

Use of Question-And-Answer Method in Teaching English Prepositions to Primary School Learners

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Abstract

Primary school education in South Africa is based on the premise that foreign language learners study English as First Additional Language. Although the ideal situation for acquiring any language is to live among native speakers, most learners are not exposed to native English speakers. As the teaching methods employed are governed by this principle, the question-and-answer method provides immediate feedback to teachers and enhances learners' proficiency in English prepositions. The paper investigated if the question-and-answer method improves learners' proficiency in the learning of English prepositions of movement. Using a qualitative approach, the researchers interviewed and observed the teaching of English prepositions of movement by English First Additional Language teachers. Three rural Grade Six Lwamondo Primary school teachers in Limpopo Province, South Africa were sampled depending on the use of traditional teaching methods. The paper established that the question-and-answer method improved learners' proficiency in the use of these English prepositions. However, learners were incompetent in a class where the teachers used the narrative method as no questions were answered at the end of the lesson. It can be concluded that the question-and-answer method is appropriate for teaching the English prepositions of movement to Grade Six learners in this regard.

1. INTRODUCTION

Educationists around the world regard the question-and-answer method as a well-known strategy to stimulate learning in the classroom. Many researchers have found and proposed several benefits which describe how the question-and-answer method enhances English Second language (L2) learners' proficiency. Sujariati, Rahman and Mahmud (2016) confirm that the use of the question-and-answer method enhances the interaction between teachers and learners, as well as revealing learners' weaknesses which assists the teacher to attend to the problems of

the entire class. Thus far, research on the question-and-answer method has increased substantially; therefore, additional findings on its use have been recommended. This paper focuses on the use of the question-and-answer method in teaching prepositions to the English First Additional Language (EFAL) learners in South African classes as a method to assist learners master English prepositions of movement.

Although the South African Constitution promotes the equal use of all 13 official languages, the system of education depends on the use of English for teaching and learning and learning it as a subject. EFAL learners are expected to become proficient in English for a variety of reasons in a South African context. English is viewed as a language of economy, education, business and *lingua franca*, thus all those proficient in English are likely to succeed in life. On this basis, the need to master grammatical aspects that result in communicative competence is highly crucial.

There are difficulties associated with English language learning as posited by Van der Walt (1993) and Odlin (1994) that the teaching of grammar to EFAL learners is a daunting task and requires the teachers' use of the appropriate method to improve mastery of the lesson. Admittedly, teachers must focus on selecting and utilising teaching methods suitable for the grammar item that must be presented (Givon, 1995). The question-and-answer method can play a significant role in English teaching because the questioning tactic promotes communication between teachers and learners resulting in an active classroom atmosphere (Yang 2017). Even so, the adoption of effective questioning skills calls that the teacher to maximise the multiple functions of the use of questions in each lesson.

Research conducted around the globe where English is used as a second or a foreign language creates a foundation for the implementation of a question-and-answer method which is indispensable in the learning of English prepositions by the EFL students. The study conducted in Malaysia by Shanmugavelu *et al.* (2020) suggests that suitable questioning practices are central to the teaching and learning process as it simplifies the task of the teachers in receiving feedback from learners about their comprehension. Likewise, the findings of a study conducted by Sujarati *et al.* (2016) at an Indonesian Senior High School in Gowa revealed positive results from the use of the question-and-answer method applied by teachers in EFL classrooms. The findings also established that there was a good interaction through the question-and-answer method between the teachers and the learners.

Furthermore, the findings of the research conducted in Chinese classrooms by Ma (2008) established that teachers' questions elicited information from learners and created an opportunity to exchange ideas. This paper, therefore, on par with what other researchers have found in some parts of the globe, elicits evidence regarding the use of the question-and-answer method in the teaching of English prepositions to South African EFAL or EFL Grade Six primary school learners.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Questions are mostly used by teachers in the classroom to develop learners' skills in forming concepts, explaining cause and effect and exploring implications. Questions are a means to an end producing desired changes in the behaviour of a learner. Aydemir and Çiftçi (2008) explain that questions keep learners alert about what takes place in the classroom and activate their intellectual skills. Vogler (2005) adds that questions monitor comprehension, help make connections to prior learning, and can stimulate cognitive growth. Hannel (2009) regards the question-and-answer method as an outdated approach focusing on accomplishing cognitive objectives. Nevertheless, this method brings knowledge to the conscious level that assists the learners with limited proficiency to interact with the teacher which is the most important feature of the classroom environment.

