Questioning as a tool in social adaptation and manipulation

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of questioning in social adaptation and manipulation. The article considers how language plays a crucial role in shaping the way we ask and answer questions and whether intellectual growth can be driven by questioning. The impact of cultural diversity on questioning, including the ways in which different cultures approach questioning and whether this affects social adaptation and manipulation, is highlighted. Some teaching tools that can be used to help individuals develop their questioning skills are discussed, as well as the importance of grammar when asking different types of questions. There are references to the philosopher Socrates, who famously used questioning as a means of teaching, and the relevance of his approach in modern society is considered. Additionally, the author touches on the intersection of questioning and sociology and suggests techniques to be used by interviewees to answer tricky questions.

Keywords: language; English language; society; adaptation; manipulation; communication; information; culture; questioning; conversation; question types; intellectual development

Умение задавать вопросы как инструмент социальной адаптации и манипуляции

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АННОТАЦИЯ

В данной работе рассматривается умение задавать вопросы как инструмент для манипулирования общественным мнением и как опора для адаптации в социальной среде. В статье затрагивается вопрос о роли языка и правильном его использовании при построении вопросительных фраз и организации ответов. Автор рассматривает умение задавать вопросы и его влияние на интеллектуальный рост индивида и исследует значение культурной составляющей, в том числе подходы различных народностей к формированию вопросов и ответов. В статье перечисляются обучающие инструменты и методы, способствующие развитию навыков постановки вопросов. Отмечается важность владения грамматикой, речью и критическим мышлением как для интервьюера, так и для респондента. Автор отдает дань Сократу и подчеркивает актуальность сократовских вопросов как метода ведения диалога. В статье также затрагивается применение вопросительной тактики, широко использующейся в социологии, и даются рекомендации по ответному реагированию.

Ключевые слова: язык; английский язык; общество; адаптация; манипуляция; переговоры; информация; культура; интервьюирование; общение; типы вопросов; интеллектуальное развитие

INTRODUCTION

Studying the art of questioning in the modern world is of utmost importance as effective questioning skills are essential for effective communication and problem-solving. In today's information-driven society, where misinformation and fake news are widespread, the ability to ask the right questions can help individuals navigate and make sense of the vast amounts of information available. The art of questioning also plays a crucial role in developing critical thinking skills and promoting intellectual growth. Moreover, in a world that is becoming increasingly diverse, understanding how different cultures approach questioning and the impact of cultural differences on social interactions is vital. Additionally, questioning is a crucial tool for individuals in positions of leadership and authority, enabling them to make informed decisions and address complex problems. As such, studying the art of questioning can be highly beneficial for individuals seeking to improve their communication skills, increase their social adaptability, and excel in their personal and professional lives.

WHAT ROLE DOES LANGUAGE PLAY?

Language is considered to be a symbolic representation of our thoughts, ideas, and experiences. It enables us to communicate with others, express our emotions, and convey our intentions. It also plays a role in shaping our perceptions, thoughts, and memory. No wonder, that the study of how we process, understand and generate language, is considered as a fundamental area of research in cognitive psychology. Language has a direct impact on our cognitive abilities, emotional expressions, and mental well-being. It can be used to influence and persuade us to adopt certain attitudes and behaviors in several ways:

1. Socialization. *Language is a key tool for socialization and is used to transmit cultural norms and values from one generation to the next. Through language, we learn the expectations of our society and internalize them as our own.*

2. Persuasion. *Language can be used to persuade and influence us to adopt certain attitudes and behaviours. Advertising, political speeches, and other forms of communication use language in a strategic way to appeal to our emotions and shape our beliefs.*

3. Power dynamics. *Language can be used to reinforce power dynamics and marginalize certain groups of people. For example, discriminatory language can be used to reinforce stereotypes and reinforce social hierarchies.*

4. Norms of communication. *Language also shapes our norms of communication, such as how we initiate and end conversations, how we indicate agreement or disagreement, and how we express emotion. These norms vary across cultures and if not understood can lead to miscommunication and difficulties in social interactions.*

5. Access to information. *Language can also shape our access to information and knowledge, limiting our understanding of certain topics or issues if we don't have proficiency in the language, they are presented in.*

It is crucial to recognize the potential biases and power imbalances that language can reinforce and to actively question and challenge them. This is especially true when it comes to English, which is often considered the global language of business and commerce. As a result, many people feel pressure to be fluent or proficient in it to advance in their careers. This can lead individuals feeling strained to accept social norms that are dictated by the dominance of the English language.

