

The Effect of Using Classroom Question Skills on Improving Oral Skills of Eighth-Grade Students in Jordan

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Abstract: *The study aims to reveal the impact of using classroom questioning skills in improving the speaking skills of eighth-grade Arabic language students, and the study sample consisted of 155 male and female students divided into two groups and selected intentionally from the Directorate of Education of the first Zarqa region during the second semester of 2019-2020. A note card was used to measure students' speaking skills to achieve the study's objectives. The study found that question skills had an impact on improving students' speaking skills, as well as the interaction between method and gender.*

Keywords: questioning skills, oral expression skills, Arabic teachers

1. Background and Crux of the Study

Introduction

The Arabic language has been and continues to be the best tool for expression and clarification, as it reflects various cultural elements of those who speak it, as well as the vividness of such fields as science and literature in general; in addition, whoever has acquired the skill of speaking Arabic can influence others (Shams El-Din, 2002).

The importance of the subject of expression is highlighted by its being the outcome of language education, as all language arts and its branches are aimed at linguistic expression; the aim of teaching reading, listening, speaking, and writing is to strengthen students' ability to express themselves through language (Shabilat, 2006).

The linguistic expression has a functional feature that serves man in his public life and daily transactions, fulfills his needs, and implements his requirements in understanding his fellow man. The goal of expression may be to describe one's feelings and thoughts effectively, using selected words and arranged ideas characterized by a choice of suggestive words and expressions affecting the reader's very being, as well as the use of imagination and images that move feelings and affect souls. These are the two modes of functional and creative expression (Ammar, 2002). An expression can be taught to students if it is associated with systematic school work that proceeds according to an integrated plan to reach a level that enables the student to translate his thoughts, feelings, observations, and life experiences orally, and in writing, in a sound language according to a specific intellectual pattern (Latif & Ahmed, 2010). The problem of teaching linguistic expression and the difficulties it faces require thinking about searching for new methods to teach it at different academic levels so that it is consistent with

what modern methods confirm in the participation of students and encourage them to criticize, analyze, extrapolate, and train them to rely on themselves in evaluating and judging phenomena (Al-Dulaimi & Al-Waeli, 2003).

Weak speaking skills of students are due to several reasons, including the lack of effectiveness of the methods of teaching linguistic expression followed, the teacher's speaking within the educational situation more than students, the weakness of the student's linguistic output, the poor knowledge of teachers about modern methods of teaching, focusing on topics that are not related to the reality of students, and the weakness of asking probing questions that push students to clarify their ideas clearly, removing ambiguity among the listeners (Al-Mousawi & Zoboon, 2010).

For teaching speaking to be effective, the teacher must employ their skills in delivering questions, especially questions that require high levels of thinking, and Abu Mahfouz (2010) stated that throwing questions requires skills including question preparation skills, asking the question, choosing the student to answer, waiting for the answer, processing students' answers, dealing with students' questions, and encouraging the student to generate questions.

The question-asking skills provide students with the opportunity to think, organize the answer, and reformulate it in mind to be expressed orally, as well as break down the barriers of fear and hesitation and develop answers using innovative linguistic patterns and templates, this is confirmed by Al-Azmat (2010); that the teacher's guided questions provide multiple opportunities to develop students' language abilities. This requires the practical training of teachers in the skills of delivering and employing questions. It is the responsibility of the Arabic language teacher to encourage their students to express themselves (speak) and invest their abilities in delivering thought-provoking questions—such as "what do you think," "how," "why," "if that, imagine"—that stimulate their minds, allow them to express themselves freely, and lead them to use diverse linguistic styles.

Al-Saifi (2009) stressed that using questions in teaching is very necessary, regardless of the teaching method, as it involves delivery, lecturing, discussion, and interrogation. It is difficult to find a strategy to explain a topic devoid of many or a few diverse questions in its purpose and the depth of the mental processes it requires.

Kyriacou (2004) pointed out that many teachers do not focus on the quality of questions and do not employ the skills of asking questions significantly, as they are immersed in asking low-level questions, away from using questioning techniques and the specifications of a practical question. Orlich (2003) showed that the results of studies conducted in the United States of America on the questions asked by most teachers focused on the lower levels of Bloom's cognitive classification, rarely at the higher levels and that students could not answer questions about the higher levels.

