

THE QUESTIONING BEHAVIORS OF EFL TEACHERS IN UAE
HIGH SCHOOLS

A THESIS IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER
LANGUAGES

Submitted to the Faculty of the American University of Sharjah
College of Arts and Sciences
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

by
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B.A. 2004

Sharjah, UAE
May 2010

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American University of Sharjah, 2010

ABSTRACT

Language teachers ask many questions in their classrooms. Questioning is a very important and effective strategy for creating a communicative atmosphere at schools and promoting learning. Research in this area has investigated the various types of questions language teachers ask in their classrooms assuming that asking a variety of questions can help enhance the learning process. However, less research has looked at the manner (i.e., strategies) in which teachers ask questions in their classrooms as well as the effectiveness of these strategies on teaching and learning. The *how* of asking questions, in my opinion, may be just as important as the question itself, and therefore more research is needed to investigate this questioning dimension. Thus, the aim of this study was to investigate the manner in which teachers ask questions in their classrooms. More specifically, the purpose of this study was to answer two research questions: (1) what questioning strategies are being used by EFL teachers in UAE high schools, particularly in Ras Al Khaima (RAK), (2) are those teachers aware of such strategies and their usefulness in the learning process?

In order to answer these two questions, a triangulation of research methods was utilized. These included classroom observation, unstructured interviews conducted with teachers, and a survey distributed to students. Generally, observed and interviewed teachers in this study showed a positive attitude towards the usage of questioning behaviors in their classrooms. The majority of them used questioning behaviors effectively as a warm up strategy in their lessons and to raise their students' interests and motivations.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to my exceptional thesis supervisor, Dr. Ahmad Al-Issa, for his immense support, guidance, and patience. I would also like to thank the members of my committee, Dr. Peter Crompton and Dr. Rodney Tyson, for their indispensable advice, ongoing encouragement, and contributions to this thesis. I offer my appreciation to all secondary teachers and students who gave their time to participate in this study. Special thanks to my school supervisor, Mr. Naeem Odeh, for his support and encouragement. I am also indebted to my English language colleagues at Al Najah School in RAK who helped in filling in my observations copies and distributing copies of my questionnaire to other English language teachers. I would also like to thank my friends, especially Fatma Al Noosi, for their support throughout this journey. I am grateful to my family who supported, encouraged, and tolerated me throughout the five years of study. I owe much to my husband Rashid for his support, understanding, patience, and love.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my wonderful parents, Saif Ali Al Mazrooei and Fatma Saeed Al Mazrooei, for their love, care, and constant prayers. It is also dedicated to my great husband, Rashid Salem for his support, encouragement and love. I would also dedicate this work to my little children, Faisal and Farah; I wish they will feel proud of their mother's work. Thank you all for your support and patience.

CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Questioning is one of the most common and effective techniques that EFL teachers use in their classrooms. Many studies were conducted and theories were adapted to test the effectiveness of these techniques as an academic tool. Not only did research look at the types of questions used in classrooms, but some researchers, like Orlich (2004), Kauchak (2008), Ur (2002) and Bond (2007), examined the manners/strategies/behaviors that are used when and after a question is initiated by teachers. According to my experience as a teacher of English language in the UAE, while many teachers seem to use various types of questions in their classrooms, few of them are really aware of the importance of the manners or behaviors in which such questions are asked.

During my first year of teaching, I had to observe some teachers to gain experience from them concerning their teaching styles and strategies. During these observations, I noticed that many of them asked brilliant and important questions. However, they didn't always use appropriate behaviors when asking these questions. Thus, in many cases, the questions became useless, unnoticed by the students, and sometimes vague. Moreover, the observed teachers often got either wrong answers from their students or no answer at all. This certainly had a major impact on the quality of teaching specifically and on the communicative aspect of teaching in general. Those teachers, while preparing excellent questions and diversifying their question types, seemed unable to use effective behaviors to present their questions successfully and effectively to their students. This is an important area that needs further investigation and this study addresses.

Significance of the Research

One of the main goals of the Ministry of Education in the UAE is creating communicative classrooms for better learning. I believe that using questioning behaviors more effectively in the classrooms in the UAE would promote discussion, negotiation, and thus communication among students themselves and between students and teachers. Furthermore, there is a need to raise teachers' awareness of the use of the appropriate behaviors of questioning.

Unfortunately, when I started reading and searching about questioning behaviors, I realized that there are very few academic research papers written on

effective questioning behaviors, and no study was done on questioning behaviors in the UAE. Hopefully, this study will contribute to help EFL teachers in the UAE become better equipped with the skills needed for more effective questioning behaviors in their classrooms.

Not only this, but using appropriate questioning behaviors would ease both the learning and the teaching process. The classroom would become more productive and communicative if both teachers and students could interact with each other easily and freely. Unlike Winne (1979) who believes that students' achievement is not affected by their teachers' questioning behaviors, I strongly believe that using the right strategy/behavior at the right time would ensure students' understanding, communication, and thus learning.

Research Questions/Assumptions

As I mentioned above, I had some opportunities to observe experienced teachers in action. Their questions in the classrooms seemed brilliant and important, but the way these questions were asked was, often, useless. It was obvious that some teachers, including myself, weren't aware of appropriate useful questioning behaviors. Therefore, one of the main objectives of this thesis is to promote awareness among teachers concerning useful behaviors of asking questions in the classroom. Such awareness has many pedagogical implications to help teachers gain some of the knowledge necessary to create better communicative and productive classes. Thus, this study tries to find answers for the following questions:

1. What are the most common behaviors of asking questions in EFL classrooms in RAK high schools in the UAE?
2. Are EFL teachers in RAK high schools aware of their questioning behaviors, and their usefulness in RAK high schools in the UAE?

The Educational Context of the Study

In the UAE, education is free for all levels, primary through secondary to college. The government schools are single-sex schools. Arabic is the main medium of instruction in the government schools, but there is also a vital role for English in such schools, especially in secondary schools, to prepare the students for higher education. In the UAE, the primary stage, which is known as the first cycle, includes grades 1 to 5, whereas the preparatory stage, which is called the second cycle, includes grades 6 to 9. The third stage, which is the secondary stage, includes three grades which are grades 10, 11, and 12. However, grades 11 and 12 are always

divided into two main sections: Arts and Sciences. The arts section focuses generally on literary subjects, whereas the main focus in the science section is on the scientific subjects. Students in both sections study English as a common language. This study focused on secondary schools for girls in RAK.

Overview of the Chapters and Appendices

Chapter one has presented the purpose and the significance of the study as well as the research questions and assumptions. Moreover, it has discussed the educational context in the UAE government secondary schools. Chapter two consists of a review of the literature which discusses the definition of questioning, importance of questioning, and questioning behaviors such as questioning frequency, nonverbal behaviors, calling on students, wait time, and handling students' responses.

Chapter three describes the methodology and procedures that were used in this study. Information related to the participants and the instruments utilized in the study are discussed in this chapter, too. In chapter four, a detailed description of the data analysis and the findings of the study are presented. The presentation of the findings is divided into two main sections: common behaviors for asking questions and teachers' awareness of their questioning behaviors and their effectiveness. Finally, chapter five contains the summary of the findings and the conclusion. It also discusses the implications for teachers, the limitations of the study, some recommendations for further research, and a final thought.

Seven main appendices are also included. Appendix A is the observation sheet. Appendix B includes the teachers' interview questions. Appendix C is the questionnaire distributed to students. Appendices D to G present the analyzed behaviors of observed teachers. Appendix D presents the instructors' behaviors, Appendix E presents wait time of teachers, Appendix F includes findings of calling on students, and finally Appendix G shows how teachers handle their students' responses.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this section is to review the literature in an attempt to survey literature that highlights the importance of questioning in enhancing the learning process in EFL classrooms. It also discusses some studies and research that discuss the definitions and importance of questioning. Literature which deals with the significance of questioning behaviors practiced in classrooms by teachers is also surveyed. Five questioning behaviors are reviewed in this section: questioning frequency, nonverbal behaviors, wait time, calling on students, and handling students' responses.

Definitions of Questioning

Questioning is one of the educational strategies that is used in most classroom settings. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2005) argued that questioning can be a "critical skill" if it is used successfully, but using it ineffectively can damage the learning process (p. 237). Questioning can be defined as "an instructional cue or stimulus" that conveys the content elements to the students to be learned (Cotton, 2001, p. 1). Ur (2002) also seems to agree that questioning is an effective universal "activation" technique that is used in teaching, and she connects questioning to what is called "Initiation-Response-Feedback" pattern or IRF (p. 228). IRF is a technique which refers to the teacher initiating a question, then one of the students answering, and finally the teacher giving feedback. This feedback can be an assessment, correction or comment. For Nash and Shiman (1974), questioning is probably the "central skill in the teaching-learning experience" since teachers "bombard" their students with all types of inquiries throughout the day (p. 38). Questioning is probably the dominant teaching technique in most language classrooms, if not all of them, since a great deal of class time is devoted to it.

Importance of Questioning

Questioning was and still is one of the strongest and most effective techniques in teaching. When teachers and educators adopt a "questioning stance," says Buehler (2005), it can lead to create communicative classrooms since conversations are daily parts of students' activities (p. 286). In her view, Zamel (1981) believes that "a constant flow" of teachers' questions plays a crucial role in creating interactive and communicative classrooms (quoted in Tollefson, 2004, p. 224). "There is evidence in

research on language and cognitive development," says Hall (2004), that interaction can be developed through participation (p. 140). Of course, questioning can be a sufficient way to encourage students to participate and interact in classrooms. In addition, it is one of the most effective ways "to maximize learning" and "actively involve students in learning activities" (Kauchak & Eggen, 2008, p. 391). According to Cotton (2001), questioning can develop students' interests, motivation, and critical thinking. Besides reviewing and summarizing previous lessons, through asking questions, teachers can stimulate learners "to pursue knowledge on their own" (p. 2). "Like athletes stretching their muscles before a race," says Foster (2004), questioning can warm up the students to learn their new lessons (p. 40). In addition, questioning tests students' understanding and makes the class more interesting and interactive. Thoughtful questions, Wilson (1997) says, can not only help learners "extract" factual information but help them connect concepts, make inferences, increase awareness, encourage creativity and imagination, aid critical thinking processes, and help learners "explore deeper levels of knowing, thinking and understanding" (p. 1). Kirkton (1971) believes that questioning can help improve the effectiveness of students' reading. Questions don't only serve to control or focus the readers' attention, but can stimulate their creative reading too. Furthermore, questioning can help shy learners get involved in the learning process and the "enhance self-esteem" of the students, say Kauchak and Eggen (2008, p. 391). Our motive in questioning as language teachers, says Ur (2002), is usually to get our students to engage with the language material "actively through speech," so an effective questioning technique is one that "elicits fairly prompt, motivated, relevant and full responses" (p. 230).

