THE EFFECT OF SYNTACTICALLY DIFFERENT DİSPLAY AND REFERENTIAL QUESTIONS ON STUDENTS' RESPONSES IN EFL CLASSES

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Abstract

There have been many studies investigating display and referential questions in language classes. Although display questions were generally found to outnumber referential questions which are considered to resemble real interaction more, classrooms prioritizing the interactional objectives have not been observed much in terms of display and referential questions. Therefore, a lesson including 10 intermediate level students and a native teacher of English with the objective of interactive and speaking skills in the foreground was videotaped. The transcriptions of conversations between the teacher and students were analysed so as to find out the frequency of display and referential questions, syntactical differences between them and their effects on students' answers. The results showed that referential questions outnumbered display ones by accounting for nearly three quarters of total questions and students apparently gave longer responses to them contrary to much evidence in literature. Also, the teacher changed question types and syntactical structures of questions during conversations. Implications were made on the results comparing to other studies in literature.

Keywords: *Question types, classroom interaction, syntactical differences, eliciting.*

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1. Introduction

Classroom interaction has been given much attention by researchers because it is seen as an important factor so as to understand second language acquisition as Ellis (1990) claimed. Also, classroom interaction has been accepted as a way to develop the learners' language skills (Malamah-Thomas, 1987) and known to be different from the interaction outside the class because of its pedagogical purpose (Cazden,2001).

There are two main approaches to investigate the classroom interaction; discourse analysis and conversation analysis (Levinson, 1983). Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) defined the most common classroom interaction as Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) with the help of discourse analysis. According to this structure of interaction, teachers generally initiate the interaction by mostly asking a question and then give feedback on students' responses. In fact, questions comprised of 80 percent of classroom interaction (Brualdi, 1998) as the statistical evidence pointing to the prominence of questions to provide both input and output for learners. As Swain (1985) explains that learners may take syntactic analyses of sentences that they produce into consideration, questions asked by teachers are a significant variable in second language acquisition because output from students is initiated with the help of questions.

Brown (2007) explains the functions of questions by quoting Christenbury & Kelly (1983) and Kinsela (1991) as the opportunity to produce language especially for reticent students, an initiation leading to chain reaction of interaction, immediate feedback to see linguistic or content difficulties and a chance for self-discovery or opinions of students.

Therefore, the types and amount of questions asked by the teachers have become an important research area among other teacher talk studies such as teachers' wait time for answers from students, using native language, error correction types, disciplinary language, and language in big classes.There are several types of categories of questions created by different scholars. For instance, a question typology, well known in literature, is open and closed ended questions. Barnes (1969) defined open questions as having more than one existing answer while closed questions are known to have only one answer.

Donald and Paul (1989) proposed three categories; diagnostic questions which aim to check the background knowledge of students, instructional questions which are asked by teachers to give instructions and lead to high level thinking, and lastly motivational questions that have the purpose of drawing students' attention to the lesson. Additionally, Richards and Lockart (1996) suggested three types; procedural, convergent and divergent. Procedural questions are asked for implementation of classroom activities while convergent and divergent questions are on the purpose of comprehension and interaction. Convergent questions require students to recall information and create short answers. On the contrary, long answers and high level thinking are needed for divergent ones.

Qashoa (2012) explained that questions are also divergent in terms of syntactic structures which includes wh- questions, yes/no questions and other questions (tag, declarative and indirect). Qashoa quoted Brock (1986) and Pica (1986) that students performed longer responses to wh- questions rather than yes/no ones. In addition Mikio (1989) found out that teachers might turn the question format from wh- to yes/no when

learners got challenged to give an answer. So diversity of question types is considered as quite necessary during classroom interaction.

