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THE ROLE OF QUESTIONS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING: A TOOL BASED STUDY

M.Somathasan[1]and R.Saranya [2]

[1]Assistant Lecturer in English Advanced Technological Institute, Trincomalee, Sri Lanka.
[2]Associate Professor, CAS in Linguistics, Annamalai University, India

Abstract:-
Good teaching is more a giving of right questions than a giving of right answers.
- *Josef Albers (1888-1976)*

It is quite obvious that the students who learn English as a Second Language (ESL) naturally want to develop the English knowledge for their academic and communicative purposes. To achieve this goal, they have to start with the requiring essentials. One of them is to develop their questioning skills. It is clear that questioning is an art which enables the ESL learners to tap into different parts of the cognitive domain. The right questions can get learners talking, discussing, reflecting, and writing their thoughts; and further, pique their interest, make them wonder why, get them to think, and motivate them to make connections with the learning contents. in the learning process a complete question-asking environment in the classroom or lecture hall. A Thus, it must be nurtured through the varieties or types of questions in English. Doing so can definitely English language Learning

Having considered this fact in mind, this paper attempts to develop a technology-enhanced tool for teaching and testing the types of questions in English language to the learners of ESL for their betterment in the field of education and communication.

Keywords: Question-asking Environment, Esl, Cognitive Domain, Technology-enhanced Tool

INTRODUCTION

The types of questions in English play a powerful role in helping students of ESL to add knowledge to their repertoire of English language. The most basic use of a question is to ask for information, for example, What time is the next session? Ten thirty. learners for two reasons. One is, the the feedback on them. By learning to

ask good questions, they get confidence that they can master the language to great extent. The second reason is that a behaviour which is to be inculcated in learners. Besides the learners, the teachers also have to handle the questions carefully as they tell them that the they say. If they begin to talk at a too high from learners tell the teachers whether the learners in the class are asleep or awake. Further, if the learners are encouraged to ask questions, they will definitely question about concepts in the language portion the teacher immediate feedback of their understanding; and wh0en the learners are unclear, their questions tell the teacher where he or she Moreover, learning English while questioning is considered; is a conversation between the learner and the teacher. Thus, questioning causes a two-way communication which is a must for an effective learning process. For a student, to make this communication effective, he should be familiar to the formations or types of questions in English.

TYPES OF QUESTIONS:

There are many definitions of question, but in short; a question, generally, is a sentence whose use is "to ask for information and also for request, suggestions, offers, etc." (John Eastwood, pp 32.). Questions in English can be classified in terms of four basic types: yes/no questions (or general questions), wh- questions (or special questions), tag questions, and miscellaneous questions or alternative questions (like echo questions, exclamatory questions, rhetorical questions, display questions, etc.) that have common features with the first three types which are analyzed in this paper.

YES/NO QUESTIONS:

A yes/no question is answered with a simple yes or no. If a declarative sentence contains an auxiliary verb like primary auxiliaries which are am, is, are, was, were, have, has, had, do, does, and did or modal auxiliaries which are the anomalous finites such as may, can, could, etc., a yes/no question is generally formed from the sentence by applying the rule of subject–auxiliary (or subject–aux) inversion. Subject–aux inversion makes the position of the subject and the verbal element that follows it. Yes/No question is the straight-forward method of asking question in English.

The sentences labeled (b) in (1) through (9) are yes/no questions that are formed by the application of subject–aux inversion to the declarative sentences labeled (a). It is to be noted that in each case, the positions of the subject and the verbal element that follows it have been reversed to create this type of questions. For instance:

(1) a. She is a teacher.
b. Is she a teacher?

In the above example, though the verb, is, is a copula BE, it is subjected to the application of subject-aux inversion to form the question.

(2) a. His little brother is making a kite.
b. Is his little brother making a kite?

(3) a. The director has submitted the report.
b. Has the director has submitted the report?

(4) a. She might have come home for Dewali.
b. Might she have come home for Dewali?

(5) a. He will be doing the business.
b. Will he be doing the business?

