoning and elaboration. Secondly, instead of global checks (e.g., "Do you understand?"), teachers should learn to use concept-checking questions (CCQs) that require production, such as generating new examples or completing task steps. Providing banks of CCQs across grammar, lexis, and procedures can scaffold this skill. Next, training should include micro-skills for rephrasing, decomposition, probing, and reformulation, combined with strategies like wait-time and revoicing, to extend learner contributions rather than reduce them. Furthermore, by annotating their own recordings to identify question types, modification strategies, and learner uptake, pre-service teachers can make visible the link between their questioning moves and student responses. Lastly, programs should incorporate assessment criteria that evaluate not only the distribution and proportion of question types but also the effective use of modification strategies and the presence of dialogic follow-up that presses for reasoning and deeper engagement. Taken together, these implications suggest that effective questioning should be treated as a core professional competency rather than an incidental skill. A coherent program of instruction, practice, reflection, and assessment in questioning strategies can equip future teachers with the tools to balance form- and meaning-oriented objectives while fostering richer, more dialogic classroom interaction.

In summary, the study highlights the evolving questioning practices of pre-service EFL teacher, the importance of adaptive and dialogic approaches, and the ongoing need for comprehensive training in effective classroom questioning. The pre-service teacher's pattern—heavy on referential prompts, frequent comprehension checks, and strategic rephrasing—reflects an emerging dialogic stance moderated by novice concerns about clarity and control. Developing effective, adaptive questioning practices should be a central focus of EFL teacher education. Teacher education should therefore move beyond taxonomies to cultivate *adaptive expertise*: planning for purposeful question sequences, converting checks into diagnostic probes, and orchestrating contingent modifications that keep learner thinking—and language—moving forward. By fostering reflective, dialogic, and student-responsive questioning, educators can create more engaging and supportive environments that empower learners and enrich the language learning experience.

CONCLUSION

This study sheds light on the nuanced and evolving nature of teacher questioning in Indonesian EFL classrooms, particularly during the formative phase of pre-service teacher practicum. The results underscore the importance of preparing pre-service teachers with a broad repertoire of question types and adaptive skills that enable real-time adjustment during teaching. Teacher education curricula should explicitly integrate training in questioning strategies, supported by guided practice, observation, and structured reflection. Embedding these practices within microteaching sessions, school-based practicums, and video-based analysis can enhance pre-service teachers' ability to use questioning as a means of engaging learners, promoting critical thinking, and encouraging learner autonomy.

Despite these contributions, the study is limited by its single-case design and reliance on classroom observation. Future research should employ longitudinal designs to capture how questioning develops across different stages of teacher education, as well as mixed-methods approaches—including interviews, stimulated recall, and reflective journals—to uncover the cognitive processes guiding teachers' choices. Further inquiry into the relationship between questioning strategies and student learning outcomes would also provide valuable insights.

In practical terms, this study suggests three key implications for teacher education programs: (1) incorporate explicit instruction and practice on varied questioning strategies, (2) use digital tools and video-based reflection to strengthen pre-service teachers' awareness and adaptive expertise, and (3) foster a culture of reflective practice where questioning is regularly analyzed and refined. By embedding these elements into teacher preparation, programs can better equip future teachers to orchestrate interactive, responsive, and effective classroom discourse.

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