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**Students' and Teachers' Perceptions of Teacher Questioning as an
Assessment Technique in EFL Students' Learning Performance**
Case Study of First-Year LMD Students at Dr Moulay Taher University

Dissertation Submitted in a Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for a Master's
Degree in Didactics

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Declaration

I hereby declare under oath that all information in this master's thesis has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. This master's thesis is the product of our own independent work. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work. This thesis has neither been submitted to another committee, nor has it been published before.

Date: May 28, 2023

Signature:

Dedication

I dedicate my work:

To my husband Ben Dida who has greatly supported me. I would not have made it without your encouragement.

A special feeling of gratitude to my loving parents, whose words of encouragement and push for tenacity ring in my ears. My sister Asmaa and my brothers Larbi, Boubaker and Abdeldjebbar have never left my side and are very special.

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Abstract

When moving from secondary school to university, students become exposed to a variety of teaching methods and techniques. This study aims to investigate the role of teacher questioning as a technique to assess students' learning performance. More importantly, the researcher explores the perceptions of students and teachers regarding the role of this technique in foreign language learning. To achieve the aim of this study, the researcher argues that effective use of the teacher questioning technique would help teachers assess students' learning performance. Based on evidences from previous studies and literature reviews, the researcher opted for a mixed methods approach. Here, two questionnaires were used to collect the necessary data, administered to first-year students and English teachers at the chosen research setting, which represents Dr Moulay Taher University, the department of English. After analyzing the questionnaires, the results indicated that the participants' perceptions of the teacher questioning technique were entirely positive and intuitive. Furthermore, the findings indicated the importance of the questioning technique in building students' thinking skills, promoting classroom interaction, and enhancing their verbal repertoire, which all characterize the learning performance and help achieve satisfactory outcomes. To conclude, the teacher questioning is fundamental to foreign language learning assessment.

Keywords: Instruction, questioning technique, assessment, learning performance, thinking skills, interaction

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List of Abbreviations

<i>EFL</i>	English as a Foreign Language
<i>ESL</i>	English as a Second Language
<i>LMD</i>	Licence Master Doctorate
<i>SPSS</i>	Statistical Package for Social Sciences

General Introduction

Introduction

Teaching English as a foreign language can be challenging for many teachers, as a wide range of skills and competencies are required to complete this task. Educators may encourage students to enhance their English skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing through course books, teaching techniques, technology-based materials, tests, and assessments. The concept of questioning as a technique for assessing the learning performance of EFL students has been a widespread topic in language teaching and testing. It has been discussed and looked at from various perspectives. The topic's significance emerges from the fact that the consequences of questioning as a technique for learning assessment help determine the nature of language teaching, learning, and testing. The primary aim of this research paper is to investigate the role of the teacher questioning as a technique for assessing EFL students' learning performance. More importantly, explore how EFL students and teachers perceive this teaching technique.

1. Research background and context

Most existing studies on classroom questioning focus on investigating effective teacher questioning in the EFL classroom and denoting the relationship between questioning types and students' learning performance. However, more research needs to be conducted in this area. Recent research in second language acquisition (SLA) has been concerned with investigating verbal questioning behaviour and the techniques used in ESL / EFL classrooms for different purposes, including simply checking for understanding, looking for unknown answers, or getting learners to produce language (Al-Zahrani & Al-Bargi, 2017).

According to Macalister (2011), questioning is critical in facilitating students' learning and long-term reading motivation (as cited in Sunggingwati & Nguyen, 2013). Regarding questioning as an assessment tool, Jiang (2014) emphasized the importance of the three stages of teacher questioning; initiation, response, and evaluation. He stated that convergent questions

could facilitate students' mastery of knowledge in the initiation stage of questioning. However, divergent questions are used to trigger learners' thinking skills. Convergent questions expose learners to actively participating in classroom questioning during the response stage. A lack of student responses during the evaluation stage can inspire independent and collaborative learning (Jiang, 2014).

The research investigated by Shen (2012) has brought to light the effects of teachers' questions on developing students' critical thinking. It explored whether teacher questions could facilitate students' critical thinking via knowledge manipulation rather than direct recalling. The researcher followed the theory of the cognitive domain, using a teachers' questionnaire, a students' interview, and classroom observation to collect the research data. The results showed that excessive use of lower-cognitive questions could not facilitate the development of students' critical thinking. Additionally, the misuse of higher-cognitive questions by the teacher was also identified.

Sunggingwati and Nguyen (2013) conducted another study about teacher questioning as a technique of assessment; they investigated the practice of teacher questioning and teaching reading in Indonesian secondary schools. In this descriptive study, the data was gathered from the teachers through observations, interviews, and textbook analysis. The findings demonstrated that the teachers relied on the textbooks for teaching reading and for the kinds of questions they asked to help in reading comprehension. This study is significant because it provides information about the practice of questioning strategies in a foreign language classroom.

Furthermore, Milawati (2017) studied the effect of teacher questioning as a formative assessment strategy in an EFL context. The researcher highlighted one experienced teacher's use of quality questioning to assess and facilitate learning. Low-level questions were

dominantly used to ask specific knowledge. Meanwhile, high-level questions were rarely used to probe students' understanding. Among the other responses the students gave, the proportion of no answers was the highest. It also provided practical insights into developing questioning as a formative assessment method and recommended that teachers should be equipped with additional knowledge and skills to conduct effective questioning.

In the present study, the researcher intends to investigate students' and teachers' perceptions of using the questioning technique to assess learning performance.

2. Statement of the problem

Mastering English skills is of great importance in the teaching-learning process. However, many factors are thought to hinder students' learning progress, mainly lack of practice, poor verbal repertoire, lack of classroom interaction, absence of critical thinking, the use of inappropriate teaching techniques, a shared sense of self-confidence and motivation, and a heavy reliance on ready-made information provided by their teachers.

Taking forward the case of learning English as a foreign language in the Algerian EFL classroom and the obstacles faced by students and teachers, some teachers at Dr Taher Moulay University- Saida, the Department of English, are viewed to face several shortcomings in assessing students' learning performance. In this regard, the present study attempts to shed light on the teacher questioning technique to assess students' learning performance.

3. Research aims and objectives

This study aims to explore the perceptions of EFL teachers and students of teacher questioning as a technique for assessing students' learning performance, so to achieve the aim of this study, the researcher created the following objectives:

1. Study the role of teacher questioning in EFL students' learning performance assessment.
2. Identify the questions types that meet the learners' needs and help them increase their performance.

4. Research questions and hypotheses

This research study intends to answer the following questions:

1. Would teacher questioning help assess students' learning performance?
2. What are EFL teachers' and first-year students' perceptions of using questioning as an assessment technique?
3. How could EFL teachers shape the questioning technique to be as beneficial as possible for the students?

Based on the previous questions, the following hypothesized are developed:

1. Effective teacher questioning would better assess students' learning performance.
2. Students' learning performance may become attainable if effective questioning is implemented.

5. Research significance

In this exploratory study, the researcher investigates how EFL students' learning performance is assessed. It seeks to link the theoretical and practical aspects of using the teacher questioning technique in language learning assessment. It will also help teachers apply this technique to enhance learners' performance in EFL classes. This type of research may encourage other researchers to carry out further studies in this regard.

6. Research method

This study follows a mixed methods approach, and its purpose is exploratory. Dawson stated, " Neither qualitative nor quantitative research is better; they are just different, and both have their strengths and weaknesses as they depend on the skills, training, and experiences of the researcher." (p.13). In this regard, a mixed methods approach was chosen to achieve the primary aim of this study, which is exploring teachers' and students' perceptions of teacher questioning as a technique for assessing learning performance. Therefore, a questionnaire was selected as the most appropriate tool to reach this objective, administered to both students and teachers.

The population of this study comprises first-year students and English teachers at Dr Taher Moulay University, the department of English. Here, one-fifth (1/5) of the entire population is selected as the sample of this study, drawn at random. One reason for this choice is that first-year students have an intermediate level in English and are introduced to several new teaching techniques that differ from those used in high schools. At the same time, teachers are more knowledgeable about the topic and will contribute to valuable information that serves the aim of this study.

The data from both questionnaires will be compared and quantitatively analyzed through the SPSS software, the simplest and most efficient way to categorize quantitative data, producing well-presented graphs, pie charts, and tables that can be used in the final report. However, some open-ended questions will be analyzed qualitatively using thematic analysis. Ultimately, the findings of this study will reject or validate the hypotheses set at the beginning of the research.

7. Research structure

This research includes three main chapters. It starts with a general introduction to give insights into the research problem, aims, and questions. The first chapter is the literature review, which summarizes, compares, and criticizes key concepts, theories, and previous studies. It also shows what needs to be added to the existing knowledge and what the project will fit into it.

The second chapter is the research methodology, which encompasses the research approach, procedures, tools of data collection, population and sampling techniques, analysis methods, ethical considerations, and study limitations. This chapter describes the researcher's steps to answer the research questions.

The third chapter deals with data analysis, interpretation, and discussion of the findings. Finally, the dissertation ends with a general conclusion, a list of references, and appendixes.

As it is the case for any study conducted, this study is bound to face certain shortcomings or conditions that cannot be controlled. This study is of an exploratory purpose; it certainly raises numerous opportunities for future research. One of the main recommendations that can be offered is the possibility of conducting experimental research. In addition, this research relies on one instrument in the data collection process. Therefore, adding a second or third tool, such as a checklist observation or a focus group discussion, can help obtain more valuable data regarding the topic under investigation.

Conclusion

In this research section called the general introduction, the researcher introduces the research topic, purpose, and relevance to foreign language teaching and learning. It identifies the research problem, questions, hypotheses, aims, rationale, data collection tools and procedures, and population and sampling. It also tackles the relationship between the variables.

Moreover, it discusses the current state of knowledge regarding the use of teacher questioning as an assessment technique for students' learning performance. The next phase is the literature review, where the researcher will discuss the state of the current knowledge in detail.

Chapter One: Literature Review

1.1 Introduction

The literature review chapter introduces the previous research on teacher questioning techniques in foreign language learning and teaching. The first section discusses what researchers discovered about teacher questioning to establish EFL classroom interaction, develop reading comprehension, and use learning performance. The second section includes critical definitions, types, strategies, theories, and related studies about questioning in assessing EFL learning. It sheds light on different assessment techniques teachers use in the EFL classroom for evaluating, synthesizing, and developing learning.

1.2 Teacher questioning in EFL classroom: Previous studies

Due to the significance of teacher questioning in the teaching-learning process, many studies have been conducted to investigate the role of teacher questioning, its aspects, types, forms, and the characteristics that distinguish it from other teaching tools as a part of classroom interaction. This section will go over three important studies on teacher questioning.

In a study conducted about teacher questioning, Al Zahrani and Al Bargi (2017) aimed to identify the characteristics of questions that encourage more classroom interaction. It aims to answer the research questions: "which types of questions are most influential in promoting a greater amount of classroom interaction?" Classroom interaction, according to Al Zahrani and Al Bargi (2017), extends beyond students' ability to speak and express themselves and includes any classroom participation that occurs in the classroom, such as teacher-student, student-student, group discussions, and any other type of classroom participation (Al Zahrani & Al Bargi, 2017). The authors introduced some key definitions regarding second language acquisition (SLA). These definitions extended beyond investigating teaching techniques in EFL/EFL classroom interaction. According to Kumpulainen and Wray (2002), "Many contemporary classroom social interactions are valuable tools for learning because of the

growing interest in classroom interaction, and in learning social interaction, students reflect a theoretical shift in perspectives on learning and instruction." (p.3). This can be accomplished by comprehending the characteristics that facilitate the development of classroom interaction (Kumpulainen & Wray, 2002).

Furthermore, the study emphasizes the importance of verbal questioning as a tool for classroom interaction in various ways, depending on the goals of the teachers and the learners. Al Zahrani and Al Bargi (2017) used participant observation to create some classifications among question features and interaction occurrence frequency. Classroom video recordings were used to collect data on the characteristics of the most influential questions in promoting significant classroom interaction. It considered the cognitive level, complexity, and type of the question. The analysis of eleven lessons indicated that verbal questions are the most common form of teacher interaction. The research finding revealed that using questioning techniques wisely leads to developing classroom interaction levels in EFL contexts. In observed EFL classrooms, questioning techniques are widely used. As a result, English proficiency is directly related to the answers generated in response to these questions. It was determined that the higher the level of proficiency of the participants, the greater the level of interaction. Therefore, the students may need help in using the structure and vocabulary at lower interaction levels (Al Zahrani & Al Bargi, 2017).