1.1. Display and Referential Questions

Question is defined in Cambridge Dictionaries (Online Version, 2015) as 'a sentence or phrase used to find out information' or 'in an exam, a problem that tests a person's knowledge or ability'. These meanings also provide the two different functions and categories of questions which have been probed by many researchers; display and referential questions. While display questions are the ones whose answers are already known to the teachers, referential questions' answers are not known and they are completely based on the respondents' knowledge (Long & Sato, 1983). For example, 'What does 'scruffy' mean?' is a display question because the answer is already known to the teacher and the teacher checks the knowledge of students. On the other hand, 'What did you do last week?' is a referential question and the response is unknown to teacher. Ellis (1994) discriminates these two types as open and closed questions. While display questions are likely to be closed, referential ones are more likely to be open questions.

According to Seedhouse (2004), IRF in Discourse Analyses showed that questions are generally display ones which are decontextualized and do not resemble the real or genuine interaction. Genuine interaction is defined as natural conversation and the right of interlocutors to decide whether to contribute or not. In this respect, display questions are seen as irrelevant to this kind of interaction (Nunan, 1987) because these questions are only asked by the teachers and dominated to students (Hickman, 2004). However, from the perspective of Conversation Analysis, display questions are appropriate for educational contexts either in L1 or L2 because language is not only a vehicle for instruction but also an object to be learned. For instance, Matra (2014) found out that junior high school students could get more benefit with lower-order cognitive questions many of which were display ones given the fact that their cognitive language proficiency levels were in the development stage. Teachers in that study used these questions to check comprehension or recall facts to students. In addition, it must be pointed out that display questions are used in parent-child interactions during L1 learning process in a pedagogical way (Seedhouse, 2004).

Long and Sato (1983) revealed that teachers ask display questions more frequently than referential questions. In addition, Brock (1986) studied with four teachers and two of them were trained to ask more referential questions. The study showed that referential questions elicited more complex and longer answers from students compared to display questions. Also Ernest (1994) and Goodwin (2001) found that students created short responses for display questions.

However, Gall (1984) suggested using both types of questions and different syntactical structures as teachers are required to modify their questions according to the level and aims of students. Students' background knowledge and content of the lesson should be taken into consideration as well in order to ask appropriate questions because display questions may be used to check the students' knowledge and practice the language forms (McCharty, 1991). Especially learners at low proficiency may get much more benefit from display questions than referential ones as they need to rehearse structures of target language. Therefore, it was advised by Thompson (1997) to initiate an interaction with display questions at the initial stage and then go on with referential questions. On the contrary, Thornbury (1996) argued for asking referential questions in all of the language classes as a result of an in-service training program designed to raise the awareness of

trainees about their communicativeness in their classroom interactions. He stated that 'Referential questions touch parts beyond the reach of other types of question.'

Contrarily, Shomoossi (2004) conducted a study for two months with five instructors at two universities in Iran. The lessons were observed and notes were taken by the researcher so as to investigate the referential and display questions. At the end of the study, it was found out that display question outnumbered referential ones but students gave longer responses to referential questions. However, it was suggested that it would not be true to generalize that referential questions were better because not all of the referential questions such as questions about unfamiliar topics initiated long responses from students. For this reason, the researcher claimed that teachers must use a strategy appropriate to contexts where they teach.

In another study by David (2007) in Nigeria, the effects of referential and display questions on students talking were researched. 20 non-native teachers and four hundred students were observed for one week period for each school and results showed that display questions accounted for 85% of total questions while referential questions comprised only 15% of questions. None of the referential questions were found to create longer interactions than display ones. In this respect, it was requested to ask more display questions in English lessons in Nigeria by the researcher. However, the syntactical structures and themes of the questions were not mentioned in the study.

At Hong Kong University, a research was conducted by Yang (2010) on the same field with three non-native pre-service English teachers training at secondary schools. The results were similar to previous ones because display, close and yes/no questions were asked more than referential and open ones. Also it was assumed that teachers asked display questions to keep persistent control over them. Yang indicated that students gave longer responses to referential questions only when they were required to elaborate more on their responses. It was implicated that pre-service teachers should take more training for questioning strategies.

