People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

University of Ghardaia

Faculty of Letters and Languages

Department of English

Exploring The Influence Of EFL Teachers's Questioning Behavior On Student Interaction

Case Study: Students of English at the University of Ghardaia

A Dissertation Submitted to University of Ghardaia in partial fulfilment of the
Master's Degree in Didactics

Submitted by: **Supervised by:**

- LAHFAR Oussama   Dr.SADAOUI Khaled

Board of examiners:

Chairperson:	**Dr. Fatima Yahia**
Supervisor:	**Dr. Sadaoui Khaled**
Examiner:	**Dr. Ezzoubeyr Mahasouel**

Academic Year: 2024 /2025

Dedication

First and foremost, I am deeply grateful to ALLAH for His countless blessings and for granting me the strength to reach this milestone.

I dedicate this work to my beloved parents:

To my mother, whose unwavering support, endless encouragement have been the fuel of my academic journey. Your presence has been a guiding light in every step I have taken may you always remain by my side.

To my father, whose support, patience, and quiet strength have inspired and sustained me throughout this endeavor. Your belief in me has meant more than words can express.

I also extend my heartfelt thanks to all the members of my family for their constant support, encouragement, and understanding.

Acknowledgments

Abstract

This dissertation explores the influence of EFL teacher's questioning behavior on student interaction at the University of Ghardaïa. Teacher questioning is a key pedagogical tool for promoting student engagement, language production, and critical thinking. However, despite the widespread use of questions in EFL classrooms, not all question types yield the same level of interaction. This study focuses on four types of questions: display, referential, concept-checking (CCQ), and instruction-checking (ICQ). Employing a mixed-methods design, the research combines classroom observations and semi-structured teacher interviews. Five EFL teachers from different modules (Grammar, Oral Expression, Written Expression, ESP, and SLA) were observed during their classes. The frequency and student response rates for each question type were recorded and analyzed. Additionally, in-depth interviews were conducted to explore the teachers' beliefs, intentions, and strategies behind their questioning behavior. The findings indicate that while display questions are the most frequently used, referential questions tend to elicit more student interaction. Teachers' use of CCQs and ICQs also varied depending on the nature of the module and the learners' proficiency level. Interviews revealed that teachers often tailor their questioning strategies based on learning objectives and student responsiveness, even if these strategies are not always consciously articulated.

Keywords: Teacher questioning behavior, Classroom interaction, Student engagement, Types of questions, ICQs (Instruction Checking Questions), CCQs (Concept Checking Questions), English language teaching (ELT).

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General

Introduction

Introduction

In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, the act of questioning by teachers is pivotal in directing learning, assessing comprehension, and fostering student interaction. The strategic deployment of questions by educators can enhance meaningful communication, stimulate participation, and promote critical thinking. In the context of communicative language teaching, interaction is not merely a secondary result of instruction; rather, it serves as a fundamental mechanism through which language acquisition takes place. However, numerous EFL classrooms, particularly within Algerian universities, continue to experience insufficient levels of student engagement. One possible contributing factor is the nature and quality of teachers' questioning behaviors. Thus, comprehending the influence of different question types on student interaction is crucial for enhancing pedagogical practices in EFL settings.

This research examines the questioning behaviors of EFL instructors at the University of Ghardaïa, focusing specifically on how various question types impact student responses. The study analyzes both the frequency and the purpose of teacher questions within actual classroom environments, as well as the beliefs and intentions of teachers concerning their questioning strategies. By investigating the correlation between teacher questioning and student interaction, this research aims to contribute to enhanced teaching effectiveness and increased learner engagement.

Background to the study

In recent decades, the emphasis in language education has transitioned from teacher-centered methodologies to learner-centered approaches, highlighting the importance of communication, interaction, and active participation by students. This shift has sparked an increased interest in the role of classroom discourse, particularly the questioning behavior of teachers, in shaping the learning environment and enhancing student interaction. In contexts where English is taught as a foreign language (EFL), where learners often have minimal exposure to English outside of the classroom, the manner in which teachers formulate questions is pivotal in creating opportunities for language usage and practice.

Teacher questions serve not only as instruments for evaluating students' understanding but also as catalysts for fostering critical thinking, engagement, and communication. By employing various types of questions—such as display questions, referential questions, concept-checking questions (CCQs), and instructional-checking questions (ICQs)—teachers can effectively guide, challenge, and engage learners in meaningful classroom interactions. Consequently, the frequency, intent, and nature of the questions posed by EFL instructors can profoundly influence both the quality and quantity of student engagement.

In the universities of Ghardaia, where English is instructed as a foreign language, classroom interaction frequently remains restricted, with a predominance of teacher talk. Therefore, it is vital to comprehend how questioning strategies impact student participation in order to enhance teaching practices and cultivate a more communicative and interactive learning environment. This study aims to investigate the questioning behavior of EFL educators and assess its effect on student interaction, with the goal of contributing to more effective pedagogical strategies within Algerian higher education..

Statement of the purpose

The primary purpose of this study is to explore the nature and impact of EFL teachers' questioning behavior on student interaction at the University of Ghardaïa. The research seeks to understand how different types of questions influence classroom discourse and learner participation. It aims to provide empirical insights that can help improve instructional practices in Algerian EFL contexts.

Specifically, the objectives of the study are to:

Identify the most frequently used types of questions (display, referential, CCQ, ICQ) in EFL classrooms.

Examine how each question type influences the quantity and quality of student responses.

Investigate the beliefs, intentions, and pedagogical reasoning behind EFL teachers' use of questions.

Statement of the problem

In many EFL classrooms in Algeria, including at the University of Ghardaïa, there are some challenges in engaging students actively during lessons. Observations reveal that classroom talk is often dominated by the teacher, with minimal student participation. This raises concerns about the interactional dynamics within language learning environments. Although questioning is a widely used pedagogical technique, not all questions are equally effective in stimulating interaction. Questions may vary in cognitive demand, purpose, and structure—ranging from display questions to referential, concept-checking (CCQs), and instruction-checking questions (ICQs). Yet, little is known about how frequently these question types are used by EFL teachers in Algeria, how students respond to them, or how teachers perceive their own questioning practices. This gap in local research underscores the need for an empirical investigation into the role of teacher questioning in shaping student interaction.

Rationale

The motivation for this research stems from a noticeable gap between the communicative goals of EFL instruction and the actual classroom dynamics observed in Algerian university settings. Although interaction is considered essential to language acquisition, many EFL classrooms remain predominantly teacher-centered, with limited student participation. Teacher questioning—arguably one of the most common and influential pedagogical strategies—holds significant potential to activate learner engagement, yet its effectiveness depends largely on the types and purposes of the questions used.

Despite its centrality in classroom discourse, questioning behavior among Algerian EFL teachers remains under-researched, especially in terms of how specific question types (e.g., display, referential, CCQs, ICQs) affect student interaction. Additionally, teachers' beliefs and intentions behind their questioning strategies are rarely explored, leaving a gap in understanding the rationale that informs this aspect of classroom practice.

This dissertation seeks to address these gaps by investigating both the observable patterns and the underlying pedagogical reasoning behind teacher questions. It aims to contribute to the local academic literature and to offer evidence-based recommendations for teacher training, instructional design, and classroom communication strategies. Ultimately, this research aspires to support the creation of more interactive, student-centered learning environments in Algerian EFL education.

Methodology

The current study employs a mixed-methods approach that integrates classroom observations with semi-structured interviews of teachers. Quantitative data were obtained through the use of observation checklists, whereas qualitative data were acquired through teacher interviews and subsequently analyzed utilizing content analysis techniques. This methodological design intends to triangulate data and thoroughly investigate the relationship between different types of questions and student interaction.

The structure of the dissertation

This dissertation is comprised of two main chapters, a theoretical and a practical one. The first chapter deals with the theoretical background of teacher questioning and student interaction in EFL classrooms, covering definitions, significance, types of questions, and the relationship between questioning and interaction. The second chapter is about the research methodology employed in this study, including the research approach, design, setting, participants, data collection instruments, procedures, and data analysis. Subsequent chapters present and discuss the findings of the study, followed by a general conclusion, pedagogical implications, and recommendations for future research.