Sunggingwati and Nguyen (2013) conducted a significant study on the impact of questioning in reading lessons with Indonesian EFL students. The study aims to determine how teacher questioning could improve students' reasoning abilities, specifically in the EFL reading class. In this regard, Sunggingwati and Nguyen (2013) reviewed some existing literature on teacher questioning practices in EFL reading classrooms. Most English as a foreign language / second language researchers agreed that using a questioning technique in reading classes is important for supporting students' learning and engaging them in reading comprehension.

Sunggingwati and Nguyen (2013) used a case study approach to investigate questioning strategies with teachers in an EFL context in Indonesia. The information was gathered from various sources, including teacher observations, teacher interviews, and textbooks.

According to the findings of this study, EFL teachers rely solely on generating questions during the reading lesson; however, they initiate or ask questions from the reading textbook. Overall, these teachers had been exposed to low-level textbook questions and needed to gain knowledge of questioning strategies. This means that most teachers must improve their ability to develop more complex questions than those provided in textbooks and learn strategies for designing their questioning techniques (Sunggingwati & Nguyen, 2013).

In short, the researchers discovered that most EFL Indonesian teachers required help in asking higher-level questions that would encourage students to use skills such as application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. This help could be provided through targeted professional development and developing higher order questioning strategies that differ from those found in textbooks. The findings emphasized the importance of developing questions that aid students' learning and rely on higher-level and lower-level questions that may challenge students' thinking and foster their reasoning skills. As a result, considering these implications when designing English reading questions for textbooks would increase the use of higher-level questions in EFL classrooms (Sunggingwati & Nguyen, 2013, p.93).

In order to teach or learn a foreign language, it is necessary to ask questions. Therefore, much research has been done to investigate the role of teacher questioning in establishing EFL classroom interaction. Toni and Parse (2013) investigated the most effective questioning techniques that assist teachers in engaging their EFL students in the classroom. In this light, Bloom's (1956) taxonomy was chosen as the framework for interpreting and analyzing the different types of questions in the classroom. Also, some literature on the role of questioning

types in the manageability of classroom interaction was mentioned to strengthen the argument of this study. Gall (1970) asserted that questions play an important role in teaching by identifying the conditions that allow these questions to be interesting enough to help students achieve their educational goals (Gall,1970, as cited in Toni and Parse,2013).

According to Barnes (1990), teachers use a variety of questions to engage students in various modes of participation. They are summarized as follows:

a. Close-ended questions. This type is frequently used to encourage passive participation, whereas open-ended questions encourage students to participate more actively in the classroom and elicit a limited set of responses (e.g., "Where were you born?").

b. Open-ended questions. This type is mainly used to encourage students to think aloud and help them explore the subject (e.g., "What did you do on your trip?"). Using these two question types influences students' participation.

According to White and Lightbown (1984), questioning is essential in classroom interaction because most EFL teachers hope to rule over the class, control the topics and speaking turns, and ask most questions. They stated that repetitions produce an extended sequence of interactions in which the teacher and the student co-create the students' answers rather than the students producing the question independently. White and Lightbown's observations were based on high school EFL classes in Canada, a group similar to the class type that participated in their study.

Toni and Parse's (2013) study's primary goal is to investigate classroom interaction using questioning as a teaching technique. The study focused on Iranian high and junior high school students with a lower intermediate level of English. Three classroom interaction settings were tape-recorded to collect data for interpreting teacher-questions-student-responses. Each recording session lasted 45 minutes. The study's findings revealed that the teacher used

inference questions far more than other questions. They concluded that inference questions emphasize the role of the learner's prior knowledge and the importance of learning objectives. To make inference questions, question words like "how" and "why" are commonly used. "What did he mean by saying..." and "what conclusions can you draw from...?" are two examples of inference questions. Accordingly, inference questions assist students in brainstorming, thinking about the subject matter, and concluding.

In a nutshell, Toni and Parse's (2013) research contributed to understanding teacher-student interactions. It made some suggestions for future research, such as assisting teachers in providing opportunities for students to exchange information and experience, making the lesson more active and growing the teachers' ability to establish student-teacher and student-student interaction.

Compared with the previous research studies, the current study explores the importance of teacher questioning as an assessment technique for developing EFL students' learning performance and enabling English communication. Because the variables in this study are teacher questioning and learning performance, we devote these lines to discuss the role of teacher questioning in assessing EFL students' learning performance during EFL learning.

1.3 Teacher questioning as an assessment technique in EFL learning

It is critical to use authentic techniques when teaching English as a foreign language, which is the target selection for assessing students' learning. Therefore, questioning is the most helpful tool in assessing EFL learning at its best. As a prominent teaching technique, it has many educational benefits that improve students' learning performance. Thus, it is worth devoting the following section to explore its definition, types, characteristics, forms, strategies, and role. In addition, guidelines to use this technique appropriately during EFL learning will be mentioned.

1.3.1 Questioning

In teaching, questioning refers to the different kinds of questions teachers are likely to ask. Since questioning is one of the most frequently used teaching techniques, the study of teachers' questions and questioning behaviours has been an important issue in classroom research in both first and second language classrooms (Richards & Schmidt, 2010). According to Zepeda (2009), questions can elicit responses from students ranging from simple recall of information to abstract processes of applying, synthesizing, and evaluating information (Zepeda, 2009, as cited Feng, 2013). Similarly, Black, Harrison, Marshall, and William (2003) claimed that teacher questioning has long been used as an instructional strategy. As the educational system has advanced, it has been investigated as a powerful assessment tool, allowing teachers to gather accurate information about students and use it to make better pedagogical decisions (Black et al., 2003). Questioning is essential in facilitating learning because it makes it simple to understand and comprehend language, builds learners' skills, and designs effective instruction.

1.3.2 Classification of Questions

For educators to use questions effectively in EFL classrooms, they need to classify questions according to their types, functions, and forms.

1.3.2.1 By type

Shanmugavelu et al. (2020) classified questions into four major categories. They are presented as follows:

A) First-order questions

These are the most common types of questions. It follows the disclosure of information provided in the teaching and learning activities.

B) Uncovered questions

Uncovered questions are the type of questions that erode students' knowledge over time. This technique also requires the teacher's participation in creative activities and the use of straightforward and simple questions to keep students engaged.

C) Open-ended questions

Open-ended questions are investigations that evaluate students' abilities and knowledge. Students may also seek additional assurance and clarification from the teacher. By this, teachers could expect the response to assess students' comprehension.

D) Divergent and convergent questions

Divergent questions usually elicit a broad range of thinking abilities from students. Subjective questions will help students broaden their thinking, which is essential for developing critical thinking skills (Shanmugavelu et al., 2020, p.48).

In short, convergent and divergent questions aid students in their learning. To begin, convergent questions require recalling and applying prior knowledge from the learner to get the teacher's reaction. Second, divergent questions elicit higher levels of thinking from students by asking them to express their opinions on a specific issue. Therefore, the questioning technique will help the teacher determine the student's needs. Which enables the teacher to make a pedagogical decision that helps improve classroom practice (Milawati, 2017).

1.3.2.2 By form

Myhill et al. (2006:39) suggested four questions: factual, speculative, process and procedural. They are labelled in the table below:

Table 1

Question Forms Taxonomy (Myhill et al., 2006)

Form	Definition	Example
Factual Questions	Inviting a predetermined answer.	What was in her pocket?
Speculative Questions	Questions inviting a response with no predetermined answer, often opinions, hypotheses, imaginings, and ideas.	What might his next move be?
Process Questions	Questions inviting children to articulate their understanding of learning processes/explain their thinking.	How did you come to that conclusion?
Procedural Questions	Questions relating to the organization and management of the lesson.	Is that clear enough for everyone to see?

1.3.2.3 By Function

Myhill et al. (2006) suggested seven principal functions of questions. They are summarised in the following table:

Table 2*Question Functions Taxonomy (Myhill et al., 2006)*

Function	Definition
Class management	Linked to the management of tasks/behaviour
Practising skills	Pupils are expected to rehearse, repeat, practice a strategy, or understand something.
Checking prior knowledge	Related to checking knowledge and experience relevant to the lesson
Developing vocabulary	Questions posed to assess or clarify understanding of vocabulary
Checking understanding	Checking grasp of ideas and concepts already covered
Building on thinking	Moving forward with pupils' ideas and concepts
Developing reflection	Querying how pupils are learning and the strategies they are using.

1.3.3 Aspects of questioning

In the teaching and learning process, questioning is one of the many interactive tools that are frequently used in the classroom. According to Shanmugavelu et al. (2020), the

questioning technique is important because it can stimulate learning, develop students' thinking potential, drive them to clear ideas, stir their imagination, and provide motivation to act. It is also one way in which teachers can assist students in developing their knowledge more effectively. Teachers must, therefore, plan carefully and consider the following aspects:

1.3.3.1 Attention

Questioning raises students' attention in the classroom. Many teachers believe that allowing all students to answer questions is important in attracting students' attention. By doing this, the teacher ensures that all students have received the question and intend to answer according to their knowledge.

1.3.3.2 Voice

A teacher's voice is an essential communication tool. When asking questions, teachers should ensure that their voices are clear and their tone is heard. The questions should be presented to the students clearly and concisely. As a result, students will be encouraged to respond to a question purposefully.

1.3.3.3 Pause

After posing a query, the teacher may take a momentary break, verbalize something, and survey the classroom. The verbal clues indicate that the student is poised to react. Upon asking questions, the teacher may give pupils adequate time to deliberate their answers.

1.3.3.4 Content of questions

The relevance of the questions is critical in stimulating the abilities of students. Teachers should ask open-ended questions. They may also ensure that the words used in the question are simple to understand. Students will be perplexed if they require assistance in understanding what is used in the question. If students misunderstand a question, the teacher's words may be

changed. However, allowing them to respond first is advisable (Shanmugavelu et al., 2020, pp.46-47).

1.3.4 Questioning strategies

In the learning-teaching process, questioning is essential. According to research on teaching and learning English as a foreign language, classroom questioning is the second most common strategy used by EFL teachers (after lecturing); Orlich et al. (2010) described two basic questioning strategies in this context. They are as follows:

1.3.4.1 Evaluative strategy

An evaluative question comes with its own set of evaluative criteria. An evaluative question, for example, seeks to learn whether something is good or bad or why something is significant. Teachers should emphasize the specific criteria on which students base their judgments when asking an evaluative question. In the evaluative strategy, the teacher's role is to assist students in developing a set of logical evaluative criteria (Orlich et al., 2010).

1.3.4.2 Reflective strategy

Many students respond to reflective questions, as in divergent questions. They contain an evaluative component as well, but the goal of this strategy is to require students to develop higher-order thinking skills, such as making inferences and speculating on causes (Orlich et al., 2010).

In conclusion, effective questioning is primarily related to the variety of strategies employed by teachers. The effect of questioning on the student's learning performance will be appealing if the strategy is used purposefully and effectively.

1.3.5 The Role of questioning in EFL learning

Language teaching includes much questioning. Many researchers emphasized the significance of teacher questioning in improving EFL students' learning performance and increasing their ability to make the best use of their verbal repertoire while responding to questions. Orlich et al. (2010) summarized the importance of teacher questioning in the following lines:

- ✓ Questioning serves as a universal teaching strategy.
- ✓ Questioning improves student learning and develops critical skills.
- ✓ Questioning allows teachers to determine their students' cognitive or adequate level and adjust as needed.
- ✓ Teachers can use systematic questioning to determine students' entry skills and knowledge levels in specific content areas.
- ✓ Questions help students develop logical thinking and encourage them to ask questions as a part of classroom interaction.

Many studies have found that educators are more likely to inspire students to inquire, and one effective tool at teachers' disposal is good questioning. In this regard, Brown (2005) described the teacher's role in questioning in the following lines:

- ✓ Questioning triggers students' interest and keeps them actively involved.
- ✓ It allows students to express themselves.
- ✓ Questions help follow up on and expand on students' contributions.
- ✓ Teachers can control disciplinary and behavioural issues by asking questions.
- ✓ Questions are an essential evaluative tool for diagnosing specific difficulties hamper learning performance.
- ✓ It gives students opportunities to absorb and reflect on information.
- ✓ It encourages an active approach to learning.

In brief, it is critical to recognize the role of questioning in creating a suitable teaching-learning environment for EFL students. According to most researchers, questioning creates learning opportunities, fosters learners' skills, and assesses the learners' performance.