• One way in which this can happen is through the pressure to conform to English-speaking norms in the workplace. *For example, an individual may feel pressure to speak English in order to be understood and to fit in with their colleagues, even if it is not their first language. This can lead to individuals feeling like they have to suppress their own cultural identity and conform to the dominant culture in order to succeed.*

• Another way in which the English language can be used to influence, and corner individuals is through the media and popular culture. *Many popular movies, television shows, and music are produced in English, and as such, they can be used to propagate certain values and norms that are associated with English-speaking cultures.*

• Additionally, English language education, especially in non-English-speaking countries, is often seen as a way to access a better future, more opportunities and better jobs. *This can create pressure on individuals to conform to the social norms and values that are associated with the English language in order to be seen as successful and upwardly mobile.*

Of course, being fluent in a language and adapting to different cultures can be beneficial for an individual, however, it's also important to recognise that this should not come at the cost of losing one's own identity or values.

IS INTELLECTUAL GROWTH DRIVEN BY QUESTIONING?

The best way to become aware of the potential pressures and influences that come with the use of a certain language is to ask questions to gain insight

into culture, values, and beliefs, to understand institutions that shape the behaviour of individuals and groups within a society. Sociologists, for example, by asking questions, — which is a basis of research methods, such as surveys, interviews, and focus groups, — can identify patterns and trends within a society; thus, developing theories which explain social phenomena.

By asking questions, we can get a better sense of other people's perspectives, as we encourage individuals to express their thoughts and feelings freely. With this knowledge at hand, therapists and counsellors are able to gain a deeper understanding of their clients' experiences and perspectives; helping them identify patterns or behaviors which may contribute to current issues they are facing. Moreover, psychologists can identify and understand different experiences as well as challenges people face due to things such as discrimination, prejudice or social inequality. Question asking is a way to initiate and maintain conversations, as well as to indicate one's own lack of knowledge or uncertainty, convey and elicit information. In "Forms of Talk," Erving Goffman [1], a Canadian sociologist and social psychologist, notes that questions can be used to signal one's own intentions, such as when someone asks a question in order to indicate that they are interested in a topic or to show that they are paying attention. Herbert H. Clark, a cognitive scientist, and linguist, in his book "Using Language" [2] examines the role of language in social interactions and communication, with a focus on the ways in which people use language to coordinate their actions and achieve shared goals. He contends that question asking can be used to convey power dynamics, with those who ask questions often having more power and control in the interaction than those who are answering. This is because the person asking the questions is setting the agenda and directing the conversation, while the person answering is responding to the questions and providing information. For instance, in an interview or formal meeting, the person who asks questions is the one who is in charge of the conversation, and the one who is in control of the flow of the discussion. They can also use questions to elicit information or opinions that they want to know, or to signal that they are paying attention and engaged in the conversation. They are able to direct the conversation in a way that serves their own interests and can steer it away from topics that they don't want to discuss. Furthermore, in some cases, the person asking the questions may be able to use their questions to put the other person on the defensive, or to pressure them into providing specific information or taking a particular

position. For example, Steve Sackur,[1] the host of the BBC's «HardTalk», is known for his direct and challenging approach during interviews. He asks questions that are informative and thought-provoking. Trying to uncover new and interesting information, he is expected to remain impartial, to provide an unbiased approach and to let the interviewee speak their mind freely, providing space for different perspectives. Although, the interviewer has a certain angle, or an idea of the story he wants to tell. It's important to note that power dynamics in conversation are not always so clear cut, and they can shift and change depending on the context, the relationship between the speakers, and the goals of the conversation.