Observer bias during classroom observations and participant bias during interviews (e.g., social desirability bias) could potentially influence the data collected. Thirdly, the duration of the classroom observations was limited to one session per teacher, which might not fully capture the teachers' typical questioning behaviors or the dynamic nature of classroom interaction over an extended period. Teachers might vary their strategies based on lesson content, student proficiency, or time of day, and a single observation may not reflect this

variability. Fourthly, the study focused on four specific types of questions (display, referential, CCQ, ICQ). While these are common and important, other types of questions or questioning strategies (e.g., probing questions, rhetorical questions, wait time) were not explicitly analyzed, which could offer further insights into classroom dynamics. Lastly, the study did not delve deeply into the specific linguistic or cultural nuances that might influence questioning and interaction in the Algerian EFL context. Future research could explore these factors in more detail to provide a more comprehensive understanding.

Limitations of the study

While the study aims to offer meaningful insights into teacher questioning practices and their effect on student interaction, several limitations must be acknowledged:

-Limited Sample Size: The study is based on a small sample of five EFL teachers from a single institution, which may limit the generalizability of the findings.

-Module-Specific Contexts: Observations were conducted in specific course types (e.g., Grammar, Oral Expression, ESP), which may not represent all EFL teaching contexts.

-Student Interaction Measured Quantitatively Only: The depth, accuracy, or linguistic quality of student responses was not qualitatively analyzed, potentially limiting the interpretation of interaction quality.

-Time Constraints: The study was conducted within a restricted timeframe during a single semester, preventing longitudinal observation of questioning practices or student progress over time.

-Potential Observer Effect: Although measures were taken to remain unobtrusive, the presence of an observer in the classroom may have subtly influenced teacher or student behavior.

Definition of terms

EFL (English as a Foreign Language): Refers to the teaching and learning of English, where English is not the primary language of communication.

Questioning Behavior: The strategies and techniques used by teachers when asking questions during classroom instruction. It includes the types, purposes, and patterns of questions posed to students.

Classroom Interaction: The communication and exchange that takes place between teachers and students, or among students themselves, during classroom activities.

Student Engagement: The degree of attention, curiosity, interest, and active participation that students show during classroom learning.

Teacher Talk: The amount and type of language used by the teacher during instruction, particularly how it affects student learning and interaction.

Resarch questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1.What types of questions do EFL teachers at the University of Ghardaïa most frequently use in the classroom?

2.How do different types of teacher questions (display, referential, CCQ, ICQ) affect student interaction in the classroom?

3.What beliefs and intentions underlie EFL teachers' use of various question types in their instructional practice?

Research Hypotheses

Display questions are the most frequently used question type by EFL teachers at the University of Ghardaïa.

Referential questions generate a higher rate of student interaction compared to display, concept-checking (CCQ), and instruction-checking (ICQ) questions.

EFL teachers at the University of Ghardaïa select question types based on their belief that certain questions better support comprehension, classroom control, and student engagement.

Chapter One:

Literature Review

Introduction

I.1.Questioning in EFL Classroom

I.1.1 Definition of Questioning

Questioning is a fundamental instructional technique widely used in educational settings to stimulate learners' cognitive engagement, assess understanding, manage classroom discourse, and foster meaningful interaction. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, questioning plays a particularly crucial role, serving not only as a mechanism for knowledge checking but also as a tool to facilitate second language acquisition and encourage communicative competence.

Mehan (1979) defines questioning as the teacher's act of initiating talk sequences, often through known-answer questions, which function to control classroom discourse and student participation (p. 285) . Almeida (2012) expands on this by noting that questioning supports learning by guiding learners' attention, testing their understanding, and stimulating higher-order thinking. Horn et al. (1978) offer a broad linguistic framing, defining a question as "any sentence having either an interrogative form or function" (p. 3) . Brown (2000) emphasizes its dual evaluative–constructive role, describing a question as "any statement which tests or creates knowledge in the learner" (p. 169) .

 The concept of questioning has evolved significantly over the decades, reflecting broader pedagogical shifts. Hyman (1972) offered an early cognitive framing, describing a question as "a stimulus which has the potential to evoke mental responses that would not otherwise have occurred" (p. 7). This early view focused primarily on the psychological triggers of learner thinking.

Later, Mehan (1979) emphasized questioning as a discourse-control tool, defining it as the teacher's act of initiating talk sequences typically through known-answer questions to guide classroom interaction and regulate student participation (p. 285). This sociolinguistic view of questioning highlighted its structural role in classroom communication.

Horn et al. (1978) broadened the lens, defining a question as "any sentence having either an interrogative form or function" (p. 3), reinforcing the formal and functional diversity of questions. Brown (2000) added a pedagogical dimension, asserting that questions function

as "any statement which tests or creates knowledge in the learner" (p. 169), emphasizing both evaluative and constructive purposes.

More recent perspectives underscore the cognitive and developmental power of questioning. Arslan (2006) called it "the strongest tool at a teacher's disposal as it teaches students how to think" (p. 81), while Tofade, Elsner, and Haines (2013) highlighted how advanced questioning techniques "increase learners' recall, comprehension, and critical thinking" (p. 155). Cazden (1986) linked questioning with discourse management, describing it as "the initiation phase through which teachers shape classroom talk" (p. 433).

In the context of EFL classrooms, Long and Sato (1983) introduced an essential distinction between display questions used for checking known information and referential questions, which invite authentic, learner-driven responses (pp. 270–271).

Taken together, these definitions chart a clear trajectory from stimulus-response models to more interactive and cognitive views of classroom questioning. For the purposes of this study, the definitions provided by Brown (2000), Tofade et al. (2013), and Long and Sato (1983) are most relevant, as they combine knowledge construction, critical thinking, and interactional authenticity key elements in analyzing how questioning influences student participation in EFL contexts.

1.1.2 Significance of questioning

In the context of language education, questioning has emerged as one of the most significant instructional strategies used to promote active learning and support pedagogical goals. Far from being a simple teaching habit, questioning functions as an essential tool to monitor comprehension, stimulate reflective thinking, and keep students cognitively engaged throughout the learning process. Hamiloğlu and Temiz (2017) argue that questions help students deepen their understanding, encouraging them to reflect critically and engage meaningfully with content (p. 139). From a foundational perspective, Cotton (1988, as cited in Hamiloğlu & Temiz, 2017) emphasizes that questioning is indispensable in effective teaching, serving multiple instructional purposes such as diagnosing student learning, guiding cognitive development, and fostering classroom interaction (p. 139).

In language learning environments specifically, questioning plays a crucial role in increasing students' exposure to input and maximizing opportunities for output, both of which are central to second language acquisition. According to Tofade et al (2013), well-

formulated questions not only test learners' understanding but also expand their analytical thinking and facilitate deeper classroom discussion (p. 155). They explain that questioning can help teachers generate insights, direct attention to learning goals, and engage students in meaningful exploration of subject matter (Tofade et al., 2013, p. 155). In this sense, questioning contributes to shaping the cognitive climate of the classroom, turning passive listeners into active participants (Al-Zahrani & Al-Bargi, 2017, p. 136)."

Moreover, questioning enhances the communicative nature of language classrooms by prompting interaction, thereby reinforcing both language input and output. As Mehan (1979) explains, teacher questions serve to initiate classroom discourse, creating structured moments for students to contribute and negotiate meaning (p. 285). Similarly, Cazden (1986) highlights that questions are foundational in framing classroom talk, enabling teachers to mediate interaction and adjust the level of challenge according to student needs (p. 433). The presence of purposeful questioning thus allows the teacher to scaffold learning in real-time, respond to learner cues, and maintain student engagement.

Chaudron (1988) asserts that questioning not only shapes the form and focus of learner responses, but also plays a key role in sustaining motivation and facilitating language practice. Dillon (1984) further suggests that questioning supports student autonomy and self-expression by encouraging learners to articulate ideas and reflect on them (p. 50). This aligns with Mercer and Howe's (2012) view that open-ended, dialogic questions allow students to expand on their ideas, thus promoting critical thinking and co-construction of knowledge (p. 17). In EFL classrooms specifically, such autonomy is crucial as it reduces dependency on the teacher and encourages more learner-initiated interaction. Recent research by Shanmugavelu et al. (2020) confirms that thoughtful questioning enables learners to generate original ideas, improve articulation, and become more engaged classroom participants (p. 46). As such, questioning remains a core element of learner-centered instruction, essential for eliciting, reinforcing, and extending students' linguistic and cognitive capacities.