1.3.6 Methods of learning assessment in EFL classroom

When approaching the definition of *assessment*, Brindley (2001) claimed that assessment refers to:

A variety of ways of collecting information on a learner's language ability or achievement. Although testing and assessment are often used interchangeably, the latter is an umbrella term encompassing measurement instruments administered on a 'one-off' basis such as tests, as well as qualitative methods of monitoring and recording student learning such as observation, simulations or project work. Assessment is also distinguished from evaluation which is concerned with the overall language programme and not just with what individual students have learnt. (p.137)

According to Abosalem (2016), assessment models focus on the student's performance instead of the student's ability to apply the acquired knowledge within specific terms drawn from the educational context. He also regarded as an ongoing procedure since it is executed in various forms continually, supplying instructors with a so-called "album" of the student's capacity rather than the arbitrary and more disconnected "picture" of the student's learning given by customary testing.

Researchers have conducted many studies on assessment methods at various levels and subjects. There are two major methods of evaluation that the researchers distinguished. They are as follows:

1.3.6.1 Traditional assessment

Wraga (1994) stated that traditional testing methods are still the basis of assessment modules, but they must be supplemented with ongoing assessment approaches to evaluate each student's performance in the present and progress made since the previous test accurately in order to provide beneficial feedback to students and parents regarding their growth in crucial skills and knowledge (Wolf, 2007). Likewise, Bol (1998) claimed that traditional assessments typically cover only a subset of educational material. It also implies testing discrete, measurable behaviours that focus on learning products rather than learning itself (Wolf, 2007; Bol, 1998, as cited in Abosalem, 2016).

1.3.6.2 Authentic assessment

Authentic assessment, as opposed to traditional assessment, is important in developing the quality of learning. Abosalem (2016) argued that authentic assessments are competency-based, and their purpose is to bring out sophisticated rather than unsophisticated answers to measure learning. The purpose is to enhance students' performance rather than merely assessing it for optimum effectiveness. In other words, authentic assessment is used to assess students' abilities in real-world learning situations.

1.3.7 Questioning as an assessment technique in EFL learning

Classroom assessment plays a critical role and inevitably influence their teaching and students' learning (Chen, 2008). Oral assessments serve as a direct means of assessing students' learning outcomes by questioning them. Unlike interviews, which typically have a structured question list, oral assessments rarely have one; assessors ask questions and request responses. Similarly, Otieno et al. (2015) discovered that oral questioning effectively assesses students' emotional, cognitive, and social development. In contrast, it is ineffective in assessing physical

growth and development, spiritual development, and moral development, all of which are important aspects of holistic development in early childhood learners.

Prior research into teacher questioning practice concentrated on the relationship between teacher questioning and student learning achievement. According to Heritage (2013), the taxonomy of questions in a science learning context distinguished four methods of questioning, as displayed below:

a. Socratic questioning. This method was designed to prompt and guide student thinking.

b. Verbal questioning. This method focused on the use of scientific terminology, keywords, and phrases to form integrated propositional statements.

c. Semantic tapestry. This method emphasized weaving disparate ideas together into a conceptual framework.

d. Framing. This method is based on the use of questions to frame a problem, issue, or topic (Heritage, 2013).

In a study about questioning as an assessment tool, Jiang (2014) identified three stages in classroom teacher questioning: initiation, response, and evaluation.:

1.3.7.1 Initiation stage. This stage includes the employment of convergent questions to encourage student understanding of the material and elude divergent queries to prevent learners from engaging in deep thinking.

1.3.7.2 Response stage. In this stage, the teacher exposes learners to participate actively in classroom questioning through using convergent questions.

1.3.7.3 Evaluation stage. In this stage, the teacher evaluates the students' responses in order to inspire independent and collaborative learning (Jiang,2014).

Milawati (2017) investigated questioning as an assessment tool to evaluate students' learning in an EFL Indonesian context after discovering this finding. She also investigated questioning and determined whether each stage fulfilled its learning function. Black and William (2009) declared that assessment becomes formative when the gathered evidence about student achievement is interpreted and used by teachers, students, or peers to determine the subsequent steps of instruction that are more likely to be more accurate than decisions that would have been made without the evidence. By eliciting, interpreting, and applying evidence, formative assessment improves instruction or promotes learning.

Questioning is seen by the majority of researchers as an indispensable formative assessment tool in the second/foreign language classroom. Through the use of questions, teachers are able to measure the predetermined educational objectives. Nevertheless, at times, questioning may only function as an evaluation method (Jiang, 2014). In addition, Milawati (2017) proclaimed that questioning is more suited to be a teaching technique, not an assessment approach, when used to ignite student intrigue rather than evaluate learning. Even if questioning is employed to recognize learning, categorizing it as a formative appraisal device is imprudent if no succeeding measures are instituted to encourage learning.

1.4 Conclusion

This chapter examines previous studies that clarify the nature of questioning, its strategies, and its utility and significance in language learning and teaching. In addition, the chapter explores the role of questioning in EFL students' learning and how it serves as a tool of assessment. The following chapter discusses the research method, data collection tools, sampling technique, and procedures used to investigate teachers' and students' perceptions of questioning as a tool to assess EFL Algerian students' learning performance.

Chapter Two: Overview of the Research Methodology

2.1 Introduction

In the present chapter, the researcher sets up the overall research methodology. It describes precisely how the researcher collects and analyzes the data, allowing the reader to evaluate the findings' reliability. Initially, the researcher describes the research design, approach, and type. After that, the researcher describes the research setting, sampling techniques, population, and randomization. In addition, the procedure for data collection is described, along with the instruments used to collect information for this study, the methods of analysis, and ethical considerations.

2.2 Research approach

This research study follows a mixed-methods approach. It aims at gathering information about students' and teachers' perceptions of the use of a questioning technique in EFL learning assessment, so the need to collect information by administering two questionnaires for the chosen populations makes it important to follow a mixed-methods approach, as both questionnaires contain a plethora of qualitative questions.

2.3 Research purpose

The purpose of this research is exploratory as it explores EFL teachers' and students' perceptions of the role of questioning as an assessment technique in EFL learning.

2.4 Case study

This type of research goes well with the aim of this study, as the sample is first-year LMD English students at the University of Dr Moulay Taher- Saida, department of English, along with EFL teachers at the same department, where they are asked about their perceptions of the role of questioning as an assessment technique in EFL students' learning performance.

2.5 Research site

The choice of an appropriate research setting contributes to the efficiency of any research study. This site of research is the University of Dr Moulay Taher- Saida, department of English. It is chosen because the researcher intends to explore the perceptions of first-year LMD English students and English teachers of the role of questioning as an assessment technique in EFL students' learning performance. Second, the aspect of accessibility has to be taken into consideration; for the researcher to conduct the study

2.6 Population, sampling, and randomization

In this research, the populations of interest comprise first-year LMD students and the teacher of English at the department of English, faculty of letters and English language, university of Dr Moulay Taher- Saida. 50 students and 8 teachers were randomly selected to be the sample for this study. One reason for choosing the previously mentioned participants is that first-year students are more motivated and willing to participate in the research. Also, first-year students may have a good level in English and are introduced to several new teaching techniques that differ from those used in high schools. However, teachers usually show an interest in taking part in Master's research studies.

2.7 Research tools and instrumentation

For this study, the researcher used a questionnaire to gather important information about students' perceptions and a semi-structured interview for teachers to shed light on their perceptions of the role of questioning as an assessment technique in EFL students' learning performance.

2.7.1 Students' Questionnaire

2.7.1.1 Administration of students' questionnaire

The questionnaire contains questions that may provide reliable data for the research. Once it is approved by both the supervisor and the administration at the university of Dr Moulay Taher- Saida, the researcher will submit it to the selected sample, which presents 50 students and 8 teachers.

2.7.1.2 Description of Students' Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire aimed to explore the perceptions of first-year LMD students of the role of questioning as a pedagogical technique in assessing students' learning performance. On this basis, the researcher includes 13 questions divided respectively into three main sections.

Section one (Q1-Q3) reviewed the general and background information, such as gender, age, and level. Section two (Q4-Q7) investigated the utility of the questioning technique in the EFL classroom. It has four close-ended questions in yes / no structure. This type of questions enables the researcher to understand the respondent's true feelings and attitudes towards the questionnaire's subject. However, section three (Q8-Q11) explored perceptions of questioning as an assessment technique in EFL classroom. This section encompasses four multiple choices questions to allow the participants to answer the question by ticking the appropriate box. Also, it examines the relationship between the two variables of the research

2.7.2 Teachers' questionnaire

2.7.2.1 Administration of teachers' questionnaire

The teachers' questionnaire was given to (8) EFL teachers at the university of Dr Moulay Taher- Saida, department of English. This research tool is chosen due to its feasibility in the social sciences domain.

2.7.2.2 Description of teachers 'questionnaire

This questionnaire aimed to explore EFL teachers' perceptions of the role of questioning as a pedagogical technique in assessing students' learning performance. The researcher designed eight open-ended questions (Q1-Q8), seeking to elicit information about teachers' views on the role of questioning in assessing students' learning performance. The questions do not contain boxes to tick, but instead a blank section is provided for the respondent to write his/her answer. This qualitative tool allowed the participants to respond in their own words, which evoked meaningful, rich, and explanatory responses.

2.8 Methods of analysis

After data collection, there is the process of data analysis that leads to answering the research questions. For the present study, the researcher chose a mixed- methods approach, where two different questionnaires were treated and analyzed through statistical and thematic analysis.

2.8.1 Statistical analysis (SPSS)

The data from the students' questionnaire was quantitatively analyzed using SPSS software, the simplest and most efficient way to categorize quantitative data, producing well-presented graphs, pie charts, and tables that can be included in the final report. The SPSS software facilitates complex statistical analysis, presents a comprehensive library of machine learning algorithms, provides text analysis, affords open-source extensibility, facilitates extensive data integration, and allows for seamless application deployment. This software was

chosen because it makes the analysis accessible to users of all levels and skills. Researchers argued that computer software could conduct multiple searches in which more than one code is searched much more quickly and efficiently than by the researcher (Dawson, 2019).

2.8.2 Thematic analysis

To analyze the teachers' questionnaires, the researcher opted for a thematic analysis as the best way to interpret qualitative data. Thematic analysis is an efficacious approach to scrutinizing qualitative data, such as interview transcripts, social media profiles, or survey responses, to ascertain something about people's perspectives, opinions, knowledge, experiences, or values. In this type of analysis, the researcher can analyze the teachers' responses and help explain emerging themes. Thematic analysis helps determine question categories and look for patterns of responses that stand out to the researcher and test the hypotheses (Caulfield, 2022).

2.9 Ethical considerations

Before distributing the questionnaire and the interview, the research procedure was explained to the participants and their consent was acquired. The informants were also assured that the data would be used in academic research, and the analysis and interpretations would be confidential. Furthermore, the researcher explained to the students and the teachers that the research would be smooth, so answering the questionnaires would take a manageable amount of time.

2.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher presented the research methodology, which included the research approach, type, site, and purpose. In addition, this chapter described sampling methods, data collection instruments, and analysis techniques. This chapter also addressed the

ethical implications of this research. The subsequent chapter focuses on data analysis, results interpretation, and the discussion of the findings.

Chapter Three: Data Analysis and Discussion of the Findings

3.1 Introduction

Upon the completion of data collection, the next phase is to analyze and interpret the results. This chapter is divided into two major sections. Section one presents the analysis and interpretation of the data of first-year students' and EFL teachers' questionnaires at Dr Moulay Taher University, the department of English. On the other hand, section two provides a prospective discussion of the findings and delves into the meaning and relevance of the results. Moreover, this chapter is significantly important because it lists the research findings, reports the results concisely and objectively, and shows how the results are structured around the research questions and hypotheses.