2.1 Bloom Taxonomy's six types of questions:

These questions were extended by Brown (2001) so that they relate to the questions used by teachers in the classroom situation. Brown proposes the next six types of questions:

1. Knowledge questions eliciting factual answers, testing recall, and recognition of information. At this level, the students will give the correct answer in remembering previously learned material. Also, these questions require the learner to recite memorised information about the concept being learnt (Forehand, 2017).
2. Comprehension questions entail interpreting and extrapolating of ideas where learners do not only recall facts but have a better understanding of the information. Further, learners construct meaning from oral, written, and graphic messages through interpreting, exemplifying, classifying, summarising, inferring, comparing, and explaining (Prasetyawati, 2021).
3. Application questions where learners apply the information they had learnt to new situations as they must understand the concept they were taught and use it in a new environment (Omar, Haris, Hassan, Arshad, Rahmat, Zainal, & Zulkifli, 2012).
4. Analysis questions in which the teacher breaks down the questions into parts, relating parts to the whole for learners to go beyond the application and perceive patterns that they can use to analyse a problem. Learners are required to differentiate, organise, distinguish and attribute the components in the lesson (Saraswati, 2015).
5. Synthesis questions where the learners combine elements into a new pattern (Shorser, 2021) and use facts provided to create new theories or make predictions and solve the problem. Also, they require learners to develop their classification system.
6. Creation question where learners put elements together to form a coherent or functional whole by organising elements into a new pattern or structure. Also, they make judgments or decisions by checking and critiquing the criteria. It is the highest component involving collating things together to conclude by designing, hypothesising, supporting, schematising, writing, reporting, discussing, planning, devising, creating and constructing (Kamlasi, Sahan, Timor, Kefamenanu & Timor, 2018; [Tofade](#), [Elsner](#), [Haines](#), & [Pharms](#), 2013).

As the use of the question-and-answer method determines the lesson's success, learners pay attention and show interest in a lesson where such an approach is utilised (Chaudron, 1988). Although the use of questions in the teaching of English facilitates learning, learners' success depends on the application of questioning strategies in teaching. Classroom questioning can

effectively stimulate learners' thinking, inspire their interest in learning and enhance interaction with teachers in the L2 classrooms. Vogler (2005) asserts that questions monitor comprehension, help make connections to prior learning and stimulate cognitive growth. A good questioning strategy helps teachers to create a learning context that can initiate communication and negotiation of meaning in class. Also, it provides a dialogue that assists students to gain experiences of real-life situations (Hamiloglu & Temiz, 2012) and enhances learners' proficiencies resulting in communicative competence as the ultimate goal for language teaching and learning.

A study by Ramnarain (2012) found that posing questions that are information-seeking assists learners to reflect, analyse and promote a view regarding what is learnt. They help learners to realise their errors, identify sources of errors and develop the habit of reflection and self-criticism. Conversely, errors provide learners and teachers with evidence of how language is learnt or acquired, and the procedures used by learners in their discovery of the language (Corder, 1967). In this regard, Gall (1970) hypothesises that follow-up questioning of the learner's initial response has a substantial impact on learning in classroom teaching situations while the teachers' questions emphasise facts.

Learners who are exposed to certain types of questions, if monitored for quality purposes, can answer similar types of questions to those who have not had the exposure. However, teachers are advised that when introducing a new topic, they must identify what the students know beforehand about the lesson. Thereafter, questions are elicited from learners when the teacher explains a new subject matter and students who frequently ask questions from their teachers learn more than students deprived of this opportunity.

Peterson and Taylor (2012) estimate that teachers and students benefit from questions that are purposefully designed in the teaching of English prepositions because learners acquire the ability to make connections to prior learning. Further, they understand the subject they are learning and make meaning in the world around them. Therefore, questions are the greatest teaching tool in cases where teachers increase their repertoire of questioning techniques that can improve the quality of instruction significantly. In this regard, the classroom's success depends on the assessment of learners' understanding of the subject being taught. Also, they assist teachers to probe learners' understanding of problem-solving skills or engagement in higher order thinking such as evaluation. Orlich, Harder and Callahan (2007) confirm that when teachers systematically raise the level of their questioning, learners raise their level of responses correspondingly.