Similar to this study, Farahian and Rezaee (2012) studied the question types with one EFL teacher and 15 pre-intermediate level learners in Iran. The data was achieved from five audio-taped English lessons of the same teacher. The researchers found that display and closed questions were much more in number than open and referential questions. They claimed that the teacher could have avoided referential ones deliberately for fear that he could not provide suitable and accurate conversation because the teacher in this study had not an advanced level of English. In addition, some referential questions provided longer responses from students as they were related to the students own lives and opinions.

Qashoa (2012) revealed the similar findings in his study whose participants were three Arab EFL teachers and 56 secondary level students. While display questions comprised of 62% of total questions, 38% of questions were referential ones. Also, average length of responses (number of words) were 4.5 to one referential question while 2.9 to one display question. Wh-questions were most frequently asked compared to yes/no and other question types in syntactical category.

Contrary to these studies, Yang (2006) conducted an empirical study of classroom observation of two audio-recorded English lessons of two native English language teachers in Canada. Yang searched for epistemic questions which serve for acquiring information from the interlocutor and found out that 80% of the epistemic questions in

this study were referential questions in sharp contrast to previous studies. The students in the study produced answers to referential questions on average more than three times longer than display questions. The researcher assumed that these differences from previous studies resulted from the objectives of the lesson which were to develop students' speaking and interaction skills in both of the classes. Additionally, small number of students (14 and 15 students respectively in each class) had a significant facilitating effect on asking referential questions.

1.2. Research questions

Although many studies obviously showed the superiority of display questions on referential questions in different contexts, Yang (2006) discovered that referential questions outnumbered the display ones when the objectives of the lessons changed. From the perspective of this discrepancy, the study will further the evidence of question types of referential and display with syntactical differences in a classroom with emphasis on interaction skills in addition to general language skills on the basis of comparisons with findings of previous researches. Thus the research questions of the present study are illustrated as;

1. What are the frequencies of display and referential questions asked in this lesson?
2. What are the syntactical differences between them?
3. What are the effects of syntactically different display and referential questions on the length of students' answers?

2. Method

The present study focuses on the referential and display questions, and their syntactical differences. Therefore, the contents of conversations were qualitatively analyzed in detail. As a result of this qualitative analysis, the question types were sorted into categories. In what follows, a quantitative analysis revealed the frequencies and percentages of the question types and narrations of the students. The following sections explain the methodology of the present study in detail.

2.1. Sample / Participants

A native speaker teacher and 10 students participated in the present study at the level of intermediate at a language school in Bursa, Turkey. Seven of them were females and three students were males. Their ages are between 17 and 25. The intermediate level of students is chosen deliberately because they had just passed to intermediate level from pre-intermediate level and it was expected to observe more teacher-student interaction at this level than lower levels. They have six hours of English lessons at weekends and three hours on each day.

The main objectives of the students were to develop their English proficiency in all aspects of language skills but speaking was seen as slightly more prominent than other skills as mentioned by the students and the teacher in an interview.

2.2. Instrument(s)

The data were collected with the help of video recording. The researcher did not observe the class during the lesson so as not to disturb the classroom environment. A high

qualified video camera which also records the audio in high quality was used in this study, however it must be stated that very few of words of all speeches produced by the students were not completely coherent. The lesson started with some warm-up questions from the teacher about the students past week and went on with a reading text about criminals and burglary. The teacher asked many questions about the text and the topic. The book used in this lesson is Oxford 4th Edition Headway Intermediate.

2.3. Data collection procedures and analysis

The recorded lesson was 45 minutes long and the camera was set on the table of teacher towards the students before the lesson had started with the purpose of detecting the speaker correctly by observing the faces of students. The camera was so small in size that students got almost never disturbed from it. The students and the teacher were informed about the research in general but the main purpose of the study was not declared with the intent of obtaining authentic and intact results.

All of the interactions were transcribed, and both qualitative and quantitative analyses were followed. First of all, it was determined whether the teacher had already known the answer of the question or not so as to categorize the questions as display or referential. Afterwards, all of the questions were also grouped into three syntactical types; *Wh-, yes/no* and *other questions. Other* questions included tag questions, declarative sentences with questioning intonation and echoing questions by repeating the students' answers. In relation to the question types, students' answers were calculated according to numbers of words that they produce. Average numbers of words were shown under the main titles; display and referential questions and subtitles of them; syntactical types of questions.