1.1.2.1 Cognitive and Metacognitive Development

Asking good questions is central to learning and sometimes can be more important than getting the answers, particularly when the questions encourage students to think critically. Dillon (1983) further defines these as "educative questions [that] advance pedagogical purposes, classroom processes, and educational ends and facilitate student thinking and

class participation" (p. 1). In a recent synthesis, Shanmugavelu et al (2020) emphasize that "Questioning techniques are important because they can stimulate learning, develop the potential of students to think, drive to clear ideas, stir the imagination, and incentive to act. It is also one of the ways teachers help students develop their knowledge more effectively" (p. 46).

1.1.2.2 Assessment and Feedback

Monitoring student understanding through questioning is essential. As Cotton (1988) notes, "Questions to the class, quizzes, and other means of calling upon students to demonstrate their understanding are methods used by teachers to find out if their instruction is 'working' or if it needs to be adjusted in some way" (p. 35). In her synthesis of 37 studies, Cotton found that when teachers employ higher cognitive questions, utilize redirection, probing, reinforcement, and increase wait time, the cognitive sophistication of student responses improves (p. 1). Similarly, Education Northwest (2016) emphasizes that "Posing questions during lesson instruction is more effective in producing achievement gains than instruction carried out without questioning students" (p. 26).

1.1.2.3 Engagement and Dialogic Interaction

In EFL contexts, Hamiloğlu and Temiz (2012) observe that "a great deal of empirical research pointed out the significance of teachers' questioning strategies on the learning process in the class" (p. 4). Cotton (1988) stresses that "classroom questioning has an extremely important role in equitable classroom practice. Posing questions during lesson instruction is more effective in producing achievement gains than instruction carried out without questioning students" (p. 26).

More recent studies confirm this trend. For instance, Demirkol and Dağgöl (2022) found that reflective questioning strategies significantly enhance learner participation and help co-construct meaningful classroom dialogue (p. 47). Similarly, Khan et al (2022) reported that interactive questioning promotes student engagement and self-efficacy, particularly in higher education EFL contexts, where learners benefit from dialogic exchanges that validate their contributions and foster a sense of agency (p. 5).

Moreover, researchers emphasize that teachers who ask questions inviting clarification or elaboration (e.g., "What do you mean by that?" or "Can you give an example?") build

richer learning environments by promoting turn-taking, negotiation of meaning, and peer learning (Mercer & Howe, 2012, pp. 17–18). Such strategies transform passive recipients of knowledge into active co-constructors, thereby cultivating more equitable and interactive classrooms.

1.1.3 Types of questions

Questions used in the EFL classroom can be categorized in various ways depending on their form, function, and cognitive demand. One widely accepted distinction is between display questions and referential questions. According to Richards and Lockhart (1994), display questions are those to which the teacher already knows the answer, used primarily to assess learners' knowledge or recall of facts (p. 186). For example, "What is the past tense of 'go'?" is a display question. In contrast, referential questions are information-seeking and open-ended, encouraging students to share opinions, experiences, or interpretations—for instance, "What would you do if you won a scholarship abroad?" These are more likely to elicit longer, more complex responses and promote meaningful interaction (Brock, 1986).

Questions may also be classified according to Bloom's Taxonomy (1956), which identifies cognitive levels such as remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. Lower-order questions target recall and basic understanding, while higher-order questions foster critical thinking and problem-solving. In EFL settings, a balance of both types is necessary: lower-order questions support form-focused accuracy, while higher-order questions stimulate communicative fluency and deeper engagement (Cotton, 1988).

Another classification, offered by Nunan (1991), divides questions into closed and open types. Closed questions typically require short, limited responses (e.g., yes/no or one-word answers), whereas open questions invite elaboration. Open-ended questions are especially valuable in language classrooms as they encourage output and negotiation of meaning—key processes in second language acquisition.

In practice, the type of question a teacher chooses has significant implications for the classroom environment and learner participation. As Walsh (2002) notes, effective questioning involves not only choosing the right type of question but also sequencing and

responding in ways that promote extended discourse and interaction (p. 10). Teachers should therefore be intentional in using a variety of question types to meet different instructional goals and respond to learners' communicative needs.

1.1.3.1 Display questions

Display questions ask learners to reproduce or "display knowledge of information already known by the questioner" (Long & Sato, 1983, p. 15), typically in closed-ended formats whose answers the teacher has predetermined (Brown, 2001, p. 264). These known-information prompts serve primarily to check students' recall and reinforce previously covered material, rather than to generate extended discourse.

1.1.3.2 Referential questions

Referential questions, in contrast, "request information not known by the questioner" (Long & Sato, 1983, p. 15), thereby encouraging students to offer authentic, open-ended responses rooted in personal experience or opinion (Brown, 2001, p. 264). By inviting genuine communication, referential questions foster longer turns at talk, negotiation of meaning, and deeper cognitive engagement.

1.1.3.3 Concept-Checking Questions (CCQs)

Concept-checking questions are "questions used by teachers to check whether students have understood a new concept or language point" (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999, p. 73). These questions often take the form of yes/no or either/or prompts to elicit evidence of comprehension before moving learners into production tasks (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999, p. 74). Shomoossi (1997) highlights that CCQs are particularly effective in EFL contexts because they allow teachers to confirm learners' grasp of grammatical and semantic content without resorting to direct explanation (p. 6), thus promoting active student engagement and diagnostic teaching..

1.1.3.4 Instruction-Checking Questions (ICQs)

Instruction-checking questions (ICQs) are used to confirm that learners understand what they are expected to do before an activity begins. "ICQs are questions that teachers use to verify that students have understood instructions for a task or activity" (Ur, 1996, p. 76). These are especially important in EFL classrooms where misunderstanding procedural

language can disrupt the flow of learning. According to Astuti (2016), effective ICQs reduce confusion, increase task completion accuracy, and create smoother transitions in classroom management (p. 18), which is particularly beneficial in interaction-driven environments..

1.1.4 Stages of Questioning

1.1.4.1 Initiation

The initiation phase represents the teacher's first move in the IRF sequence, wherein a question is posed to introduce or elicit a fact-based response (Dailey, 2010, p. 608). According to Coulthard, Montgomery, and Brazil (1981), "to initiate … is to make the first move, to lead, to introduce an idea or concept for the first time" (p. 7). This opening move establishes the discourse focus and sets the cognitive task that drives subsequent student contributions (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975).

1.1.4.2 Response

Following initiation, the response stage comprises student answers to the teacher's question, constituting the R component of IRF (KNILT, 2008). Saswati (2018) notes that "learners respond to teacher talk" and that this stage provides the raw data upon which teachers base their next instructional decisions (p. 29). The nature and richness of these responses directly influence the quality of ensuing feedback.

1.1.4.3 Evaluation

In the feedback phase, the teacher evaluates or extends the student's response, often through brief evaluative tokens or corrective comments. Atmojo, Saleh, and Widhiyanto (2020) describe IRF as "teacher initiation, students' response and feedback by teacher" (p. 225), emphasizing its evaluative function. Similarly, Saswati (2018) explains that after student responses, teachers typically provide confirmatory or corrective feedback to guide understanding (p. 31).

1.1.4.4 Follow-up

Beyond simple evaluation, follow-up moves enrich the interaction by probing deeper comprehension or extending student ideas. Jaeger (2019) identifies follow-up options such as "reformulating or extending a child's response, admitting confusion, or inviting the child to expand upon or inquire about what has been said" (p. A5). These dialogic strategies foster genuine two-way communication and encourage learner agency in co-constructing knowledge (Jaeger, 2019, p. A4).