Grade 12 English FAL in South African examination results as stipulated in the annual diagnostic reports over the past five years indicate that learners have not mastered grammar which is one of the reasons for their poor performance (Department of Education, 2016). Yang (2006) attests that what learners learn is greatly influenced by how they are taught and the decisions about content and activities that teachers make, their interactions with learners, the selection of assessments and the habits of mind that the teachers demonstrate and nurture among their learners. Further, the attitudes conveyed wittingly and unwittingly affect the knowledge, understanding, abilities, and attitudes that learners develop. Teachers should decide on the type of instruction that is better suited for a level of proficiency in the teaching

of English prepositions and the expected outcome. Teaching technique and language use within the classroom environment is, in this regard, seen in terms of the need to communicate meaning to ensure access to knowledge of English prepositions and thereby foster individual development (Cleghorn & Rollnick, 2002).

Arjan, Abdullah and Roslim (2013) indicate that it is difficult for foreign language learners to master the use of English prepositions correctly as many English prepositions have several different functions. In addition, Lorintz and Gordon's (2012) English prepositions are very difficult for English language learners to master due to the sheer number of them in the English language and their polysemous nature. For this reason, teachers must be more proactive in finding solutions in terms of material selection and preparation to ensure the teaching and learning of English can be more effective and practical for the learners to become proficient. Hence, language teachers must discover more interesting methods of teaching the English prepositions of movement.

3. METHODOLOGY

This research aimed to establish if the use of the question-and-answer method promotes EFAL and improves teaching and learning in the rural Grade Six classrooms. Action research was used as it is a process for improving educational practice, involves action, evaluation, reflection and a process to gather evidence to implement change in practices (Kansas, Clark, Porath, Thiele & Jobe, 2020). The qualitative research design was used to explore the behaviour, perspectives, feelings, and experiences of teachers and learners to interpret the approach to social reality, in the description of the observed experience of learners and teachers (Atkinson, Coffey & Delamont, 2001).

Further, the researchers included an element of a quantitative approach using a graph to collate and reinforce the findings from a qualitative research design. Data was collected using the process of observation and semi-structured interviews from the respondents. The observation process enabled researchers to learn about the teachers' use of the question-and-answer method in the classrooms by observing them (Kawulich, 2005). Additionally, the semi-structured interview was used to obtain detailed information required to examine the quality of the question-and-answer method in the learning of English prepositions.

3.1. Sample and sampling criteria

The criteria for sampling the rural Grade Six teachers in the Lwamondo Circuit over the others including Dzindi, Dzondo and Mvudi were that the circuit was dysfunctional as compared to the other circuits. For the past five years, for example, this circuit under-performed by producing less than 60% in the EFAL Grade 12 results *vis-à-vis* the other circuits producing more than 80% in the same subject. The researchers apportioned the dysfunctionality of Lwamondo Circuit to the use of out-dated English grammar teaching methods from as early as Grade 4 until Grade 12 despite the fact that the language is used as a medium of instruction. The researchers decided that English preposition, as one part of speech posing challenges to the EFAL learners, be used in the investigation of the feasibility of the question-and-answer

method. As Lwamondo Circuit falls within the researchers' criteria for investigation, three purposively selected respondents were sampled to participate in this research.

Further, the convenience sampling criteria was employed to sample respondents readily approachable to be a part of the sample. The respondents were part of the population of the rural Grade Six teachers of Lwamondo Circuit in Limpopo Province, South Africa who have been teaching the rural Grade Six EFAL for the past five years. The reason to use convenience sampling was that the teachers sampled fitted the profile of the respondents the researchers needed to interview and observe in this cluster.

3.2. Data Collection Procedure

Data was collected through the process of observation and semi-structured interview. The observation process enabled researchers to learn about the teachers' use of the question-and-answer method in the classrooms by observing them (Kawulich, 2005). The semi-structured interview was used to obtain detailed information required to examine the use of this method. The researchers conducted a pilot study on two teachers who were not part of the study group but share similar sentiments with the three selected rural Grade Six EFAL teachers at the Lwamondo Circuit. The results from the pilot study indicated the indispensability of the question-and-answer method in the teaching and the learning of English prepositions of movement. Before the interview was conducted the characteristics and the size of the entire treatment group were considered. The researchers determined if a representative sample was best selected according to rural traditional attributes of the respondents regarding the use of the question-and-answer method (Biden, 2022) in the teaching of English prepositions in general. Also, the researchers remained engaged collaboratively while taking notes and established rapport during the interview process.