(6) a. It will have been being repaired.
b. Will it have been being repaired?

Some sentences are written by using the lexical verb only and the auxiliary verb will be in the hidden position. In such cases, an appropriate form of the auxiliary verb do is placed at the beginning of the sentence. This process of adding do to a sentence is called do-insertion or do-support. While applying do-support to a sentence, the learner has to concentrate on tense differences. For example:

	Statement	**Yes/No Question**	
(7) a.	He does Yoga every day.		
b.	He does do Yoga every day.	Does he do Yoga every day?	(present simple tense)
(8) a.	She ate two pieces.		
b.	She did eat two pieces.	Did she eat two pieces?	(past simple tense)

When a sentence depicts the main verb as have (not the auxiliary verb have), in the context of American English (AmE), the do-insertion is applied to form the yes/no question. But in British English(BrE) it is not the case. Instead, the subject-aux inversion can be directly applied to create the yes/no question. For instance:

(9) a. They have BMW cars.
Have they BMW cars? subject-aux inversion BrE
b. Do they have BMW cars? do-insertion AmE

Positive and negative Yes/ No questions:
Yes/ No questions are either positive or negative. Look at the following examples:

(10) a. She went to the museum.
b. She did go to the museum. (do-insertion)
c. Did she go to the museum?

d. She did not go to the museum.
e. She didn't go to the museum.
f. Didn't she go to the museum?

While considering the positive yes/ no questions as illustrated in (10c), subject-aux inversion is applied to the statement; and no intentional implication regarding the answer is usually expected in these questions. In (10c) the person who is asking the question doesn't worry about the answer which is yes (she went) or no (she didn't). As far as the negative yes/no questions are concerned, they are formed by contracting the auxiliary verb question with not. These questions are generally asked to confirm a specific expectation on the part of the questioner. In (10f) the person who asked the question, i.e. questioner, expected that she would go to the museum.

TAG QUESTIONS:
A tag question is a special construction in English. It is a statement followed by a mini-question. The whole sentence is a "tag question", and the mini-question at the end is called a "question tag" (Betty Schrampfer Azar, 1985). A tag relates to the subject and the auxiliary verb the tag will be in then the tag, positive (+). For instance:

(11) a. He does visit his aunt every week, doesn't he?
b. They didn't work together, did they?

Here, the main statements are He does visit his aunt every week (+) in (11a) and They didn't work together (+) in (11b) whereas the question tags are doesn't he (-) in (11a) and did they (+) in (11b). Thus, the basic pattern or structure of the tag questions can be paradigmed in the following.

For positive clause (+):

Positive clause (+)				Negative tag (-)		
Subject	**Auxiliary verb**	**Main Verb**	**Others**	**Auxiliary verb**	**not (n't)**	**Personal pronoun (same as in subject)**
She	is	working	in a hotel.	is	n't	she?
She is working in a hotel, isn't she?						
He	(does)	likes (like)	singing classical songs.	does	n't	he?
He likes singing classical songs, doesn't he?						

For negative clause (-):

Negative clause (-)					Positive tag (+)	
Subject	**Auxiliary verb**	**Negative**	**Main Verb**	**Others**	**Auxiliary verb**	**Personal pronoun (same as in subject)**
She	is	not (n't)	working	in a hotel.	is	she?
She isn't working in a hotel, is she?						
He	does	n't	like	singing classical songs.	does	he?
He doesn't like singing classical songs, does he?						

Intonation also plays a role in tag questions. Intonation is simply the rising and falling of pitch over an utterance or spoken sentence. Rising intonation on the tag indicates that the speaker is asking for information. For example:

(12) Arun will come back, won't he? ↗

(13) You weren't lying, were you? ↗

Falling intonation on the tag indicates that the speaker predicts that the listener will agree with the information in the statement.

(14) Saranya's husband owns a car, doesn't he? ↘

WH-QUESTIONS:

Wh-question is a term used to refer to questions starting with "Wh" and "H". In other words, it is a type of question which is formed with an interrogative word such as who, whose, whom, what, which, when, where, why, and how.