In a case study, Mitchell (1994) found that questioning can serve in three main functions: instructional, management, and social. In its instructional function, questioning can help teachers introduce topics, summarize, revise work, prompt discussion, and encourage critical thinking. Questioning can serve a management-related function since it "draw[s] students into discussion who are doing something else" (p. 74). Also, the teacher in Mitchell's study believed that questioning can help build the students' self confidence which gives questioning a social connection.

Research about the importance of asking questions in relation to learning is not new. Many Greek philosophers emphasized the importance of questioning in the learning process. Through my readings I found that the concept of questioning seems to be discussed frequently starting from the 1960s. Later, in the 1970s, many

researchers started to talk about asking different types of questions and its relationship with the learners' achievement. Researchers continued working on teachers' focus on factual questions rather than thinking ones in the 1980s and 1990s. Their studies showed that many teachers ask factual questions in their classrooms, most of the time. On the other hand, highly cognitively questions that require thinking, analyzing, and evaluating were rarely asked. Rather than discussing the types and categories of questions, more people have started talking about questioning behaviors in the 21st century. Researchers, like Kauchak and Eggen (2008), introduced different questioning behaviors for becoming more professional and effective teachers.

Asking questions in the classroom may not be productive unless the teacher is "knowledgeable," Orlich, Harder, Callahan, Trevisan, and Brown (2004) believe, in framing meaningful questions that match the course's goals and outcomes (p. 231). Questions should help the students develop their thinking skills. Bloom (1956, cited in Wilson, 1997) developed a system or taxonomy, for organizing such thinking skills, from lower to higher levels of cognitive thinking skills. There are six thinking skills explained in Bloom's taxonomy: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. In referring to Bloom's work, Wilson (1997) gives a brief description of five types of questions. The first type is factual questions which can be defined as requiring "simple" and "straight" answers based on facts. They are considered the lowest level of cognitive questions. Convergent questions are the second type, and they are used "within a very finite range of acceptable accuracy". That is because such questions can be formed at different cognitive levels: comprehension, application, or analysis. They can be based on "personal awareness" or personal materials. Such questions, says Orlich, et al. (2004), are "ideal application" of 'teacher-directed instruction' in which all students have a chance to participate" (p. 237). The third type that is Wilson describes called divergent questions which allow the students to think of alternatives and different variations. Thus, they encourage the students to analyze and evaluate using their own knowledge, thoughts, or imagination. Because such questions stimulate the learners' imagination and thinking, answers to them are usually correct. Thus, it is believed that they can be effective in building the confidence of learners, especially those with learning difficulties (Orlich, et al. 2004). Evaluative questions are the fourth type of questions. They usually "require sophisticated levels of cognitive and/or emotional judgment" (Wilson, 1997, p. 3). Thus, answering such questions should consider different levels

and perspectives. The last type of questions combines one or more of the previous mentioned questions. They are called the combinations.

Questioning Behaviors

There are many strategies and behaviors that teachers should learn before asking questions in their classrooms. For example, teachers should try to ask positive or "reinforcing" questions that students might learn from as well as enjoy (Orlich et al., 2004, p. 244). Orlich et al. (2004) warn against using questioning for "punitive purposes" since it "turns off" the learning process (p. 244). Pausing is another questioning strategy that teachers should be aware of when asking questions. For Orlich et al. (2004) and many other psychologists, questioning is a process of "ask[ing] the question, paus[ing], and then call[ing] on a student" (p. 244). The pause keeps the attention in the classroom high since any student may be selected to answer. Thus, students should not be chosen before asking questions but after finishing asking the questions. Other important behaviors in asking questions are nonverbal in nature, such as pointing or nodding to students to answer. All these nonverbal signals, and others, help to frame correct and meaningful questions since they activate the learners' participation, understanding, and communication. In what follows, I would like to mention some of those general behaviors used when asking questions, define them, and explain their roles in enhancing the learning process.

1) Questioning Frequency

Questioning frequency refers to the number of questions asked by the teacher during an instructional period as Kauchak and Eggen (2008) define it. Some teachers depend on the strategy of telling and explaining instead of interacting with their students through questioning. However, other teachers believe that involving students in question-and-answer sessions can make them more attentive to teacher explanations than passive listeners, and as a result, their achievement increases in the classroom (quoted in Kauchak & Eggen, 2008, p. 391).

But how many questions should teachers ask in their classrooms? Some teachers tend to repeat their questions regularly in their classes. This error, Orlich et al. (2004) say, can condition the students "to catch the 'replay' of the question instead of attending to it the first time" (p. 259). Not only this, but repeating the question regularly might affect managing the time of the class negatively. Although repeating the question can, sometimes, be effective, especially when asking high level questions, it can commonly cause "a loss of valuable time" and inefficient

management of the classroom (Orlich, et al., 2004, p. 259). Some researchers have found no relationship between increasing the frequency of classroom questions and enhancing the learning process, and other researchers have found a negative relationship (Cotton, 2003).

2) Nonverbal Behaviors

The nonverbal aspects, says Crooks (2003), are as important as the verbal aspects for engagement and communication. The teacher “must maintain congruency between “[his/her] verbal and nonverbal behaviors” when both asking a question and handling a student’s response (Orlich, et al., 2004, p. 249). The teacher’s attitudes, such as eye contact, nodding, facial expressions, and hand gestures, can help in producing effective questions and thus correct and clear responses. When using such nonverbal manners, the teacher should act as if "seeking knowledge" rather than "interrogating the troops" (Davis, 1993, p. 83). Maintaining eye contact with the students makes the students feel that their teacher is listening to them as well as interested in their responses. Again, this gives the students confidence and motivation to participate in the discussions. Also, some nonverbal gestures indicate the teacher’s understanding, confusion, or support while others are signals for the students either to continue, think, or repeat their responses.

3) Wait Time

Davis (1993) believes that waiting is a signal that the teacher wants "thoughtful participation" (p. 86). Orlich, et al.,(2004) distinguish between two types of wait time. Whereas wait time 1 is defined as the time between asking the questions and calling on a student, wait time 2 refers to the time given to the called student, or other students, to think of their responses. Thus, wait time is an important educational element in teaching because it gives the students a chance to think of their responses more carefully. As a result, students’ involvement and participation increases and management problems decrease. Not only does wait time affect the student, but wait time gives the teacher time to read students’ nonverbal signals that indicate excitement, fright, shame, interest, apprehension, etc. Orlich, et al. believe that the dimension of teaching becomes very important when teachers become more sensitive to "humanitarian considerations" in their classrooms (p. 245). Also, increasing wait time beyond three seconds can help teachers achieve their outcomes by (1) increasing the flexibility of teacher responses, (2) increasing the teachers’ expectations regarding

their slow learners, (3) expanding the variety of questions asked by teachers, and (4) increasing the number of higher cognitive questions asked by teachers (Cotton, 2001).

Wait time 1 can be a very effective strategy in classrooms, especially if it lasts for about three to five seconds. Kauchak and Eggen (2008) point out three benefits for increasing the wait time period to about five seconds. They believe that increasing wait time can help to (1) improve the quality of the students' responses, (2) reduce the students' failures, and (3) increase the students' participation, in general, and the "participation from minority students" too (p. 392).

4) Calling on Students

Who should the teacher choose to answer his/her questions? The strategy of calling on students is very important, especially for the students themselves. Kauchak and Eggen (2008) say that the students, when raising their hands, believe that their teachers expect them to participate and learn. This can also make the students feel their teachers' commitment to their learning. However, this technique should be used equally. In other words, all the students should be selected equally and fairly. "Equitable distribution," says Kauchak and Eggen (2008), "is a powerful tool for promoting both achievement and student motivation" (p. 392). Besides increasing students' participation and motivation, equitable distribution can help increase the learners' confidence in themselves since they all have the opportunity to raise their hands and respond. This technique should be used randomly, though. Cohen (2005) explains that calling on students randomly rather than naming them in a systematic way can help to avoid "selective listening" (p. 241).

On the other hand, inequitable selection of particular students can send the students a negative message. For instance, focusing on a certain group of students to answer, like the stronger ones, might make the other students less active and feel that the teacher has lower expectations for them. When the teachers choose students to respond, they should be careful who they choose and when they choose them. Some faculty members, says Davis (1993), believe that calling on students who may not wish to participate "intimidates students and may deter others from making contributions" (p. 83). They believe that students need to be drawn into the discussions by calling on them individually.

Selecting a student to answer the question *before* asking it is not like selecting him/her *after* asking the question. Bond (2007) explains that calling on a specific student before asking a question can help the teacher ensure his/her students'

participation. Also the students become aware of whom the teacher is addressing and thus management problems are lessened. On the other hand, Bond believes that asking the question first and then calling on a student can help the teacher determine and assess his/her students' understanding. In other words, slow learners who aren't raising their hands can be given more time to think before selecting them to answer and thus embarrassing them.

Bond (2007) believes that calling on a variety of students is an effective element for keeping the students "on their toes" during the class's discussions. Calling on the students randomly makes the students remain alert and attentive. "Effective educators," says Bond, "must interact with all children ... [to] keep ... [them] engaged for maximum learning to occur." Sometimes, choral responses can be effective. After introducing and/or presenting the new items to the students, the students can be asked to repeat them in chorus. Ur (2002) believes that this way can help the learners to "perceive and remember" newly introduced items (p. 240).