3.3. Data Analysis Procedure

A document analysis procedure was used to analyse the results obtained from the observation process regarding the teaching of the English prepositions of movement by the respondents using the question-and-answer method in the classroom situation. As regards, the semi-structured interviews, an inductive thematic analysis approach was utilised because it involves deriving meaning and creating themes from data **without any preconceptions** (Crosley, 2021). All the necessary steps for thematic analysis were followed, namely, familiarisation with the data, creation of initial codes, collating codes with supporting data, grouping codes into themes, reviewing and revising themes and writing of the findings from the semi-structured interview process regarding the teaching of English prepositions of movement.

Further, a coding reliability thematic analysis necessitating multiple coders as a team was employed because it allowed the researchers to gather themes across a range of comments. The results were coded and sorted using the intercoder reliability. The coders/researchers agreed upon the codes to bring about credible, reliable and valid outcome and reduce the element of subjectivity and bias. The categories, namely, 'Agree', 'Strongly Agree' and 'Strongly

Disagree (Biden, 2022) were employed to allow a systematic and meaningful interpretation from the open-ended questions using a Delve Thematic Analysis Software.

3.4. Classroom Observation

The classroom observation was preferred to help the researchers observe how teachers use the question-and-answer method when teaching. Also, the researchers could observe how learners participated in the lesson, the difficulties they came across and how they were resolved while learning English prepositions of movement. The researchers organised three contact sessions with the respondents where they observed them in the classroom environment without disturbing the day-to-day routine of their schoolwork. In the first meeting arranged with individual respondents, it was indicated that the observation was meant for research purposes and that they should relax and teach as if there was no one observing them.

During the pre-observation meeting, the respondents used questions sparingly because they wanted to impress the observer. The researchers collected field notes during all lessons to compare the frequency of questions used by all the respondents. The three teachers were observed on four different occasions; however, one lesson was used as a specimen to assess the practical nature of how the respondents teach English prepositions of movement in class.

3.5. Teachers' Semi-structured Interviews

Each respondent was interviewed for twenty minutes to get comprehensive information about the practical use of the question-and-answer method and what teachers thought of the lesson without questions. The overuse of questions was examined and explored the purpose and effectiveness of the use of the question-and-answer method to help learners master English prepositions of movement. The respondents were aware that learners have trouble in mastering these prepositions and that it is their responsibility to guide them gradually in learning them. Data collected were transcribed, meticulously sorted and thereafter analysed to assess the effect of the respondents' use of the question-and-answer method when teaching these English prepositions of movement. The results obtained from teacher interviews were arranged according to the themes which emerged from the analysis. Also, the teacher interviews were used in the presentation and discussion of the results obtained from the respondents.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews were analysed to assess the impact of the question-and-answer method to improve the proficiency of EFAL learners in the mastery of English prepositions of movement. The research findings on classroom observation suggest that teachers use the question-and-answer method for various reasons ensuring that learners improve their mastery of the language. Learners encounter difficulties in mastering the English language grammar, hence the use of the question-and-answer method in teaching English prepositions of movement. This is consistent with Sujariati *et al.* (2016) who found that both teachers and learners interact well in class using the question-and-answer strategies.

Results from the teaching observations suggest that the question-and-answer method offers better learners comprehension provided it is applied with knowledge of question types, techniques and the art of questioning. Three transcripts of classroom observations were used to explore how the question-and-answer method was used to improve learners' mastery of English prepositions of movement. They assisted the researchers to determine the manner and reasons for the manipulation of this method. In line with ethical principles of protecting respondents' secrecy, they were denoted as One, Two and Three.

The following excerpt indicates how respondent One presented the lesson.

Excerpt I

Teacher: *Good afternoon, Class.*

Learners: *Good afternoon, Madam!*

Teacher: *Today you are going to learn about English prepositions of movement.*

Learners: *Yes Mam!*

Teacher: *English prepositions of movement show the directions to which a person or a thing is moving or heading. We shall look into four types of English prepositions of movement, namely, movement from one side to another, movement from inside to outside, the movement that enters or looks inside and a specific direction of movement.*

Teacher: *Do you all understand class?*

Learners: *Yes Mam!*

Teacher: *Do you understand these types?*

Learners: *Yes (but without the enthusiasm)*

Teacher: *Can someone summarise what we have discussed so far?*

Learners: (No response)

Teacher: *Why are you so quiet Murendeni, can you please tell us.*

Murendeni: *I only heard you talk about English prepositions of movement.*

The lesson presented by teacher One was unsuccessful, learners did not understand the English prepositions of movement or their examples. The teacher failed to involve the learners through all the stages of the lesson by asking them relevant questions.