1.1.5 Functions of questioning

1.1.5.1 Cognitive Functions

Teacher questioning plays a critical cognitive role by guiding learners toward comprehensible input and prompting them to generate language output, thereby deepening understanding and retention. As Astuti (2016) observes, well-crafted questions "facilitate students to have comprehensible input, to trigger students to produce language production (output), and to create interaction in the classroom" (p. 12). Similarly, Chen, Hand, and Norton-Meier (2016) demonstrate that in argument-based science lessons, teachers' questions scaffold students' higher-order thinking, promoting "students' cognitive responses for argumentative practices over time" (p. 374).

1.1.5.2 Affective and Social Functions

Beyond cognition, questions also serve affective and social functions by motivating learners and fostering classroom community. Astuti (2016) notes that questioning can reduce student anxiety and strengthen engagement, making learners feel "valued contributors" in the lesson (p. 14). In line with a sociocultural perspective, Mercer and Howe (2012) report that when teachers use a range of open-ended prompts—such as "How did you know that?" or "Can you say a bit more?"—students become more willing to elaborate, thus enhancing both social cohesion and collective reasoning (pp. 17–18).

1.1.6 Purposes of Questioning

1.1.6.1 Checking

A primary purpose of questioning is diagnostic: to check comprehension and ensure that instruction is on track. Long and Sato (1983) define display questions as those that "ask the respondent to provide or to display knowledge of information already known by the questioner" (p. 15), serving as quick checks of recall. Brown (2001) concurs, describing closed-ended display prompts as tools teachers use "to determine if students have grasped specific facts or forms" (p. 171).

1.1.6.2 Stimulating

In contrast, stimulating questions aim to push learners beyond mere recall, eliciting personal opinions, critical reflection, and creative thought. Brown (2001) asserts that "questions will develop thinking, clarify ideas, stir imagination, and develop knowledge" (p. 137). Mercer and Howe (2012) further emphasize that open-ended prompts, when used

judiciously, "encourage students to put knowledge into their own words, press them to elaborate their views, and allow extended turns for thoughtful responses," thereby fostering deeper engagement and critical discourse (p. 17). Tofade et al (2013) similarly found that "posing higher-order questions has a significant and positive effect on student performance," reinforcing the role of such prompts in driving cognitive stimulation (p. 3).

1.1.7 Barriers to Effective Questioning

Although skilled questioning can drive interaction and learning, multiple obstacles often undermine its effectiveness. These barriers fall into three interrelated categories: teacher-related (skills, beliefs, and workload), student-related (affective and cultural factors), and contextual/institutional (class size, time, and resources).

1.1.7.1 Teacher-Related Barriers

Many teachers report feeling ill-equipped to design questions that simultaneously assess comprehension and stimulate higher-order thinking. As Smith and Lennon (2011) explain, "researchers agree that a lack of training for teachers to clarify the difference between questions that assess a student and questions that support a student's comprehension is the cause of some confusion" (p. 35). This confusion fosters a pervasive sense of insecurity, causing educators to default to factual, display-style prompts rather than risk posing divergent questions (Smith & Lennon, 2011, p. 35). Moreover, entrenched beliefs that teachers must remain the primary holders of knowledge further discourage inquiry: "teachers hold the belief that they must be the holders of the knowledge, making a discussion a threatening situation if the students venture into an area where the teacher is not adept" (Smith & Lennon, 2011, p. 34). Fordham (2006) concurs, noting that without explicit training, instructors often conflate evaluative and supportive questioning, resulting in poorly structured prompts that fail to elicit the intended cognitive engagement (p. 392). Hannel (2009) adds that this lack of questioning expertise is compounded by performance pressures and rigid curricula, which leave little time for teachers to plan and practice more open-ended strategies (p. 65). Finally, Larson and Lovelace (2013) observed that professors routinely overestimate their use of wait-time and the cognitive level of their questions, revealing a critical gap between perceived and actual classroom practice (pp. 109–110).

1.1.7.2 Student‑Related Barriers

Learners' affective states and cultural expectations can sharply curtail their engagement in classroom questioning. Barnlund (1989) found that "reluctance to ask questions may stem from students' shyness or self‑consciousness in front of peers and teachers, as they fear repercussions or embarrassment, and to avoid 'losing face' before the teacher and classmates" (p. 115). Similarly, Wen and Clement (2003) report that "in many EFL contexts, it may be considered selfish to take up class time that could be used for others' learning by asking questions for clarification, leading students to remain silent even when they do not fully understand" (p. 20). Beyond cultural norms, anxiety plays a central role: Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) define language anxiety as "a distinct complex of self‑perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p. 128), which can manifest as communication apprehension or fear of negative evaluation. Indeed, Young (1991) argued that "learners do not participate in classroom activities because they fear committing a verbal error" (p. 438), while Whittaker (2012) emphasizes that low self‑confidence and elevated anxiety constitute substantial psychological barriers to question-asking. Collectively, these student‑related factors result in muted classroom dialogue, even when teachers employ interactive questioning techniques.

2. Student interaction and Questioning

2.1. Definition of an interactive classroom

An interactive classroom in the EFL context is a learning environment in which teachers and students engage in dynamic, reciprocal exchanges that co‑construct knowledge and scaffold language development. Classroom interaction encompasses any form of participation—teacher–student, student–student, and small‑group work—through both verbal and nonverbal communication acts that negotiate meaning and support learning (Al‑Zahrani & Al‑Bargi, 2017, p. 135). This dialogic process is structured by the classic IRF (Initiation–Response–Feedback) cycle, whereby the teacher's question initiates discourse, students contribute responses, and the teacher provides evaluative or elaborative feedback to guide further talk (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975, p. 22). Beyond this triadic exchange, true interactivity involves follow‑up prompts that invite learners to justify,

clarify, or extend their ideas, thereby fostering learner agency and deeper cognitive engagement (Mercer & Howe, 2012, pp. 17–18). Classroom interactional competence—defined as "teachers' and learners' ability to use interaction as a tool for mediating and assisting learning"—lies at the heart of such environments, placing interaction itself at the center of pedagogy (Walsh, 2013, p. 65). Finally, effective interactive classrooms value sufficient processing time; extended wait-time after questions has been shown to increase the length and complexity of student talk, creating necessary "space for learning" in which learners can formulate more thoughtful contributions (Rowe, 1986, p. 4).

2.2. Classroom Interactional Competence

Classroom Interactional Competence (CIC) refers to teachers' and learners' ability to use interaction as a deliberate pedagogical tool to mediate and support learning (Walsh, 2011, p. 158). It places interaction at the very heart of teaching, arguing that enhanced CIC directly correlates with increased learning opportunities, particularly when learning is regarded as a collaborative social activity (Walsh, 2014, p. 4). CIC encompasses multiple dimensions of interactive skill: spoken interactional moves (e.g., initiation, uptake, repair), pragmatic sensitivity to turns and feedback, and the collaborative co-construction of meaning within broader socio-institutional contexts (Young, 2011, pp. 427–430). As a framework, CIC has been employed to analyse how EFL teachers shape discourse—modulating wait-time, deploying open-ended prompts, and scaffolding peer contributions—to maximize student uptake (Sert & Walsh, 2013, p. 52). Developing CIC through focused training and reflective practice enables teachers to transform everyday talk into learning-rich exchanges, thereby elevating the quality and quantity of student participation in language classrooms (Demirkol & Dağgöl, 2022, p. 45).

2.3 Significance of Interactive Classrooms

Interactive classrooms—where students and teachers engage in reciprocal, dialogic exchanges—have been robustly linked to superior learning outcomes across disciplines. A landmark meta-analysis of 225 undergraduate STEM studies found that active, interactive methods raised exam performance by approximately 0.47 standard deviations and reduced failure rates by 55% relative to traditional lectures (Freeman et al., 2014, pp. 1–2).

Similarly, Hake's (1998) six-thousand-student survey reported conceptual gains of 48% under interactive-engagement methods versus 23% under lecture-only instruction (p. 3). Beyond cognitive gains, interactive approaches foster critical thinking, collaboration, and self-efficacy: research at the university level shows that incorporating interactive teaching methods "promotes critical thinking skills, collaboration, active engagement, and self-efficacy" among undergraduates (Khan et al., 2022, p. 4). From a sociocultural vantage, dialogic teaching environments—characterized by open-ended questioning and shared regulation—strengthen learner agency and deeper conceptual processing, as students co-construct understanding through meaning-making exchanges (Mercer & Howe, 2012, pp. 17–18).