5) Handling Students' Responses

Whether the student's response is correct or incorrect, the teacher should deal with this response wisely. If the student gives a wrong response or gives no response, then the teacher needs to help the learner by using effective techniques like prompting, repetition, rephrasing, and interpretation. These techniques are important since they help the students "explore and express" what they know, even when they aren't sure (Davis, 1993, p. 87). When they give incorrect responses, the students shouldn't be criticized. Orlich, et al. (2004) believes that negative comments given to students like, "No, you are wrong," "act as negative reinforces" and can reduce the students' participation as well as motivation (p. 248). Questions shouldn't be used for "punitive purposes" because this can shut down the learning process and "turns off" the learner (p. 244). Another problem that might occur as a result of the negative handling of the students' responses is called the "ripple effect" (Orlich, et al., 2004, p. 248). Orlich, et al. describe this "ripple effect" as the effect of the teacher's negative feedback on not only the "target student" but also the rest of the students.

Orlich, et al. (2004) also believe that "teachers who suffer from excessive verbosity frustrate students" (p. 260). That is, some teachers don't allow their students to complete their responses either because they tend to complete the student's response or because they want to add their own personal comments. Such "inappropriate ... idiosyncrasy" might discourage the students' participation and

confidence (p. 260). Such interruption, says Davis (1993), "signals the teacher's impatience and it hinders participation" (p. 88). Providing positive reinforcement will encourage the students to complete an incomplete response or revise an incorrect response (Orlich, et al., 2004). Moreover, the teacher shouldn't praise every answer because that then turns the teacher into the "official dispenser of rewards" and it becomes awkward when a student gives an irrelevant or incorrect answer (Davis, 1993, p. 89).

To conclude, the manner in which the question is asked seems to be as important as the question itself. In other words, the manner of asking questions in the classrooms is meaningful too. If the teacher asks a perfect question in an inappropriate way, then the question is worthless. There are many "behaviors," as Orlich, et al. (2004) call them, for asking questions that teachers should be aware of (p. 231). The use of nonverbal actions is one of those behaviors, for example. If the teacher looks at the students or the white board, walks around them, or stops close to the board or students during or after asking a question, it might affect the students' responses as well as their understanding. Another important technique for asking questions is the selection of students. Equitable and inequitable selection of students may affect their participation and self-confidence. Of course, besides selecting the students to respond, there are a variety of behaviors that questioning requires when and after asking any question.

My aim in my research was to try to find what the most common behaviors English teachers in UAE high schools use for asking questions. Then, I tried to find out if teachers are aware of such behaviors and their usefulness for learning.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The main purpose of this exploratory study was to investigate teachers' awareness of questioning behaviors and their usefulness in EFL classrooms in the UAE. This awareness was examined through different points of views: the author's point of view, teachers' beliefs, and students' opinions. Thus, the study aimed at answering the following research questions:

1. What are the most common behaviors English language teachers in UAE high schools use for asking questions?
2. Are EFL teachers in the UAE high schools aware of their questioning behaviors, and their usefulness?

In order to achieve the purpose of this study, I used a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments. Observing different EFL teachers in different high schools in RAK helped me collect both quantitative and qualitative data (see Appendix A). Also, quantitative data were collected by using a questionnaire distributed among 80 high school students in RAK (see Appendix C). Moreover, I used the teachers' interview questions in Appendix B to collect qualitative data from interviews with English language teachers in RAK high schools. To avoid any ambiguity or misunderstanding regarding language comprehension, I translated all the included statements, items, and questions in the students' questionnaire into Arabic to enable the students to understand the statements easily. In addition, instructions on how to complete the questionnaire were given in Arabic language.

The Participants

The participating population of this study was composed of two groups: English language teachers and government secondary school students. What follows is a description of each group.

Teachers

The teachers' group in this study consisted of experienced secondary level teachers who teach English for grades 10, 11, and 12 in four different government secondary female schools in the Ras Al Khaimah (RAK) Educational Zone. This group included eight female local teachers from the UAE. From each school, two teachers participated in this study.

Students

This group included a total of 80 female students in grades 10, 11, and 12. The aim of choosing this number of participating students was to include 10 students from eight different schools. The majority of students in these government schools were UAE nationals with some students from other Gulf and Arab countries such as Oman, Yemen, Jordan, Palestine, Syria, Sudan, and Egypt. The students' level of English proficiency is was intermediate to upper-intermediate. Their ages ranged from 15 to 18.

Instruments

Classroom Observations

In order to shed light on teachers' common behaviors of asking questions, classroom observations were scheduled in four different high schools. I observed eight female teachers teaching high school students in grades 10, 11 or 12 from four different government schools in RAK: Al Najah School for Basic and Secondary Education, Muzoon School for Basic and Secondary Education, Khadra School for Basic and Secondary Education, and Al Asma'a School for Basic and Secondary Education. To develop my observation sheet shown in Appendix A, first, I read Orlich, Harder, Callahan, Trevisan and Brown's (2004) chapter talking about the different types of behaviors, or what they call "questioning behaviors," that teachers should use while and after asking questions (p. 231). Focusing on two of their mentioned behaviors, the pause and the selection of respondents, I listed them in my observation sheet. Besides Orlich's, et al. two behaviors, I added others of my own based on the articles and books that I read about questioning behaviors, including Kauchak and Eggen (2008) and Bond (2007). Also, my experience as an English teacher who experiences questioning daily in my classrooms helped suggest other behaviors to add to the sheet.

The observation sheet was divided into four main questioning behaviors: instructor behaviors, wait time, calling on students, and handling the students' responses. Each main strategy had at least four sub-behaviors for questioning that were adapted or modified from my readings as well as my experience. Regarding the final strategy, handling students' responses, I added a column next to it showing whether the responses were correct (C) or incorrect (I). In the second column of the sheet, I counted the number of times that behaviors were used in the classrooms. Only

the number of the questions, and not the questions themselves, were filled in the observation sheet next to the behaviors used.

The observations helped me to collect both qualitative data and some quantitative data. I was planning to video tape the classes I observed, but my colleagues suggested that both teachers and students would not feel comfortable. Not only this, but perhaps, most teachers might refuse for cultural reasons.

My school supervisor asked the teachers he is supervising to attend additional classes in other schools. He wanted his teachers in different schools to observe each other so they can learn about each others' styles and techniques of teaching. My school supervisor was very supportive to me since he agreed to give his teachers observing those classes my "observation sheet" to use while observing each other. This "shared observation" made my findings more accurate and valid since more than one observer had the same copy to fill in and write down notes.

I visited four schools, and observed two teachers at each school including my school. Thus, eight high female local high school teachers teaching English were observed.

Structured Interviews

After observing the eight female teachers, follow up structured interviews were conducted with all of the teachers. I was planning to conduct an interview with every observed teacher immediately after her class, but it wasn't possible for all the teachers. In two schools, I had to observe two classes following each other and thus couldn't have time to hold a direct interview after the first class. Thus, I waited until the second class was finished and then had two interviews following each other. Regarding the other two schools, the observed teachers were interviewed directly after their classes were finished. During those interviews I asked the teachers for more clarification and explanation (see Appendix B). They were asked about the questioning behaviors they used and how useful these behaviors were. Interviews, I believe, made my observations more valid and productive because vague and unclear things observed in the classrooms were, mostly, discussed and clarified during the interviews.

The interview questions were based on my observations of the teachers' behaviors in the classroom (see Appendix B). Teachers interviewed were first asked to give background information about themselves like their names, ages, and grades they were teaching. Then, the interview sheet started with a yes/no question asking

teachers whether they found asking questions in their classrooms useful or not and giving reasons. The second long and more detailed question of the interview sheet was a multiple choice question where teachers had to select the questioning behaviors they were using besides mentioning their usefulness. Finally, teachers were asked to mention other questioning behaviors they use rather than the mentioned ones. These interviews were helpful in clarifying teachers' observed behaviors in classrooms.

Questionnaires

In order to shed light on students' beliefs on their teachers' questioning behaviors, a questionnaire was distributed among 80 students (see Appendix C). The questionnaire had two main sections. Section one asked for background information about the students such as nationality, age, and level of studying.

Section two consisted of two main questions. The first question had 12 close-ended statements aimed at eliciting information about students' beliefs towards their teachers' behaviors of asking questions. Again, the statements in the survey were organized around the four main behaviors that I used in my observation sheet as well as the interview sheet: instructor behaviors, wait time, calling on students, and handling the students' responses. The first statement in the survey was a general one asking the students if their teachers ask questions in their classrooms. The second and third statements in the survey asked about the instructor's nonverbal behaviors. To be more specific, they asked about the teachers' use of eye contact and other nonverbal gestures. The fourth, fifth and sixth statements aimed at finding out how teachers call their students to respond. Statements seven and eight referred to wait time used by the teacher. The last four statements (9-12) asked about the way of teachers' handle their students' responses: positively or negatively. Participating students were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each statement on a 5-point Likert-type scale (always, sometimes, not sure, rarely, or never).

The second question was an open-ended question asking the students to list other questioning behaviors they could notice in their classrooms besides mentioning its usefulness in the learning process. It is worth mentioning here that statements, items, and questions in this questionnaire were offered in both languages: English and Arabic. This was to make sure that the students understood it.

Ten different high schools in RAK, other than the schools I visited to observe classes, were given 30 copies of surveys each to make my total number of surveys 300. My initial plan was to select 10 copies from each school randomly to make the

total number of selected copies 100. However two schools didn't return their copies. Thus, the total number of questionnaires analyzed was 80 copies. Collecting data from more schools and different ones, I believed, helped to give me a fuller picture of questioning behaviors used in RAK schools. Not only this, but such triangulation could make my findings more representative and valid. Data collected using the questionnaire and the observation sheet were analyzed descriptively.

Fortunately, our RAK Educational Zone held a regular meeting for high school teachers every Monday throughout the academic year 2008-2009. Those meetings discussed the importance of the CEPA (Common Educational Proficiency Assessment for UAE Higher Education) test for grade 12 students in order to help teachers prepare their students for the CEPA using communicative pedagogical methods and approaches. I took advantage of the meeting to discuss with different high school teachers the possibility of observing and interviewing some of them. Also I captured the opportunity of the regular meetings to give the other teachers, rather than the observed ones, copies of my surveys for their students.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

In this chapter, a detailed description of the data analysis and the findings of the study will be presented. Data were collected by using a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments. Data collected from classrooms observations and questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics, whereas, data collected from the open-ended question in the questionnaires and interviews were analyzed qualitatively to gain more insights on the teachers' observations and students' questionnaires. The presentation of the findings is divided into two sections: teachers' common behaviors for asking questions and teachers' awareness of their questioning behaviors and their usefulness.