From the other side, the ability to ask questions is a key component in metacognition, which involves the ability to think about one's own thinking, and can be seen in the following ways:

• Metacognitive monitoring. *This refers to an individual's ability to monitor their own understanding and progress in learning. Asking oneself questions such as "Do I understand this concept?", "What do I know and what I don't know?" can help to identify areas of confusion or misunderstanding, and prompt the person to seek out additional information or clarification.*

• Metacognitive planning. *This refers to an individual's ability to plan and set goals for their own learning. Asking oneself questions such as "What do I want to learn?", "What do I need to do to achieve my learning goals?" can help to identify specific strategies and resources that can be used to reach those goals.*

• Metacognitive evaluating. *This refers to an individual's ability to evaluate their own understanding and performance. Asking oneself questions such as "How well did I perform on this task?", "What did I do well and what I need to improve?" can help to identify areas of strength and weakness, and to make adjustments for future learning.*

• Metacognitive regulation. *This refers to an individual's ability to regulate their own cognitive processes, such as by setting goals, monitoring progress, and making adjustments as needed. Asking oneself questions such as "What strategies can I use to stay focused?", "How can I stay motivated?" can help to identify the most effective methods for regulating one's own learning.*

Overall, by asking questions, individuals can monitor their own understanding, plan and set goals, evaluate their own performance, and regulate their own learning.

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[1] URL: https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/profiles/QrrcWR 1vSGDbwZ45JLhNg2/stephen-sackur; https://www.youtube.com/user/bbchardtalk

Asking questions is a fundamental aspect of critical thinking, as it enables individuals to clarify their thinking, scrutinize assumptions, and gain deeper understanding of a subject. The skill of asking questions helps people make informed decisions that align with their values and beliefs. Richard Paul, in his book "Critical Thinking: Tools for Taking Charge of Your Learning and Your Life" [3], identifies several types of questions that are essential for critical thinking, such as:

• Questions that challenge assumptions

• Questions that probe reasons and evidence

• Questions that examine the implications and consequences of a belief or action

• Questions that ask for the relationship between and among concepts

• Questions that ask for the purpose or the frame of reference of a statement or question

• Questions that ask for the evidence or criteria

• Questions that ask for the assumptions behind a statement or question

Asking questions is not just about having the right answer, but also about the questioning skills. By learning to ask the right questions, individuals can gain a deeper understanding of a matter, identify key issues, solve problems and make better choices. The form of the question can affect the nature of the conversation, for example, open-ended questions are typically used to encourage elaboration, while closed-ended questions are used to elicit specific, factual answers. By asking questions in a strategic and thoughtful way, a person can be led to consider new information and perspectives, challenge their existing beliefs, and develop deeper understanding and insights.

COULD YOU TELL WHETHER CULTURAL DIVERSITY MATTERS?

The types of questions used in any language-speaking culture can alter depending on a variety of factors such as context, the relationship between the speaker and the listener, and the topic being discussed. However, in English-speaking countries, it is common to use direct and open-ended questions. This means that questions are often phrased in a way that directly asks for information or an opinion and allows the respondent to give a detailed answer. For example, "What do you think about the current political situation?" In Russian-speaking countries, it is common to ask, "Could you tell me, how you feel about the current political situation?" instead. Answering more indirect and closed-ended questions, one could simply state their opinion or

feeling in a brief sentence: "I am concerned about the current political situation." It's important to remember that when giving a short answer, it's not just about being brief, but about providing a clear and direct response that addresses the question being asked. Also, in some cultures, it's considered impolite to give a direct negative or critical answer, so in such situations, people might use words like "concerned" or "uncertain" instead of "displeased" or "disappointed". To understand and be understood, it's important to be aware of these cultural differences and adjust the language and phrasing of questions accordingly to avoid confusion or offense. It's crucial to keep in mind the cultural context and the different ways questions are phrased and answered to facilitate effective communication and understanding. For instance, idiomatic expressions and colloquial phrases in the English language can be difficult for a non-native speaker to comprehend. For example, "What's the 411?" This phrase is a slang way of asking for information or an update on something. It comes from dialling 411 for information. Idiomatic expressions and colloquial phrases are often used informally, but miscommunication can occur in formal or written language as well. Complex sentence structures, jargon, technical language, different accents, or dialects can all impact comprehension.

