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Thesis

EFL TEACHER QUESTIONING BEHAVIOUR
AT CZECH GRAMMAR SCHOOLS
AND ITS EFFECT
ON STUDENT CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION

Petra Baxová

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V Plzni dne 7. dubna 2016

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Petra Baxová

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ABSTRACT

Baxová, Petra. University of West Bohemia. June, 2016. EFL Teacher Questioning Behaviour at Czech Grammar Schools and Its Effect on Student Classroom Participation. Supervisor: Mgr. Gabriela Klečková, Ph.D.

The thesis deals with EFL teacher questions and their effect on student language production and classroom participation. Readers are presented with various aspects of teacher questions, including their role in classroom discourse, the importance of questioning, different question types and their cognitive level, the functions of teacher questions, and so on. Numerous examples of various research studies on the similar subjects are provided. The research was carried out by means of lesson observations and teacher structured interviews at a Czech grammar school. It maps EFL teachers´ questioning behaviour and student´ participation within the IRF sequences. The research results revealed that the teachers´ use of various question types was not well-balanced in most cases, with prevalence of display and lower-order questions, students´ abilities and skills thus often staying unutilized. It was further showed that most teachers used L1 in questioning on a small scale, which corresponds with modern EFL principles. Typical questioning techniques and patterns were observed and analysed with each teacher. Students´ answers to their teachers´ questions were also investigated, showing that higher-order and referential questions supported the students´ language production more effectively. Nevertheless, the key condition of increasing STT seemed to lie in the expedient use of teacher questioning skills.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF GRAPHS

I. INTRODUCTION

This thesis deals with EFL teacher questioning behaviour and its effect on student classroom participation. Effective communication represents a crucial aspect of successful teaching and learning process, no matter what methodology is applied in a particular EFL class. Within that communication, teacher questions and student answers form a large portion of the language produced. Apart from school, there is hardly any other common type of interaction filled with so many questions; questioning is the most frequently used activation technique which aims at eliciting student responses. There are many types of questions that are recognized, differing mainly in terms of their authenticity, cognitive level, or number of possible responses. Teacher questions also serve different functions in the classroom. While questioning, EFL teachers need to abide by the questioning skills. All the aspects of teacher questioning that have been mentioned above are introduced and discussed in the Background Chapter, which establishes the theoretical framework for the practical part of the thesis.

The following chapter, Methods, attempting to map current questioning practices of Czech EFL teachers, specifies the research tools, participants, and procedure, and introduces five research questions:

- What is the frequency of different question types in EFL classes?
- What is the percentage of questions asked in Czech?
- In what ways does questioning vary while comparing individual teachers´ lessons and different teachers´ lessons?
- What is the rate of short and long student answers?
- What importance do EFL teachers assign to questioning?

The research results are presented in the form of tables and graphs and commented on in the chapter titled Results and Commentaries. It is followed by a chapter focusing on pedagogical implications, research limitations, and further research suggestions. It seems that the quality of student answers directly depends on the teachers´ mastery of questioning skills. The last chapter called Conclusion presents the most important findings.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The theoretical chapter presents readers with an overview of the theoretical background and aims at providing them with the basic knowledge that is needed for understanding the research of the thesis. Fundamental terms connected with teacher questioning are explained and various authors´ viewpoints are examined. The core of this chapter lies in the section that is devoted to the skills of questioning in EFL. Following the rules and advice that different scholars offer may facilitate more effective and valuable questioning in EFL classrooms.

Questioning in the Framework of Classroom Discourse

Before starting to examine teacher questions in detail, it is necessary to define their framework, which is created by classroom discourse. Therefore, some features of classroom discourse are described and classroom interaction patterns, including the IRF pattern, are examined in the following part.

Some Features of Classroom Discourse

Malamah-Thomas (1991) views a school lesson as a distinct type of discourse that possesses special rules of speech and other typical features. The main purpose of classroom communication is learning; among other reasons for communicating in the classroom belong establishing and maintaining personal relationships, establishing a rapport, organisation and administration, and so on (pp. 14-15).