Teachers' Common Behaviors for Asking Questions in UAE Government Secondary Schools

Findings show that questioning was a common educational strategy used by all participating teachers in this study. In fact, 93% of the students stated in their questionnaires that their teachers "Always" use questioning in their classes (see Table 1).

Table 1: Using Questioning in EFL Classrooms

No.	Statement	Always	Sometimes	Not Sure	Rarely	Never
1	Asking questions is one of the techniques that your English teacher uses in your classroom	74 (93%)	6 (7%)	- (0%)	- (0%)	- (0%)

The Use of Nonverbal Behaviors

The classroom observations showed that all eight observed teachers used many nonverbal behaviors when asking questions like maintaining eye contact with students, using nonverbal gestures while asking a question, and standing in different positions while asking questions, or listening to respondents. Of course, there were some differences among the teachers in the number of times they used those behaviors. Figure 1 below represents the frequency of occurrences of each behavior for the eight observed teachers.

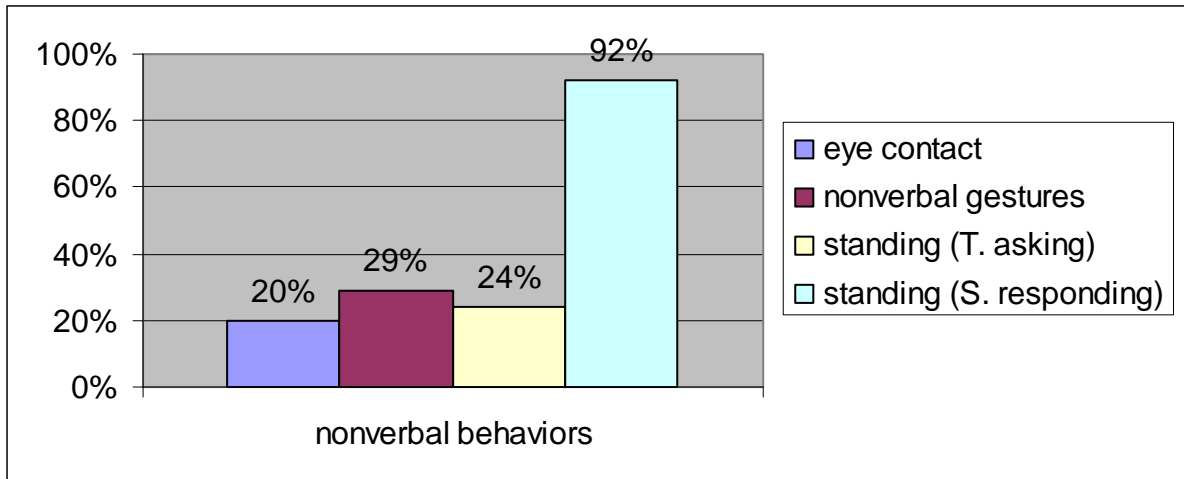


Figure 1: The Instructors' Nonverbal Behaviors for Asking Questions in Classrooms

As seen in Figure 1, it was found that in 20% of the questions asked, teachers were maintaining eye contact with their students. Eyes can signal many messages, as Brown (2004) states, like "interest, boredom, empathy, hostility, attraction, understanding, misunderstanding, and other messages" (p. 263). Most of the students (81%) agreed that their teachers "Always" make eye contact with them while asking questions while 14 students (18%) stated that their teachers "Sometimes" make eye contact with them (see Table 2).

Table 2: Maintaining Eye Contact While Asking Questions in EFL Classrooms

No.	Statement	Always	Sometimes	Not Sure	Rarely	Never
2	Your teacher always makes eye contact with you when he/she asks you any question	65 (81%)	14 (18%)	1 (1%)	- (0%)	- (0%)

Also, the observed teachers tended to use different nonverbal gestures such as head nodding and hand gestures in 29% of questions they asked (see Figure 1). 92% of students agreed that their teachers use nonverbal gestures either with their heads or hands while asking questions (see Table 3). Davis (1993) believes that gestures like nodding or pointing help to keep the focus on students' responses rather than shifting attention to the teacher (p. 89).

Table 3: Using Nonverbal Gestures While Asking Questions in Classrooms

No.	Statement	Always	Sometimes	Not Sure	Rarely	Never
3	Your teacher always uses nonverbal gestures when asking questions such as head nodding and hand movements	60 (75%)	16 (20%)	3 (4%)	1 (1%)	- (0%)

When it comes to the position of teachers' standing, the observed teachers stood in different positions while asking questions and/or listening to respondents. Their different positions of standing seemed to reflect their beliefs and reasons behind doing it, as it is going to be discussed later. Crookes (2003) suggests the teacher should be "reflective and proactive" (p. 73) about his/her position in classrooms. There were three teachers (T2, T3, and T6) standing in two positions only while asking a question. They would either stand in front of the classroom or in the middle of the class, maybe because these places gave them the feeling of having the control which is needed in "leading a question and answer session" (Harmer, 2005, p. 58). However, they would stand in four different positions while listening to their students responding. Crookes (2003) explains that there are many ranges for the places a teacher can stand or sit depending on certain purposes. He explains why a teacher would stand close to the student or far away for two main reasons: A teacher may stand closer to the students either to achieve "greater impact" or to have a "better chance to relate to students" (p. 73). Also, he explains why students would prefer their teachers to stand far away from them for other two reasons: feeling insecure or not finishing their work. On the other hand, T1, T4, T5, and T8 had three different positions of standing while asking a question in their classrooms. Those teachers stood in two or more different positions while listening to their students, except T5 who would always stand in front of the class while the students responded. "Varying the pace" of questions, says Kirkton (1971), can help the teacher create an "alive" discussion (p. 408). T7 was the only teacher who had the same position for asking questions and listening to responses. That was standing in front of the class. Figure 1 shows that 92% of the teachers' positions of standing were focused on listening to their students' responses. In other words, teachers tend to change their positions of standing and stand in different positions while listening to their students responding. On the other hand, 24% of their standing positions were related to the teachers asking

questions. This seem to show that teachers care more and give more importance to their students' responses and where they, teachers, should be standing than their positions while asking questions.

The Use of Wait time

There are two types of wait time. Wait time 1 refers to the time between asking the questions and calling on a student, while wait time 2 refers to the time given to the called student, or other students, to think of his/her response. Like Kauchak and Eggen (2008), I believe that increasing wait time to about 3-5 seconds can enhance the learning process. Figure 2 shows percentages of wait time 1 used by the observed teachers. It shows that some teachers waited less than three seconds after asking a question (21%) while others waited for more than three seconds (60%) while using wait time 1.

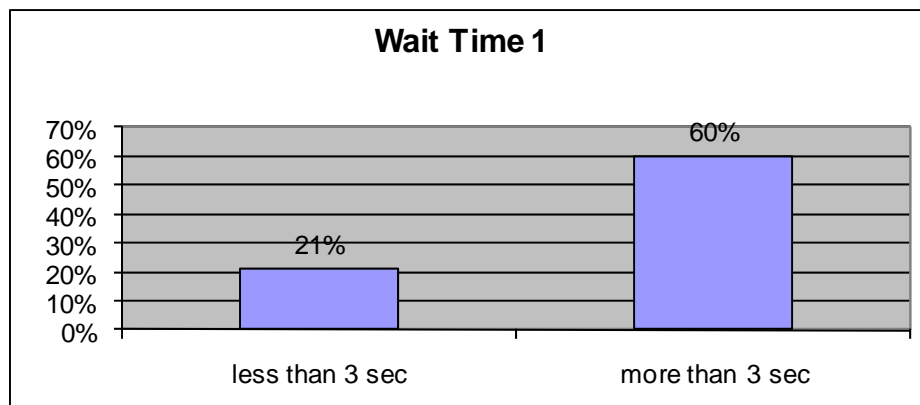


Figure 2: Teachers' Use of Wait Time 1 in EFL Classrooms

All eight observed teachers tended to wait for more than three seconds after asking questions to help the students think of the responses. As seen in Figure 2, 60% of teachers' questions were followed by wait time of more than three seconds. Also 73% of the students believed that their teachers "Always" pause three seconds or more after asking questions (see Table 4). When the students were asked about their teachers' usage of wait time, 89% ("Always" + "Sometimes") of them stated that their teachers paused for about three seconds after asking a question. There were only four students who said that their teachers never pause. Waiting, says Davis (1993), is a signal indicating the teacher's desire for "thoughtful participation" (p. 86). This wait time becomes important, say Orlich, et al. (2004), when asking higher-level questions (p. 245). Also Sitko's and Slemon's (1982) finding confirmed the "close relationship" between the teachers' level of questions and their students' responses (p. 116). In other

words, the student may give a better responses if he/she was given enough wait time to think of higher-level questions.

Figure 2 shows that some teachers asked their students some questions (21%) without giving them at least three seconds to think of the questions. Actually, most of T6's students were not given waiting time to think of her questions. Maybe those teachers didn't give wait time to their students after asking them because their questions were lower-level ones. Wait time, according to Orlich, et a l. (2004), has no effect on students' responses to lower-level questions (p. 246).