THERE ARE SOME TEACHING TOOLS, AREN'T THEY?

Teaching ESL (English as a Second Language) students how to ask proper questions can be challenging, but with the right approach and patience, it can be accomplished. Here are a few strategies that may be helpful:

1. Modelling. *One of the most effective ways to teach question-asking is by modelling. Show the student how to ask different types of questions in different situations. For example, you can demonstrate how to ask for directions, how to ask for clarification, and how to ask for information.*

2. Practice. *Encourage your students to practice asking questions in a variety of real-life scenarios through role-playing exercises. This can provide a safe and controlled environment for students to hone their questioning skills. By practicing in this way, students will better understand the context and purpose of their questions and will see the practical applications of the language they are learning.*

3. Feedback. *Give your student feedback on their question-asking skills. Point out any errors or mistakes they make and give them suggestions on how to improve.*

4. Vocabulary. *Ensure that your student has the vocabulary they need to ask proper questions. Teach them*

the appropriate question words (what, when, where, why, etc.) and other question-related vocabulary, such as "Can you help me understand…?" or "Could you explain…?"

5. Use positive reinforcement. *Positively reinforce students who ask questions by acknowledging and praising their contributions. This will encourage them to continue asking questions in the future.*

6. Use humour. *Incorporating humour and making it fun to ask questions will help the student to relax and feel more comfortable asking questions.*

7. Use technology. *Use technology such as online forums, social media, or chat platforms to encourage students to ask questions. This can be less intimidating than asking in person, and it can also be done at the student's own pace.*

There are online forums and chat platforms that can be used to help ESL (English as a Second Language) students practice and improve their question-asking skills. Here are a few examples:

1. Quora. *Quora is a question-and-answer website where users can ask and answer questions on a wide variety of topics. This can be a great resource for students to practice asking questions in a real-world setting.*

2. Reddit. *Reddit is a website that features communities, or "subreddits," dedicated to specific topics. This can be a great resource for students to find discussion boards on topics that interest them, and to practice asking questions in a supportive and engaged community.*

3. Stack Exchange. *Stack Exchange is a network of question-and-answer websites on a variety of topics. This can be a great resource for students to practice asking technical questions and get answers from experts in a specific field.*

4. Language exchange platforms. *There are a variety of online language exchange platforms that connect ESL students with native speakers of the language they are learning. This can be a great way for students to practice asking questions in a conversational setting and get immediate feedback.*

5. Online language learning communities. *There are several online language learning communities where students can connect with other learners and practice their language skills. These communities are designed to be supportive and encouraging, which is perfect for students who want to improve their question-asking skills.*

6. Online discussion forums. *Online discussion forums are a great way for students to participate in group discussions and practice asking questions. These forums can be found in many websites and they can be focused on different topics.*

7. Online chat platforms. *WhatsApp, Telegram, and WeChat are popular instant messaging app that can be used to communicate with native speakers in real-time.*

8. Video conferencing platforms. *Zoom, Google Meet, Skype, and alike can be used for language practice sessions with native speakers, where students can practice asking questions and having conversations.*

9. Discord. *Discord is a popular chat platform that is often used by communities, such as gaming communities, but it can also be used to create chat groups for language learning.*

To gain inspiration and enjoyment, students can be directed towards watching TV shows that feature hosts known for their skillful questioning techniques. Here are a few examples:

1. «The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon» (USA). *Jimmy Fallon is known for his ability to ask engaging and entertaining questions during his interviews with guests. He is known for his comedic approach to interviews and his ability to create a relaxed and fun atmosphere.*

