

**A study of teachers' oral questions in mathematics lessons in primary grades:
A case study of a selected education zone in Sri Lanka**

R M K K Yahampath*

Provincial Department of Education, Western Province, Colombo 7

The main objective of the study was to find out the patterns of teachers' oral questions in mathematics lessons in primary grades within the context of education reforms introduced in 1999. The case study was conducted in one education zone in the Western province. The teachers sample consisted of 24 teachers, selected from 14 schools by using stratified random sampling strategy. The observations of lessons followed by post-observation interviews and a teacher questionnaire were main data collection techniques used for the case study.

The key findings that emerged were that the majority of questions teachers asked required recall of facts. Almost all the oral questions used, except on a few occasions, were closed questions. Questions which challenge pupil's thinking were rarely used. Many teachers were not aware of the different types of questions (such as open-ended questions and explanation demanded questions) and about the questions in different cognitive levels that are available to be used.

The study also reveals that the present teacher guides do not contain enough guidance for using different types of questions. The inclusion of a few examples of different types of questions in the teachers' guide is very essential.

Analysis of the responses given by the teachers shows that most of teachers' questions aim to revise knowledge or to check pupils' understandings. Even though the teachers were aware that questioning is important to diagnose pupils' difficulties and to improve mental skills, such questions were not used in practice.

The study recommends a well planned in-service training for teachers and the development of a module for pre-service teacher training courses focusing on questioning skills.

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* kusumyahampath@yahoo.com

Tel: 011-2693893