3.2 Data Analysis and Interpretation

3.2.1 The Students' Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire was addressed to 50 participants of first-year students who were generously cooperative in this study. It consists of three main sections. They are analyzed and interpreted as follows:

Section One: Background information

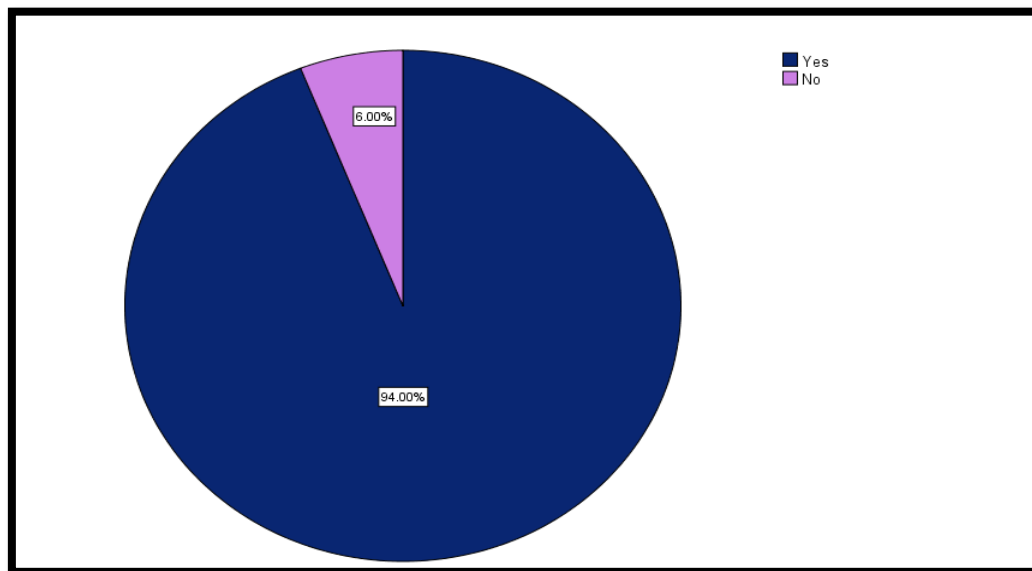
In this section, students have three questions that inquire about their general information regarding study choice, age, and level.

Q1: Are English studies your own choice?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Table 3*Students' Study Choice*

		Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	47	94,0	94,0
	No	3	6,0	6,0
	Total	50	100,0	100,0

Figure 1*Students' Study Choice*

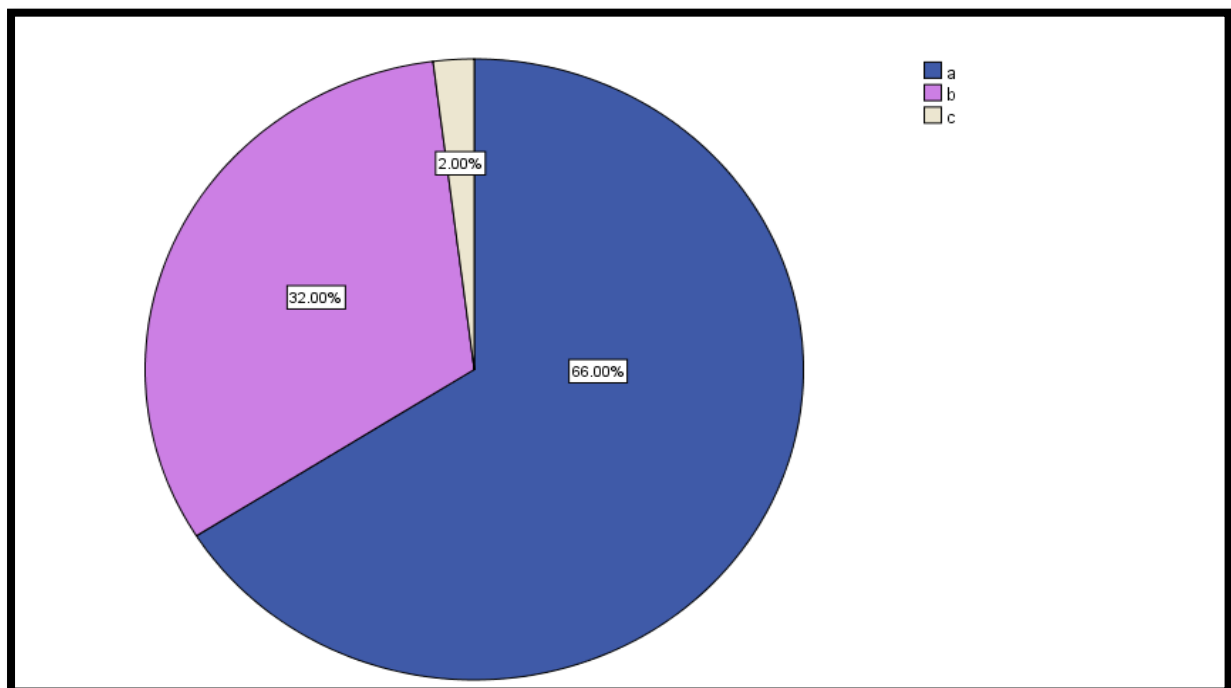
This question was asked to determine if the English language was the students' first choice at university. Their answers help us determine students' motivation and readiness to learn the English language. Table (3) and figure (1) show that 47 students (94%) chose English studies by themselves, whereas three students (6%) had their choice selected by others or were obliged to do so due to their Baccalaureate average.

Q2: Age

- a. From 17 to 20 years
- b. From 20 to 25 years
- c. More than 25 years

Table 4*Student's Age Distribution*

		Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent
Valid	a	33	66,0	66,0
	b	16	32,0	32,0
	c	1	2,0	2,0
	Total	50	100,0	100,0

Figure 2*Student's Age Distribution*

The question was asked to reveal the age distribution among the participants. Table (4) and figure (2) reveal the students' age scope, which ranges between 17 years and 25. Thirty-three students (66%) are between 17 and 20 years old. Sixteen students (32%) are between 20 and 25 years old. However, only one student (2%) is over 25 years old. This means that our participants are relatively young and may show more desire to participate in this study.

Q3: How do you assess your level of English?

- a. Good
- b. Bad
- c. Average

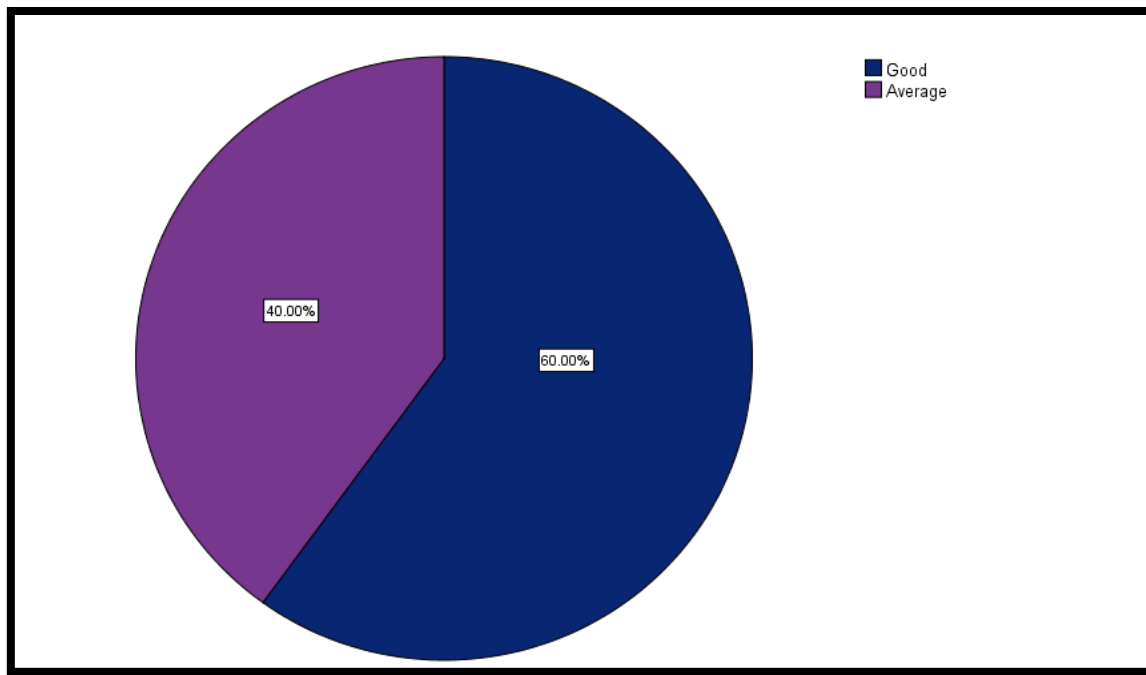
Table 5

Students' Level in English

		Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent
Valid	Good	30	60,0	60,0
	Average	20	40,0	40,0
	Total	50	100,0	100,0

Figure 3

Students' Level in English



This question was asked to determine first-year LMD students' English level. Table (5) and figure (3) shows that 30 participants (60%) believe they have a good level of English, whereas only four participants (40%) claimed to have an average level. This means that most first-year students assume to have good English.

Section Two: The utility of the questioning technique in EFL Classroom

This section explores the learners' perceptions of the questioning technique. It offers a set of four different questions, from yes and no to multiple choices.

Q4: Do you think that teaching techniques, including questioning used in the classroom, help improve your learning?

- a. Yes
- b. No

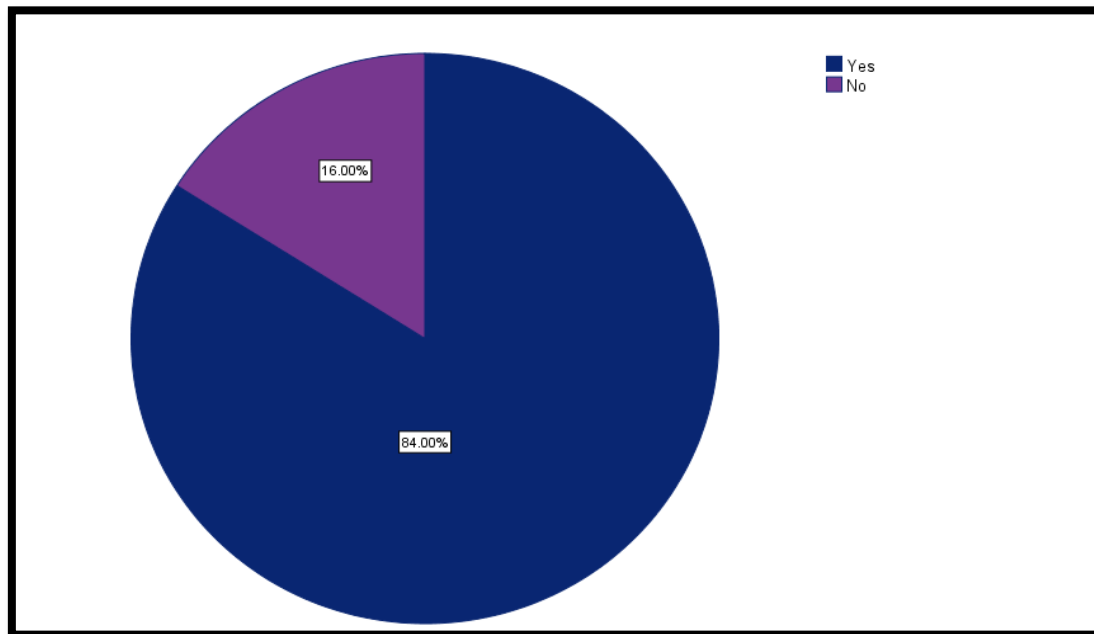
Table 6

Students' Perceptions of the Role of Questioning Technique in Improving Learning

		Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	42	84,0	84,0
	No	8	16,0	16,0
	Total	50	100,0	100,0

Figure 4

Students' Perceptions of the Role of Questioning Technique in Improving Learning



This question was asked to know if students perceive the questioning technique as helpful in improving learning. Table (6) and figure (4) reveal that 42 participants (84%) considered the questioning technique helpful in language learning, while eight participants (16%) said that this technique was not helpful. This means that most students find the questioning technique helpful and engaging.