2. "The Ellen DeGeneres Show" (USA). *Ellen DeGeneres is known for her ability to ask thoughtful and insightful questions during her interviews with guests. Her interviews often focus on personal stories and experiences, and she is known for her ability to connect with her guests on a personal level.*

3. "The Graham Norton Show" (UK). *Graham Norton is known for his ability to ask witty and humorous questions during his interviews with guests. His show often features a mix of celebrities and comedians, and he is known for his ability to create a fun and relaxed atmosphere.*

4. "The Howard Stern Show" (USA). *Howard Stern is known for his ability to ask controversial and personal questions during his interviews with guests. His interviews often focus on the personal lives and careers of his guests and he's known for being a very direct and straightforward interviewer.*

5. "The Oprah Winfrey Show" (USA). *Oprah Winfrey is known for her ability to ask thought-provoking and emotional questions during her interviews with guests. Her interviews often focus on personal stories and experiences, and she is known for her ability to connect with her guests on a personal level.*

6. "BBC Question Time" (UK). *It's a political debate show, where a panel of politicians and public figures answer questions from the audience, it's known for the quality of the questions asked by the audience, which are usually well informed, thought-provoking and challenging.*

By watching shows that feature interviews and questioning, students can observe and learn about

effective asking skills. They can also see how the format of the show can impact the quality of the questions and answers received. Furthermore, they will realize the importance of ensuring the correct information is provided, as the wrong information can lead to inaccurate or misleading results.

CAN GRAMMAR BE NEGLECTED?

Proper grammar is essential for delivering information, effectively shaping words and constructing coherent sentences, paragraphs, and arguments. This includes knowledge and application of verb tenses, modal verbs, phrasal verbs, prepositions, subject-verb inversion, question tags, and conditional structures. It also plays a crucial role in asking and answering questions effectively.

Using a variety of question types [4] keeps the conversation interesting and allow to gather different types of information. For example:

1. Open-ended questions do not have a specific or limited set of answers:
- "Can you tell me about a time when you felt particularly proud of your work?"
- "What do you think are the biggest challenges facing our community today?"
- "How do you think the company can improve its customer service?"

2. Closed-ended questions are used to elicit specific, factual answers:
- "What is your gender? (male, female, other)"

3. Clarifying questions are a type of question used to seek more information or to gain a better understanding of a topic or statement:
- "Can you please explain what you mean by that?"
- "Can you give me an example of how that would work in practice?"
- "I'm sorry, I don't understand. Can you rephrase that for me?"

4. Leading questions are used to suggest a particular answer or lead the respondent in a certain direction:
- "Don't you think that this new policy will improve the company's profits?"
- "Have you stopped stealing office supplies?"
- "Isn't it true that you were at the scene of the crime?"

5. Hypothetical questions are a type of leading question. They also can help individuals to consider the potential consequences of different actions or decisions, encourage elaboration by creating a sense of curiosity and prompting imaginative thinking from the respondent:
- "What would you do if you had a time machine?"
- "If you could have any superpower, what would it be and why?"
- "What would the world look like if everyone had access to the same resources?"

6. Comparative questions are used to encourage elaboration by prompting the respondent to think deeply about how alternatives compare and contrast:
- "How do these two strategies differ?"
- "Which method produces the best results?"
- "What advantages does this approach offer compared to that one?"

7. Follow-up questions are used to gain more insights and explore a topic in greater depth. Unlike probing questions, which encourage the respondent to give more detailed and in-depth answers, follow-up questions are used to clarify any confusion or misunderstandings about a previous response. Both types of questions help provide further information and understanding about a certain subject:
- "Can you expand on that point?"
- "How does that relate to what we were discussing earlier?"
- "What made you come to that decision?"

8. Probing questions are used to gather more information or to delve deeper into a topic:
- "Can you tell me more about that?"
- "What led you to that conclusion?"
- "What specifically do you mean by that?"