Teachers typically design learning experiences and tasks to help their students reach their planned goals (planning phase) to implement in teaching and learning situations. Briefly, the implementation phase means how the teacher taught, and the cornerstone of teaching effectively is using classroom questions. The teacher asks questions in the classroom for multiple reasons, perhaps the most important and common of which is to verify students' understanding of what has been taught, evaluate the effectiveness of the lesson, and increase higher levels of thinking (Driscoll & Freiberg, 2000).

The Crux of the Study

The crux of the study lies in the soft speaking skills of students, as the researchers noted from their previous experience teaching Arabic for the eighth grade: students do not master speaking skills, especially the skill of speaking in a formal and grammatically sound language, and the skill of expressing ideas smoothly and logically. Studies and research have indicated a problem with speaking among students in the Arabic language in Jordan, as Darwish's study (2007) indicated that students' oral expression does not rise to the level that ensures effective communication. The study by Al-Juwairashi (2008) showed that students suffer from a significant weakness in speaking; their speech lacks a clear idea series, their language violates the rules of grammar and morphology, and they have a weakness in their linguistic wealth. The study by Al-Mousawi and Zaboon (2010) showed several reasons for poor speaking among students, including their linguistic outcomes.

Study Purpose

The research study aims to illustrate the effect of using classroom questioning skills on improving the speaking skills of eighth-grade students in Jordan.

Questions of the Study

The study aims to answer the following two questions:

- 1) How does using classroom questioning skills improve the speaking skills of eighth-grade students?
- 2) What is the effect of gender interaction on classroom questioning skills on improving the speaking skills of eighth-grade students?

The Hypotheses of the Study

Considering the two questions of the study, the following hypotheses are tested:

- There was no statistically significant effect at the significance level (0.05 =) of using question skills to improve the speaking skills of eighth-grade students.
- There was no statistically significant effect at the 0.05 level of significance of the interaction of Gender with the skills of using questions in improving the speaking skills of eighth-grade students.

The Importance of the Study

This study derives its importance from the following:

- 1) Benefiting Arabic language teachers in improving their teaching practices towards speaking, especially using classroom questions skills in those practices.
- 2) Providing feedback to Arabic language curriculum planners to focus on formulating goals, preparing appropriate content, methods, and activities, and evaluation to achieve strategies that improve students' speaking skills.
- 3) Informing educational supervisors about the need to educate Arabic language teachers about the importance of using classroom question skills.

Limitations of the Study

- The study is limited to a sample of eighth-grade students in the schools of the Directorate of Education in the first Zarqa area during the second semester of the academic year 2019-2020
- The study deals with the areas of questioning for Arabic language teachers, namely: preparing the question, asking the question, choosing the answering student, waiting for

the answer, processing students' answers, dealing with students' questions, and encouraging students to generate questions.

- The study deals with speaking skills, namely: choosing ideas expressing the topic, linking ideas in a logical sequence, expressing the required ideas with flow and ease, supporting ideas with appropriate citations, presenting ideas, using formal language without cost, controlling the structure of spoken words, controlling the vocabulary that is used grammatically, possessing a linguistic wealth that helps expression, employing artistic images in expression, using a vocal layer appropriate to the expressed meaning, taking letters out of their exits, speaking at a speed that suits the audience, using body language (communication is not verbal), the use of language that arouses the audience's listening, the use of what arouses discussion among its listeners.
- The results and the possibility of generalizing them are determined by the beginning of the study and their honesty and stability.

Procedural Definitions

Question skills: In the current study, it means the ability of Arabic language teachers to deliver classroom questions within the areas specified in this study.

Oral expression skills: In this study, it means the students' ability to express orally what is required by fulfilling the skills specified within the study's limits. It is measured by the score achieved on the speaking test preparation for this study.

Eighth-grade students: They are officially registered in primary education and study regularly in the eighth grade of the primary upper stage, by the provisions of the school educational system followed in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and their average age is (13) years.

Related Previous Studies

This aspect deals with previous relevant studies arranged chronologically from the earliest to the oldest.

Al-Shammari (2014) conducted a study aimed at discovering the impact of employing the educational drama strategy in developing the linguistic skill of third-grade students in Hafr Al-Batin, on a sample of (51) students from Saeed bin Zaid Intermediate School, for the academic year (1434/1435 AH). The sample was divided into two groups, a control group consisting of 26 students taught in the usual way and an experimental group consisting of (25) students who were taught with activities employing role-playing and used the dialogue scale prepared by Abdullah Al-Obaisi (1432 AH). The results showed statistically significant differences in dimensional performance in favor of the experimental group students.