***If yes, teacher questioning improves learning in terms of:**

- a. Facilitating students' learning
- b. Assessing learning performance
- c. Boosting long-term motivation
- d. Engaging students in various modes

Table 7

Students' Perceptions of the Effect of Teacher Questioning on Learning

		Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent
Valid	a	20	40,0	40,0
	b	5	10,0	10,0
	c	6	12,0	12,0
	d	19	38,0	38,0
	Total	50	100,0	100,0

Figure 5

Students' Perceptions of the Effect of Teacher Questioning on Learning

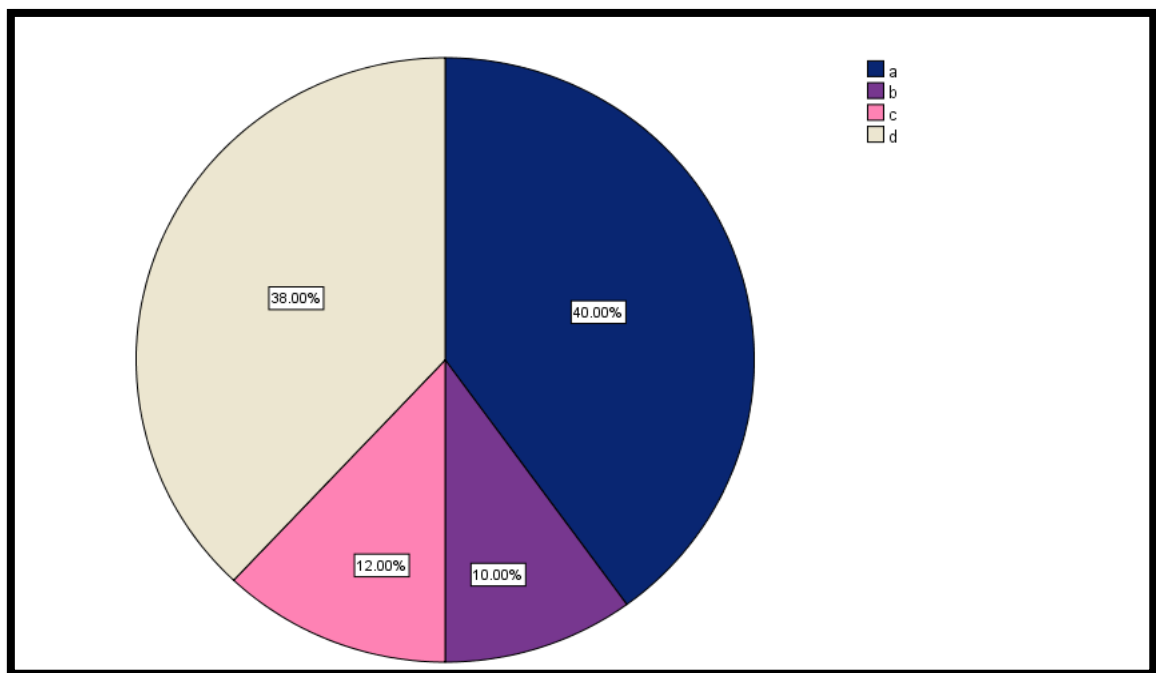


Table (7) and figure (5) demonstrate that 20 students (40%) find the questioning technique effective in facilitating learning. Five students (10%) said it effectively assesses language performance. Six students (12%) related their answers to the effect of the questioning technique on boosting long-term memory. However, 19 students (38%) find questioning useful in engaging them in various learning modes. From the results obtained, we deduce that most students find the questioning technique indispensable in learning.

Q5: Does questioning help you understand what is communicated in the classroom?

- a. Yes
- b. No

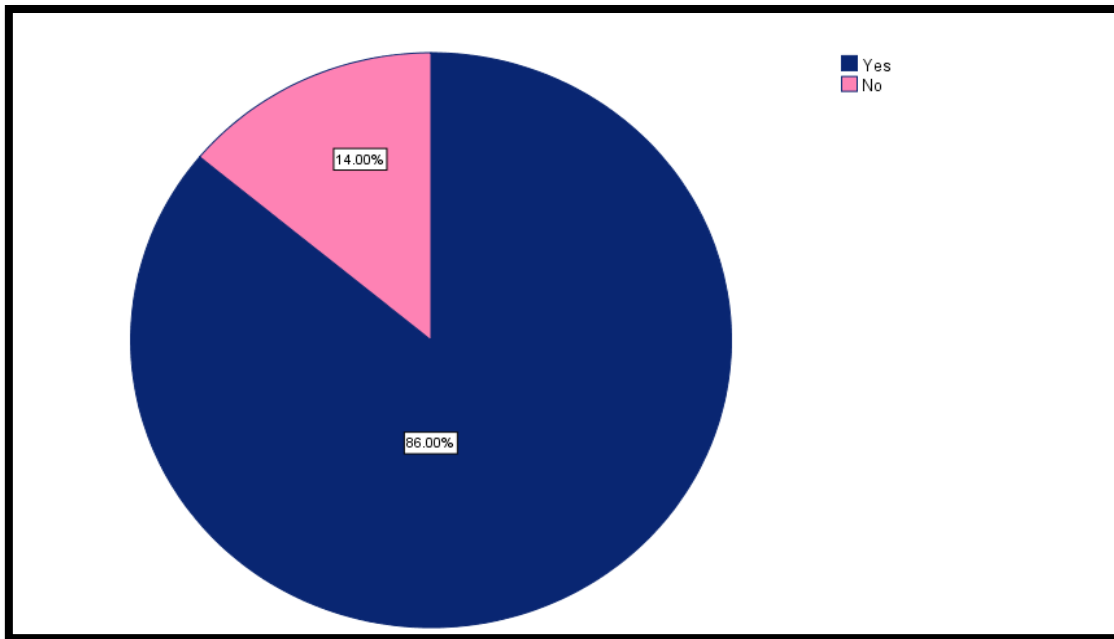
Table 8

Students' Perceptions of the Role of Questioning in Language Communication

		Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	43	86,0	86,0
	No	7	14,0	14,0
	Total	50	100,0	100,0

Figure 6

Students' Perceptions of the Role of Questioning in Language Communication



This question aimed to know if questioning is useful for language communication. Table (8) and figure (6) reveal that 43 students (86%) answered affirmatively, while seven students (14%) replied in the negative. As a result, the majority of students maintain positive opinions regarding the importance of questioning in language communication.

Q6: Many language skills, including the speaking, reading, and writing skills, are improved due to teacher questioning. Do you agree?

- a. Yes
- b. No

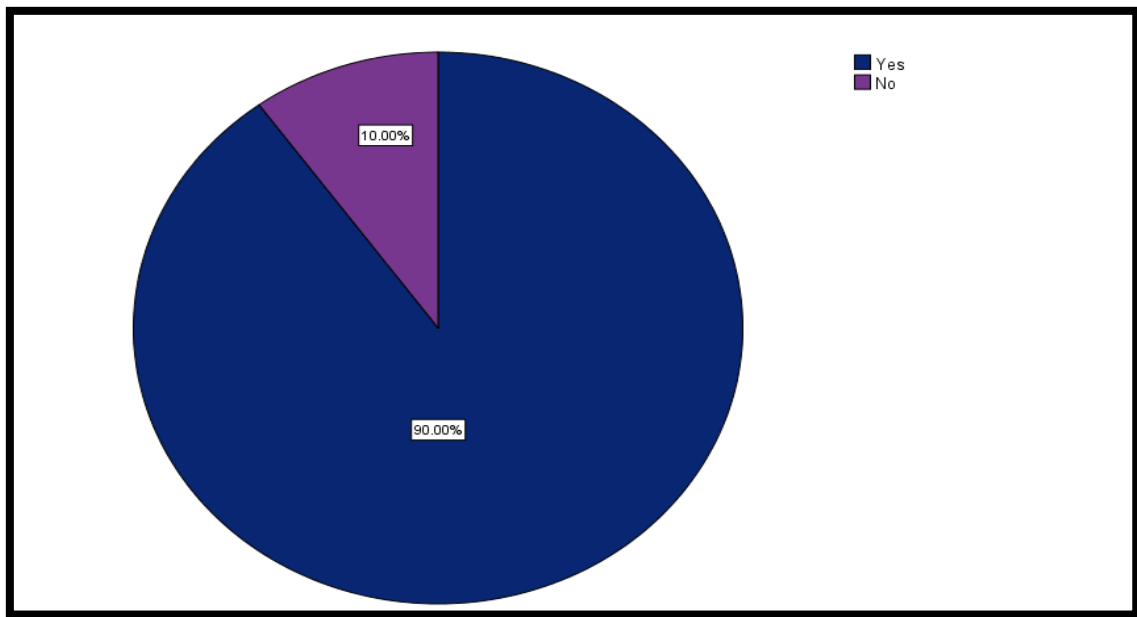
Table 9

Students' Perceptions of the Role of Questioning in Improving Language Skills

		Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	45	90,0	90,0
	No	5	10,0	10,0
	Total	50	100,0	100,0

Figure 7

Students' Perceptions of the Role of Questioning in Improving Language Skills



This question aimed to know if the questioning technique helps students improve their language skills. Table (9) and figure (7) show that 45 students (90%) answered yes. However, five students (10%) answered no. Teacher questioning has been observed to bring about a marked improvement in the language skills of the majority of students. With regard to the previous question, 30 participants provided justifications for their answers. They were decoded into the following themes:

***Yes**

- Grasping new knowledge and information. **(3 responses)**
- Promoting learning performance. **(4 responses)**
- Refining language skills, such as speaking and reading. **(4 responses)**
- Enhancing vocabulary and enriching the verbal repertoire. **(5 responses)**
- Facilitating the understanding of the teacher's talk. **(2 responses)**
- Improving learning engagement and concentration. **(1 response)**

- Triggering students' thinking skills. **(2 responses)**
- Reshaping students' mistakes. **(2 responses)**
- Promoting communication. **(3 responses)**
- Enhancing classroom interaction. **(2 responses)**
- Increasing English level. **(1 response)**

***No**

- Putting pressure on the students. **(1 response)**
- Increasing reliance on the teacher. **(1 response)**

From the above answers, it seems that the students get the maximum benefit from teacher questioning in terms of building their language skills and improving their learning performance and thinking skills.

Q7: Does questioning allow you to learn English and communicate effectively by building your verbal repertoire?

- a. Yes
- b. No

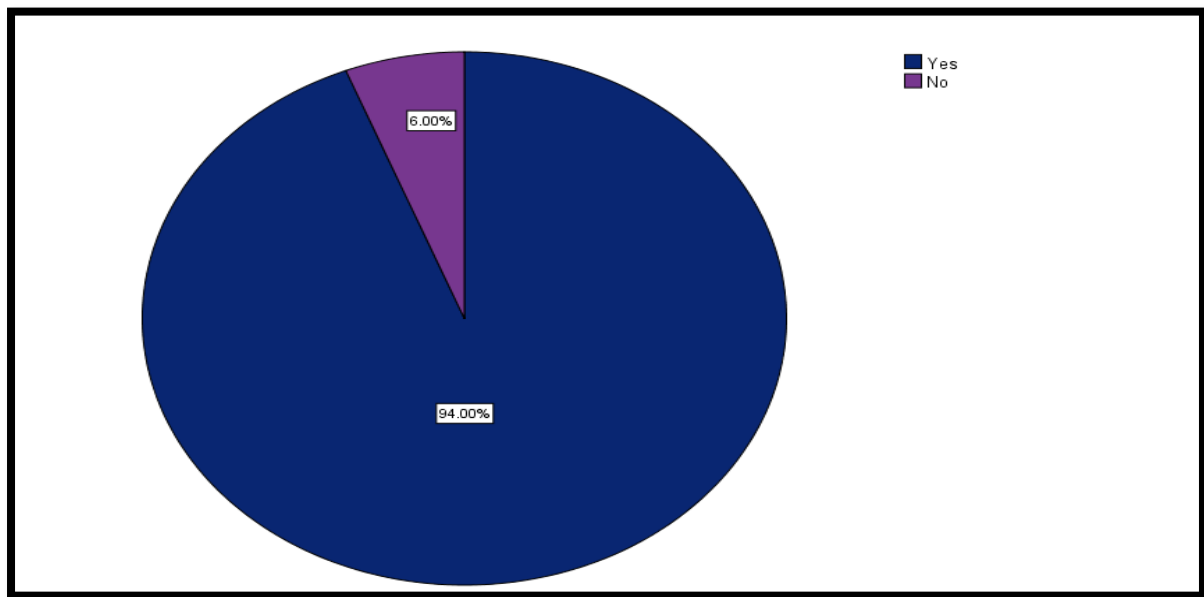
Table 10

Students' Perceptions of Building Verbal Repertoire through the Questioning Technique

		Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	47	94,0	94,0
	No	3	6,0	6,0
	Total	50	100,0	100,0

Figure 8

Students' Perceptions of Building Verbal Repertoire through the Questioning Technique



This question was addressed to determine if questioning helps build students' verbal repertoire. As shown in table (10) and figure (8), 47 students (94%) answered with yes, while three students (6%) answered with no. From the results presented above, we deduce that questioning plays a crucial role in building students' vocabulary and language repertoire, which is clearly shown in students' perceptions, which are most likely to be positive.