2.4. Characteristics of an Interactive Classroom

2.4.1 Strategic Wait-Time

Strategic wait-time—the deliberate pause a teacher employs after asking a question or following a student's response—serves as a critical mechanism for deepening learner interaction and enhancing cognitive processing. Rowe's seminal research demonstrated that increasing teacher wait-time from less than one second to approximately 2.7 seconds (termed Wait-Time 2) results in significantly longer and more thoughtful student responses, improved inferencing, and higher-quality participation (Rowe, 1986, p. 4). In EFL classrooms, this practice not only enhances the quantity but also the quality of learner output. A recent survey of Indonesian secondary teachers confirmed that well-timed pauses allow learners to process and formulate responses more confidently, thereby increasing both student-to-student and student-to-teacher interaction (ResearchGate, 2023).

Academic support for this strategy continues to emerge. The Kent State University Center for Teaching and Learning (2018) emphasizes that an initial 3–5 second pause following a teacher's question (Wait-Time 1) allows learners to cognitively engage with the question itself, while an additional pause after a student's response (Wait-Time 2) encourages peer contributions and the co-construction of ideas. Further empirical evidence is provided by Kater (2024), who investigated EFL classrooms in Algeria and found that while teachers acknowledged the importance of wait-time, actual classroom practices often fell short, with pauses rarely exceeding the recommended 3–5 seconds. This discrepancy highlights the

need for targeted teacher training to bridge the gap between pedagogical awareness and implementation. More recently, Colorín Colorado (2024) reinforces the importance of this simple but powerful strategy, noting that "providing students extra time to process and respond… can lead to increased student engagement". Collectively, these studies demonstrate that wait-time is a foundational strategy in the interactive teacher's toolkit, promoting higher-order thinking, equitable participation, and sustained learner engagement in EFL settings.

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2.4.2 Scaffolding and Ecological Affordances

Scaffolding in questioning involves teachers providing graduated support—through prompts, cues, and modeling—to help learners progress toward autonomous language use. Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) originally defined scaffolding as "a process that enables a child or novice to solve a problem, carry out a task, or achieve a goal which would be beyond his unassisted efforts" (as cited in Hammond, 2019, p. 2). In EFL settings, fine-grained analyses of QA sequences reveal how skilled teachers interweave scaffolding moves—such as reformulating student errors or offering targeted hints—to extend learners' responses and maintain dialogic momentum (OICC Press, 2012). From a sociocultural standpoint, Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development posits that learning occurs within an ecological system of support; van Lier (2000) characterizes these supports as "affordances"—features of the environment that invite learners to act—which, when orchestrated by the teacher, mediate uptake and foster learner agency (p. 248). Empirical studies of technology-mediated language classrooms demonstrate that digital tools (e.g., collaborative whiteboards) can be designed to maximize these affordances, enabling real-time scaffolding through prompts, feedback, and multi-modal cues (Hampel, 2006). More recent research affirms that scaffolding not only aids individual learners but also cultivates collective reasoning: structured peer-collaboration routines, such as Think-Pair-Share in EFL contexts, provide scaffolded platforms for co-construction of meaning, enhancing both interactional competence and content mastery . Finally, longitudinal reviews of scaffolding research at the four-decade mark emphasize that effective scaffolding balances supportive guidance with gradual withdrawal, thereby building learners' self-efficacy and sustaining interactive engagement over time (Gaffney

et al, 2018). These converging perspectives highlight scaffolding and ecological affordances as foundational to high-quality questioning and vibrant student interaction in EFL classrooms.

2.5 Empirical Studies on Teacher Questioning and Learner Interaction

Although numerous studies have explored the pedagogical value of questioning, fewer have examined its direct impact on student interaction in EFL contexts. Shomoossi (1997), in one of the earliest empirical studies, found that referential and open-ended questions significantly increased student response length and quality in Iranian EFL classrooms, suggesting that question type influences interactional depth (p. 9). More recently, Demirkol and Dağgöl (2022) investigated how Turkish EFL teachers' questioning strategies affected classroom discourse. Their findings showed that reflective, open-ended questioning promoted higher student participation and more frequent learner-initiated turns (p. 47). Similarly, Sert and Walsh (2013) analyzed classroom interactions using conversation analysis and found that strategic questioning—particularly referential and clarification prompts—improved learners' uptake and interactional competence (p. 340).

Despite these contributions, few studies have focused on Algerian EFL classrooms or investigated how questioning functions across different modules and teaching contexts. Moreover, existing research often examines either teacher talk or interaction separately, rather than analyzing how teacher questioning behavior shapes the quality and quantity of learner interaction. This lack of localized, integrated inquiry constitutes the central gap this study addresses.

The current research aims to bridge this gap by examining how different types of teacher questions (e.g., display, referential, CCQs, ICQs) influence student interaction across various disciplines at the University of Ghardaia. In doing so, it offers both a context-specific analysis and a broader contribution to the understanding of questioning as an interactive pedagogical strategy.

Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the theoretical and empirical foundations of teacher questioning in the EFL classroom, emphasizing its multifaceted role in promoting cognitive engagement, assessment, scaffolding, and dialogic interaction. Questioning was shown to influence not only student comprehension and classroom management, but also broader pedagogical aims such as critical thinking, autonomy, and learner participation.

A variety of question types—including display, referential, concept-checking (CCQs), and instruction-checking (ICQs)—were examined for their distinct functions and effects. Furthermore, the chapter explored the concept of interactional competence, identifying key strategies such as wait-time, scaffolding, and follow-up questioning that help foster an interactive learning environment.

While the literature confirms that questioning is central to EFL pedagogy, there remains a lack of empirical studies specifically investigating the relationship between **teacher questioning behavior and learner interaction**, particularly in the Algerian context. Few studies explore how different types of teacher questions influence the **quality**, **frequency**, and **depth** of student interaction across real classroom situations.

To address this gap, the present study investigates how EFL teachers at the University of Ghardaia use questioning across multiple modules and how these practices shape classroom interaction. The following chapter outlines the research methodology employed to conduct this inquiry.

Chapter Two: Research Methodology

Introduction

This chapter delineates the practical component of the study. It encompasses the research design, sampling procedures, data collection instruments, data analysis methods, a discussion of the findings, and a comprehensive conclusion. The methodology employed follows a mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative tools, as recommended by the supervisor to facilitate a more profound understanding of the impact of EFL teacher questioning behavior on student interaction. The research was executed at the University of Ghardaia during the latter half of the second semester and included classroom observations and teacher interviews. Furthermore, this chapter elucidates how the tools were validated and how ethical considerations were adhered to throughout the research process.

Research method

This study employs a mixed-methods approach to investigate EFL teachers' questioning behavior and its effect on student interaction. A mixed-methods design enables the researcher to draw on more than one methodological tradition, thereby enhancing the depth and breadth of the inquiry (Johnson et al., 2007). Specifically, the quantitative component is used to analyze numerical data collected from classroom observations, where various question types and corresponding student responses were recorded. The qualitative component, on the other hand, focuses on content analysis of the semi-structured interview data, which explores teachers' beliefs, intentions, and questioning strategies. This methodological triangulation—collecting both measurable patterns and personal insights—ensures a more comprehensive understanding of the role of teacher questioning in facilitating learner interaction.

Context and sample

This study was conducted at the University of Ghardaïa, specifically within the English Department. The overarching aim is to explore the types of questions EFL teachers use in the classroom and how these influence student interaction. The research also seeks to understand the beliefs and intentions that guide teachers' questioning behavior.

The target sample consists of five (05) EFL teachers from the university, teaching a variety of modules including Grammar, Oral Expression, Written Expression, ESP, and Literature. These teachers were selected using purposive sampling, ensuring a diverse representation in terms of teaching experience, instructional context, and language skills covered.

A total of five (05) classroom observation sessions were carried out — one for each participating teacher — across five different modules. These observations took place during the second term of the academic year 2024–2025. In each session, the types of teacher questions (Display, Referential, CCQ, ICQ) and the number of student responses were recorded using a structured observation form.

