

**“Monster in the Classroom”:  
A Survey Study on Students’ Aptitude in Asking Question during  
Classroom Interaction in University Malaysia Kelantan, Malaysia**

Yohan Kurniawan, Thana Binti Abdullah, Khuzaiton Binti Zakaria and  
Wan Abdullah Wan Mohammad  
Center of Language Studies and Generic Development  
Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Malaysia  
[yohan@umk.edu.my](mailto:yohan@umk.edu.my)

**Abstract**

Asking question is a way to express a sense of curiosity. Curiosity is an impulse or an effective stimulus to learn and seek answers (Suhito, 1987; dalam Ribowo, 2006). Classroom teaching with lots of activities is a sign that the learning and teaching in the class exists. Communication in the classroom is very important in the learning process in a school. It relates with students’ ability to ask and communicate in the classroom. The students’ culture in Asia is very different with European or America students’ culture. Western students have the tendency to be more daring to talk in the classroom than Asian students. A research that was related to the method in the process of learning showed that the higher score was on listening and writing based on teacher’s explanation (67.56%), however the score for active speaking was very low (8.10%). At the moment, the weakness in asking questions among students in lecture rooms is due to the habit which has been brought by students since elementary until high school. This paper focuses on why students feel afraid to ask questions in lecture room? This study is a research survey to find out factors that contribute to students’ inability to ask questions in lecture room. The respondents are 200 students in Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Malaysia from various faculties. The data collecting technique uses questionnaire which was created by the researcher himself (reliability score is 0.846). The questionnaire consists of 2 parts: Part A is internal factors and Part B is external factors. The data is analyse using SPSS as descriptive and correlation analysis. From the results we can summarise that the students are aware of the importance of asking questions in lecture room but they feel shy (majority) although lecturers encourage them to ask during the lecture. Undeniable, they want to ask but they do not know what to be asked, and they are apprehensive if their friends think that they are trying to

show off. The positive side of this research indicates that the students are fully conscious that if they often ask in the lecture room, that will assist them in passing the subject easily. The students are also aware that they will easily get a position in the university's club/ society if they are active in asking questions during their lecture hours (popularity). The other finding is the students tend to ask questions in the lecture room when the lecture topic is very interesting and prompted them to ask for a better understanding and finally, the parents' role in encouraging them to ask questions help these students to become active in posing questions during classroom lectures.

**Keywords:** students' asking aptitude, feeling shy, lecturer and classmate encourage

### 1. Introduction

The skill to ask is one of the things that need to be addressed by teachers in schools. The asking in class activities is an important activity in the learning process. Not just for teachers, but also for the students. Activity in the classroom is a sign that teaching and learning activities in class exists. When a teacher asks, this means the students are tested on the understanding level of the lessons taught, as well as able to provide their own analysis and opinion. Unfortunately, most teachers ask questions to check what students know and they are more likely to test students using a low-level questions "lower-order question" as to check whether students remember facts (memorizing), or whether the students have their homework or not. Teachers should use these questions to identify learning gaps in the learning of their students.

The fact, that there is still a lot of students who actually silent when the teacher ask questions or provide the opportunity to ask questions in class. From the observation will be undertaken by Soufia (2003, in Winasih, 2009) for subjects in junior high social studies 2 Muhammadiyah Surakarta, where teachers still use lecture and question and answer method of delivering learning, student response seen here is still low and results from observations of researchers in the learning process in middle school social studies class VIII B

Figure 1. The classroom activities

<u>Activities</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Readiness to receive lessons	43.24%
Preparing task / homework	27.07%
Concentration	35.13%
Record the results of the discussion	32.43%
Ask questions	2.7%
Express opinions, ideas, ideas	8.10%
<u>Taking into account the teacher's explanations</u>	<u>35.13%</u>

The students tend to be passive in class. They just listened and noted what was described by teachers as proposed by Ribowo (2006). The asking a good technique in the classroom will be able to motivate and raise the quality of student learning. If the teacher encourages students to ask the teaching and learning, this will avoid the frequency of the teacher-centered only.

## 2. The Asking in The Classroom Concept and Theory

The feeling ashamed or afraid to ask what happens when students are still sitting in the school can continue until they are adults. Because basically planted habit since childhood, would normally form the same mindset when they grow up.

This is consistent with the theory of operant conditioning from Skinner (in Santrock, 2008), where he said that the provision of reinforcement (positive or negative) can lead to the formation of the expected behavior or is not expected to last long. It was sad when the mindset is the mindset formed afraid to ask questions by giving a negative reinforcement.

However, the activity is to ask an important thing to open up horizons and find the information you want known. In this paper, I want to know the effect of asking students to improve learning outcomes in the classroom.

When students are still sitting in school, when he was given the opportunity to ask the teachers, students often feel reluctant or afraid to ask.