3. Results

The results of the present study are shown in the Tables below and clarified in this section relating to the research questions. Some examples from the transcription of recording were illustrated and explanations of some speeches were given in brackets if considered necessary. The data related to three research questions were demonstrated respectively.

4.1 What are the frequencies of display and referential questions asked in this lesson?

The numbers of question types are given in table 1 since the first objective of the study is to investigate the frequency of referential and display questions in addition to the second one (the syntactical differences between them). As seen in the table, the results indicate that the total number of questions asked by the teacher in this study is 51.

Table 1

The Numbers and Percentages of Question Types (Referential and Display Questions & Syntactical Types)

Syntax of Questions	Referential Questions	Display Questions	Total Number / %
Wh-	15	10	25 / 49
Yes/No	8	3	11 / 21
Others	14	1	15 / 29
Total Number / %	37 / 72,5	14 / 27,5	51 / 100

As for referential and display questions, it is quite obvious in the table that referential questions outnumbered display ones because they consist of 72,5% of total questions while display questions only account for 27.5%. The teacher asked 37 referential questions during the lesson and 14 display questions which means that referential questions are two times more than display questions.

4.2 What are the syntactical differences between them?

In regard to syntactical types, the teacher asked wh- questions more than the other two types of questions and they comprised of %49 of all the questions. In fact, almost half of the questions started with a wh- question. Moreover, the wh- questions are the mostly asked syntactical type of question under the display and the referential categories. Also it is seen in the table that display wh- questions (10) are two thirds as many as referential questions (15). The following examples show some wh- questions from the recording;

Referential;
- Can you tell me why?
- How was your week?
- How are you having fun and also getting with the stress at the same time?
- What do you think about it?

Display;
- What is a burglar?
- What is the criminal arrest?
- What happened here?
- How could this happen?

Yes/No questions were least in number in this lesson totally and accounted for 21% which is near to other questions type in percentage. In addition, it is quite clear that Yes/No questions were asked more under the referential category than the display one because referential Yes/No questions are more than twice as many as display ones. Some examples are from the transcript;

Referential;

- Do you watch any horror movies?

Display;

- Is that what happened?

The table shows that 29% of total questions were asked under the category of others (tag questions, declarative sentences with questioning intonation and echoing questions by repeating the students' answers). Others were almost in equal numbers with wh-questions under the referential category, 14 and 15 respectively as seen in the table. They are generally asked as declaratives with questioning intonation and tag questions as shown in the following example;

- It was great?
- It's out of Turkey?
- You don't know anyone?
- OK? (pointing to someone to orient the same question which had just been asked to another student)
- You? (pointing to someone to orient the same question which had just been asked to another student)
- You are in break now, right?

However, there is only one question of others type in display questions although there are 14 under referential category;

- Smashed? (asking the meaning of the word)

4.3 What are the effects of syntactically different display and referential questions on the length of students' answers?

As the last objective of the study was to investigate the students' answers depending on the question types, numbers of words for each category of question type were shown in table 2. As seen in the table, students created 316 words totally in this lesson.

Table 2

The Numbers of Words of Students' Answers to Different Types of Questions

Syntax of Questions	Referential questions	Display Questions	Total Number / %
Wh-	196	24	220 / 69
Yes/No	35	5	40 / 13
Others	55	1	56 / 18
Total Number / %	286 / 90,5	30 / 9,5	316 / 100

Students apparently gave much longer answers to referential questions which elicited answers 10 times more than display questions and accounted for 90.5% of all words produced by students while the answers to display questions were the only 9.5% part of the total words. The average number of words for an answer to per referential question is

eight which is four times more than average number of words per display ones because students produced only two words approximately to answer display questions.