In addition to the classroom observations, five (05) semi-structured interviews were conducted with the same teachers. These interviews aimed to gather deeper insights into the participants' pedagogical reasoning and strategies regarding classroom questioning. The combination of observations and interviews enabled the researcher to triangulate data and obtain a multidimensional view of teacher questioning behavior in university EFL classrooms.

Data collection tools:

To answer the formulated research questions and test the proposed hypotheses, this study employed two distinct data collection tools: classroom observation and a semi-structured teacher interview. These tools were selected to allow for both quantitative and qualitative insights into teacher questioning behavior and its effect on student interaction.

Classroom observation:

The first instrument used to collect quantitative data was classroom observation. As Hora and Ferrare (2013) explain, classroom observation involves the systematic monitoring of instructional practices as they occur in real-time. It enables the researcher to record teacher behavior and student reactions in an authentic educational setting.

In this study, classroom observations were conducted during regular teaching sessions across five university-level modules: Grammar, Written Expression, Oral Expression, ESP, and Literature. The aim was to quantify the types of questions used by EFL teachers and the number of student responses each type elicited. For this purpose, an observation checklist was designed to categorize each question into one of four types: Display

Questions, Referential Questions, Concept-Checking Questions (CCQs), Instruction-Checking Questions (ICQs).

The observer tallied the frequency of each question type used by the teacher, as well as the number of responses provided by students. This approach allowed for the generation of numerical data suitable for statistical analysis and comparison across modules.

Semi-Structured interview:

The second instrument used in this study is the **semi-structured teacher interview**, designed to collect qualitative data that complements the classroom observation. The goal was to gain deeper insights into teachers' beliefs, intentions, and strategies regarding their use of questions during instruction.

Semi-structured interviews are a flexible qualitative tool that allows participants to elaborate on their views, while still following a guided structure (Longhurst, 2010). In this study, each of the five EFL teachers previously observed was individually interviewed. The interviews were conducted in quiet, informal settings at the university to ensure participant comfort and openness.

The interview guide was organized into five main sections, each addressing a key aspect of questioning behavior:

Background Information: Teaching experience, modules taught, and curriculum followed.

Types of Questions: Most frequently used question types and how teachers decide on them.

Purposes Behind Questions: Main goals when using questions, including comprehension checks and stimulating discussion.

Questioning Behavior: Style of questioning and encouragement of student questions.

Techniques and Strategies: Methods for managing incorrect answers and increasing student participation.

Each interview lasted between 10 and 15 minutes and was recorded with the participant's consent. The interviews were later transcribed and analyzed by content. This qualitative tool was essential for interpreting the observation results and understanding the pedagogical reasoning behind the use of different question types.

3. Data Analysis Procedures

This study employs a mixed-methods approach for analyzing the collected data. Two complementary data analysis procedures were selected to ensure a comprehensive examination of the findings:

Descriptive Statistical Method: The Descriptive Statistical Method is a widely used technique in academic research for organizing, summarizing, and analyzing quantitative data in a clear and systematic manner (Vetter, 2017). This method was applied to analyze the data obtained from classroom observations, where various types of teacher questions and student interaction instances were recorded and quantified. The results were then summarized and presented in the form of tables and charts to highlight patterns and frequencies of teacher questioning behavior and student responses within the EFL classroom. The primary aim of using this method was to provide a precise and objective overview of how teachers employ different questioning strategies and how these influence student interaction during classroom activities.

Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA): Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) was adopted as the principal method for analyzing the qualitative data gathered from the semi-structured interviews with EFL teachers. QCA is a research method focused on the systematic classification and interpretation of textual data through coding and thematic identification (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This approach was utilized to explore teachers' perceptions, attitudes, and experiences regarding their questioning practices and its effects on fostering student interaction in the classroom. The analysis aimed to transform the interview data into meaningful themes that reveal how teachers conceptualize and implement questioning techniques, the challenges they encounter, and their views on the role of questioning in enhancing student engagement. The findings from QCA are presented in narrative form to provide rich, contextualized insights that complement the quantitative observation data.

The data analysis framework was informed by Mayer's (2009) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, which guided the categorization and interpretation of data to understand how teacher questioning mediates cognitive engagement and interaction in the EFL classroom context.

Conclusion

This section has emphasized the key features of the research methodology adopted in the present study. Initially, it outlined the rationale behind the selected methods for conducting the investigation. Subsequently, it described the context of the study and the characteristics of the sample population involved. Furthermore, it detailed the data collection instruments utilized to gather the necessary information. Finally, it classified the data analysis procedures employed for both the quantitative description and qualitative interpretation of the data, thus ensuring a comprehensive examination of the research questions.

Presentation of Findings

Introduction:

This chapter is dedicated to the presentation of the findings of the current study. The first section focuses on the results obtained from the classroom observations, providing a quantitative overview of teacher questioning behaviors and student interactions. The second section presents the findings derived from the semi-structured teacher interviews, offering qualitative insights into teachers' perceptions and experiences. The results are illustrated through a combination of tables and descriptive texts to ensure clarity and comprehensiveness.

Presentation of the Results Obtained from the Classroom Observation

The findings from the observations indicate distinct patterns in the questioning techniques employed by EFL teachers across various modules. In both Grammar and Literature modules, display questions emerged as the most commonly utilized, highlighting an emphasis on assessing factual knowledge and precision. Conversely, referential questions were predominantly observed in the Oral Expression and ESP sessions, implying that educators in these areas sought to encourage more open-ended student responses and foster critical thinking skills. Although concept-checking questions (CCQs) and instruction-checking questions (ICQs) were employed less frequently, their consistent presence across all modules signifies a collective recognition of the significance of clarity and

comprehension in the instructional process. These findings substantiate the notion that the type of questioning employed is contingent upon the educational objectives and the characteristics of the module, which is consistent with the insights gathered from teachers' interviews and their pedagogical objectives.

Module	Question type	Number Of teacher questions	Number Of student responses
Grammar	Display	18	12
	Referential	5	7
	Concept-Checking	3	2
	Instruction-Checking	2	2
Written Expression	Display	14	10
	Referential	6	6
	Concept-Checking	4	3
	Instruction-Checking	3	2
Oral Expression	Display	2	8
	Referential	14	17

	Concept-Checking	6	2
	Instruction-Checking	4	2
ESP	Display	9	5
	Referential	6	8
	Concept-Checking	4	3
	Instruction-Checking	2	1
Literature	Display	13	9
	Referential	7	10
	Concept-Checking	3	2
	Instruction-Checking	1	1

Presentation of the Results of the Teachers' Interviews

The interview is the second research tool used in this study. It was conducted with five (05) EFL teachers working at different educational levels. The detailed results obtained from the teachers' interviews are organized below.

Section 1: Background Information

Question 1: Could you briefly describe your teaching experience (years, levels, modules)?

The five teachers have varied teaching experiences ranging from 1 year to 20 years. Their teaching covers different levels from primary schools to university, and modules include

grammar, oral skills, written expression, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), and civilization. Some have experience in syllabus design and teaching TEFL, while others focus on specific modules such as dissertation writing or ICT.

Question 2: Do you follow a specific curriculum or textbook series? If so, which one(s)?
Responses varied: two teachers follow official textbooks such as the Ministry curriculum and the "Book of Alice Oshima" for writing, while others adapt relevant materials according to the lesson. One teacher uses "Grammar in Use" and Oxford's grammar courses for grammar modules, and for civilization, they rely on various history books.

Section 2: Types of Questions

Question 3: What question types do you most frequently use in class?
All teachers reported frequent use of open-ended questions, especially in oral modules, to encourage student expression. Additionally, some employ display questions to check understanding, and others use a variety of question types including short-answer questions, sentence transformation, multiple-choice questions (MCQs), and guided writing prompts.

Question 4: How do you decide which type of question to use at a given moment?
All respondents agree that question type depends on the learning objectives, lesson context, and the level of students. For example, open-ended questions are used to stimulate thinking and expression, while display questions check comprehension. Time constraints and module nature also influence question choice.