According to Morgan & Saxton, (2006), the causes of student are reluctant or afraid to ask is the existence of personal pressure. Students feel pressure from theirself when they asked often ridiculed, ignored and considered stupid by the environment. Personal pressures also arise when the teacher is angry or ignore the question. Students do not feel appreciated and finally feel not confident to ask.

Students also will rarely ask in class when the teacher does not or rarely provide students with opportunities to ask. Teachers felt himself/herself as the holder complete control over the classroom, so that the teacher was not to be disturbed by student questions. Teachers also feel like to look more prominent than their students, so teachers who constantly talk in class and do not give students the opportunity to ask questions.

Students also will rarely ask in class when the school use a traditional curriculum in classroom or Centre Teacher learning in which teachers are active, while the students are more passive in classroom teaching and learning activities. Winasih (2009) also said that students are less bold in their ideas and less concerned about the learning activities in class because of teaching methods and media used by teachers considered to be very monotonous and boring.

According Ribowo (2006) the importance of using appropriate

questioning skills is to achieve the expected goals in a classroom teaching and learning process, which generate interest and curiosity of students to a subject, students focus on a subject or concept, diagnose trouble -special difficulties that impede student learning, giving students the chance to criticize the information he had, encourages students to express their opinions in the discussion, test and measure student learning outcomes.

The importance of asking students in the class also to encourage interaction among students, for students more personally involved and more accountable to the question posed. In this case aims to create learning systems Student Learning Centre, where students are active in the classroom while the teacher becomes a facilitator, not the full authority over the classroom.

Pythagoras, a teacher of ancient Greek philosophy (in Sentanu, 2007) says that the quality of life is largely determined by the quality of the question, the more progressive a question, the more successful person in living his life. If a student is afraid or embarrassed to ask, how he could improve the quality of life and life success in the future?.

Levels in Bloom's Taxonomy can be used to measure the cognitive development of students in making progressive questions. Levels of Bloom's Taxonomy-tingkatan contained in the questions students are sequences of questions to develop the cognitive level of the lower nature into higher levels and complex. The levels include knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

At the level of knowledge, students are asked about what had been a teacher or someone else to teach students. Students just want to know more about these lessons to supplement his knowledge. Form of questions that the students at this level is usually a question of

what, who, why, when, where, and how.

At the level of understanding, students are asked about what he has learned and want to understand it further. Usually the students at this level ask you understanding, intent and purpose, usefulness, differences and similarities, and others.

At the application stage, students are asked about how to deploy a lesson that has been he can to real life. Usually students are asked about how, step by step, samples, effects, and others.

At the level of analysis, the questions students metupakan representative of opinion about a lesson he has critics.

At the level of synthesis, the students asked about how to connect some of the information and knowledge he can to solve a problem or to create new knowledge.

At the level of evaluation, the question posed in the form of evaluation of student is their learning in the classroom. Question students contain criticism, encouragement, conclusions, opinions, and others (Bloom and Krathwohl, 1965; in Morgan & Saxton, 2006).

The fear of asking students in the class must be immediately addressed with the help of teachers and the surrounding environment so that teaching and learning process that is expected to run optimally and can improve learning outcomes of students in the classroom.

### 3. Motivation Theory

Maslow's theory consisted of two parts:

- (1) The classification of human needs, and
- (2) Consideration of how the classes are related to each other

The classes of needs were summarised by Maslow as follows:

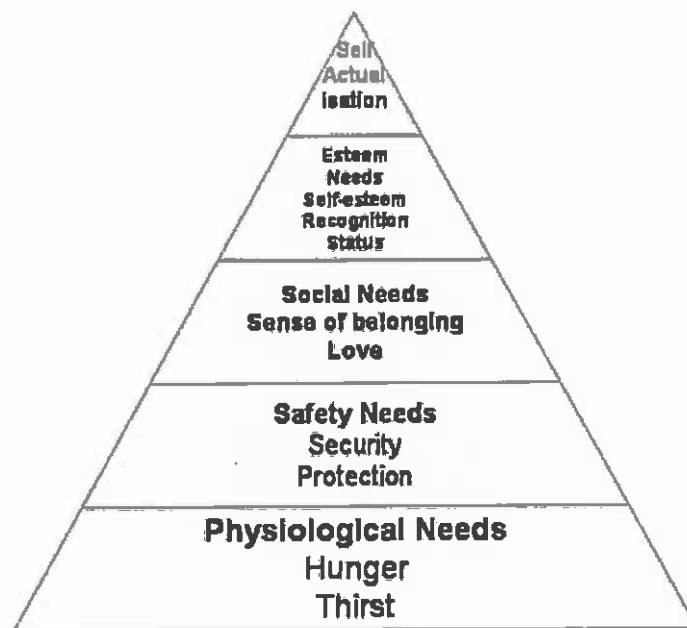


Figure 1. Maslow's Need Hierarchy

#### 3.1 How does the Hierarchy Work?

The hierarchy starts with a person starting at the bottom of the hierarchy (pyramid) and will initially seek to satisfy basic needs (e.g. food, shelter)