9. Reverse questions can encourage elaboration by prompting the individual to think deeper about their response and provide more detail on the topic being discussed:
- Instead of asking a student "What makes you interested in this subject?", you could ask "What interested you in this subject first?" This gets them to think further about their initial motivations for taking the subject.
- Instead of asking "Why did you do that?" You could ask "What made you decide to do that?". This encourages them to explain the thought process behind their actions and provide more information on what drove them to take a particular course of action.

10. Scenario questions can encourage elaboration by providing a reader with a context to which they can relate, think about, and describe in detail:
- "Imagine you are invited to a dinner with your favourite celebrity. Describe the kind of atmosphere

you would want to create at the dinner." This question gives a reader an opportunity to think deeply about how they would like the dinner to look, feel, and sound. They could imagine what kind of decorations they would select and the type of music they would like playing at the dinner. Furthermore, they could describe how they would interact with their guest of honour.

11. Funnel questions are often used by detectives taking a statement from a witness because the technique involves starting with general questions, and then drilling down to a more specific point in each:

- *"How many people were involved in the fight?"*
- *"About ten."*
- *"Were they kids or adults?"*
- *"Mostly kids."*
- *"What sort of ages were they?"*
- *"About fourteen or fifteen."*
- *"Were any of them wearing anything distinctive?"*
- *"Yes, several of them had red baseball caps on."*
- *"Can you remember if there was a logo on any of the caps?"*
- *"Now you come to mention it, yes, I remember seeing a big letter N."*

DON'T THEY KEEP SAYING ABOUT SOCRATES?

Many of us may not be aware that questioning is a skill. However, as Socrates famously stated, "The highest form of human excellence is to question oneself and others." Engaging in Socratic questioning [5] produces a thoughtful dialogue between two or more people. This type of conversing encourages deeper understanding and open-mindedness, making it an invaluable practice in any context. Socratic questions usually have the following attributes:

- Being specific. *Instead of asking a broad or general question, it's often more effective to ask a specific question that targets the information you're looking for.*
- Being clear. *Make sure your question is clear and easy to understand so that the person you're asking can give you a clear and accurate answer.*
- Being open-ended. *Open-ended questions allow the person you're asking to provide a more detailed and nuanced answer. Avoid asking yes/no questions.*
- Being respectful. *Ask questions in a respectful manner, avoid being confrontational or aggressive.*
- Being sensitive to cultural differences. *Be sensitive to cultural differences when asking questions. Avoid asking personal or sensitive questions unless it is necessary and appropriate to the conversation.*

- Being strategic. *Ask questions that are relevant to the conversation and the goal you're trying to achieve.*
- Being active listener. *Listen to the answer and respond appropriately, ask follow-up questions if needed.*
- Being appropriate. *Avoid asking personal or sensitive questions unless it is necessary and appropriate to the conversation.*

To be the ideal companion for Socratic questioning, apart from being genuinely curious, willing to take the time and energy to unpack beliefs, and able to logically and dispassionately review contradictions and inconsistencies, additional types of questions should be noted:

1. Empathetic questions. *These are questions that are used to show understanding and empathy for the partner's perspective. For example, "I can see how you would feel that way, can you tell me more about it?"*

2. Self-reflection questions. *These are questions that are used to encourage the person to reflect on their own behaviour or actions. For example, "What did I do to contribute to this argument?"*

3. Solution-focused questions. *These are questions that are used to explore potential solutions to the problem at hand. For example, "What can we do to resolve this issue?"*

4. Validation questions. *These are questions that are used to validate the partner's feelings and experiences. For example, "I understand that you feel upset, can you tell me more about why?"*

5. Perspective-taking questions. *These are questions that are used to encourage the person to consider the situation from the partner's point of view. For example, "How do you think I felt about that?"*

6. Apology questions. *These are questions that are used to express remorse and take responsibility for the actions that led to the argument. For example, "I'm sorry, can you forgive me?"*

7. Future-focused questions. *These are questions that are used to explore the future and how things can be better. For example, "What steps can we take to prevent this from happening again?"*

Thus, questions are a powerful way of learning and studying, relationship building, avoiding misunderstanding, managing and coaching, de-fusing a heated situation, persuading people and, unfortunately, for manipulation.