Section Three: Questioning as an assessment technique in EFL learning

In this section, the researcher designed four questions to explore students' perceptions of using the questioning technique in assessing learning performance.

Q8: Do you agree that learning achievement, including interaction, participation, and comprehension, is better evaluated through questioning?

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Strongly disagree

d. Disagree

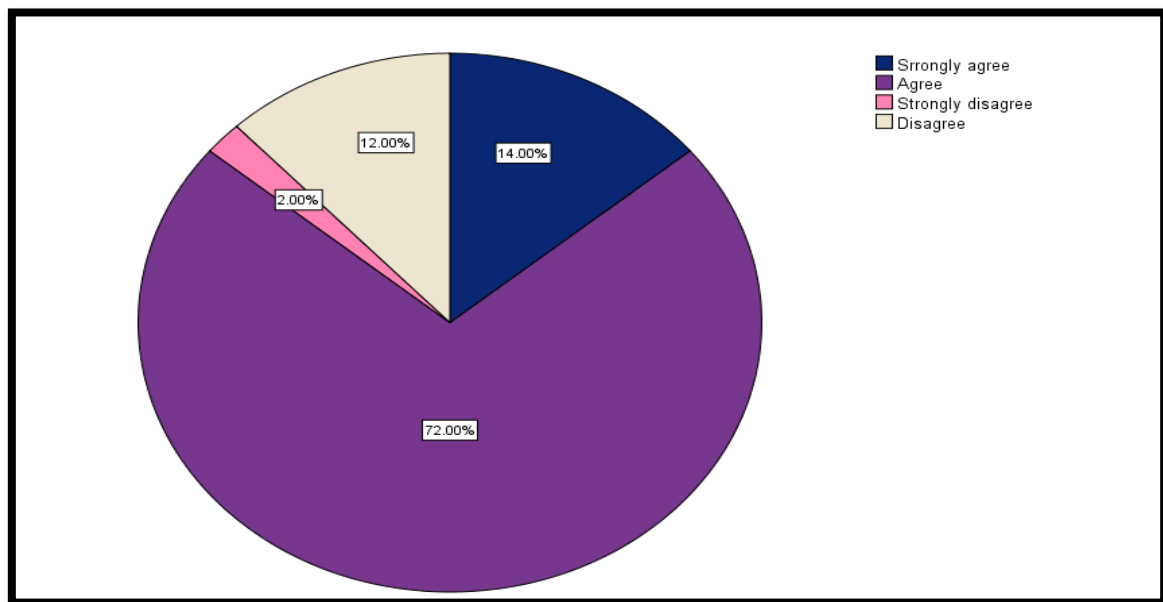
Table 11

Students' Opinions Regarding the Evaluation of Learning Achievement through the Questioning Technique

		Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	7	14,0	14,0
	Agree	36	72,0	72,0
	Strongly disagree	1	2,0	2,0
	Disagree	6	12,0	12,0
	Total	50	100,0	100,0

Figure 9

Students' Opinions Regarding the Evaluation of Learning Achievement through the Questioning Technique



This question aimed to explore students' opinions about the effectiveness of questioning in evaluating learning achievement. As demonstrated in table (11) and figure (9), seven students (14%) said that they strongly agree. 36 students (72%) said they agree. 6 students (12%) said

they disagreed. In contrast, only one student (2%) strongly disagreed with this claim. From the obtained results, we deduce that most students show a strong to a mild agreement that learning achievement, including interaction, participation, and comprehension, is better evaluated through questioning. This means that students positively perceive the questioning technique and emphasize its utility in the teaching-learning process.

Q9: What type of questions do you find more effective in learning assessment?

a. Direct questions

b. Indirect questions

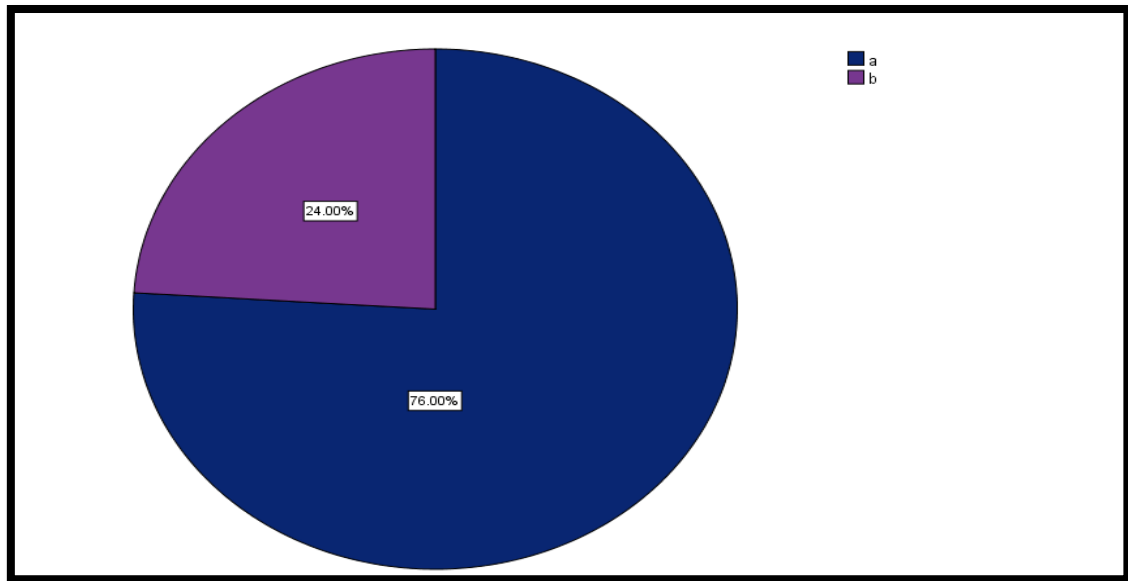
Table 12

Students' Perceptions of the Most Effective Questioning Types of Learning Assessment

		Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent
Valid	a	38	76,0	76,0
	b	12	24,0	24,0
	Total	50	100,0	100,0

Figure 10

Students' Perceptions of the Most Effective Questioning Types of Learning Assessment



This question was asked to determine which type of questioning is more effective in learning assessment according to first-year students. Table (12) and Figure (10) show that 38 students (76%) find the direct questions more effective, whereas 12 students (24%) find the indirect questions more effective. These results conclude that direct questions are the students' favourite type. In this light, 23 students clarified their choice by providing the following justifications:

Option (a):

- Getting direct ideas. **(2 responses)**
- Easy, understandable, simple, and straightforward. **(12 responses)**
- Effective in learning assessment. **(1 response)**
- Understanding the teacher's talk. **(2 responses)**

Option (b):

- Forcing students to make more effort. **(2 responses)**
- Improving students' level. **(1 response)**
- Improving teacher-student interaction. **(1 response)**
- Enhancing thinking skills. **(1 response)**
- Effective in learning assessment. **(1 response)**

The students' answers revealed a preference for direct questions, as they are uncomplicated and strict to the point, making understanding easier to attain.

Q10: How would questioning assess the learning performance in the classroom?

- a. Through increasing the student's concentration
- b. Through determining the student's needs
- c. Through improving classroom interaction
- d. Through checking the student's knowledge

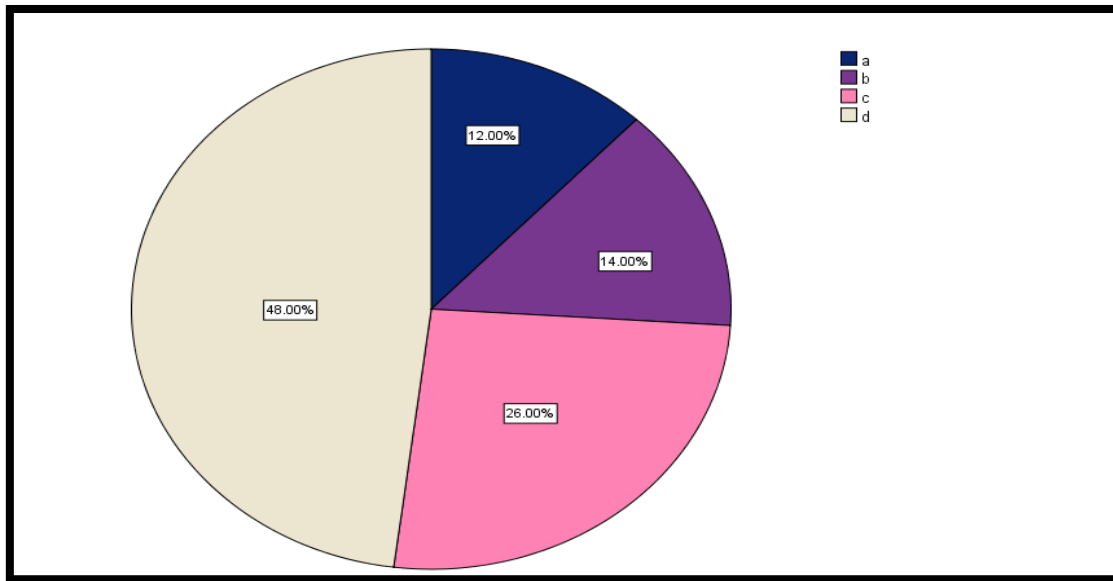
Table 13

Assessing Learning Performance through the Questioning Technique

		Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent
Valid	a	6	12,0	12,0
	b	7	14,0	14,0
	c	13	26,0	26,0
	d	24	48,0	48,0
	Total	50	100,0	100,0

Figure 11

Assessing Learning Performance through the Questioning Technique



This question was asked to investigate how the teacher questioning technique was used to assess students' learning performance. The data in Table (13) and Figure (11) indicate that six students (12%) chose option (a), seven students (14%) chose option (b), 13 students (26%) related to option (c), and 24 students (48%) selected option (d). consequently, a great half of the participants find that improving classroom interaction and checking the students' knowledge make questioning outcomes more satisfactory when assessing learning performance.

Q 11: How could the questioning technique be shaped to be as beneficial as possible in evaluating students' learning performance? This is by:

- a.** Raising students' attention towards the importance of answering questions
- b.** Presenting questions in a clear and precise way
- c.** Encouraging students to respond purposefully according to the type of question
- d.** Giving students enough time to express their ideas and answer accordingly

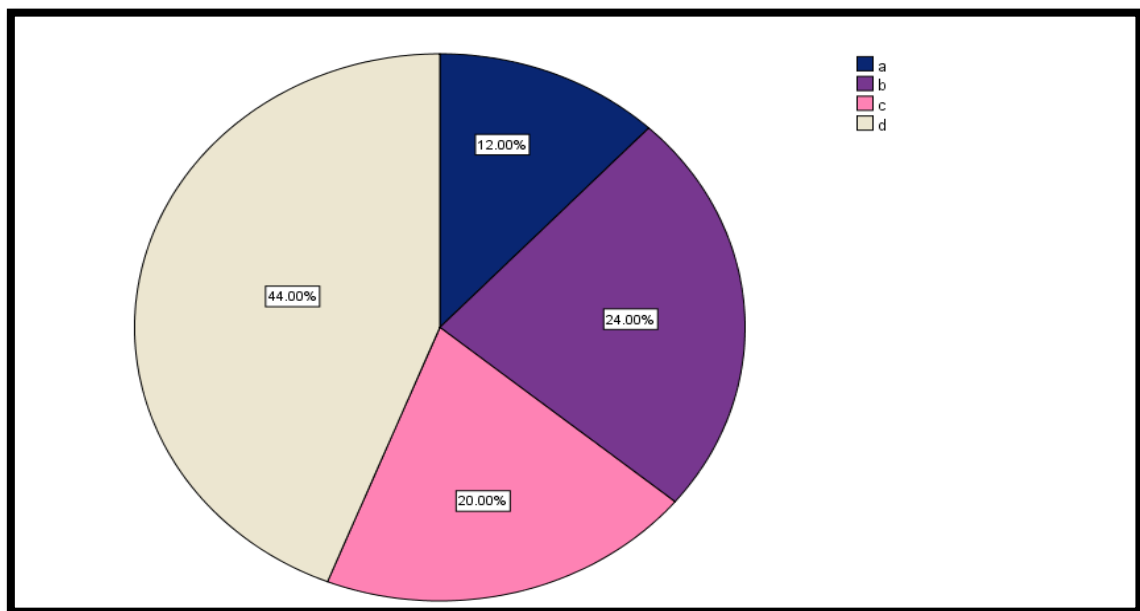
Table 14

Students' Perceptions of Employing the Questioning Technique in Learning Performance Evaluation

		Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent
Valid	a	6	12,0	12,0
	b	12	24,0	24,0
	c	10	20,0	20,0
	d	22	44,0	44,0
	Total	50	100,0	100,0

Figure 12

Students' Perceptions of Employing the Questioning Technique in Learning Performance Evaluation



The last question was designed to determine how teacher questioning could be as beneficial as possible for language learning performance. As shown in Table (14) and Figure (12), six students (12%) chose option (a), 12 students (24%) chose option (b), ten students (20%) chose option (c), 22 students (44%) chose option (d). In short, most students benefit from the questioning technique by giving them enough time to express their ideas and answer accordingly. Also, a considerable number of students benefit from this technique as long as the questions are presented clearly and precisely.