Once these physiological needs have been satisfied, they are no longer a motivator. The individual moves up to the next level

Safety needs at work could include physical safety (e.g. protective clothing) as well as protection against unemployment, loss of income through sickness etc)

Social needs recognise that most people want to belong to a group. These would include the need for love and belonging (e.g. working with colleague who support you at work, teamwork, communication)

Esteem needs are about being given recognition for a job well done. They reflect the fact that many people seek the esteem and respect of others. A promotion at work might achieve this

Self-actualisation is about how people think about themselves - this is often measured by the extent of success and/or challenge at work

Maslow's model has great potential appeal in the business world. The message is clear - if management can find out which level each employee has reached, then they can decide on suitable rewards.

Self-actualization is the summit of Maslow's motivation theory. It is about the quest of reaching one's full potential as a person. Unlike lower level needs, this need is never fully satisfied; as one grows psychologically there are always new opportunities to continue to grow.



Self-actualized people tend to have motivators such as ([http://www.envisionsoftware.com/articles/Maslows\\_Needs\\_Hierarchy.html](http://www.envisionsoftware.com/articles/Maslows_Needs_Hierarchy.html)):

- Truth
- Justice
- Wisdom
- Meaning

Self-actualized persons have frequent occurrences of *peak experiences*, which are energized moments of profound happiness and harmony. According to Maslow, only a small percentage of the population reaches the level of self-actualization.

### **3.2 Esteem Needs**

After a person feels that they "belong", the urge to attain a degree of importance emerges. Esteem needs can be categorized as external motivators and internal motivators. Internally motivating esteem needs are those such as self-esteem, accomplishment, and self respect. External esteem needs are those such as reputation and recognition.

Some examples of esteem needs are:

- Recognition (external motivator)
- Attention (external motivator)
- Social Status (external motivator)
- Accomplishment (internal motivator)

- Self-respect (internal motivator)

Maslow later improved his model to add a layer in between self-actualization and esteem needs: the need for aesthetics and knowledge.

### **3.3 Social Needs**

Once a person has met the lower level physiological and safety needs, higher level motivators awaken. The first level of higher level needs are social needs. Social needs are those related to interaction with others and may include:

- Friendship
- Belonging to a group
- Giving and receiving love

### **3.4 Safety Needs**

Once physiological needs are met, one's attention turns to safety and security in order to be free from the threat of physical and emotional harm. Such needs might be fulfilled by:

- Living in a safe area
- Medical insurance
- Job security
- Financial reserves

According to the Maslow hierarchy, if a person feels threatened, needs further up the pyramid will not receive attention until that need has been resolved.

### ***3.5 Physiological Needs***

Physiological needs are those required to sustain life, such as:

- Air
- Water
- Food
- Sleep

According to this theory, if these fundamental needs are not satisfied, then one will surely be motivated to satisfy them. Higher needs such as social needs and esteem are not recognized until one satisfies the needs basic to existence.

Remember, everyone is not motivated by same needs. At various points in their lives and careers, various employees will be motivated by completely different needs. It is imperative that you recognize each employee's needs currently being pursued. In order to motivate their employees, leadership must be understand the current level of needs at which the employee finds themselves, and leverage needs for workplace motivation

([http://www.envisionsoftware.com/articles/Maslows\\_Needs\\_Hierarchy.html](http://www.envisionsoftware.com/articles/Maslows_Needs_Hierarchy.html)).

### **3.6 The Solutions**

Teachers should provide motivation to students so that students dare to ask, not only made students feel terpojokkan and increasingly afraid to ask. Appreciate any small business to ask kids.

If it is a question students are considered less polite, try to guide the student into a good question, because maybe a lot of questions in the minds of students, but it is difficult to properly phrase.

Teach students to create questions that progressively through the levels of Bloom's Taxonomy, so the teacher can also evaluate how effective teaching and learning activities in the classroom to improve student learning outcomes

The one good way is to put questions to ask a high level (higher-order question). The high-level questions require students to explain their views and submit the appropriate arguments. For the teacher should give some time for students to answer questions of this high level. To increase student motivation to ask questions, teachers should give marks to students if they ask the good questions, as well as give credit to the correct answer.

The one of the constraints of current students to ask questions in class is a shame. Therefore, teachers can create a query box (Question box) in the class. There is no doubt that there are students who would like to ask,

but have a sense of shame. If this is established, it is not denied to any student to ask. In fact, these questions can be answered by other students.