Hatch and Long (1980) indicate another typical feature of classroom discourse: teachers have great power and students much less, i.e. teachers determine the topic of conversation and control who speaks, when, and to whom (as cited in Betáková, 2010, p. 68). Delamont (1976) points out the fact that teachers have the right to monitor and correct pupils´ talk in ways that differ sharply from the norms of everyday conversation. Teachers are also expected to monitor and correct pupils´ behaviour (as cited in Betáková, 2010, p. 68). Betáková (2010) enumerates further EFL teacher responsibilities, which include orchestrating the interaction, maintaining good relationship

with students, establishing appropriate conditions for students´ learning, monitoring, evaluating and correcting student contributions (pp. 68-69).

Malamah-Thomas (1991) argues that one of the crucial aspects of successful classroom interaction is mutual influence and adjustment between the teacher and the class. Specifically, she claims that "where there is no interaction, but only action and reaction, there can be no communication. Where there is conflict in the interaction, communication breaks down. Only where there is co-operation between both sides involved in the interaction can communication effectively take place, and learning occur" (pp. 7, 11).

Classroom Interaction Patterns

There are many possible ways for EFL teachers to organise classroom interaction, largely depending on the methodology and pedagogic approach they prefer. For example, Ur (2012) enumerates the patterns from the most teacher-centred to the most student-centred:

>
> 1. teacher talk
> 2. choral responses
> 3. closed-ended teacher questioning (IRF)
> 4. open-ended teacher questioning
> 5. full-class interaction
> 6. student initiates, teacher answers
> 7. individual work
> 8. collaboration
> 9. group work
> 10. self-access (p. 18).

Betáková (2010) mentions various EFL discourse research studies and shows that in a typical EFL lesson, teacher talk represents about two thirds of classroom speech (p. 74). Cullen (1998) points out that even when the teacher talks a lot in the classroom, the talk is a valuable source of comprehensible input for the learners (as cited in Betáková, 2010, p. 74). Nevertheless, recently there have been numerous appeals by different authors

for EFL teachers to reduce Teacher Talking Time (TTT) and devote more class interaction to Student Talking Time (STT). For instance, Scrivener (2011) explains that teacher talking at the students does not necessarily mean that learning is taking place. On the contrary, it often means that learners are neither active, nor involved (p. 59). If EFL teachers are to follow the advice and concentrate on STT, they need to shift their concentration on the student-centred end of Ur´s continuum.

The IRF Pattern in EFL

Ur (2012) states that the most common and frequent type of classroom interaction is Initiation – Response – Feedback (IRF), which belongs among the more teacher-centred classroom interaction patterns. The teacher commences an exchange (usually by a question), nominates a student to respond, the student responds, and the teacher gives feedback. The whole procedure then typically repeats. Ur concludes that "questioning is the most common and universally used activation technique in teaching, mainly within the IRF pattern" (pp. 18, 228).

Gavora (2005) mentions several advantages of IRF. The stable structure of such dialogues provides lessons with certain rhythm and economy. Teachers and students know what to expect from such dialogues, they know what to do and are able to anticipate the following steps. The structure also functions as a class management tool. The key issue in IRF is, what type of questions the teacher asks, what the line of questioning looks like, how the teacher supports students´ expressing their ideas, opinions, attitudes, experiences, how the teacher reacts to students´ responses, and how many students take part in such dialogues. If the teacher allows or supports students to initiate dialogues, the IRF structure changes; the teacher loosens the structure (p. 75).

Walsh (2006) regards the IRF structure the very fabric of classroom interaction; she uses the term "the essential teaching exchange" while describing IRF (as cited in Betáková, 2010, p. 83). Cazden (2001) points out that the three-part sequence IRF represents a traditional lesson, and argues that both – traditional and non-traditional lessons or sequences are needed in EFL (as cited in Betáková, 2010, pp. 83, 88). Other authors, on the other hand, criticize the extensive use of IRF. For example, Lemke (1990) believes that as a result of IRF use, children are confined to contributing exactly what the teacher requests, with little or no opportunity to express or expand upon their own ideas (as cited

4

in Betáková, 2010, pp. 88-89). Moreover, Kumpulainen and Wray (2002) criticize the unequal communicative rights of the IRF sequence. They show that the choice of a teaching method influences the interaction in the classroom, and recommend group work as the best solution for effective learning. While working in small groups, children are freed from the role of answerers, they are more likely to challenge and question one another, to ask and provide elaboration, and so on (as cited in Betáková, 2010, p. 89).