3.2.2 The Teachers' Questionnaire

The teacher's questionnaire contains eight expansive open-ended questions, designed to elicit the most precise and organized responses.

Q1: As an EFL teacher, what challenges do you usually face when teaching first-year students?

Generally, the answer to this question expresses different views towards the challenges the teachers are more likely to encounter when teaching first-year students. Nevertheless, responses were not on the same ground; each of the seven teachers being questioned provided a different answer. They are analyzed as follows:

- Two teachers considered his/her biggest challenge as the student anxiety, shyness, nervousness, lack of autonomous learning and absences, "Generally anxiety and nervousness, and stress resulted from new learning and teaching conditions". "Shyness among their mates, not doing autonomous learning, being absent frequently. “.
- Two teachers related some of the most common teaching challenges to grammar, speaking, and writing techniques. One teacher said, "Their attitudes towards the language as basically related to grammar and speaking."
- Also, one teacher found that students' lack of motivation and interest are significant obstacles to the teaching-learning process.
- Lack of linguistic competencies, such as reading, contributes to teaching challenges. The teacher said, "Algerian EFL learners do not fancy reading in the TL, which causes a huge lack of linguistic competence."
- One teacher claimed that a lack of critical thinking skills is one factor that should be considered when teaching first-year students.

The answers show that teachers have different perceptions and opinions regarding the obstacles they regularly face when teaching first-year students.

Q2: What techniques do you often use to assess students' learning in the classroom?

When asked about the most frequent teaching techniques they use in learning assessment, all seven participants provided different yet insightful answers.

- On the whole, direct and open-ended questions are the teacher's favourite techniques. Also, engaging students in group or pair work discussion is among the most used techniques. Some teachers prefer putting students in face-to-face communication activities.
- Moreover, writing assessments and debates are helpful in assessing and evaluating the students' learning performance. One teacher said, "I usually assess students' learning to use various techniques, such as oral tests, writing short essays, performing role plays and so on."
- Using formal tests within and after the end of the semester as a wrap-up for their performance during the semester is much appreciated as a good assessment technique. One teacher said: " As a novice teacher, I'm using formal tests tasks and seeking their participation by asking them to give examples and do home works".

From what was discussed above, each teacher adopts a different technique. However, they share some of the most common techniques used in most EFL classrooms, including questioning and collaborative learning.

Q3: What do you use questioning for?

This question was asked to know the purpose behind asking questions in EFL classrooms. The teachers were generous in their answers and strict to the point.

- According to four teachers, questioning tests students' knowledge and understanding and checks their level and knowledge. Also, questioning enhances students' understanding and peer discussion. In this regard, one teacher said, "Questioning helps in knowing their level of understanding and aims to check what they know and do not." Another teacher also said, "Checking students' understanding of the lecture, assessing their knowledge about the topic being discussed, enhancing peer discussions and understanding."
- On the other hand, one participant shared a different answer and related the use of questioning to boost students' critical thinking skills, their learning, and their understanding of the lecture. Similarly, another teacher argued that questioning is used effectively in drawing students' attention to the lecture's content besides evaluating their improvement.
- According to the last participant, questioning is used to engage students, motivate them, and help them produce insightful ideas. The teacher stated, "I use questioning for sustaining students' speaking and motivate them to generate ideas and thoughts through retrieving knowledge they have."

The results of this question indicate a variety in the teacher's use of questioning, ranging between checking their knowledge and assessing their learning. Also, triggering their reasoning skills is considered.

Q4: What questioning strategies do you adopt to assess students' learning performance?

This question was asked to reinforce the validity of the previous question. Here, the teachers were asked to mention the questioning strategies they usually use to assess learning. Seven teachers provided clear and concise answers. They are analyzed as follows:

- According to one participant, there is no specific strategy to be used. The participant simply stated that: "It depends on the lecture, I do not stick to one strategy. " However, another teacher said, "I teach grammar courses, produce their own statements, do tasks and correct their peers if there is a mistake." Here, the teacher showed the importance of grammar courses and corrective feedback. One participant referred to using direct and indirect questions as a questioning strategy. Moreover, another teacher focuses on group work by assigning reading and writing tasks to the learners.
- Furthermore, two teachers revealed that open-ended or WH questions are preferably used as questioning strategies because they are more analytical and critical. One teacher stated, "Questioning strategies I adopt are of searching for casual roots, expand questions with "WH" questions." While the other stated that: "Open questions, critical thinking questions, analytical questions."
- The last response was slightly different from the previous ones. The teachers assumed that he/she preferred designing higher cognitive questions, a sequence of questions, and increasing the wait time.

From the answers obtained, we deduce that teachers use different questioning strategies to assess their students' learning performance based on the needs and goals of both teachers and learners.

Q5: On which aspect of learning do you emphasize the most during questioning?

This inquiry was posed to ascertain which element of learning teachers emphasize during questioning. In this regard, seven teachers provided the following answers.

- According to two teachers, the main emphasis is improving students' writing skills. One teacher stated: " Everything which concerns the writing process."

- Additionally, one teacher provided a broad answer related to learning in general without specifying a specific aspect or skill. However, the content and the information from the lesson were considered. The answer is as follows: "I believe that grasping the correct information is the most important, even if I have to repeat myself. I look for them to understand and receive the lecture appropriately." Similarly, "I want my learners to understand the objectives and aims behind each lesson."
- On the other hand, the three participants' answers were clear enough to see how much the speaking skill is essential, perhaps more than the other skills. The other aspects the teachers usually focus on when questioning their students are their oral fluency, authentic learning, memorization, and effective listening. One teacher asserted the importance of speaking: "Students, most of the time, expect a given series /type of questions. Providing multiple ways of questions enhances their analytical abilities next to the speaking skill."

From the answers above, we deduce that EFL teachers do not focus on the same aspect of learning when interrogating their learners. However, speaking skill is more prestigious than any other language skill or aspect.

Q6: What type of questions do you use to assess the student's learning?

This question was designed to know which questions the teachers use for assessment. Three participants contributed to this question by providing various answers. The point of asking this question is to shed light on the variety in the questioning technique.

- In this regard, three teachers gave similar answers by mentioning open-ended or WH questions. One said, "I frequently ask why's and how's questions." Those questions

are more likely to be related to critical and analytical objectives, which the teacher uses to evaluate students' reasoning skills.

- In contrast, one teacher related to direct and indirect questions or, as many would call them, debatable questions. Another teacher's response was straightforward by simply stating that he/she uses questions which concern the text and filling the gaps of appropriate tradition. However, two teachers recognized the usefulness of close-ended questions or yes/no in assessing student learning, along with tag questions. One teacher stated: "The lecture is difficult. I try to start with simple questions (yes/no) after that moving to the more complex issues."

From the teachers' answers, WH-questions and yes/ no questions are the most used types of questioning for students' learning assessment.

Q7: When you notice lack in learning achievement, how would you shape the questioning technique to assess it?

This question aims to know how teachers use the questioning technique to promote learning achievement. As usual, the answers were different as each teacher use this technique differently, also the learning achievement is seen from different angles.

- According to two teachers, using direct questions is helpful in increasing students' learning achievement. One teacher argued: "simplicity and directedness". This type of questions helps teachers evaluate students' actual level and select the content of the questions.
- On the other hand, three teachers acknowledged that practice is the best way to maximize the learning outcomes by reinforcing the number of practices. One answer

was as follows: " I think giving extra practice or reexplaining the lecture (ambiguous) issue will hopefully help."

- For one teacher, questioning helps find the knowledge gap, which causes students to fail to achieve desired learning outcomes. Therefore, questioning might bring about a positive effect in reshaping students' views towards their knowledge repertoire.
- The last answer is slightly different, " sometimes it is unimportant to let the students formulate questions among themselves to be able to generate conclusions." This means that the teacher questioning should control the narrative instead of forcing students to generate questions independently.

From the answers analyzed above, despite having the same issue, which is the lack of learning achievement, teachers share the same point of view regarding the importance of questioning in enhancing students' learning achievement through assessment. However, they need to use it in the same way systematically.

Q8: " Practice Makes Perfect". How would you relate this quote to the role of questioning in assessing students' learning performance?

This question aimed to know the teachers' perceptions of the importance of practice in language learning-teaching by relating it to the role of questioning in facilitating the assessment process as long as students' learning performance is concerned. As a whole, the 7 participants agreed that practice makes perfect and without practice, nothing can be conveyed. Also, the impression given by those teachers who attached practice to effective questioning is that practising language through one of its four skills, mainly speaking, reading, and writing, is highly recommended. In this regard, five intuitive answers were selected to acknowledge this claim. They are quoted as follows:

- 1) "Practice is fruitful in learning more than in questioning. Thus, practice concerns learners more than how to do questioning. "
- 2) "I would relate this quote to questioning by saying that if anyone would be a genius, he should keep questioning since it helps develop the mind to increase knowledge and expand individual skills while learning."
- 3) "Raising students' awareness of the importance of extensive reading. It is the learners' only way to enhance their linguistic abilities."
- 4) "Assessment through practice, exercises done through questions, interviews, role plays and other ways of assessment."
- 5) "If you don't know where the problem is, you will not be able to fix it and questioning increases the learning process's weak points."

From what was mentioned above, questioning plays a significant role in triggering the learning process, building students' skills, and raising their awareness towards the importance of questioning in making their learning achievable and practical.

3.3 Discussion of the findings

This study explores students' and teachers' perceptions of using teacher questioning in assessing students' learning performance at Moulay Taher University of Saida, the Department of English. In this regard, two research instruments were used to answer the questions stated at the beginning of the research. After the analysis of the students' and teachers' questionnaires, the most significant findings are as follows:

3.3.1 Students' questionnaire

At the beginning of this research study, two significant hypotheses were suggested. The first hypothesis stated that: "teacher questioning, as an assessment technique, may effectively improve students' learning performance". The results obtained from the students' questionnaire

show that the majority of students aim to learn the English language and improve their language skills. Thus, achieving satisfactory learning performance.

The analysis of the first section of the students' questionnaire reveals that most students assume to have a good level of English and have chosen English studies based on their preference (Q1-Q3). Also, their answer for (Q2) indicates that most first-year students are young learners aged 17 to 20. The aim of designing this section is to get a clear idea about the background and status of the participants to help explore their perceptions.

On the other hand, aims to explore first-year students' perceptions of the utility of teacher questioning in EFL classrooms. The questions used in this section were simple and strict to the point (Q4-Q7). Some questions required clarification and justification. The overall results reveal that the majority of students find teacher questioning helpful in engaging them in learning as most of them acknowledge its effectiveness in facilitating the process of learning (Q4), improving learning, building their language skills, including the speaking skill, reading skill, and writing skill (Q6). Accordingly, the majority of them get the maximum benefits from this technique rather than the other pedagogical technique because they find it of paramount importance in increasing their level, facilitating the understanding of the teacher talk (Q6) and for the most part enriching their verbal repertoire (Q7). Nearly all students find the questioning technique useful in developing vocabulary, meaning that vocabulary plays a crucial role in language communication and also in the foundation of the four skills.

Furthermore, section three aims to explore the students' perceptions of the effectiveness of teacher questioning in assessing their learning performance. The overall analysis of questions (Q8-Q11) denotes that when the great half of the students were on solid ground when they asserted that their learning achievement, interaction and comprehension are better evaluated when the questioning technique is implemented (Q8). Questioning is regarded as an effective

technique for reshaping students' learning performance. It is argued that direct questioning is more effective than indirect questioning when it comes to easiness and directness. Also, learning is better assessed when direct questioning is used (Q9). This type of questioning plays a significant role in assessing students' learning, such as checking their knowledge and improving classroom interaction (Q10).