The lion share of answers belongs to wh- questions both for referential and display questions in this study and the percentage of them is 69%. The number of words produced to wh- referential questions in this lesson is 196 and nearly eight times more than display ones; totally 24 as seen in the table. Students mostly gave one word answer to wh- display ones because the teacher generally asked the meaning of words with this kind of questions. However, they produced 13 words in average to referential wh- ones. The following examples show the answers produced by the students to wh- referential and display questions;

Referential;

- How was your week?' (to S2)
- S2: 'The week was great. My exams started and I went to concerts and one theater with my high school friends.'
- T: 'Cool. Err. OK?' (to S3)
- S3: 'It was nice. I went to school every day.'

Display;

- T: 'What is a burglar?'
- S1: 'Thief.'
- T: 'What is a victim?'
- S2: 'Suicide?'

Yes/No questions have the minimum share in syntactical category of students' answers with 13% totally under referential and display question categories. They expressed Yes/No questions under the referential category (35) seven times more than the display one (7). In terms of the average word production, students produced 4.3 for referential Yes/No questions and only 1.6 for display ones. The following examples are given for both types of questions;

Referential;

- T: 'Have you or anyone you know ever been a victim of a crime?
- S1: 'I don't know anyone victim of a crime.'

Display;

- T: 'Do you know 'scruffy'?'
- S1: (No answer from students)

The answers given to other kinds of questions establish 18% of total questions and the percentage is slightly more than the category of yes/no questions (%13), however, it is quite less than wh- questions (%69). The difference between numbers of words provided for referential and display questions in this category is obvious as seen in the table because there is only one word given to one display question while 55 in total and 3.9 words in average were produced to answer referential questions in this category as seen in the following examples;

Referential (1);

- S1: (student1 explains the city where he had been in the previous week.) 'Bolu is in mid of north of Turkey.'
- T: It's out of Turkey? (questioning intonation)

-   S1: No. North of Turkey and close to the Black Sea.

Referential (2);

-   T: (pointing to a part of the unit in the book, asking about whether they skipped that part in the previous lesson with other teacher) 'You skipped that part, right?'
-   S1: We skipped that part.

Display;

-   T: 'Smashed?' (asking for meaning with questioning intonation)
-   S1 and S2: 'Hit'

It must be added that there are four procedural questions according to the taxonomy of Richards and Lockart (1996) which are not grouped into any category in this study as they were asked to implement the classroom activities and did not elicit any answer from students like in the following example;

-   T: 'Let's read the passage. Who would like to start? Are you going to read the heading? The introduction?' (pointing to S1)
-   S1: (No answer was given. She started to read immediately.)

4. Discussion

As for the first research question about the frequency of display and referential questions, the present study show quite divergent findings from the results of many studies in literature such as Long and Sato (1983), Shomoossi (2004), David (2007), Yang (2010), Farahian and Rezaee (2012), Qashoa (2012) as these studies revealed similar findings arguing for superiority of display questions on referential ones in number. However, the result of the present study is similar to the research of Yang (2006) because it was found out that 80% of questions were referential in that study and 72.5% of questions were referential in the present study. As Yang (2006) explains that the number of students in the classroom is a prominent factor in questioning types, the number of students in the present study is also similar to the context of Yang's study. The numbers of students in Yang's study were 14 and 15 respectively in both classes. Similarly, there are 10 students in the present study which is a small number to be able to create an interactive classroom. However, the numbers of students in some of the above-mentioned studies were also similar to the present and Yang's studies. Therefore it may not be true to generalize that the number of students is an effective factor on questioning types rather than objectives of teachers and students.

In terms of classroom objectives, most of the studies except the study of Yang (2006) observed classes which usually focused on general language skills despite the fact that they were not mentioned explicitly. On the contrary, the teacher in the present study stated that he gave much importance to interaction skills of students which is a similar objective to the Yang's (2006) studies as they were preparing their students for IELTS exams. Also, it is up to the teacher to decide whether and when to ask referential questions as Nunan & Lamb (1996) stated (cited in Yang, 2006). So it can be assumed that different objectives of classroom and teachers may lead to different question types because as Van Lier explains that different varieties of interaction may take place with different focuses on activities and content. In classes where interaction gain prominence,

it is quite likely and necessary to ask referential questions for teachers (Dalton-Puffer, 2007; cited in Yang, 2006).