HOW ABOUT SOCIOLOGY?

There are several types of questions that can be used to manipulate and force others to accept a certain point of view [6]. The following types of questions can be used in an interview, a debate, or a conversation:

1. Leading questions: These are questions that suggest a certain answer or imply a certain viewpoint. *Examples include "Don't you think that this new policy is the best solution?" or "You agree that this will be the way to go, right?"*

2. Loaded questions: These are questions that contain hidden assumptions or biases. *Examples include "When are you going to stop being so lazy?" or "Why are you so sensitive?"*

3. Double-barrelled questions: These are questions that ask multiple things at once, making it difficult for the interviewee to answer fully. *For example, instead of asking "What are your strengths and weaknesses?" an interviewer might ask "What are your strengths in working under pressure and your weaknesses in time management?"*

4. False dichotomy: These questions present a limited set of options and imply that those are the only options. *Examples include "Are you for or against this policy?"*

5. Ambiguity: These questions are phrased in such a way that they can be interpreted in multiple ways, leaving room for confusion and manipulation.

6. Native language: For example, an interviewer who is proficient in the interviewee's native language can use that proficiency to create a sense of rapport and trust with the interviewee, which can make the interviewee more likely to disclose personal information. Additionally, an interviewer who is proficient in the language can use more nuanced language and phrasing to probe for specific information or to convey certain messages.

The following types of questions can be used in advertising, political campaigns, or public relations:

1. Fear-based questions: *These are questions that appeal to people's fears and anxieties to influence their opinions or behaviours. Examples include "Are you scared of losing your job? Vote for this candidate." or "Do you want to protect your family? Support this policy."*

2. Emotion-based questions: *These are questions that appeal to people's emotions to influence their opinions or behaviours. Examples include "Do you want to be on the right side of history? Support this cause." or "Are you tired of feeling powerless? Join this movement."*

3. Repetition: *This method consists in repeating a certain message or question repeatedly, trying to make it stick to the mind of the audience.*

4. Framing: *This technique consists in presenting information in a specific way to influence the perspective of the audience. For example, instead of asking "Should we cut down the forest?" a different framing could be "Should we preserve the forest?"*

5. Appeal to authority: *These are questions that use the authority of a person or organization to influence the opinions or behaviours of the general public. Examples include "Experts say this is the best solution. Are you going to disagree?" or "The government has approved this product. Is it not good enough for you?"*

Being conscious of the potential for unethical use of questions can help people avoid obtaining inaccurate and dishonest information, enabling them to make their own informed decisions.

DO WE THINK THEY KNOW?

Although asking questions is an action, it is the **listener** who determines how they respond to a question. Questions often offer key information that can guide the response, so listeners should be mindful when interpreting a question and making decisions they are comfortable with accordingly [7]. To recognize the desired answer in a question, it is useful to use certain strategies and techniques:

1. Identify the key words and phrases
2. Understand the question's purpose
3. Break down the question
4. Use the information provided
5. Provide evidence and examples
6. Keep it Simple

For example:

Question: "What are the causes of deforestation in the Amazon rainforest?"

Answer: "Deforestation in the Amazon rainforest is caused by a variety of factors, including logging for commercial purposes, land conversion for agriculture and cattle ranching, and infrastructure development. One of the main causes is the logging for commercial purposes, as trees are cut down to produce wood products such as paper and furniture. Additionally, land conversion for agriculture and cattle ranching is also a major contributor to deforestation in the Amazon, as forests are cleared to make way for these activities. Another cause is the construction of roads and other infrastructure in the region, which can lead to increased access to previously remote areas and increased deforestation."

There are several linguistic techniques that can help ESL students to build a more elaborate and detailed answer to any question. These include:

1. Using a variety of vocabulary: Using a range of vocabulary, including synonyms and technical terms, can help to make an answer more precise and accurate.

2. Using linking words and phrases: Words such as "in addition," "furthermore," and "moreover" can help connect different parts of an answer and make it more cohesive.

