

CHAPTER - II

QUESTIONS - MEANING, NATURE, PURPOSE, IMPORTANCE AND TYPES

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CHAPTER - II

QUESTIONS - MEANING, NATURE, PURPOSE, IMPORTANCE AND TYPES

II.1 INTRODUCTION

Questions are part and parcel of our life. They are a must in teaching - learning process. A lot of knowledge and information has been acquired with the help of questions. It is seen that Socrates used the method based on questions and the modern concept of Enquiry Learning is also based on questions.

This chapter reveals the meaning of the term question, its nature, purposes, importance in teaching - learning process. It also gives the types of questions, question words and construction of the question.

II.2 MEANING OF THE TERM QUESTION

The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English gives the meaning of question as given below :

- 1) Question as a noun means sentence adapted by order of words, use of interrogative pronoun or stop, or other means, to elicit answer, interrogative sentence.



- 2) Question is a transitive verb and it means to ask questions, interrogate, seek information from study of phenomena or facts, subject to examination (person).

In teaching-learning process both uses as a noun and as a verb are important and questions are asked for various purpose and at various stages of teaching.

II.3 NATURE OF QUESTION

Questioning is one of the most important devices of teaching. It plays a very important part in learning, teaching and testing. It is said that the success of the teacher in teaching is related more with the questions he puts to the students than any other thing. The power to question well is an art.

Questioning is one of the tricks of trade for a teacher.

For a child it is a natural and enjoyable means of intellect and social growth.

Questions have been one of the most important means of stimulating, thinking and learning.

Questions create a good interaction between the teacher and the class.

Questioning in fact is the key to all educative activity.

Rudyard Kipling has well said,

"I keep six honest serving men.

They taught me all I know.

Their names are what ? why ? when ?

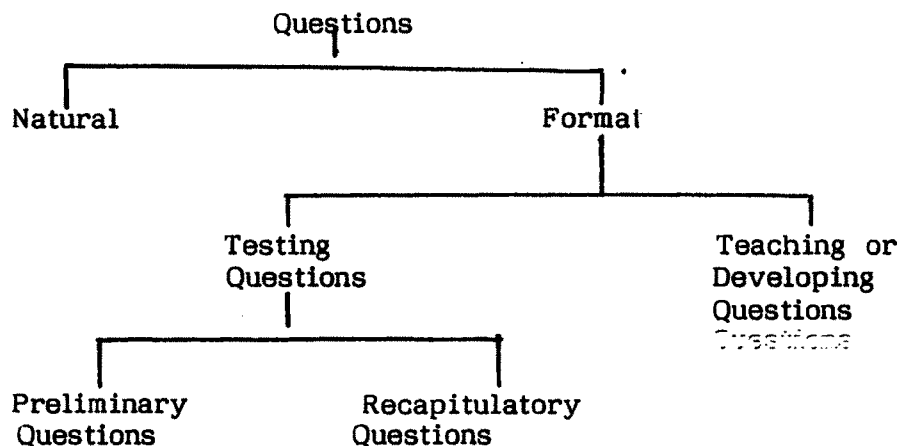
And How and where ? who ?"

II.4 PURPOSES OF QUESTIONS

There are various purposes of questions in teaching, Some of them are as follows :

- 1) Questioning can be used for exposing difficulties so that these may be resolved.
- 2) They can be used for promoting thinking.
- 3) Questioning can be used to revise work covered earlier.
- 4) They can be used for keeping up attention and preventing misbehaviour.
- 5) It can be used for creating good emotional and intellectual atmosphere, as well as high level of effort in the class-room.

From the point of view of purposes the questions can be classified as follows :



Natural Questions -

When the questioner wants to elicit some information and for that purpose makes a query he is asking natural questions e.g. Whose house is this ? When does the train arrive ?

Formal Questions -

Questions are formal when the questioner already knows about the information asked for. Most of the questions asked in the class are of this type. e.g. 1) What is the theme of the story ?
Who was Shivaji ?

II.5 IMPORTANCE OF QUESTIONS IN TEACHING

Importance of questions in Teaching is, in a way, already

mentioned in II.3 and II.4 while describing the nature and the purposes. The questions can be asked at different stages.

1) Motivation stage - The teacher can motivate the students by asking questions related to their previous knowledge.

He can show a picture and ask questions related to it.