Another factor on choosing question types is defined as mastery of language teachers by Farahian and Rezaee (2012). In their study, the teacher had not a full mastery of English which was interpreted as a factor of using display questions instead of referential questions compared to Yang's study (2006). Yang (2006) stated that unconfident teachers may choose to ask more display questions in order not to get into a longer interaction and quoted Edward and Wastgate (1994) that teachers may believe mistakenly that constant control over classroom is a precondition for instruction. In addition, Horwitz (1996) pointed out that non-native language teachers may feel the anxiety of using target language interactively and creating a 'genuine interaction' which is mentioned in the introduction stage of this article. Therefore, teachers may ask more display questions to the class.

However, using display questions was harshly criticized by Hickman (2004) as claiming that display questions limit the scope of exploration of knowledge. According to her, Initiation-Response-Feedback model does not encourage students to create new ideas and long responses as students always wait for an initiation from teachers instead of themselves. Also, Ahmad (2014) stated that using too many display questions in Saudi classrooms limits not only the opportunities of students to speak in target language but also improving self-discovery learning because of teachers' long speech rather than students. However, Thompson stated that it must not be forgotten that display questions may be more beneficial at the beginning levels or while commencing a dialogue in language classes (McCharty, 1991; Thompson, 1997; Matra, 2014). It must be pointed out that display questions can be used as pedagogical means (Seedhouse, 2004), especially for checking students' backgrounds or achievements at lower levels (Matra, 2014). In addition, display questions can help teachers to activate or elicit some vocabulary or grammatical knowledge of learners (Kirchoff and Klippel, 2013) as the teacher used these functions frequently in the present study. Therefore, referential questions may be more beneficial after other syntactical referential types or display ones are asked as initiation of the dialogue or checking up students' knowledge (Darn and Çetin, 2010).

In respect to second research question about syntactical differences of question types, the similar results with the literature were attained in the present study. The wh- questions were the most frequently asked ones in this study just like in the study of Qashoa (2012). However, in the present study yes/no questions were asked slightly less than other types of questions such as declaratives with questioning intonations, tag questions and echoing questions contrary to the results of the study of Qashoa (2012).

There are only three Yes/No questions and one other type under the heading of display while 10 wh- questions are asked as display. The significant differences between wh- and other categories including Yes/No and other types of questions show that display questions are more preferred as wh- syntactically according to the results in the present study. On the other hand, there are not underused syntactical categories in referential questions. This evidence shows that display questions are generally asked as wh-questions while referential questions can vary across syntactical categories. As using different kinds of questions is suggested by Miko in class (1989), referential questions are more appropriate to both classroom interaction and real-like conversation rather than being syntactically monotype like display questions.

The last research question was about the length of the answers of students to the different question types and the findings showed compatible results with the studies in literature mentioned in this paper. The students gave longer responses to the referential questions than display questions, similarly to the other studies (Brock,1986; Shomoossi, 2004; David, 2007; Yang, 2006; Yang, 2010; Farahian and Rezaee, 2012; Qashoa 2012) except the study of David (2007) because he found out that referential questions did not elicit long responses from students than display ones. Although not stated in that study, the level of student or the topic might have been more appropriate to display questions as low level of students may produce more words to this kind of questions (McCharty, 1991).

The lion share of the length of students' answers was wh- referential questions. Especially, the questions elicited longer responses from students about their own lives and opinions which is a compatible finding with the study of Farahian and Rezaee (2012) such as the following example;

- T: 'How was your week?'
- S1: 'The week is very nice because I travelled to different cities. Another (incoherent word). I saw the spring, winter, summer during the same week. It's very nice. When I was went to Bolu, I saw it snow. The weather snowing.'