THE STRUCTURE OF WH-QUESTION:

A wh-word can function in a sentence either as subject or parts of the VP or predicate (i.e. any object-direct or indirect or object of a preposition, and adverbial).

Regarding the subject of the sentence, the wh-question is formed by simply adding the proper wh-word at the beginning. Consider the following affirmative sentence in (15).

(15) The postman delivered the letters.

When the subject NP (The postman) is considered in the above sentence, the question can be raised about it, as in (16).

(16) Who delivered the letters?

When the parts of the predicate are questioned, there are three options based on two rules which are wh-movement and subject-aux inversion.

1. If there is a helping verb, i.e. auxiliary verb, like am, is, are, was, were, can, will, could, etc. that precedes the main verb, the question word is added at the beginning and then the subject-aux inversion rule is applied. For instance:

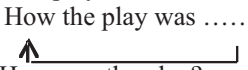
(17) a. What can he speak?
b. He can speak what? *declarative sentence*
c. What he can speak ……? *wh-movement*

. d. What can he speak? subject-aux inversion

Here, the question (17a) is formed through the steps shown in (17c) and (17d).

2. If there is no helping verb and the verb is "to be" which is functioning as the main verb, then the question word is simply added at the beginning and then the subject-aux inversion is applied. For example:

(18) a. How was the play?
b. The play was how? *declarative sentence*
c. How the play was ……? *wh-movement*

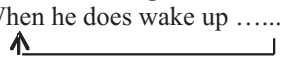


d. How was the play? *subject-aux inversion*

Here, the question (18a) is created through the steps shown in (18c) and (18d).

3. If there is no helping verb (auxiliary verb) in VP and the main verb is not "to be", as usual the question word is added at the beginning and then do-support is provided. After that the subject-aux rule inversion is applied. For instance:

(19) a. When does he wake up?
b. He wakes up when? *declarative sentence*
c. He does wake up when? *do-support*
d. When he does wake up …...…? *wh-movement*



e. When does he wake up? subject-aux inversion

Here, the question (19a) is formed through the steps shown in (19c) to (19e).

METHODOLOGY:

In Sri Lanka and India, English is taught as a second language, and its usage is quite wide, especially in the domain of higher education, because the medium of instruction in most the higher educational institutions, is English. Therefore, seeking the required English knowledge is inevitable for learners. At this juncture, questioning is considered as one of the best ways to develop one's language knowledge. As far as ESL is concerned, the learners can boost their cognition and academic performance by gathering information through questions. Thus, it is not denied that the study of questions is necessary for the academic achievement. Based on this, three types of questions which

Sample visuals of the developed learning tool:

CONCLUSION:

There are four basic types of questions in English language: yes/no questions, tag questions, wh-questions, and miscellaneous questions that have common features with the first three types. In this paper, yes/no questions, tag questions, and wh-questions are analysed in detail. Yes/no question is usually formed by applying the rule subject-auxiliary inversion in the sentence. For example, the sentence Apple trees are deciduous will reflect the yes/no question - Are apple trees deciduous? through the application of sub-aux inversion. Tag questions are made up of a statement (stem) and a tag (short question form) like in She goes to temple every Friday, doesn't she?. Here, the statement is She goes to temple every Friday and the tag is doesn't she. Wh-question is a term used to refer to questions starting with "Wh" and "H", for example, Who is your favourite singer? Here, the question word Who is used to refer to a person. Like this, what to things, idea, information and actions; where to place, why to reason, when to time, whose to possession, which to choice, and how to manner.

In conclusion, questions are very important and used at a high frequency in most conversations in our daily life. In learning process, they serve the purpose of encouraging learners to spend more time engaged in learning activities, whether these involve studying, reading, discussing, or practising. Further, questions can provide learners with a reality check on their ability to retrieve information. Thus, it is clear that studying about types of questions is indispensable for learners of ESL and the developed tool for this paper will be meaningful and particularly effective for them to develop their language to great extent.

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