Section 3: Purposes Behind Questions

Question 5: What are your primary goals when asking questions? (e.g., check comprehension, elicit language production, stimulate critical thinking)
The teachers highlighted multiple goals including stimulating critical thinking, eliciting language production, checking comprehension, and encouraging self-expression. They emphasized that goals vary with the phase of the lesson and the module taught.

Question 6: Have you ever noticed unintended effects of your questions (e.g., student anxiety, off-task behavior)?
Some teachers observed that personal or sensitive questions may cause student shyness or anxiety. Others noted that different learner personalities affect how students respond to questioning.

Section 4: Questioning Behavior

Question 7: How would you characterize your overall questioning style? (e.g., teacher-centered, student-centered)
Most teachers described their style as student-centered, focusing on making students active

participants in the learning process. A few noted using a combination of teacher-centered and student-centered approaches depending on the lesson needs.

Question 8: Do you encourage students to ask questions of you or each other? How?
All respondents encourage students to ask questions either during discussions, via emails, or through peer interactions. They create a supportive environment where students feel comfortable asking and answering questions.

Section 5: Questioning Techniques and Strategies

Question 9: How do you handle incorrect or incomplete answers?
Teachers reported tolerance towards mistakes, treating them as learning opportunities. Strategies include providing positive feedback, encouraging discussion, rephrasing questions, and inviting other students to contribute.

Question 10: Do you employ any specific strategies to increase learner participation?
Various strategies were mentioned, such as pair work, group work, role play, assigning roles (e.g., monitor, helper), and using motivational marks or points. Some teachers rely on spontaneous engagement or create interactive tasks like quizzes to maintain interest.

Final Remarks

Question 11: Do you find that the type of questions you use differs based on the module's subject matter or learning objectives? If so, how?
All teachers confirmed that question types vary according to proficiency levels, module nature, and learning goals. For example, written modules often focus on structured questions to assess grammar and form, while oral modules favor open-ended questions that stimulate conversation and self-expression.

Question 12: Do you have any advice for teachers aiming to improve their questioning behavior in EFL classrooms?
The respondents agreed that teachers should continue learning about effective questioning techniques, tailor questions to student levels, and create supportive classroom atmospheres. They emphasized the importance of balancing question types and encouraging learner autonomy.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the results obtained from both the classroom observation and the interviews. The data collected through classroom observation have been systematically presented in the form of tables to provide a clear quantitative overview of teacher questioning behavior across different modules. Likewise, the qualitative data gathered from the teacher interviews have been articulated in detailed paragraphs, offering insights

into teachers' perspectives and practices regarding questioning techniques. These results will be thoroughly discussed and interpreted in the following chapter, entitled Discussion of the Findings.

Discussion of the findings:

Introduction

This chapter delves into the discussion of the principal findings derived from the classroom observations and the semi-structured interviews conducted with five participating EFL teachers. The data collection phase involved detailed observations focusing on the types and frequencies of questions employed across various modules (Grammar, Written Expression, Oral, ESP, Literature) and interviews exploring teachers' perspectives on their questioning strategies, purposes, handling of responses, and perceived challenges. The primary objective of this discussion is to interpret these findings in the context of existing pedagogical principles and the specific EFL environment under investigation, aiming to provide a comprehensive understanding of teacher questioning practices at the university level.

The chapter is structured into several key sections, each addressing specific facets of the research questions. The first section discusses the types of questions predominantly used by the teachers, analyzing the quantitative data from observations alongside qualitative insights from the interviews. The subsequent sections explore the teachers' stated purposes for employing various question types, their strategies for managing student responses and fostering participation, and the challenges they encounter in implementing effective questioning techniques. Throughout the discussion, connections will be drawn between the observed practices, the teachers' rationales, and relevant theoretical considerations regarding classroom interaction and language pedagogy. The aim is to synthesize the collected data to offer a nuanced picture of questioning in this specific EFL context.

Discussion of Question Types Employed by EFL Teachers

The analysis of classroom observations reveals distinct patterns in the types of questions utilized by the participating EFL teachers across different modules. The quantitative data

collected indicates a varied distribution of Display questions, Referential questions, Concept Checking Questions (CCQs), and Instruction Checking Questions (ICQs). For instance, in Grammar sessions, Display questions were notably frequent (28 instances observed), suggesting a focus on checking recall of grammatical rules or structures, although Referential questions were less common (6 instances). Conversely, Oral sessions showed a higher prevalence of Referential questions (22 instances), aligning with the goal of eliciting more open-ended student production and opinions, while Display questions were less frequent (9 instances). Written Expression and ESP modules presented a more balanced mix, though Referential questions were still prominent in Written Expression (18 instances) despite lower answer rates (10 answers), potentially indicating challenges in eliciting elaborate written responses through this question type.

These observational findings resonate partially with the teacher's self-reported preferences during the interviews. Several teachers explicitly stated a preference for using "open-ended questions," particularly in Oral modules, to "stimulate thinking" and allow students to "express themselves." This aligns with the higher frequency of Referential questions observed in Oral sessions. One teacher noted deciding on question types based on the "phase" of the lesson, using Display questions during initial 'talking' phases, potentially for activating prior knowledge or checking basic comprehension, before moving to more elicitation-focused questions in production phases. This strategic variation suggests an awareness of tailoring question types to immediate pedagogical goals.

However, the significant number of Display questions observed, especially in Grammar, contrasts slightly with the emphasis on open-ended questions in the interviews. This might reflect a necessary focus on form and accuracy in grammar instruction, where checking understanding of specific points is crucial. Display questions, while often criticized for limiting student output, serve a clear function in verifying comprehension of discrete language items. The use of CCQs and ICQs, though less frequent overall compared to Display and Referential questions, was consistent across modules (e.g., 9 CCQs in Grammar, 6 ICQs in Oral). Teachers confirmed in interviews the necessity of checking understanding of instructions, sometimes resorting to the mother tongue, gestures, or board drawings, highlighting the practical function of ICQs. Similarly, CCQs, while not numerous, point towards efforts to ensure students grasp the meaning, form, and use of language points, a cornerstone of communicative language teaching.

The variation across modules like Grammar (more Display) versus Oral (more Referential) also aligns with interview responses where teachers acknowledged that questioning differs based on the "nature of module" (e.g., "writing vs grammar: is structure, oral is open") and "learning objectives" (e.g., "enhance self expression different from checking comprehension"). This indicates a conscious adaptation of questioning strategies to suit the specific demands and aims of different language skills and content areas within the EFL curriculum.

Discussion of Teachers' Approaches to Student Responses and Participation

The manner in which teachers respond to student answers and manage participation is crucial for creating a supportive and effective learning environment. The interview data provides insights into the strategies employed by the participating EFL teachers in this regard. A consistent theme emerging from the interviews is a generally positive and encouraging approach towards student contributions, even when incorrect.

Regarding incorrect or incomplete answers, the teachers reported various strategies aimed at maintaining student confidence while guiding them towards accuracy. One teacher explicitly mentioned adopting a tolerant stance, viewing mistakes as a "learning experience" and emphasizing that it's "fine to see other opinions." Another teacher mentioned using "discussion" to handle incorrect answers, suggesting a collaborative approach to error correction rather than direct dismissal. A third approach involved asking "other questions to the same student or others," potentially scaffolding understanding or eliciting peer correction. Phrases like "Thank you, very good. You\'re close" or clarifying questions like "I did not get what you mean here" were also mentioned as ways to gently address errors without discouraging the student. This aligns with pedagogical principles emphasizing constructive feedback and reducing affective filters that can hinder language learning, particularly anxiety related to making mistakes, which some teachers acknowledged observing ("Shyness : personal questions, timid", "Sometimes students have different personalities", "Some learners feel that and I can see that in their eyes").

Strategies to increase learner participation also varied. Several teachers highlighted the use of collaborative learning techniques, such as "Pair works : pair, square, share," "peer work," and "role play." These methods shift the focus from teacher-centered questioning to

student interaction, potentially increasing opportunities for language use and reducing individual pressure. Motivation was also cited as a factor, with one teacher mentioning the use of "marks as motivation" and another suggesting "praise them, give them good points cards." Other strategies included giving students "more freedom," involving them "in the content of the Lecture," using "guided quizzes," and focusing on moving from "general comprehension and get deeper." Encouraging students to ask questions themselves, either via email or through "open discussions at the end of the lecture," was also mentioned as a way to foster a more interactive and student-centered environment, a style most teachers claimed to adopt ("Student : focus on student are the doers", "Student centered mostly", though some acknowledged a mix - "Both"). These approaches reflect an understanding of the importance of active student engagement and the use of varied techniques to cater to different learning preferences and classroom dynamics.