Walsh (2006) provides four reasons why IRF is still used, although it is regularly criticized by many scholars:

1. Teachers´ and students´ expectations regard IRF routines as appropriate classroom behaviour.
2. Teachers feel the need to make learners feel good; the feedback given by a teacher to a student is important and necessary.
3. The system of power relations in most classes means that it is the teacher who has more of the floor owing to asymmetrical roles.
4. The time constraints facing teachers confirm IRF routines as the most effective means of advancing the discourse (as cited in Betáková, 2010, p. 89).

It has been showed that classroom discourse possesses numerous features that distinguish it from other discourse types. The IRF structure, although belonging among the teacher-centred patterns, still forms a large portion of classroom interaction. The next step is considering the importance of asking questions and defining teacher questions.

Importance of Questioning in EFL Classes

Many authors see teacher questions as not only one of the most common teaching tactics used, but as a key element supporting the process of learning (Švaříček, 2011; Qashoa, 2013; Ma, 2008; Hamiloglu, 2012; Darn, n. d.). Postman (1979) goes even further and claims that all our knowledge is a result of questioning; he explains that ancient philosophy originated in human curiosity and the need to know answers to fundamental questions; Greek philosophy can thus serve as the oldest evidence of the importance of questioning in the process of learning (as cited in Švaříček, 2011, p.10).

Another author mentioning the tradition of pedagogic questions stretching back to antiquity is Ma (2008), stating that "questioning has been considered as one of the most essential and important techniques during instructional processes since Socrates times". She claims that questioning takes up most of teacher talking time, and sees this elicitation method as student-oriented, giving incentives to communicative activities in ELT classroom. She points out that each question must be presented to accomplish the teaching objective and task. She also considers different reasons for implementing questions in EFL, such as: promoting active and creative student thinking, fostering students´ ability of analysis and creation, giving information and obtaining feedback, exchanging ideas between the teacher and students, checking understanding, enhancing student involvement, consolidating knowledge, controlling social behaviour, achieving teaching goals, etc (pp. 92 - 93). Hamiloglu (2012) believes that the predominant role of teacher questions in EFL is checking whether and how much learning is taking place (p. 1).

Teacher questions are usually defined as teacher initiatives which are designed to elicit student responses, most often of oral nature. Mareš and Křivohlavý (1995) explain that the term *question* is often mistakenly used as the synonym of the term *interrogative sentence* (p. 73). As Ur (2012) shows, teacher questions may not always be in the interrogative form, and conversely, interrogative forms are not always questions. For example, the question *"What can you see in this picture?"* may be communicated by a statement (*"We´ll describe what is going on in this picture."*) or a command (*"Tell me what you can see in this picture!"*), but it is still considered a teacher question. On the other hand, an interrogative sentence *"Will you repeat it?"* is obviously not a question, but actually a request or command (p. 228).

Reactions to teacher questions, student answers, are more complicated to define. As Mareš and Křivohlavý (1995) explain, many different student activities can be regarded as answers within pedagogic communication. Nevertheless, the most frequent forms of student answers are verbal responses reacting to teacher questions. Such answers are not independent; they are bound to the questions in the language and semantic sense. Student answers can be assessed according to various criteria, e.g. whether they meet the question requirements, whether they bear enough information, or whether they fulfil their communication purposes (p. 73). In the context of EFL, one of the main features that many

authors examine is the length of students´ answers, as the key role of teacher questions is facilitating STT.

Richards (1990) says that the teacher´s use of questions is one of the characteristics of effective teaching, stating that school teachers ask approximately 150 questions per hour (as cited in Betáková, 2010, p. 93). Cotton (1988) also considers the large amount of questioning in classes, stating that it is second only to lecturing in popularity as a teaching method; teachers spend anywhere from thirty to fifty percent of their instructional time conducting question sessions. Teacher questioning is thus an indispensible part of teaching process, having a significant impact on the learning process in the class (as cited in Hamiloglu, 2012, p. 1). According to Feng (2013), students´ critical thinking ability is the main goal of good teacher questions. He believes that the quality of teacher questions determines the quality of students´ critical thinking. Effective EFL teachers are certain to have a deep understanding of the types and cognitive levels of questions they ask every day (p. 149).