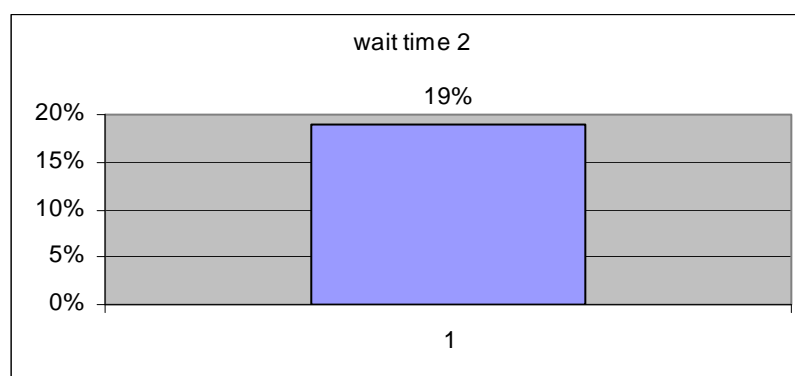


Figure 3: Teachers' Use of Wait Time 2 in EFL Classrooms

Figure 3 refers to wait time 2 where teachers paused for about three seconds after their students responded. All of the teachers, except T5, waited once or twice more than three seconds after their students responded. That is, 19% of their students' responses were given wait time 2 (2-5 seconds) to be heard and/or discussed (see Figure 2). Table 4 shows 42% (n=34) of the students stated that their teachers "Always" give them at least three seconds (wait time 2) to think of their responses. Only 19 students (24%) claimed that their teachers "Never" give them enough wait time 2 (see Table 4). As Orlich, et al. (2004) say, wait time 2 is as important as wait time 1 since it gives the students time to think or "allows other students to respond" (p. 245).

Table 4: Teachers Pause For Three Seconds Or More After Asking Questions

No.	Statement	Always	Sometimes	Not Sure	Rarely	Never
7	Your teacher pauses for about 3 seconds after asking questions to get students' responses	58 (73%)	13 (16%)	5 (6%)	- (0%)	4 (5%)

8	You teacher pauses for about 3 seconds after you respond to a question	34 (42%)	13 (16%)	10 (13%)	4 (5%)	19 (24%)
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Calling on Students

The observation sheet looked at the ways teachers call on students. Calling on students to answer can be accomplished through different behaviors too. A teacher may call a specific student to answer, call for volunteers, or ask the whole class to call out the answer. Figure 3 represents the percentages of times each of the eight teachers called their students by their names or called for volunteers in two cases: before or after asking a question. Also, it presents the percentages of times teachers asked their students to call out the answer together.

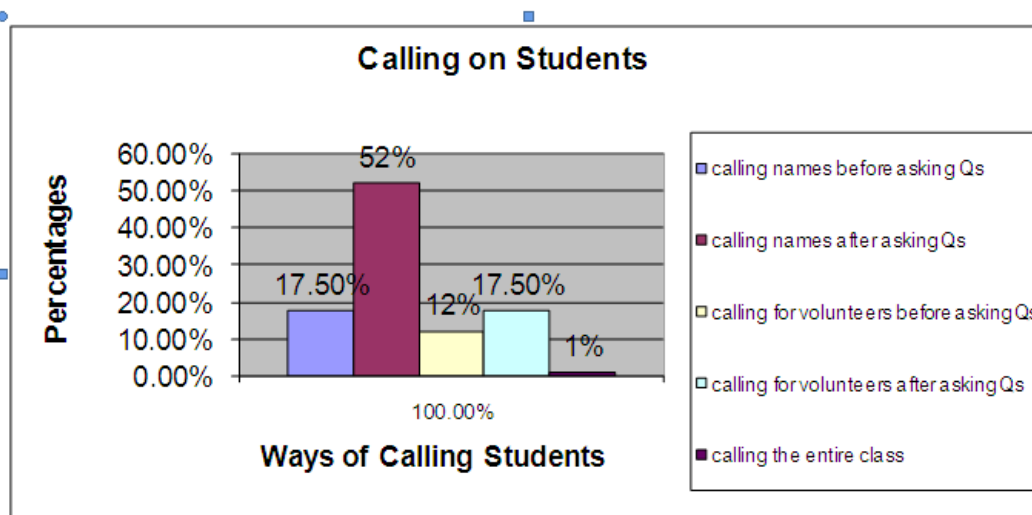


Figure 4: Teachers' Ways of Calling Students to Answer

As seen in Figure 3, in 52% of the teachers' questions, students' names were called to answer after asking them questions. This pattern, says Cohen (2005), encourages all the students to listen and prepare their answers in anticipation of being asked. "To keep students on their toes," says Bond (2007), teachers need to use the elements of surprise and uncertainty (p. 4). 34 students out of 80 (43%) said that their teachers "Always" call names before asking questions, and 25 students (31%) believed their names were called "Sometimes" by their teachers. 20% of the asked students said that their teachers would "Rarely" call their names before asking questions (see Table 5).

Calling students names before asking a question is "advantageous," says Bond (2007) for two reasons. The first one is that the teacher can ensure the involvement of a wide variety of his/her students throughout the lesson. Second, all the students

clearly know whom the teacher is addressing, and thus management problems should be minimized. This can be achieved by calling the students' names randomly. Students will remain attentive since they aren't sure who the teacher will call to answer.

Table 5: Calling Students' Names When Asking Questions in EFL Classrooms

No.	Statement	Always	Sometimes	Not Sure	Rarely	Never
4	Your teacher calls on students by their names to answer before asking the question	34 (43%)	25 (31%)	4 (5%)	16 (20%)	1 (1%)
5	You teacher calls students by their names to answer after asking the question	12 (15%)	6 (8%)	3 (4%)	34 (43%)	25 (31%)

Figure 3 shows that there were few questions (17.5%) asked where the teachers called their students names first and then asked the question. The same percentage (17.5) applied with calling for volunteers. Most teachers who called for volunteers did so after asking questions. Only 12% of questions were asked after calling for volunteers to answer.

Regarding statement number 5 in the questionnaire, "your teacher asks his/her questions to the entire class," 61 students (76%) said that their teachers ask the entire class without specifying names to answer questions. Some faculty members, says Davis (1993), prefer distributing their questions to their students to be all responsible for answering. This gives shy students opportunities to think of the responses before class. However, classroom observations showed only one case (1%) where T1 asked her entire class to call out the answer for her question (see Figure 3). Perhaps calling out the answer by the students requires more time. High school students, I would assume, wouldn't prefer calling out the answer together since it seems a childish style of answering. Or maybe this was because those teachers agree with Bond (2007) who suggests using this technique, calling the entire class to answer, should be used "cautiously" because the teacher may lose control over the students' enthusiasm and noise (p. 3).

Table 6: Calling the Entire Class to Answer

No.	Statement	Always	Sometimes	Not Sure	Rarely	Never
4	Your teacher asks his/her questions to the entire class	61 (76%)	13 (16%)	2 (3%)	3 (4%)	1 (1%)

This variety of methods in calling students out to answer shows the equitable distribution pattern that the teachers were using. As Kauchak and Eggen (2008) illustrated, this patterns of calling on the students to answer leads the students to believe that their teacher "expects them to participate and learn" and that their teacher is committed to their learning (p. 392)

Handling Students' Responses

Teachers' handling of their students' responses varied from negative to positive handling. Also, there were differences between handling correct responses of students and handling their incorrect ones. Figure 4 presents the results of the last section of the observation sheet, handling the students' responses. It has two main parts: handling the students' responses in a positive or negative way or a negative and whether the responses were correct or incorrect. That is, Figure 4 represents four cases:

- Positive handling of correct responses (PH of CR)
- Positive handling of incorrect responses (PH of IR)
- Negative handling of correct responses (NH of CR)
- Negative handling of incorrect responses (NH of IR)

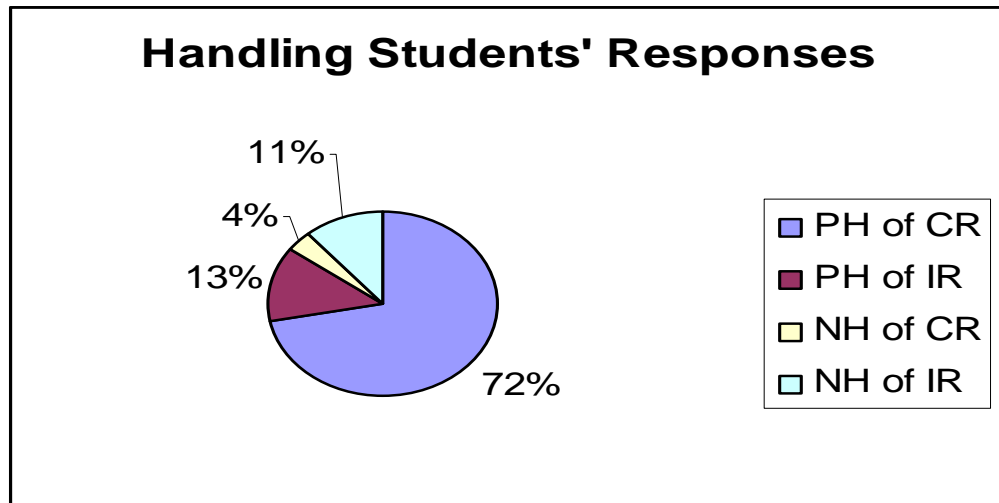


Figure 5: Teachers' Handling Students' Responses in EFL Classrooms

Positive Handling of Both Correct and Incorrect Responses

Figure 4 shows that most of the students' correct responses (72%) were handled positively. This was done through praising, smiling, head nodding, eye contact, or rewording the questions. This is what students stated in their questionnaires, too, since 97% ("Always"+"Sometimes") of them believed that their correct responses were handled positively, compared with only 3% (n=2) who stated that their teachers would "Rarely" handle their correct responses positively (see Table 6). However, Figure 4 shows that there were few incorrect responses (13%) that were handled positively. T1, T3 and T6 all praised their students' incorrect responses once. Also, T2, T4, and T6 each nodded their heads positively to their students' incorrect responses at least once (see Appendix G). Table 6 shows that 85% (n=68) of students agreed that their teachers "Rarely" or "Never" handled their incorrect responses negatively. Such "positive reinforcement" can encourage the students to revise their incorrect responses (Orlich, et al., 2004, p. 248). Responses to the questionnaire showed similar results when 69% ("Always" + "Sometimes") of the students stated that their incorrect responses were handled positively, and only 12 students (15%) said their teachers would "Rarely" or "Never" handle their incorrect responses positively (see Table 6).

Negative Handling of Both Correct and Incorrect Responses

Out of 80 students, 19 students ("Always"+"Sometimes") said that their correct responses were handled negatively, while most of them (70%) stated that their correct responses were "Never" handled negatively. Classroom observations, also, showed that some of the teachers handled their students' correct responses negatively.