Al-Qadi (2011) conducted a study aimed at identifying the impact of teaching Arabic using the blended learning strategy in developing verbal communication skills among seventh-grade students in Jordan (northwestern Badia), and the study included (110) male and female students, by (60) male and female students who represented the experimental group, and (50) male and female students who represented the control group, and the study tool consisted of an achievement test of the type of open questions, and the study found that there were differences between the experimental and control study groups in favor of the experimental group that Studied using the blended learning strategy in the development of verbal communication skills.

Abu Salim (2009) conducted a study aimed at revealing the impact of developing the ability to reflective thinking among teachers of the upper primary Arabic language on employing the

integrative method in teaching communication skills, the qualitative approach was used, and the sample was chosen intentionally, as it consisted of (3) teachers in the Directorate of the first Zarqa region, and students of one school from the eighth to the tenth grade, and a training program was prepared to develop reflective thinking abilities among Arabic language teachers, and to show the extent to which thinking contributes to teaching communication skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) among students of the eighth, ninth and tenth grades, and the results showed the importance of the training program because of its impact on sustainable professional growth, and an improvement in the teachers' implementation of the integrative method in teaching communication skills, and the best employment of the integrative method in teaching was led by conscious reflective practice.

Ma (2008) conducted a study to reveal the impact of teachers' questioning skills on the abilities of Chinese students to learn English (reading, writing, and speaking) because English is the second official language taught in Chinese schools. The study also aimed to reveal the impact of teachers' questioning skills on improving oral expression and communication skills. A sample of 32 teachers was selected and divided into an experimental group and a control group. The results revealed an impact of teachers' questioning skills on verbal expression and communication skills.

Nasr and Abadi (2005) conducted a study to determine the effect of a role-playing strategy on developing speech skills among third-grade students according to the criteria of oral language performance: flexibility, composition, intonation, fluency, and accuracy. The study sample consisted of (60) male and female students studying at the Model School of Yarmouk University, with two randomly selected sections. The study reached a set of results, most notably the existence of statistically significant differences between the students of the experimental and control groups in speech skills, attributed to the role-playing strategy in favor of the control group, the existence of differences attributed to gender in favor of females, and the absence of differences attributed to the interaction between gender and teaching strategy.

Wilen (2003) conducted a study to identify the results of oral tests and the relationship of these results to the teacher's style while asking questions while teaching. The study was conducted on a sample of (275) students in Washington public schools. The study found that there is a substantial positive relationship between the teacher's effectiveness in the skill of asking questions and how to receive them and the ability of students to achieve in oral tests and that there are statistically significant differences in the effectiveness of the teacher to practice the skill of asking questions and variables of Gender, specialization, and experience, in favor of teachers, scientific disciplines, and teachers with long experience, respectively.

Hus (2002, 2003) conducted a study to reveal the effect of probing questions on students' acquisition of a second language in oral communication in Japan. The study sample consisted of 27 students, divided into two experimental groups that used probing questions and a control group that did not use them. The students answered two oral tests and questionnaires to measure their verbal communication ability. The results showed statistically significant differences in oral communication abilities in favor of the experimental group.

Arther (2002) conducted a study aimed at revealing how to enhance the teacher's ability to use the question cycle to draw students' attention to the task-based dialogue, and the question cycle included meditation affirmation and the questioning process that included: planning, tribal activities, investigation, probing, and then metacognitive thinking. The study sample included (3) teachers from the primary school teachers in the state of Wyoming, USA, who were selected

to teach seven pre-selected sports activities once a week for (14) weeks; Teachers published weekly for about six stages of the question matrix, which included the stages of the question cycle, to monitor the changes that appeared in the sounding process, and to identify the extent to which teachers understand the probed questions. The question matrix was used as a tool to evaluate teachers' questions and to clarify the link between the use of the question matrix and the teacher's sounding of questions and asking theirs, the statement of the decrease in questions in the level of knowledge and the increase in discussion between the student and the teacher. The results showed that revising activity planning created a greater chance of questioning among teachers. Teachers achieved significant professional growth in questioning throughout the study.