The following excerpt indicates how Teacher Two presented the lesson.

Excerpt 2

Teacher: *Good afternoon, Class.*

Learners: *Good afternoon, Sir!*

Teacher: *Today you are going to learn about English prepositions of movement.*

What are we going to learn about today?

(All learners raised their hands)

Teacher: *Alright, I can see that you all understand, can you all tell me?*

Learners: (In unison) *English prepositions of movement.*

Teacher: *English prepositions of movement show the directions in which a person or a thing is moving. What are the English prepositions of movement Michael?*

Micheal: *They show the movement of....*

Teacher: *Can someone explain in full?*

Lerato: *They show the direction where the person or the thing is going.*

Teacher: (fascinated with learners' response) *Good! The English preposition of movement is: 'across' which shows the movement from one side to another. What is the English preposition showing movement from one side to another?*

Learners: (In unison) *Across*

Teacher: *Second English preposition of movement from inside to outside is 'through'. What movement is represented by the English preposition 'through'?*

Learners: (All raise their hands) *movement from inside to outside.*

Teacher: *Right, we shall learn the other uses of these English prepositions of movement in the next lesson. However, summarise in your books that which you have learnt today.*

The lesson presented by Teacher Two was successful because all learners could understand what was being taught using the questioning strategy.

The following excerpt indicates how Teacher Three presented the lesson in her classroom.

Excerpt 3

Teacher: *Afternoon, Class.*

Learners: *Good afternoon, Mam!*

Teacher: *Thabelo please move around the classroom (Thabelo moved around the table as told by the teacher).*

Teacher: *The word around shows the kind of movement or direction from one place to another. Can someone tell us what kind of a word is around?*

(All learners raise their hands)

Tshililo's response: *Is a movement word.*

Teacher: *Yes, it is a movement word; and we refer to it as an English preposition of movement. Can you give some English prepositions of movement? (Although half of the class raises hands, only four learners could respond)*

Lerato: *I am coming to you.* Lufuno: *I crossed the road.* Daniel: *She poured water into the kettle.* Mulalo: *He is sitting on the chair.*

Teacher: (Fully fascinated) *That's awesome, can you please identify the English preposition of movement from the sentences stated?*

Learners: (In unison) *to, crossed, into, on*

Teacher: *Not all the English prepositions you have mentioned are correct because 'crossed' is a verb. So which one is correct?*

Lerato: *'Across'.*

Teacher: *Fine, which one describes inward movement?*

Learners: (All shout) *inside.*

Teacher: Wow, thank you so much. *Now sit in groups and write down in your exercise books all the English prepositions that show movements.*

4.1. Analysis of data from teaching observations

Teacher Three ensured that the learners are involved in the lesson by asking them questions about the English prepositions of movement and so her lesson was prosperous. The data obtained from three teachers through observation demonstrate that two teachers who used the question-and-answer method implemented it differently without any rigid specific method. Learners paid attention and became active in two lessons where teachers asked them questions. Although teacher One asked them questions, the questions did not help learners to focus on the lesson because they affirmed their understanding whereas they did not. The findings confirm Aydemir and Çiftçi's (2008) assertion that learners' attention is captivated, and their intellectual skills are activated if the teachers ask relevant questions. In this case, Teacher One just told learners about English prepositions of movement; learners failed to follow the lesson as they did not learn anything about English prepositions of movement.

Teacher Two started the lesson by telling learners the aim of the lesson which was to learn English prepositions of movement and immediately asked them to repeat the aim of the lesson. The learners could communicate right from the beginning. In reinforcing the definition of the English preposition of movement, the teacher asked a specific learner a question who when unable to answer the question fully was assisted by others and by so doing, it reinforced the individual learner's understanding and that of other learners. This observation confirms Forehand's (2017) assertion that knowledge questions require the learner to recite memorised information about the concept being learnt.

Learners applied the knowledge they had previously learnt about the use of the English prepositions of movement in the English language lesson. The finding is in line with the suggestion made by Vogler (2005) that questions monitor comprehension, as well as make connections to what learners have already learnt. The use of questioning strategy assisted learners to master English prepositions of movement. The finding was incongruent with what, Arjan *et al.* (2013) posited that it is difficult for foreign language learners to master the use of English prepositions of movement correctly.