Additionally, Farahian and Rezaee (2012) generalized that questions directed to individuals were referential ones while questions asked to whole class display. Accordingly, the teacher in the present study asked most of the display questions to the whole class while most of the referential ones were oriented to individuals, however, some referential questions about the topic of the text were first asked to the whole class rather and then directed to the individuals after students did not give any answer like in the following example;

- T: 'Is there anyone who wants to share ideas about this organization (Restorative Justice Consortium mentioned in the text)?' (to the whole class)
- Ss: (No answer from students)
- T: 'You?' (Directing to S1)
- S1: 'Really interesting. I think, it could be.'

As Gall (1984) suggested that teachers change question types to promote interaction and get more responses, the teacher in the present study changed wh- questions into Yes/No ones but without waiting for any answer to wh- ones and then asked the Yes/No question again after wh- ones. The reason why he immediately changed the question type may be to elicit an answer in a shorter time and simplify the question like in the following example;

- T: 'What are you planning to do? You are in break now, right?'
- S: 'Yes.'
- T: 'How long is it?'
- S: 'Err. One month.'
- T:'One month. Waov. So what are your plans?
- S:'I don't know.'

5. Conclusions

Questioning types with their effects on students' answers and interaction between students and teacher in the present study were investigated in this study. A classroom at

intermediate level including 10 students and a native English speaker teacher was recorded with a camera and the conversations were transcribed for investigation. A short interview with the teacher and students were conducted before the recording about the general outline of the study.

The question types were categorized in two ways. First, questions were divided into two groups; display and referential questions and then they were categorized according to their syntactical differences including wh-, Yes/No and others (tag questions, declarative sentences with questioning intonation and echoing questions by repeating the students' answers) under the headings of display and referential questions. Their effect on students' answers was analyzed by counting the numbers of words that they produced.

The significance of the study is that it challenges and interrogates again the general finding of many studies in literature that display questions outnumber referential ones in language classes except the study of Yang (2006). In the present study, it was found out that referential questions were asked much more than display ones. The diversities between the present study and previous ones showed that mastery of the teacher and objectives of the lesson are important factors on choosing types of questions to be asked. As the objectives of the lesson in this study focused on speaking and interaction skills and the teacher is an English native one, the questions were referential ones much more in number and accounted for 72.5% of all questions asked by the teacher. On the other hand, the previous studies did not examine classes with emphasis on interaction skills or teacher with full mastery of the language.

In addition, wh- questions outnumbered Yes/No and other kinds of questions as nearly half of the questions in the present study were structured with wh- interrogatives. As for the syntactical diversities within the referential and display categories, display questions were mostly wh- questions while referential questions included all of the syntactical types almost equally. As the diversities of question types are suggested, referential questions seem to be more efficient in this case.

Apart from these, the teacher in the present study changed question types from wh- to Yes/No ones to simplify the questions and elicit the answers quickly. The examples in the results stage of the study show that changing question types syntactically or starting with display ones to initiate a conversation were much more comprehensible for students as mentioned in the introduction stage (Gall, 1984; McCharty, 1991; Thompson, 1997). Also, it must be pointed out that display questions can be used as pedagogical means (Seedhouse, 2004), especially for checking students' backgrounds or achievements. Therefore, wh- referential questions may be more beneficial after other syntactical referential types or display ones are asked as initiation of the dialogue or checking up students' knowledge.

The results related to length of the answers of students were quite compatible with above-mentioned studies as referential questions elicited quite longer responses from students. Students gave the longest responses to wh- referential questions, especially to the questions about their own experiences and lives. However, it must be indicated that the teacher in the present study asked display questions generally to check the knowledge of students which may have caused one word answers.

The present study has revealed some results contrary to many studies in literature and made some implications on them. However, more data and observation of language teaching lessons in this matter are necessary to generalize that more referential questions

in number are asked to initiate interaction and elicit longer responses if the objectives of lesson are interaction skills and teacher has an advanced level of target language. Furthermore, Kirchoff and Klippel (2013) emphasized that social and instruction contexts are vital to evaluate questions of teachers in the classroom as well as the objectives. Also, the effect of question types on different levels of language learning should be examined to evidence the appropriateness of question types for different levels. Therefore more study is needed to further the data by examining more than one classroom at the same time in this field.

Acknowledgements

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