3. Using descriptive language: Using descriptive adjectives and adverbs can help to add colour and interest to an answer and make it more engaging.

4. Using comparisons and contrasts: Comparing and contrasting different ideas or concepts can help to make an answer more nuanced and sophisticated.

5. Elaborating on ideas: Providing specific examples, details, and explanations can help to illustrate and expand on the main points of an answer and make it more in-depth and concrete.

6. Using rhetorical questions: Asking a question as part of the answer can help to make the answer more engaging and thought-provoking.

7. Using quotes and references: Including quotes and references from credible sources can help to add credibility and authority to an answer.

8. Using anecdotes: Including a personal story or experience can help to make an answer more relatable and interesting.

9. Using complex sentence structures: Using a variety of sentence structures, such as compound and complex sentences, can help to make an answer more nuanced and sophisticated.

10. Summarizing: Summarizing the answer can help to make it more concise and easier to understand.

11. Chunking: involves breaking down the answer into smaller, manageable parts and focusing on one part at a time.

• One way to use this technique is to start with a sentence that introduces two or more key nouns related to the question and to elaborate on one of the nouns by providing specific examples, details, and explanations in the next sentence:

Question: "What are the advantages and disadvantages of solar energy?"

Answer: "The advantages of solar energy include its renewable nature and low maintenance costs. One advantage is that it is a renewable energy source, meaning it will never run out, and it does not produce emissions that contribute to climate change. Additionally, the maintenance costs for solar panels are relatively low compared to other forms of energy generation."

Another way to use this technique is to use conjunctions such as "and, but, or, yet" to connect the different parts of the answer and make it more cohesive:

Question: "What are the advantages and disadvantages of solar energy?"

Answer: "Solar energy has many advantages, such as being renewable and having low maintenance costs, but it also has some disadvantages, such as its high initial cost and dependence on weather conditions. The renewable nature of solar energy is a significant advantage as it does not have a limited supply and does not produce emissions that contribute to climate change. However, the high initial cost of installing solar panels can be a significant disadvantage for some individuals and companies."

Clear, concise, and accurate language is always better than complex and verbose. Quality communication is not only about the quantity of information but also the quality. Modern society is saturated with information, thus it's important to be mindful when answering questions in order to avoid being subject to power dynamics. Even though power dynamics between speakers may vary according to context, relationship, and goals — it's possible for the person being asked questions to regain control of the conversation and neutralize power dynamics. For example, the person answering:

• can use both active and reflective listening

• can use open-ended questions to reframe the conversation and guide it in a different direction.

• etc.

• can also use clarifying questions to ensure they understand the purpose and intent of the question and can use reflective listening to show they are actively listening and engaging with the conversation.

• can also use assertive communication to express their own opinions and perspectives and to establish their own positions in the conversation

• should be aware of their own rights and boundaries, and to not feel pressured to answer questions or provide information that they are not comfortable with.

• can also ask for more time to think about the question before answering.

Thus, questioning plays an essential role in facilitating meaningful learning and scientific exploration. According to Jean Piaget [8], [9], the renowned Swiss psychologist, asking questions is powerfully linked to intellectual development. He highlighted that questions are the driving force of intellectual growth.

1. Questions involve analysing and challenging what is known, which enhances cognitive development.

2. Questions are an opportunity to explore complex topics or ideas.

3. Questions inspire curiosity and facilitate creative problem solving.

4. Questions promote independent thinking and stimulate mental processes like synthesis and analysis.

5. Questioning encourages students to take ownership of their learning and become more invested in it as a result.

6. Questions can help learners structure their thinking and better articulate what they know.

In conclusion, the importance of the skill of asking questions is growing as rapidly as neural networks are developing. This is evidenced by the increasing use of neural networks in scholarly publications, with 28% of these publications related to natural language processing. Additionally, a survey of college students showed that 25% have already used AI or natural language processing technology for writing or editing essays, and 39% are interested in using it in the future. Teaching students questioning is becoming critical in this technological age.

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