Teacher Three introduced a lesson by demonstrating a movement action and asked learners to state the word describing the action. The learners' response by show of hands indicated that most of them understood the English preposition word *around*, they paid attention and showed interest in the lesson as posited by (Chaudron, 1988). This finding confirms Hamiloglu & Temiz's (2012) claim that asking learners questions produces a learning environment originating from communication and negotiation of meaning in the classroom. The teacher reminded learners to differentiate between an English preposition (*across*) and a verb (*crossed*). The finding supports Gall's (1970) hypothesis that the teacher's advice to learners has a positive impact on the learning and teaching in the classroom situation. The teacher finally gives them an exercise on all English prepositions of movement.

The findings suggest that teachers' use of the question-and-answer method especially in Teachers Two and Three enhanced the participation of learners in the lessons that assisted in the mastery of English prepositions of movement. The findings support Sujariati's et al. (2016) emphasising that the use of questions in the teaching of English facilitates learning process. Nevertheless, the teachers should know that lesson's success depends on how the questioning strategies are utilised as it was witnessed in excerpts 2 and 3 where all learners benefitted in terms of active participation, communication and mastery. Although there are different strategies that teachers can employ, the question-and-answer method is irreplaceable and often provides awesome results as is conspicuous.

4.2. Analysis of data from the teachers' semi-structured interviews

The researchers transcribed, analysed and evaluated teachers' views after the coding and the sorting of the data obtained from the teachers' interviews. Numerous ideas developed during data analysis were arranged according to five themes that had emerged and focused on the use of the question-and-answer method in the classroom environment. The subsequent paragraphs dealt with a brief discussion emanating from the application of the suggested themes.

1. South African EFAL learners are not proficient in the English language

Learners in South Africa study English as a first additional language since most of them do not have contact with English native speakers although the ideal situation for acquiring the language is to live among them. These learners only learn English at school. Hence, the poor English mastery level. In this research, the three respondents concurred that the department of education should assist teachers in the use of effective English teaching strategies to improve proficiency. They maintained that the use of the question-and-answer method helps learners participate in the lesson and assists them to use English only throughout the lesson. One respondent stated that:

“Our EFAL learners are incompetent in the use of English and this interferes with their understanding of complex English concepts. To assist learners, the question-and-answer method must be used to explain certain difficult topics such as English preposition”.

The above-mentioned statement indicates that the respondent strongly agreed with the suggested theme. Correspondingly, the lady teacher has established a method that encourages learners to participate in a lesson regarding the prepositions of movement. However, the majority of the respondents remain passive in the lessons and seek refuge in the provision of exercises to pass the time and wait for the correct answers from their teachers.

2. English prepositions are difficult to EFAL learners

English prepositions are the complex grammatical aspect to be learnt by EFAL learners because they are numerous and have several challenging meanings. All the respondents agreed that learning English prepositions of movement is difficult. The use of the question-and-answer method can reduce the monotonous learning burden. In agreeing with the difficulties

experienced by learners in the use of English prepositions of movement, one respondent indicated the following:

“I always plan the lesson and type of questions days beforehand but sometimes I change teaching strategy depending on how learners respond. I have noticed that some teachers ask aimless questions to learners”.

3. Question-and-answer method assists teachers with feedback from learners

The respondents revealed that the question-and-answer method helps them to assess the success or failure of the lesson. Teachers can identify the gaps in the lesson and immediately improvise the means to fill them immediately by rephrasing and simplifying difficult concepts. The question-and-answer method assists learners to comprehend what is taught gradually. Further, teachers can review the presentations that improve the learners’ understanding. In proposing a strong agreement with the suggested theme, one respondent added that:

“Learners also ask teachers questions when they do not understand so that the teacher can explain fully to their understanding”.

4. Question-and-answer method fosters learners’ communication

Two respondents indicated that although the question-and-answer method encourages learners’ participation in the classroom as they are forced to respond to the questions posed and respond both as individuals and collectively, they may experience difficulties at times. However, the shy and passive learners are encouraged to communicate. Nevertheless, one respondent pointed out that when learners respond to questions in unison, some hide behind the voices and answers of others. Eventually, they may not achieve the purpose of the subject matter regarding the use of English prepositions of movement. Therefore, to show conflicting opinions in the use of the question-and-answer method, one respondent strongly disagreed and stated:

“It is difficult to involve all learners as their way of learning is not the same. However, the question-and-answer method may involve three-quarters of the learners”.