As demonstrated throughout the discussion of the two sections, the questioning technique is beneficial to the teaching-learning process. Therefore, The questioning technique must be shaped to assess learning clearly and effectively to maximize the benefit. Therefore, students' attention towards the effectiveness of the questioning technique should be highlighted.

In a nutshell, the student questionnaire results demonstrate that first-year students hold positive perceptions of using teacher questioning in the assessment of learning performance.

3.3.2 Teachers' questionnaire

The teachers' questionnaire was conducted with two main aims: Firstly, to get a deeper insight into the teachers' perceptions of the usefulness of teacher questioning in assessing the learner's performance. Secondly, to test the validity of the second research hypothesis, that state that if teachers use a questioning technique in EFL assessment, their students' learning performance will be enhanced. The analysis of the responses to the questionnaire, supplied by teachers of English at Moulay Taher University of Saida, the Department of English, allowed drawing certain conclusions.

All teachers revealed that foreign language teaching is challenging, especially for secondary school students. Some teachers attributed this difficulty to many factors, including psychological factors such as anxiety, shyness, lack of motivation, and many more. Nevertheless, others related this difficulty to linguistic factors, including a lack of competencies and an absence of language skills, such as speaking, writing, and reading (Q1). According to

many, the questioning technique is among the most used teaching techniques to assess learning. This means that teachers find it effective in facilitating the evaluation procedures (Q2).

In (Q3) and (Q4), the teachers explained the reason behind considering the questioning technique beneficial, as the majority of them pointed out the fact that questioning makes the learning assessment more achievable and it fits all learning needs and helps overcome learners' difficulties (Q3). This was demonstrated in the appropriate selection of questioning strategies used to evaluate learning performance (Q4). As clarified in (Q5), the teacher's questioning aims to assess different aspects of learning, such as writing and speaking skills. Moreover, (Q6) explored teachers' perceptions of the usefulness of the questioning technique covering the most frequent types used for different objectives. The results denote that direct and close-ended questions are beneficial in this technique as they help teachers engage students in the teaching-learning process due to their simplicity and straightforwardness (Q6).

In the last two questions (Q7-Q8), the teachers revealed throughout their answers that they fully know the role of the questioning technique in overcoming students' lack of learning achievement, which was clearly revealed in their perceptions of the quote, "Practice makes perfect". It means that teachers support this claim and relate it to the effectiveness of the questioning technique in improving students' learning performance.

In summary, delving into the meaning and relevance of the teachers' results helps in interpreting the research data and contextualizing the results. Therefore, answering the research questions and validating its hypotheses.

3.4 Conclusion

The results obtained from the analysis of both students' and teachers' questionnaires acknowledged the significance of teacher questioning in enhancing students' learning

performance, as was hypothesized earlier in the study. The findings revealed positive perceptions of the participants regarding the usefulness of the questioning technique in helping teachers evaluate their learners' learning performance effectively and purposefully. This chapter presented the research findings through the analysis of the questionnaires administered to first-year students and EFL teachers at Dr Moulay Taher University of Saida, the Department of English. Moreover, it displayed the students' questionnaire results in tables and pie charts, along with statistical analysis. However, the teachers' questionnaire was analyzed qualitatively through content analysis. These results matter because it shows consistency with the research questions. Therefore, the hypotheses set at the beginning of the research are validated.

General Conclusion

Among the most challenging tasks that strike the halls of academia, teaching English to non-native speakers is on the top ten challenges that require a wide range of skills, competencies, techniques, and effective instruction. The role of the teacher is indispensable to the success of the teaching and learning processes as long as dedication, qualification, and good command of instruction control the narrative. For some learners, achieving satisfactory learning outcomes depends highly on effective teaching. Earlier in this study, we have pointed out some practical ways to achieve this aim, which is the implementation of effective teaching techniques, more precisely, the questioning technique.

Primarily, this research aimed at investigating EFL students' and teachers' perceptions of teacher questioning as a technique for learning performance assessment. On this basis, the study begins with a theoretical framework which summarizes, criticizes, and synthesizes key theories and concepts found in the existing knowledge regarding the role of teacher questioning as an assessment technique in EFL learning. Through the chapter, the researcher investigates the aspects of teacher questioning and what makes it among the best teaching techniques used to assess students' learning. Here, a plethora of works by distinguished academics and scholars in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) have been used to test the validity of the research hypotheses. Therefore, the research questions were answered from a theoretical point of view. What is interesting in this chapter is the researcher's endeavours to bridge the gap in the existing literature and discuss any theory that may support what was hypothesized at the beginning of the research. A large body of research has basically agreed.

As it is in the nature of any research work to evolve, a practical part is given much centrality. Here, the researcher describes precisely how the research data are collected using a quantitative approach. A questionnaire is chosen to help perform this task and test the validity of the research hypotheses. As the research takes place in the University of Dr Taher Moulay,

the department of English, the chosen population is first-year students and English teachers in the same setting. The research aims and objectives are achieved by conducting the questionnaires, as the participants provide the most insightful and intuitive answers that reflect their perceptions of the topic. One of the most important aspects of investigating the participants' perceptions is raising their awareness of the importance of effective instruction in general and teaching techniques in particular.

The last phase of this study is data analysis, interpretation, and discussion of the results. From the analysis of both questionnaires, the participant's perceptions appear to be generously positive, as most of them support the use of the of teacher questioning technique to assess learning and demonstrate how this technique could benefit learners and instructors. In addition, the research findings agree with what was previously asserted in the literature review. The findings show that teacher questioning is effective and plays a significant role in shaping the contours of the teaching and learning process. Additionally, it is discovered that students' most challenging issues in learning are the need for effective techniques rather than effective teaching. Moreover, this strategic assessment technique is fundamental in refining students' skills and triggering them to achieve satisfactory learning outcomes that will later identify their academic and professional careers.

Following this brief conclusion, the researcher would like to frame some practical recommendations for EFL teachers to use questioning techniques efficiently in assessing learners' performance. Therefore, a plethora of recommendations is suggested to emphasize the effectiveness of this pedagogical technique. The researcher suggests the following:

- Using straightforward questions that target the student's needs and polish their skills.
- Delivering high-level questions and various question types, ranging from simple to complex.

- Implementing practical strategies to maximize the learners' reactions.
- Promoting classroom interaction to involve students in Q&A sessions.
- Using questioning as an assessment tool to help learners develop their learning abilities and improve their questioning skills.
- Constructing questions based on the students' cognitive level, focusing on knowledge and comprehension questions (check Bloom's classifications of question types).
- Designing practical activities that engage students in classroom participation and interaction with their teachers, such as warm-up, think, share and pair, and brainstorming activities.
- Concentrating on formative assessment and develop the questions accordingly.
- Reflecting on classroom questioning by audio-taping a lesson, listening to the students' questions and responses, ask more prospective questions.
- Finally, it is highly recommended to select interesting reading tasks, such as multi-tasking activities that require reading a certain text while listening to its audiobook, especially for struggling readers, and then evaluate students' reading performance through effective questioning.

Overall, effective teaching is an art, and teachers are the best artists. By applying good techniques and feasible approaches to teaching, learning a foreign language can reach the bright edge. It also helps overcome learning issues that have gained momentum among researchers for years. This research study covers the gap in the existing literature and provides authentic results regarding the effectiveness of teacher questioning in assessing EFL students' learning performance.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

You are kindly asked to fill in this questionnaire and provide the most truthful answers that will help collect data for this research. This questionnaire aims to uncover EFL learners' perceptions of the role of questioning as an assessment technique in EFL students' learning performance.

All responses will be kept confidential, and the results obtained will help us throughout the conduction of this study.

We will be grateful for your participation in filling in this questionnaire. Thank you for your contribution.

Section One: Background information

1. Are English studies your own choice?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

2. Age:

a. From 17 to 20 years ☐

b. From 20 to 25 years ☐

c. More than 25 years ☐

3. How do you assess your level of English?

a. Good ☐

b. Bad ☐

c. Average ☐

Section Two: The utility of questioning technique in EFL Classroom

**Please answer the following questions with yes or no and justify your answer where necessary.*

4. Do you think that teaching techniques, including questioning used in the classroom, help improve your learning?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

If yes, teacher questioning improves learning in terms of:

a. Facilitating students' learning ☐

b. Assessing learning performance ☐

c. Boosting long-term motivation ☐

d. Engaging students in various modes of participation ☐

5. Does questioning help you understand what is communicated in the classroom?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

6. Many language skills, including the speaking, reading, and writing skills, are improved due to teacher questioning. Do you agree?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

*Please justify your answer precisely.

.....
.....

7. Does questioning allow you to learn English and communicate effectively by building your verbal repertoire?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

Section Three: Questioning as an assessment technique in EFL learning

**Please answer the following questions by ticking the appropriate box. Justify your answer where required.*

8. Do you agree that learning achievement, including interaction, participation, and comprehension, is better gained through questioning?

a. Strongly agree ☐

b. Agree ☐

c. Strongly disagree ☐

d. Disagree ☐

9. What type of questions do you find more effective in learning assessment?

a. Direct questions ☐

b. Indirect questions ☐

*** Please explain why.**

.....
.....

10. How would questioning assess the learning performance in the classroom?

a. Through increasing the student's concentration ☐

b. Through determining the student's needs ☐

c. Through improving classroom interaction ☐

d. Through checking the student's knowledge ☐

11. How could the questioning technique be shaped to be as beneficial as possible in evaluating students' learning performance? This is by:

a. Raising students' attention towards the importance of answering questions ☐

b. Presenting questions in a clear and precise way ☐

c. Encouraging students to respond purposefully according to the type of question ☐

d. Giving students enough time to express their ideas and answer accordingly ☐

Appendix 2

Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teachers,

You are kindly asked to contribute to this study by completing this brief interview. The data collected from this interview will help with the completion of the current study. This interview aims to explore the perceptions of EFL teachers of the role of questioning technique in assessing students' learning performance. The researcher seeks to highlight the importance of learning English through classroom techniques, including teacher questioning.

We would be very grateful if you help us complete this research by filling in this interview.

1. As an EFL teacher, what challenges do you usually face when teaching first-year students?

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2. What techniques do you often use to assess students' learning in the classroom?

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3. What do you use questioning for?

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4. What questioning strategies do you adopt to assess students' learning performance?

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5. On which aspect of learning do you emphasize the most during questioning?

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6. What type of questions do you use to assess the student's learning?

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7. When you notice lack in learning achievement, how would you shape the questioning technique to assess it?

.....

.....

8. " Practice Makes Perfect". How would you relate this quote to the role of questioning in assessing students' learning performance?

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المخلص

عند الانتقال من المدرسة الثانوية إلى الجامعة، يتعرض الطلاب لمجموعة متنوعة من أساليب وتقنيات التدريس. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التحقق من دور استجواب المعلم كأسلوب لتقييم أداء التعلم لدى الطلاب. الأهم من ذلك، يستكشف الباحث تصورات الطلاب والمعلمين فيما يتعلق بدور هذه التقنية في تعلم اللغة الأجنبية. لتحقيق هدف هذه الدراسة، يرى الباحث أن الاستخدام الفعال لطريقة طرح الأسئلة من قبل المعلم من شأنه أن يساعد المعلمين على تقييم أداء التعلم للطلاب. بناءً على الأدلة من الدراسات السابقة ومراجعات الأدبيات، اختارت الباحثة نهج الأساليب المختلطة. هنا، تم استخدام استبيانين لجمع البيانات اللازمة، تم إجراؤها على طلاب السنة الأولى ومعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية في بيئة البحث المختارة، والتي تمثل جامعة الدكتور مولاي طاهر - سعيدة، قسم اللغة الإنجليزية. بعد تحليل الاستبيانات، أشارت النتائج إلى أن تصورات المشاركين لطريقة استجواب المعلم كانت إيجابية تمامًا وبديهية. كما أشارت النتائج إلى أهمية أسلوب طرح الأسئلة في بناء مهارات التفكير لدى الطلاب، وتعزيز التفاعل الصفّي، وتعزيز ذخيرتهم اللفظية، والتي تميز جميعها أداء التعلم وتساعد على تحقيق نتائج مرضية. في الختام، يعتبر استجواب الأستاذ أمرًا أساسيًا لتقييم تعلم اللغة الأجنبية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التدريس، أسلوب طرح الأسئلة، التقييم، أداء التعلم، مهارات التفكير، التفاعل