There were times when T4, T5, T6, and T7 ignored their students' correct responses by looking at the board/slides or/and by riffling papers/slides while their students were responding. Such interruption, says Davis (1993), signals the teachers' impatience and thus hinders the students' participation. 11% of students' incorrect responses were followed by negative statements or ignoring by the teacher who was looking at the board or riffling papers (see Figure 4). Only eight students claimed that their teachers "Never" handled their incorrect responses negatively (see Table 6).

Table 7: Teachers' Handling Of Students' Responses

No.	Statements	Always	Sometimes	Not Sure	Rarely	Never
9	Your teacher deals with your correct response positively	66 (82%)	12 (15%)	- (0%)	2 (3%)	- (0%)
10	Your teacher deals with your correct response negatively	9 (10%)	10 (13%)	2 (3%)	3 (4%)	56 (70%)
11	Your teacher deals with your incorrect response positively	41 (51%)	14 (18%)	13 (16%)	4 (5%)	8 (10%)
12	Your teacher deals with your incorrect response negatively	1 (1%)	7 (9%)	4 (5%)	15 (19%)	53 (66%)

Teachers' Awareness of Their Questioning Behaviors and Their Effectiveness in EFL Classrooms

Structured interviews were conducted with observed teachers in order to answer my second question of this study: Are EFL teachers in UAE government secondary schools aware of questioning behaviors and their usefulness?

When asked about the importance of using questioning in EFL classrooms, all four interviewees believed that questioning is an effective strategy in such classrooms since it strengthens the communication between the teachers and students. Also, most teachers believed that questioning is important for encouraging students' participation as well as ensuring their understanding. One of the interviewed teachers explained that her questions "make her students more attentive and curious." Another two teachers, T4 and T6, believed that asking the students questions can help manage some

behavioral problems. T4 stated that asking questions in her classrooms "reduces some behavior problems like gossiping" while she is lecturing.

The second question of the interview sheet was more detailed, and teachers had to respond to a multiple choice question (see Appendix B). The interviewees gave different explanations for the degrees of effectiveness of the different behaviors listed in the interview sheet: the instructor's nonverbal behaviors, wait time, calling on students, and handling their responses. The four questioning behaviors observed and discussed in the interviews are presented below.

The Instructor's Nonverbal Behaviors

All the interviewed teachers said they used nonverbal behaviors like eye contact, head nodding and hand moving. They explained that such behaviors help their students to understand better. One teacher said that she makes eye contact with her students "all the time" to control their negative behaviors like gossiping and laughing in classrooms. She said that her students understand her "threatening eye contact" and thus stop their unaccepted behaviors. Another teacher said that she uses hand gestures a lot when asking questions to make sure that her students are following her and listening to the question.

Three teachers (T2, T3, and T7) out of the eight believed that the teacher's place is in front of the class where all the students can see them. They said that teachers shouldn't move a lot because this would distract their students' attention and understanding. One of those teachers believed that standing in front of the classroom gives her "the power to control" the entire class. Some teachers, says Harmer (2005), play the role of the controller in their classrooms because they feel comfortable with it. Thus, as Harmer suggests, perhaps it was hard for her to go beyond it. This controller role appears in her actions like preferring standing in front of the class. Another four teachers said that moving around their students and changing their positions of sitting and standing make their students more active and attentive. One of those teachers, T5, explained that she sits on her students' desks sometimes to create a friendly atmosphere. Also, she said that she joins her students' groups from time to time to ask them questions about their work while she is sitting in the group. "This," she said, "strengthens my relationship with my students as well as strengthens my students' confidence. Being a participant, where the students "enjoy having their teacher with them," is also one of the teacher's roles that Harmer (2005) mentioned (p. 61). This teacher seems to agree with Mitchell's (1994) case study, too, who

concluded that teaching is 90% "caring and working ... and developing a joint purpose" with students, and once this purpose is achieved, it is up to the students mostly to do all the learning (p. 76). Actually, throughout the interview, I could feel the enthusiasm of this teacher and her real interest in teaching. This was, perhaps, partly due to her young age that was closer to her students' than the other teachers. She was also the only teacher I observed and interviewed who graduated from the Higher Colleges of Technology. The last teacher wasn't sure about her movement, sitting and standing while asking questions in her classrooms. "You'd better ask my students," she said laughing. "They are great observers." She explained that making sure that her students could hear the question or see it on the board is enough for understanding the question since she gives them time to think of the answer.

Wait Time

All the interviewed teachers recognized the importance of giving their students two or three seconds to think of their answers and responses. Two teachers said that they let their students think and discuss their answers with their groups before giving their responses. This strategy usually takes more than 15 seconds. Of course, this group thinking is not used with all the questions, but with the more critical thinking questions. They seemed to agree with Orlich, et al. (2004) when they signified the importance of wait time with higher-level questions in increasing the students' achievement and levels. Also, Redfield and Rousseau's (1981) study concluded that "teacher's use of higher cognitive questions has a positive effect on students achievement" (p. 244). One teacher explained that sometimes her students would ask her to give them more time (more than three seconds) to think of some difficult questions. When asking some teachers about not giving enough wait time (less than three seconds) for some questions during the observations, they had different explanations. One teacher said that if she noticed that all of her students are raising their hands to answer, then she would understand that her question was easy and clear, and that her students didn't need wait time to think of it. She added that such questions are usually direct and short with one or two word answers. "Wait time," says Orlich, et al. (2004), "has no effect on students' responses to lower-level questions" (p. 246). Another teacher explained that "yes or no questions don't need wait time to think of because they are simply direct and short." Two other teachers explained how they sometimes ask their students questions about things they have just explained and want to make sure that their students could understand them by raising a question about

them. "In such cases, the students should have just heard the answer and don't need time to think of the question," said one of the teachers. Such direct and easy questions may not require time to think of them. The teacher explained that the answer is just a word or two, and sometimes it is in front of the students_ on the board or in their notebooks. The other teachers believed that they give their students wait time, and didn't notice that some of their questions were given no wait time.

Calling on Students

Three of the interviewed teachers, T1, T4, and T8, preferred calling students' names or for volunteers after asking the question. They believed that this makes their students feel secure and confident of their answers. One of those teachers said that she never calls a student's name before asking a question because this makes her students "feel worried and anxious since the rest of the class is watching and focusing on her during asking the question." Another teacher added that she would call a student's name after giving the whole class wait time to think. In this way, the entire class is thinking but one student is responding. "Selecting a student before asking a question or calling for a volunteer wouldn't give the other students a chance to think of the question," she explained. Some teenage students may be "disruptive" in their classes, says Harmer (2005), looking for their self-esteem and approval of their peers (p. 39). Thus, some behavior problems may occur sometimes in high school classes, as two interviewed teachers complained. They agreed that calling student's names after asking a question can reduce some behavior problems. One teacher said that her students "shout MISS...MISS...MISS after asking a question to let them answer my question, while other students are shouting the answer." This was a huge behavior problem for her until she decided to call a certain student's name to answer her question. The other teacher said, " If I select a student before asking my question, then the rest of my students wouldn't bother themselves listening or thinking of the answer, and thus management problems appear like gossiping." Such "disruptive outbursts," like gossiping, says Bond (2007), can be minimized by "cueing" the class before asking a question (p. 4). Bond strongly believes that classroom management problems arise when "well-intentioned" students can't read their teachers' minds. It is important here to point out that names should be selected randomly to avoid "selective listening" (Cohen, 2005, p. 241). Like Cohen, Davis (1993) believes that calling students' names can allow the students' attention to wander until their turns come (p. 83).

There were only two teachers, T5 and T7, who preferred to call students' names before asking a question because they believed that this makes their classes more controlled. Selecting a student before asking a question, one of the teachers said, makes the entire class listen to their mate's answer and have the opportunity to correct her instead of shouting the answer and "jumping from their seats." Also, selecting a student before asking a question gives the teacher the opportunity to select every student in her class, she added.

Handling Students' Responses

As I mentioned previously, teachers in this study dealt with their students' correct and incorrect responses in two different ways: negatively or positively:

1. Positive handling of correct responses

All the interviewed teachers agreed that they always praise their students' correct responses either by clapping hands or saying complimentary words like "good" and "well done." Some of those teachers said that they should be smiling and maintaining eye contact when praising their students. Students need their teachers' guidance and support, says Davis (1993), and such simple words can increase the students' participation.

Three teachers explained that asking their students to discuss their correct responses makes them feel confident and proud besides encouraging them to participate more in the class. Another two teachers explained how praising high school students can have a strong effect on the students' achievement. "Teenagers like to feel accepted and well known within their classes," one of the teachers said, "and such simple positive words like 'very creative answer' or 'I didn't think of this great answer' may fulfill their pride." Bond (2007) seems to have the same view, believing that students generally don't want to look bad or be embarrassed in front of their peers. Thus, they try to give correct responses. "Peer approval," says Harmer (2005), may be considered more important for adolescents than their teacher's attention (p. 39). The rest of the teachers mentioned the importance of positive feedback in reinforcing encouragement and participation in the class. One of the teachers added that such compliments can encourage shy students to participate since they are rewarded positively.

2. Positive handling of incorrect responses

Seven out of the eight teachers said that they give positive feedback for their students' incorrect answers. using simple words like "good try" or try again" can

encourage the students to rethink their answers as well as participate later in the class, said one of the teachers. Such responses, said Orlich, et al. (2004), aren't negative but rather "neutral" (p. 248). Another teacher said that positive feedback gives her weak students opportunities to participate since they know they will be complimented whether their answers were right or wrong. Cohen (2005) pointed out that students' incorrect responses need to be pointed out positively since it is considered a "constructive criticism" (p. 246). Two teachers explained how asking other mates to help a student giving a wrong answer can make the students active and confident. One teacher explained, "This also helps the asked student feel secure and relaxed since the help comes from her friends rather than her teacher." This approach, says Bond (2007), creates "a more interactive exchange" as well as "positive social interaction" between the students (p. 4). Rewording the questions is a favorite strategy used by T1, T4, and T8. They said that their students might not hear the question or understand it, and thus repeating it or rewording it can be a very successful way to get a correct response from the students.