A review of previous studies shows that some of them, such as Al-Shammari's study (2014), Al-Qadi's study (2012), Abu Salim study (2009), and Nasr and Al-Abadi study (2005), provided remedial programs that contributed to improving speaking skills in different stages of teaching. These include role-playing, drama, blended learning, and reflective thinking.

Some of them followed the semi-experimental research method, such as the study (Ma, 2008), which aimed to identify the impact of teachers' skills in asking questions on students' expression and oral communication skills, the Hus study (Hus, 2002), which aimed to identify the impact of probing questions on students' acquisition of the second language, and the study of Nasr and Abadi (2005), which aimed to find out the impact of using the role-playing strategy in developing speech skills among third-grade students according to oral language performance standards.

Hus (2002) and Arther (2002) followed the descriptive approach in examining the relationship of test results to the teacher's questioning style and in enhancing the teacher's ability to use the question cycle.

This study was also like that of Al-Qadi (2010) and Nasr and Al-Abadi (2005) in terms of the age group (primary stage) of the sample and the place of its application.

It follows from the above that previous studies have been concerned with ways to develop speaking because of its importance and tried to reveal ways of developing it. Some studies have employed the use of questions as a means of developing oral expression.

The present study benefited from Ma (Ma, 2008) and Hus (2002), especially Nasr and Abadi (2005).

This study was distinguished from previous studies as it aimed to reveal the effect of using questions in improving the Arabic speaking skill of eighth-grade students.

2. Method and Procedure

Methodology

The study adopted the semi-experimental approach.

Study Personnel

The study participants were intentionally selected from two schools, a boys' school and a girls' school, from the schools of the Directorate of Education in the first Zarqa area. The study members consisted of (147) male and female students from the eighth grade, divided into an

experimental group of boys, the number of its members (34) students, an experimental group of girls numbering (48) students, and a control group of boys, the number of its members (25) students, and an experimental group for girls numbering (40) students.

Study Tool

Three themes were chosen for oral expression: Journey to the Moon, Between Yesterday and Today, and People Love Me, Mom. These topics were presented to a group of specialized arbitrators who were to choose one of them to be expressed orally by the eighth-grade students (study sample). 80% of the judges agreed on the topic: "People loved my mom," and the students selected the topic, so the student was asked to talk about the topic for two minutes. What the student is saying is recorded in audio and video. The answers were corrected by presenting the students' conversations and applying the speaking scale, which consisted of (16) skills, two grades were allocated for each skill when the test had (32) marks. Moreover, the skills were defined within the study's limits.

Correction Stability

To verify the stability of the correction of the speaking test, (10) students were selected, (5) students, and (5) students from outside the study sample, and they were asked to talk about the same topic for two minutes for a student. The video recording of these students was presented to a male and female teacher, who was provided with a speaking scale consisting of (16) skills, in which two grades were allocated for each skill, and each of them was asked to monitor the marks of each student considering the skills included in the said scale. Using Pearson's correlation coefficient between the teacher's marks and the teacher's marks, it was found that the correlation coefficient was (0.76), which is an acceptable correlation coefficient for this study.

Procedures

Two teachers and two assistants were selected so that one teacher and one assistant instructed the experimental groups. The teacher in these two groups was provided with classroom questioning skills to practice raising this question in teaching the Arabic language in its various branches for (6) weeks. However, the teacher needed to be provided after making sure that they did not have the question skills in the two groups that studied the control groups with any of the question skills, i.e., they left the Arabic language subject in the usual way.

Study Variables

The study included the following variables:

- 1) Independent variable: Classroom Questioning.
- 2) Dependent variable: Oral Expression Skills.

Statistical Processing

Arithmetic averages, standard deviations, and adjusted averages of the experimental and control groups were used to answer the study's questions and hypotheses. The analysis of the associated binary variance was used to determine the significance of the differences in favor of either group and to indicate the interaction between method and gender.

3. Results of the Study

Results related to the first question:

The first question is: **"What is the effect of using classroom question skills on improving the speaking skill of eighth-grade students?"**

The second question stated, "What is the effect of the interaction of Gender with question skills in improving the speaking skill of eighth-grade students"?

To answer this question, the arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the student's marks in the experimental and control groups were calculated because of their performance in speaking skills. Table 1 shows that.