Discussion of Challenges Encountered by EFL Teachers in Questioning and Classroom Management

The effective implementation of questioning techniques does not occur in a vacuum; teachers often face various challenges related to student factors, resource limitations, and the inherent complexities of the classroom environment. The interviews with the participating EFL teachers shed light on several difficulties they encounter in their practice, impacting both their questioning strategies and overall classroom management.

One significant challenge relates to student characteristics and affective factors. Teachers reported observing unintended effects of questioning, such as student anxiety or shyness, particularly with personal questions or among more timid students. This necessitates careful consideration of question phrasing and sensitivity to individual student personalities. Furthermore, teachers noted difficulties with student concentration ("lack of concentration among pupils") and general classroom management issues, especially with younger or less experienced university students. Descriptions included students having high energy levels, getting up, playing with objects, or talking to friends, which can disrupt the flow of questioning and instruction. One teacher specifically mentioned the challenge of English being a "new and difficult language for children" (though the context here is university, the principle applies to perceived difficulty), which can contribute to anxiety or reluctance to participate.

Difficulties in comprehension, particularly with task instructions, were also highlighted. Teachers reported needing to repeat instructions multiple times, use the mother tongue (bilingual instructions), employ gestures, or draw on the board to ensure understanding. This underscores the importance of ICQs, as observed, but also points to potential limitations in students' listening comprehension or the complexity of tasks relative to their proficiency level, which can impede the effectiveness of subsequent questioning aimed at eliciting production or critical thinking.

Resource and systemic constraints were another category of challenges. One teacher explicitly mentioned a "lack of materials such as data show, no computer," forcing reliance on personal budgets. Others reported that the "dedicated time for teaching English is not sufficient" and that "overcrowded classes" make it difficult to control pupils and provide individual attention. Issues like a "lack of discipline" and students tending to "mix between the French and English languages" were also cited as additional difficulties. These external factors can significantly constrain a teacher\\'s ability to implement varied and engaging questioning techniques or manage classroom interactions effectively.

Teachers' advice for improvement often reflected these challenges, emphasizing the need to "know their learners well," "vary your questions," match questions to "learning objectives and students\\' level," and use strategies to manage the classroom and motivate students ("think about their learners, to smile with them," "Try first and make an effort"). This suggests an awareness that effective questioning is intertwined with broader pedagogical skills, classroom management, and adapting to specific contextual constraints.

General Conclusion

This dissertation investigated the questioning behavior of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers at the University of Ghardaïa and its perceived effects on student interaction. Recognizing the pivotal role of teacher questions in shaping classroom discourse and fostering language acquisition, this study aimed to identify the types of questions predominantly used, examine their impact on student participation, and explore

the pedagogical reasoning behind teachers' questioning choices within this specific Algerian higher education context.

The research addressed three main questions concerning the frequency of different question types (Display, Referential, CCQ, ICQ), their influence on student interaction, and the underlying beliefs and intentions guiding teachers' practices. Corresponding hypotheses suggested that Display questions would be most frequent, Referential questions would elicit more interaction, and teachers face various challenges influencing their questioning behavior. Adopting a mixed-methods approach, data were collected through classroom observations of five EFL teachers across different modules and semi-structured interviews with the same participants. Quantitative data from observations were analyzed for frequency and response rates, while qualitative data from interviews were analyzed by content.

The findings largely confirmed the hypotheses and answered the research questions. Classroom observations revealed that while Display questions were indeed frequently used, particularly in modules like Grammar, Referential questions showed a higher prevalence in interaction-focused modules like Oral Expression and tended to elicit more student responses, aligning with teachers' stated goals of stimulating thought and self-expression. The use of CCQs and ICQs was observed, though less frequently, serving specific functions of checking comprehension of concepts and instructions, respectively. Teachers demonstrated an awareness of tailoring question types to module objectives and lesson phases, although this was sometimes more implicit than explicitly articulated.

Interviews further illuminated teachers' perspectives, revealing a preference for open-ended (Referential) questions to foster critical thinking and student-centered learning. Teachers reported employing various strategies for handling student responses, generally favoring positive reinforcement and constructive feedback over direct correction, aiming to mitigate student anxiety. Collaborative techniques like pair work and peer discussions were cited as methods to increase participation. However, significant challenges were also identified, including student-related factors (anxiety, lack of concentration, varying proficiency), resource limitations (lack of materials, insufficient time), and systemic issues (overcrowded classes, discipline), all of which constrain the effective implementation of desired questioning strategies.

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Appendices:

semi-structured interview questions:

Section 1: Background Information

1. Could you briefly describe your teaching experience (years, levels, modules)?

2. Do you follow a specific curriculum or textbook series? If so, which one(s)?

Section 2: Types of Questions

1. What question types do you most frequently use in class?

2. How do you decide which type of question to use at a given moment?

Section 3: Purposes Behind Questions

1. What are your primary goals when asking questions? (e.g. check comprehension, elicit language production, stimulate critical thinking)

3. Have you ever noticed unintended effects of your questions (e.g. student anxiety, off-task behavior)?

Section 4: Questioning Behavior

1. How would you characterize your overall questioning style? (e.g. teacher-centered, student-centered)

3. Do you encourage students to ask questions of you or each other? How?

Section 5: Questioning Techniques and Strategies

2. How do you handle incorrect or incomplete answers?

3. Do you employ any specific strategies to increase learner participation

Finale

Do you have any advice for teachers aiming to improve their questioning behavior in EFL classrooms?

"Do you find that the type of questions you use differs based on the module's subject matter or learning objectives? If so, how?

ملخص:

تتناول هذه الاطروحة تأثير سلوك المعلمين في طرح الأسئلة على تفاعل الطلاب في أقسام اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL) بجامعة غرداية. يُعد طرح الأسئلة من قبل المعلم أداة تربوية أساسية لتعزيز تفاعل الطلاب، وإنتاج اللغة، والتفكير النقدي. ومع ذلك، وعلى الرغم من الاستخدام الواسع للأسئلة في فصول تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية، إلا أن أنواع الأسئلة المختلفة لا تؤدي إلى نفس مستوى التفاعل. يركز هذا البحث على أربعة أنواع من الأسئلة: الأسئلة الاستعراضية، والأسئلة المرجعية، وأسئلة التحقق من الفهم (CCQ)، وأسئلة التحقق من التعليمات (ICQ).

اعتمد البحث على تصميم بالطرق المختلطة، حيث جُمعت البيانات من خلال ملاحظات صفية ومقابلات شبه مهيكلة مع المعلمين. تمّت ملاحظة خمسة معلمين للغة الإنجليزية عبر وحدات مختلفة (النحو، التعبير الشفهي، التعبير الكتابي، الإنجليزية لأغراض خاصة، واكتساب اللغة الثانية). وتم تسجيل وتحليل تكرار استخدام كل نوع من الأسئلة، بالإضافة إلى معدلات استجابة الطلاب لها. كما أُجريت مقابلات معمقة مع المعلمين لاستكشاف معتقداتهم، ونواياهم، واستراتيجياتهم في استخدام الأسئلة.

أظهرت النتائج أن الأسئلة الاستعراضية هي الأكثر استخدامًا، بينما الأسئلة المرجعية تحفز تفاعلاً أكبر من الطلاب. كما تبيّن أن استخدام المعلمين لأسئلة CCQ وICQ يختلف باختلاف طبيعة الوحدة التعليمية ومستوى كفاءة المتعلمين. وكشفت المقابلات أن المعلمين غالبًا ما يكيفون استراتيجياتهم في طرح الأسئلة بناءً على أهداف التعلم واستجابة الطلاب، حتى وإن لم تكن هذه الاستراتيجيات دائمًا معبّرًا عنها بشكل واعٍ.