3. Negative handling of correct responses

When I told them that not all correct responses were handled positively, the interviewed teachers gave different explanations. Two teachers, T2 and T3, said that they usually don't give feedback for yes or no questions because they are usually easy and direct questions. When I told them that they looked at the board while the students were giving correct responses, T5 and T8 explained that they must have been given a direct and simple question that didn't require their attention or reaction because "the students certainly know the answer," said T8. Another teacher seemed to agree with Bond's view when she said that she sometimes writes the students' answer on the board which is "positive feedback" for her, and it makes the lesson more "multisensory" (Bond, 2007, p. 4). Orlich, et al. (2004) believe that teachers should show "courtesy" to their students' responses by listening to them (p. 261). They believe that such teachers who ignore their students' responses are "insensitive" to students' feelings (p. 261). However, the rest of the interviewed teachers would perhaps not agree with Orlich, et al.'s claim that teachers' ignoring of their students shows insensitivity. They justified their looking at the board and/or riffling papers while their students were giving correct responses, or what Orlich, et al. name ignorance, by saying that they don't have time to respond to all responses and that their curricula are long and need to be finished.

4. Negative handling of incorrect responses

One of the teachers, T4, believed that negative statements are sometimes needed. "When my student gives an incorrect answer, she needs to know her mistake in order not to repeat it," she said. Whereas statements like "wrong" or "not exactly" are considered "negative reinforcers" (Orlich, 2004, p. 248), T8 said that such statements aren't considered negative feedback for her since they don't affect her students' participation. However, Orlich, et al. (2004), consider such punishing verbal responses "verbal abuse" and inappropriate since they cause the students to ignore opportunities to participate (p. 249). Davis (1993) seems to agree with Orlich, et al. when they say that teachers who "chastise" students find that participation in class "drops off" (p. 89). When I asked them about looking at the board or the book while the student is responding wrongly, two teachers referred to the short time and heavy curricula again. Four teachers, T2, T3, T4, and T6, said that giving negative statements can't be an unsuccessful technique if it is used correctly. One of them explained that she would tell her students that they are wrong with a low and nice tone. Another one said that she gives negative statements but they are funny too. She would say words like "WRONG...naughty girl!" while she is smiling and acting. She believes such acts are necessary sometimes to add fun to the class and reinforce relationships between the students and their teacher. Perhaps this helps her succeed in maintaining the "congruency" that Orlich, et al. discuss between her verbal and nonverbal behaviors (p. 249). Furthermore, Cohen (2005) finds that such a sense of humor is "an invaluable asset" in such questioning sessions in order not to "dry up" the flow of students' answers (p. 241). On the other hand, T1 and T5 believed that students' incorrect responses shouldn't be handled negatively in any cases. "This can affect the students' personality," T5 said, "because [high school students] are at a sensitive age and need to be always complimented rather than criticized." The "ripple effect" that Orlich, et al. talk about can be a result, too (p. 248). This effect refers to the way in which students who aren't the target of their teacher's negative behaviors are still affected by his/her behavior to a certain classmate. Cotton (2001) would seem to agree with this teacher by calling such handling criticizing, and he believes that such critical probing has no relationship to the students' achievement. A negative handling of incorrect responses of one student can affect the other students' participation.

The last question in the questionnaire was an open-ended question asking the students about other useful questioning behaviors their teachers use in their classrooms (see Appendix C). Responses to this question showed that some students are aware of their teachers' questioning behaviors and their effectiveness since many of them explained their preferences for certain strategies or behaviors. Some students mentioned behaviors like using games, repeating the question or writing the question, on the board (see table 7). There were two students who said that translating the question into Arabic (their mother tongue) helps them understand it sometimes. "I don't usually answer the question if it has a difficult word that I couldn't understand because I am afraid of misunderstanding the questions' meaning," one of the students wrote, explaining her preference for translating some questions into Arabic. Also, there were many students (23%) who mentioned that drawing on the board helps them understand some difficult words in the question, and thus understand it. They added that they like to see and visualize things on the board to remember them. Students' answers showed their interest and care for learning. This may be because adolescents, as Brown (2004) says, are the most "successful learners" and achieve "the highest levels of performance" (p. 66).

Table 8: Students' Answers of the Open-Ended Question in the Questionnaires

Suggested Behaviors	NO. of students
Using games	21 (26%)
Repetition of questions	17 (21%)
Writing questions on the board	22 (27%)
Translation into Arabic	2 (3%)
Drawing on the board	18 (23%)

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study examined teachers' beliefs and attitudes about the common questioning behaviors in EFL classrooms in RAK / UAE and teachers' awareness of these behaviors and their usefulness in their secondary classrooms. This chapter is divided into three main sections: summary of the findings; implications for English teachers, the Ministry of Education and secondary school students in the UAE, limitations of the study and suggestions for further research, and a final thought.

Summary of the Findings

Questioning behaviors can play a vital role in enhancing and improving both the learning and teaching processes. All my research questions of this study were answered. Obviously, these teachers in high schools in RAK seemed to be using questioning behaviors since they were aware of their significance in the learning process. Also, findings show that questioning behaviors used by these teachers seemed to be reasonable in their classrooms. Generally, observed and interviewed teachers in this study showed a positive attitude towards the usage of questioning behaviors in their classrooms. Like the teachers in Kauchak's (2008) study, teachers in this study believed that questioning are an effective way to "involve students in learning activities" (p. 391). Most of the teachers observed and interviewed seemed to use questioning behaviors as a warm up strategy in their lessons to raise their students' interests and motivations. Cotton (2001) points out that questioning can develop the learners' interests, motivation, and critical thinking.

To make my observation results more valid, questionnaires were distributed among students asking them about their teachers' uses of questioning behaviors. Generally, the questionnaire results were similar to what had been observed in classrooms showing that some of the participating teachers in this study were using some questioning behaviors in their classrooms. 93% of the students stated that their teachers use questioning in their classrooms as an educational strategy in teaching English (see Table 1). When I asked the students about their teachers' usages of nonverbal gestures when asking questions, 81% of them pointed out that their teachers always use nonverbal gestures like facial expressions and hand gestures (see Table 2). In addition, 43% of the students stated that their teachers call their names to answer their questions. Furthermore, it was interesting to find out that most of the

students (73%) believed that their teachers wait at least three seconds after asking questions to give the students time to think of their responses. Again, as observations and interviews showed, most of students correct and incorrect responses were handled positively by their teachers.

In order to gain insight into teachers' awareness of their own questioning behaviors and their importance, structured interviews were conducted with them. Those interviews showed that, to some extent, teachers were aware of their questioning behaviors and their importance for students. Most of the interviewed teachers clarified and gave professional reasons for practicing certain questioning behaviors. All eight teachers seemed to believe in the importance of the four questioning behaviors mentioned in this study; the instructor's behaviors, wait time, calling on students, and handling students' responses.

Although not all teachers waited for more than three seconds after asking their questions, they stated in their interviews the importance of wait time in giving the students enough time to think of their responses. In addition, they had reasonable explanations for this practice related to the level of their questions. Like Orlich, et al. (2004), some of these teachers believed that wait time doesn't affect "students' response to lower-level questions" (p. 246). That is why they don't give wait time for their "direct and easy questions," as one of the teachers described them in her interview.

Teachers called their students in different ways giving reasonable reasons. Some teachers (17.5%) preferred calling their students before asking questions. It is an act that Bond (2007) believes to be "advantageous" since it ensure the involvement of a wide variety of students. On the other hand, most of the teachers called out their students' names or asked for volunteers after asking questions to help them reduce some behavioral problems, like gossiping, and help the students remain attentive. What is important here is that all teachers were trying to call all of their students out to answer, whether this approach was practiced before or after asking questions.

How the response is handled is as important as how the question is asked. Both students' correct and incorrect responses were handled either positively or negatively by the teachers. It was interesting to find out that most of students' responses, correct and incorrect, were handled positively. Two teachers explained how high school students, or what they called "teenagers," are sensitive to their teachers' words. Simple words like "very creative answer" may fulfill teenagers'

pride," one teacher said, and make them "feel accepted" among their classmates, said another teacher. When asking teachers about the negative handling of students' responses, they gave different explanations. Some teachers stated that they sometimes ignore their students' correct responses because the questions asked are lower-level ones, and don't require feedback. Other teachers explained that they tend to ignore students' feedback because of the heavy curricula and the short time they have. Unlike Orlich, et al. (2004), some teachers believe that words like "wrong" or "not exactly" aren't "negative reinforces" (p. 248) or "verbal abuse" (p. 249) but rather positive feedback helping the students learn from their mistakes. One teacher stated that she says negative words like "no ... wrong" to her students' wrong responses but in a "funny way," changing her tone and facial expressions.

Implications of the Study

This study showed the importance of using questioning behaviors in classrooms to improve the learning process. To become effective, says Kirkton (1971), teachers need to know the purposes of various questioning behaviors. Thus, adapting questioning behaviors, like wait time and handling students' responses, in an effective way are important strategies for teaching effectiveness. Most teachers in this study showed an awareness of the questioning behaviors. However, there were some teachers who seemed to lack the awareness of some questioning behaviors, and the knowledge of their usefulness. Thus, I believe that further training for such teachers is recommended. Activating the effective use of questioning behaviors in classrooms is a responsibility, I believe, of the Ministry of Education, supervisors, and teachers, as well as students.

Since it plays a vital role in administrating and developing the learning process, the Ministry of Education should share the responsibility of offering training workshops covering areas of questioning behaviors in classrooms. There were few teachers in this study, for example, who hadn't enough knowledge of the importance of eye contact and wait time when asking questions. These teachers need to be aware of such questioning behaviors and get training to be able to use them professionally in their classrooms.

A very important role of guidance is be fulfilled by supervisors, because they are very close to teachers in schools. Regular visits and meetings with teachers are usually organized at the beginning of each semester to discuss the teachers' achievements and improvement. In such meetings, educational matters are presented,

discussed, and even evaluated for each teacher by his/her supervisor. Thus, I would recommend listing the use of questioning behaviors among the other discussed issues.

Along with the teachers, their students need to understand the importance of questioning behaviors and their usefulness. There are some nonverbal gestures teachers may practice in front of their students who are not sure of their meaning or purposes. Trained teachers can teach their students some of these behaviors and their importance in their classrooms at the beginning of each semester, and they can remind them what each signal indicates during the semester. I believe that questioning can become a better and more effective educational tool if it is used appropriately by both sides: teachers and students.