5. Question-and-answer method instils learners’ interest in the lesson

All the respondents pointed out that the question-and-the-answer method arouses learners’ interest to participate in the subject matter and allows teachers to timeously interact with learners. Lastly, one respondent strongly agreed that the question-and-answer method stimulates learners’ interest in the use of English prepositions of movement and stated that:

“Asking learners questions helps them to respond with the enthusiasm that helps them encourage others to enjoy the lesson”.

The following is a graphical representation based on the different results from the teachers’ delivery of their lessons in the English prepositions of movement.

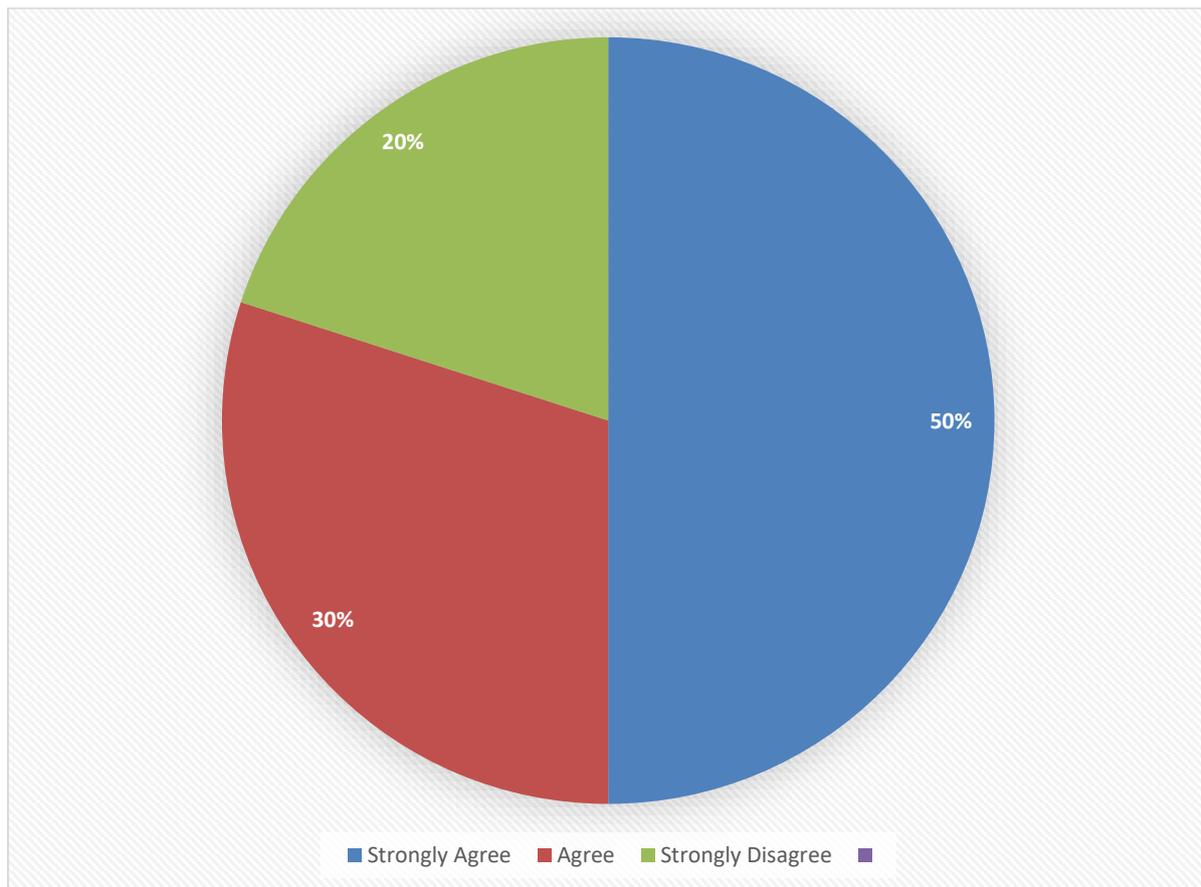


Figure 1. Teachers' responses from the semi-structured interviews

Figure 1 shows that the respondents strongly agreed with themes 1) South African EFAL learners are not proficient in the English language, 3) Question-and-answer method assists teachers with feedback from learners and 5) Question-and-answer method instils learners' interest in the lesson. These themes amounted to 50%. Further, one respondent agreed with theme 2 'English prepositions are difficult to EFAL learners' amounting to 30%. Nevertheless, one respondent strongly disagreed with theme 4 'Question-and-answer method fosters learners' communication' amounting to 20% depending on the lesser value of its importance. Percentagewise, therefore, it is evident that the teaching of English preposition in the English language can be addressed comprehensively using the question-and-answer method.