#### **4. The Problem Statement**

The problem statement this research is why do the Universiti Malaysia Kelantan' students feel afraid or shy to ask in the lecture room?

#### **5. The Objective Research**

The objective of this study understands factors that cause the Universiti Malaysia Kelantan students feel afraid for ask while in the lecture room.

#### **6. Research Methodology**

Subject researches are 270 UMK' students from variety faculty (second year students) and the research run in UMK Campus Kota Bharu, Kelantan. This research is quantitative research and the collecting data uses a questionnaire. The questionnaire is separated become 2 parts: part A is internal factor (22 items), and part B is external factor (19 items). The questionnaire part A purposes to explore about individu internal factors that influence students asking behavior, and the questionnaire part B purpose to explore about individu external factors that influence students asking behavior.

The data that collect is proccesing using Statistic Package for Social Science (SPSS) and analysis uses frequency, correlation and reliability.

## 7. Research Results

The research finding show that the students are aware if the asking in the classroom is important. However they do not dare to ask in the classroom.

This research also shows that:

1. The students are less asking while in the classroom because they are shy person (63%)
2. The students do not want to be considered as showing off by their classmates (46%)
3. I want to ask but I do not know what to be asked (41%).
4. I am worried about grammar mistakes (for English) when I am asking (38.9%)

Some reason why the students are afraid to ask in the classroom although lecturer gives them the opportunity to ask because they feel shy, they don want to showing off in the classroom, they want to ask, however they do not know what to be asked, and they feel very worry about grammar mistakes (in English contex).

Although they feel shy to ask in the classroom, the students are not afraid to ask questions in classroom and do not feel shy to talk with the lecturer but they can not do it. The students know and aware that their thinking will be more developed if they always ask in the classroom, and they will pass that subject easily. They know if they embarrassed to ask will result in getting lost (56.3%), and the students also know that they will be more appreciated and respected by peers and lecturers if they always ask.

From the parents part, their parents teach and practice the freedom to ask. The reliability of questionnaire is .8385. It shows that questionnaire is good and compatible to use in this research.

## **8. Discussion**

The study found that students remain passive during the class because of embarrassment; even though they understand that it is important to ask in class. They also do not have a problem with the questions that they ask during the class. In addition to the teachers and their parents also give encouragement to them to ask questions.

Other factors that cause students are embarrassed to ask their fear grammar is used during said one (for tuition in English). Of these reasons can be summed up as well as a sense of shame.

Besides the problem of shyness, students are not asked in class because of cultural factors. Different cultures dariapda eastern western culture, where culture is not to be asked eastern cultures such as occurred in western societies. Culture of respect and not questioning any case in depth to the older age or the authority is one of the teaching in eastern society.

A teacher plays the important aspect that causes their students to ask while studying in the classroom. The teacher is obliged to stimulus their students for asking while learning process in the classroom. They should establish the student' confidence, their bravery for asking, and grow their desire to know what they do not know.

## Conclusion

This research evidences that the UMK' students are passive in the classroom because they feel shy to ask in the classroom.

## References:

- Morgan, N., & Saxton, J. (2006). *Asking Better Questions* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Canada: Pembroke Publishers Limited
- Ribowo, B. (2006). Upaya Meningkatkan Hasil Belajar Siswa Kelas IIA SMP Negeri 2 Banjarharjo Brebes dalam Pokok Bahasan Segiempat Melalui Model Pembelajaran Tutor Sebaya Dalam Kelompok kecil. Skripsi. Semarang: Universitas Negeri Semarang  
<http://digilib.unnes.ac.id/gsd/collect/skripsi/archives/HASH01b9/55f8dc7e.dir/doc.pdf> 6.01.2012
- Santrock, J.W. (2008). *Adolescence: Perkembangan Remaja* (edisi ke-12, Penerjemah: Adelar, S.B., & Saragih, S.). Jakarta: Erlangga
- Sentanu, E. (2007). *Quantum Ikhlas: Teknologi Aktivasi Kekuatan Hati*. Jakarta: Elex Media Komputindo
- Winasih, Y. (2009). Peningkatan Respon Siswa pada Pembelajaran IPS Melalui Pendekatan Ketrampilan Proses (PTK Pembelajaran IPS di SMP Muhammadiyah 2 Surakarta Kelas VIII B Tahun Ajaran 2008/2009). Skripsi. Surakarta: Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta  
<http://www.docstoc.com/docs/22028831/1-PENINGKATAN-RESPON-SISWA-PADA-PEMBELAJARAN-IPS-MELALUI> 06.01.2012
- None name. Maslow' Need Hierarcy.  
[http://www.envisionsoftware.com/articles/Maslows\\_Needs\\_Hierarchy.html](http://www.envisionsoftware.com/articles/Maslows_Needs_Hierarchy.html)