Limitations of the Study and Directions for Further Research

There has been no research on the use of questioning behaviors in the area of the Gulf, and this study tries to fill a gap in such an important area. Future research should aim at investigating other behaviors relevant to questioning, such as length of questions, type of question, and expected response. In addition, future research in this area should look at both male and female teachers in different educational zones in the UAE. While this study depended on teachers and students as sources for obtaining the data, future similar studies should consider the views of supervisors in the schools. Surveying supervisors and conducting interviews with them about the use of questioning behaviors in classrooms and their usefulness in the learning process can help lead to suggestions for implementing such practices in classrooms. The supervisors are very close to the teachers and their practices since they have a direct contact with them in schools and classrooms. It is possible that supervisors could think of other useful questioning behaviors and methods of applying them in classrooms.

Final Thought

Questioning seems to be a common educational tool used in UAE high schools. Teacher in this study showed a positive attitude towards the use of questioning and its behaviors in their classrooms. To some extent, most teachers are aware of their questioning behaviors, such as the use of nonverbal gestures and calling on students, and their importance. However, there were few teachers who needed to gain more knowledge about the effective use of some questioning behaviors like the use of wait time and handling students' responses.

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Appendix A: Classroom Observation Sheet

Observation Sheet

Background Information

Teacher's name (optional): _____ age (optional) _____

School's name: _____ Grades teaching: 10 / 11 / 12

period: ____ Time: _____ Lesson: _____ skill: _____ date _____

	Questioning Behaviors	No. of Times												
	The Instructor Nonverbal Behaviors	T. maintains eye contact while asking a Q.												
T. uses nonverbal gestures while asking a Q.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head nodding • Facial expressions • Hand gestures • Others _____ _____ 														
While asking a Q., T. stands: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In front of class • Middle of class • Back of class • Moves around • Others _____ _____ 														
While Ss response, T. stands: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In front of class • Middle of class • Back of class • Near S responding • Moves around • Others _____ _____ 														

Wait Time	T. waits for less than 3 seconds to get Ss' responses																		
	T. waits for 3 seconds or more to get Ss' responses																		
	T. waits a second or 2 following Ss' responses																		
Calling on Students	T. calls Ss by their names before asking a Q.																		
	T. calls Ss by their names after asking a Q.																		
	T. calls for volunteers before asking a Q.																		
	T. calls for volunteers after asking a Q.																		
	T. allows the entire class to call out																		
Handling the Students' Responses	<p>T. reinforces Ss' responses in a positive way by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Praising • Smiling • Head nodding • Eye contact • Asking to analyze, justify or evaluate • Asking to deduce relationships by comparing, contrasting or implying • Rewording the Q • Ask another S to help • Other positive nonverbal gestures: _____ <p>_____</p>	C	I																
	<p>T. deals with Ss' responses in a negative way by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative statements • Interrupting the S • Looking at notes while S speaks • Looking at the board • Riffling papers • Other negative nonverbal gestures: _____ <p>_____</p>	C	I																

Appendix B: Teachers' Interviews Questions

Interview Questions

Teacher's name (optional): _____ age (optional): _____
School's name: _____ Grades teaching: 10 / 11 / 12
period: ____ Time: _____ Lesson: _____ skill: _____ date _____

1- Do you believe that asking questioning in the classrooms is effective and/or productive? Why?

.....
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.....
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.....
.....

2- What are the behaviors that you use when asking questions in your class?

The instructor's Nonverbal behaviors:

- Nonverbal gestures (nodding, eye contact,...)

.....
.....
.....

- Standing / sitting / moving

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.....
.....
.....

Wait time:

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Calling on students:

- Selecting students after/before asking questions

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- Asking the whole class

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.....

Handling students' responses:

- **Positive feedback**

1. Correct responses

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2. Incorrect responses

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- **Negative feedback**

1. correct responses

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2. incorrect responses

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- Other behaviors:

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Thank You

Appendix C: Students' Questionnaires

Research Instrument Students' Survey

This survey will help me identify the behaviors that teachers in the UAE classrooms use when asking questions in English classrooms. I would greatly appreciate having your honest opinions. The results of this survey will be used in my MA TESOL thesis. Please note that all personal information will remain confidential.

Section 1: Please response to the following questions by ticking the appropriate choice:

Gender:	<input type="checkbox"/>	male	<input type="checkbox"/>	female				
Age:	<input type="checkbox"/>	13-14	<input type="checkbox"/>	15-16	<input type="checkbox"/>	17-18	<input type="checkbox"/>	over 18
Levels studying now:	<input type="checkbox"/>	grade 10	<input type="checkbox"/>	grade 11	<input type="checkbox"/>	grade 12		
Nationality of your English teacher:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Emirate	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not Emirate				

Section 2: please, read the following statements carefully and tick the appropriate box:

A (دائما) always :), S : sometimes (أحيانا), NS : not sure (غير متأكد), R : rarely (نادرا), N: never (أبدا)

N O	Statements	A	S	N S	R	N
1	Asking questions is one of the techniques that your English language teacher uses in your classroom طرح الأسئلة على الطلاب هو أحد الأساليب التي يستخدمها معلم					
2	Your teacher always makes eye contact with you when he/she asks you any question تتواصل المعلمة معك بصريا عندما تطرح عليك سؤالا ما					
3	Your teacher uses nonverbal gestures when asking questions such as head nodding and/or hand movements عند طرح السؤال، يقوم المعلم باستخدام الرأس واليد لتوضيح					
4	Your teacher calls on students by their names to answer before asking questions يختار المعلم الطالب الذي يعرف الإجابة ويناديه باسمه للإجابة قبل					
5	Your teacher calls on students by their names to answer after asking questions يختار المعلم الطالب الذي يعرف الإجابة ويناديه باسمه للإجابة بعد					
6	You teacher asks his/her questions to the entire class يطرح المعلم السؤال على الفصل بأكمله دون تحديد أسماء					
7	Your teacher pauses for about 3 seconds – after asking questions - to get students' responses. يعطي المعلم الطلاب وقتا للتفكير-حوالي 3 ثوان- بعد طرح السؤال					
8	Your teacher pauses for about 3 seconds after you respond to his/her question يعطي المعلم الطلاب وقتا للتفكير-حوالي 3 ثوان- بعد إجابتهم					
9	Your teacher deals with your correct responses positively يتجاوب المعلم مع إجاباتي الصحيحة بشكل إيجابي ومشجع					
10	Your teacher deals with your correct responses negatively يتجاوب المعلم مع إجاباتي الصحيحة بشكل سلبي ومحبط					

11	Your teacher deals with your incorrect responses positively يتجاوب المعلم مع إجاباتي الخاطئة بشكل إيجابي ومشجع					
12	Your teacher deals with your incorrect responses negatively يتجاوب المعلم مع إجاباتي الخاطئة بشكل سلبي ومحبط					

- Can you think of other behaviors that your teacher uses when or after asking questions (rather than the mentioned ones). Please mention them explaining their effectiveness on the learning process??
- هل هناك استراتيجيات (أساليب) يستخدمها معلمك عند طرح الأسئلة (غير ما تم ذكره مسبقا) ؟ اذكرها من فضلك موضحا فعاليتها في العملية التربوية.

Thank you

Appendix D: Analyzed Classroom Observation Sheet (Section 1)

The Instructor's Nonverbal Behaviors

The Instructor Behaviors	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	percentage
Maintaining eye contact	4	11	15	10	3	10	7	7	20%
Using nonverbal gestures									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head nodding • Facial expressions • Hand gestures 	3 2 1	8 3 2	10 3 2	5 5 5	5 3 3	2 4 14	6 1 2	2 2 6	29%
The position of standing while asking a question									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In front of class • Middle of class • Back of class • Moving around 	3 2 1 -	9 2 - -	14 2 - -	6 1 3 -	3 1 - 3	14 2 - -	9 - - -	4 2 - 2	24%
The position of standing while a student responding									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In front of class • Middle of class • Back of class • Near S responding • Moving around 	7 1 - -	10 7 2 1 -	10 4 2 1 -	3 - - 4	4 - - -	9 2 - 6 2	7 - - - -	3 1 - 6 -	27%
Total									100%

Appendix E: Analyzed Classroom Observation Sheet (Section 2)

Wait Time

Wait Time	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	percentage
Less than 3 sec. following a question	2	-	1	-	-	12	-	4	21%
3 sec. or more following a question	4	13	12	9	6	2	7	2	60%
1 or 2 sec following a response	1	8	2	3	-	1	1	1	19%
Total									100%

Appendix F: Analyzed Classroom Observation Sheet (Section 3)

Calling on Students

Calling on Students	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	Percentage
Calling students' names before asking a question	1	3	4	1	4	1	3	1	17.5%
Calling students names after asking a question	3	11	10	10	-	13	1	5	52%
Calling for volunteers before asking a question	-	3	2	-	4	-	3	-	12%
Calling for volunteers after asking a question	5	2	1	6	-	1	-	3	17.5%
The entire class answering	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1%
Total									100%

Appendix G: Analyzed Classroom Observation Sheet (Section 4)

Handling Students' Responses

Handling the Students' Responses	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	percentage
Positive handling of correct responses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Praising • Smiling • Head nodding • Eye contact • Analyzing or justifying • Deducing relationships • Rewording the Q • Asking another S to help 	3	9	10	2	5	6	3	6	72%
	2	4	1	5	5	-	3	3	
	1	3	1	5	3	6	2	7	
	2	-	-	6	-	10	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	4	-	2	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	
Positive handling of incorrect responses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Praising • Smiling • Head nodding • Eye contact • Analyzing or justifying • Deducing relationships • Rewording the Q • Asking another S to help 	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	13%
	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	-	1	-	1	-	2	-	2	
	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	
	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
	3	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	
Negative handling of correct responses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative statements • Looking at the board • Riffling papers/slides 	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4%
	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	2	
	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	
Negative handling of incorrect responses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative statements • Looking at the board • Riffling papers 	-	2	1	3	-	3	1	2	11%
	-	-	2	1	-	1	-	1	
	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	
Total									100%

VITA

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