Table 1: Arithmetic averages, standard deviations, and adjusted averages of students' marks in the oral expression test

Group	Gender	Students	Mean	Standard deviation	Arithmetic mean
Experimental	Males	34	21,17	0,45	21,03
	Females	48	23,79	0,39	23,53
Total		82	22,48	0,41	22,28
Control	Males	25	19,12	0,56	19,01
	Females	40	20,51	0,51	20,16
Total		65	19,82	0,53	19,58

As shown in Table 1, the experimental group's arithmetic mean in the speech test was 22.48 with a standard deviation of 0.41, and the adjusted mean for the same group was 22.28. The control group's arithmetic mean was 19.82, with a standard deviation of 0.53. The adjusted arithmetic mean for the same group was (19,58). This indicates apparent differences between the experimental and control group averages.

To determine the significance of these apparent differences, I use the binary variance analysis (two-way ANCOVA), and Table (2) shows this.

Table 2: Analysis of Bilateral Variance (Two Way ANCOVA) to find the significance of the differences between the arithmetic averages of the performance of the two study groups on the oral expression skills test:

Source of contrast	Sum of Squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean of squares	(q) Calculated	Level of significance
Skills					
Class questioning	244.712	2	61.178	9.745	0.000
Gender	3.209	2	3.209	2.511	0.475
Gender+ skills	44.911	2	11.228	1.789	0.131
Mistakes	1958.67	140	6.278		
Total	2251.757	146			

It is clear from Table (2) that there are statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha=0.05$) between the arithmetic averages of the performance of the experimental and control group in speaking skills, and the differences were in favor of the experimental group. The value of (q) was (9.745), with a significance level ($\alpha = 0.000$).

As for the interaction between method and gender, the analysis of bilateral variance showed no statistically significant differences in favor of either boys or girls in the speaking skills test. In this case, accept the null hypothesis, which states that there is no statistically significant difference in speaking skills, and accept the alternative hypothesis, which states that there is a statistically significant difference.

Discussion of Findings and Recommendations

The first question is: **"What is the effect of using question skills in improving the speaking skill of eighth-grade students?"**

The results related to this question showed statistically significant differences at the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) in favor of the experimental group in which the teacher employed classroom questions in teaching Arabic to this group.

This finding may be attributed to the questions motivating students to evoke what is underneath.

Using language and communication with teachers and colleagues through word selection and vocabulary is employed, improving communication skills, including oral expression skills. Participation in questions and answers leads to properly using vocabulary, sentences, and phrases.

The employment of questions often leads to the generation of a state of interaction between students and the teacher and between students and their colleagues, and this interaction requires that the participant selects understandable sentences, which is training to use the language correctly, which leads to the development of speaking skills among members of the experimental group.

Finally, this result may be attributed to the teacher's introduction, which could lead students to assess their language proficiency and compete in demonstrating it, increasing their ability to express themselves.

As for the agreement of the results of this study with the results of previous studies, the results of the study agreed with the findings of a study (Ma, 2008), which showed that teachers' skills in asking questions affected statistically significantly in improving students' expression skills. She also agreed with the results of Hus's study (Hus, 2002), which showed a significant difference in oral communication abilities due to probing questions.

Discussion of the Results Related to the Second Question

The second question is: **"What is the effect of gender interaction with the use of questions in improving the oral skill of 8th-grade students?"**

The results showed that teachers' use of the Arabic language for questions had an equal impact on male and female students, improving oral expression skills. This may be attributed to several things, including the similarity of the scientific atmosphere in which the skills of using questions were used, the fact that students benefited from this employment, as both genders responded to employment activities or the fact that both male and female teachers were interested in employing the questions with the same enthusiasm, in addition to the questions that are directed to students. Alternatively, the level of male and female students may be similar, especially regarding the performance of language skills.

The results of this question differed from the results of a study (Wilén, 2003), which revealed that students' ability to achieve oral tests according to Gender was affected in favor of females. She also disagreed with Nasr and Abadi's study (2005) regarding the effect of Gender on improved speech skills in favor of females.

4. Recommendation

Based on the results, the following recommendations and proposals shall be formulated:

- 1) Encourage Arabic language teachers to use classroom questioning skills in teaching different branches of the Arabic language.
- 2) Include in Arabic teachers' guides sample classroom questions
- 3) Conduct other studies to determine the effect of using classroom questions in improving communication skills and in various stages of study.

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