2) Presentation stage - While presenting the new content matter the teacher can ask some thought provoking questions. He can ask comprehension questions to see the comprehension or he can ask some questions to test his attention and memory.

3) Recapitulation stage - These type of questions are asked at the end of each section of lesson.

These questions should not be only factual but also useful for application.

4) In languages questions are asked for guided composition or picture composition.

5) Evaluation - The examinations, the tests and the oral tests in all types of evaluation, questions are asked to test the knowledge of the students.

6) Outside the class - The interaction between the teacher and a student outside the class is also with the help of questions.

In this way the questions have the key position in teaching learning process.

A good question involves many skills. It should be precise, proper and pointed. Its construction should be correct.

Theodore Struck has very well said about good questions.

"Good questions, by their very nature, are educative and they have a very prominent place in kinds of learning. If used in the right way at the proper time questions lead to new realms of understanding : they serve as means of organizing knowledge, of co-relating the results of educative experiences, of tying together units of learning and integrating personality".

This quotation gives the importance of questions in teaching-learning process.

II.6 TYPES OF QUESTIONS - STRUCTURAL VIEW

All above characteristics, types, purposes of questions are applicable to the questions in teaching of English. The main purpose of the dissertation is to develop the skill of framing the questions in English. It leads to the necessity to see the types of questions in English language.



Mainly there are two types of questions.

(1) Questions beginning with question words. They are also called 'Wh' question because all the questions with question word start with 'Wh' (except 'how').

e.g. What is your name ?

Why was he absent ?

Where were they going ? etc.

(2) Verbal Questions.

The questions which begin with auxiliary verbs are called verbal questions. These are also called Yes/No questions because the answers to these questions are always in yes or no.

e.g. Are you going to market ?

Yes, I am going to market.

or

No, I am not going to market.

These questions begin with : do, did, have, has, had, can, must is/am/are, was/were, will/shall, may, such types of auxiliary verbs.

(3) What ... be ... like questions.

When it is a description of something using certain adjective the question is

e.g. 1) What was the water like ?

The water was warm.

2) What was Mantharaka like ?

Mantharaka was very slow.

3) What were the legs of the donkey like ?

The legs of the donkey were shaky.

4) What is the hotel like ?

The hotel is wooden.

(4) Question tags :

In day-to-day life question tags are also important. They are not full questions but a bit of them and they are asked to confirm certain things.

First the statement is given and then the tag is added to it.

1. In the tags only pronouns are used.
2. Only auxiliaries are used.
3. When the statement is negative, the tag is positive and when the statement is positive, tag is negative.

4. Before adding a tag, it is necessary to give the coma.

- e.g.
1. He is a famous doctor, isn't he ?
 2. Sheela played well, didn't she ?
 3. She does not like it, does she ?
 4. Harish will not go, will he ?

II.7 QUESTION WORDS

There are two types of question words.

- viz.
- 1) Interrogative pronouns.
 - 2) Interrogative adverbs.

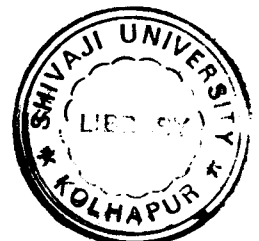
1) Who, which and what are interrogative pronouns and 'whom' and 'whose' are the objective and possessive case of 'who'.

2) Where, when, how, why, how much, how many, how far, howhigh, how long, etc.

These are adverbs used in making questions.

II.8 CONSTRUCTION OF A QUESTION IN ENGLISH

The whole investigation is devoted to this. In Marathi or Hindi while framing a question only a question word is used and question mark is given.



But in English the construction of an interrogative sentence is different. The word order of a statement and the word order of a question are different.

The construction of a statement is

S + V + O

S for subject

V for verb

O for object

But in question the order is changed and the structure will be

V + S + O

V is divided into two parts, first part is auxiliary verb and the other is main verb.

When the question begins with question word the construction will be

Q Word + Auxiliary + S + V + O

e.g. Whom did you write a letter ?

Instead of O there may be adverb or complement or adjective.

e.g. What did you do yesterday ?

Was he present ?

II.9 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter was devoted to the various aspects related to the questions.

The meaning and nature, the purpose and importance of the questions are described in this chapter.

Questions hold a key position in teaching and they will have it in future.

The dissertation is mainly concerned with the construction of the questions in English so the question types, question words and question patterns are also described.