Findings from the teachers' interviews complement those gathered from the classroom observation. This suggests that, during class observation, researchers noticed that learners were not interested in the lesson when Teacher One was narrating a lesson about English prepositions of movement aimlessly. The findings support Gall's (1970) hypothesis that although the question-and-answer method seems outdated, it has a positive impact on teaching and learning. On the other hand, observation results confirm that the question-and-answer method promotes communication between teachers and learners which results in an active classroom atmosphere. The learners taught by Teachers Two and Three were active and responded to the questions posed. Therefore, the learning of English prepositions of movement was facilitated. The finding is in support of Ma's (2008); Hamiloglu and Temiz's (2012);

Sujarati's *et al.* (2016) and Yang's (2017) suggestion that the question-and-answer method promotes effective and interesting communication between teachers and learners.

The findings are also consistent with what Ganesan, Manimaran, Khairi and Zulkufli (2020) opine about the enhancement of interaction which exposes the weaknesses of learners and thus offers teachers the opportunity to address the challenges faced by the whole class. For example, during the observation, Teachers Two and Three were able to see if learners were following the lesson by raising hands and offering some learners the opportunity to respond. The findings also supported Ramnarain's (2012) assertion that the question-and-answer method helps learners to reflect, analyse, and promote a view regarding what is learnt, because they were able to give sentences containing English prepositions of movement. In this situation, the question-and-answer method improves learners' mastery of what is learnt and helps them become proficient in the use of English prepositions of movement.

As Forehand (2017) demonstrates that knowledge-seeking questions call for learners to rehearse memorised information about the concept being learnt, most learners in the two classes were not familiar with the English prepositions of movement but had to memorise and respond to teachers' questions as the lessons proceed. They were required to use the English prepositions of movement provided to create new sentences, this finding is in line with what Shorser (2021) found that the question-and-answer method helps learners to come up with new ideas. However, Orlich *et al.* (2007) advise teachers to systematically raise their questioning level inviting learners' positive responses. In addition, teachers must use the question-and-answer method that improve the general understanding, communication and proficiency in the EFAL classrooms.

5. CONCLUSION

The paper describes how the question-and-answer method can be implemented to promote mastery of English prepositions of movement which is regarded as the most challenging EFAL part of speech among South African Primary School learners. The paper presents evidence based on the observation of teachers' practices in the classrooms, in their effort to involve learners in the lesson and demonstrate their understanding of English prepositions of movement. This confirms what the cited authors suggest that the question-and-answer method is a suitable strategy that encourages learners to pay attention in class. The findings also unearthed several reasons for teachers' use of the question-and-answer method. For the Department of Basic Education (DBE) to improve proficiency among EFAL learners, teachers should be encouraged to use the question-and-answer method. Also, the DBE must encourage learners through proper planning and formalisation of the use of the question-and-answer method to the benefit of the EFAL learners in their classroom environments.

Also, the paper underscores the importance of the question-and-answer method as a strategy that can be applied in EFAL classrooms to assist learners to improve communication in English. It is again evidenced that thorough and well-planned questioning can function as a strategy to build learners' confidence when exchanging their ideas among themselves and with the teachers. It is generally rewarding when learners respond to questions in the classroom

because it encourages them to make meaningful contributions to the classroom and so the teacher gets self-motivated. As English prepositions are part and parcel of everyday speech, teachers, therefore, should apply the question-and-answer method to improve mastery of the English prepositions of movement proficiency.

In essence, the question-and-answer method is a feasible strategy that enhances the learning of English prepositions of movement that most EFAL learners struggle to master. Considering this fact, teachers must employ teaching methods that improve learners' English proficiency. Further investigations at higher levels are advisable so that teaching methodology scholars develop the question-and-answer teaching framework that enables teachers to enhance proficiency in the mastery of all English prepositions of movement in the English language.

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