Some authors go even further. Walsh and Sattes (2005) call for a school reform: there is an urgent need to move from the traditional classroom to the more student-centred, inquiry-oriented classroom embodied in what they call a *quality questioning classroom*. They illustrate that there has been very little change in teachers´ questioning practice well over 100 years. In their work, they analyse different questioning strategies in detail, give a lot of practical advice, and formulate the main principles of contemporary questioning tactics (pp. 7-8).

The situation in EFL is specific for several reasons. According to Medgyes (1995), foreign language teachers are a special group, because for them the foreign language embodies both the means and the end. Typically, they teach knowledge about and skills in the foreign language mediated by the same foreign language in virtually all situations. Furthermore, foreign language teachers have no direct body of knowledge available in the sense that physics or history teachers have (as cited in Betáková, 2010, p. 92). Johnson (1995) makes a similar point. EFL teachers control most of the patterns of communication; even in the most decentralized L2 classroom, it is the teacher who orchestrates the instruction and plays a critical role in understanding, establishing and maintaining patterns of communication that will foster both classroom learning and second language acquisition (as cited in Betáková, 2010, p. 69).

Many authors state that EFL teacher should serve as a model for learner utterances (Betáková, 2010; Ur, 2012; Malamah-Thomas, 1991). Betáková (2010) enumerates some of the language competencies all EFL teachers should possess, such as being able to use language in authentic encounter situations, to express themselves clearly, to use natural language with the features of spoken English, to implement repair strategies (e.g. rephrasing, securing, clarification, facilitating, paraphrasing). The teachers´ clear pronunciation, stress and intonation are emphasised, as they have to provide a good model for children. Moreover, teachers should keep live contacts with target language (p. 93). Johnson (1990) points out that in EFL, English is used as the medium of instruction. Teachers have to be able to communicate their knowledge and intentions effectively through the target language; the focus should be on speaking (as cited in Betáková, 2010, p. 94).

One of the generally accepted EFL teaching principles is that teachers should use L1 as little as possible in their classes; for example, Gardner and Gardner (2000) explain that using English as much as possible will emphasize to learners that the English lesson is very different from any other lesson in the school day. It will help to maintain a good ´English-speaking atmosphere´, and this will help learners focus on learning and using the language. Also, if teacher gives them instructions, asks questions, and makes comments in English, learners will have to listen carefully, and it will keep them thinking in English. They believe that "it is important, from the early stages of learning, to avoid translations as much as possible and make the learners think in that language" (p. 6). Asking questions in L1 is thus seen as undesirable in most EFL situations.

Another EFL teaching principle that needs to be mentioned is maximising STT. As Darn (n. d.) explains, teachers ask between 300-400 questions per day; however, the quality and value of their questions varies. Every question demands a response, so questions inevitably generate communication. Darn emphasises the need to consider the quantity of questions asked in relation to general time constraints and the need to keep TTT to a minimum while maximising learner contributions (p. 1). Ur (2012) perceives the core of effective questioning alike: the main motive in questioning is usually to get students to engage actively with the language material and its content. An effective questioning technique is one that elicits immediate, motivated, relevant and full responses. If most teacher questions result in long silences, are only answered by the strongest students, obviously bore the class, or consistently elicit only very brief or unsuccessful

answers, then there is something wrong: teachers need to revise their questioning tactics (p. 230). This point is well-supported by the findings of a research study carried out by Farahian and Rezaee (2012): "it was also revealed that the reason for the learners´ silence or reluctance to participate might have been due to the ineffective questioning technique(s)" (p. 161).

Shulman (1987) indicates that the act of asking a good question is cognitively demanding and requires considerable pedagogical content knowledge (as cited in Hamiloglu, 2012, p. 1). Ornstein and Lasley (2000) make a similar point and state that good questioning is both a methodology and an art, it necessitates teachers to know what and to whom they teach well (as cited in Hamiloglu, 2012, p. 2). On the other hand, Qashoa (2013) warns that teacher questioning has a possibility to demotivate the learners if carried out incorrectly. He declares that teacher questions are of little value and importance unless they have a positive impact on students´ interaction, learning and communication. What should be highly stressed is the need to implement questioning strategies suiting students´ levels and subjects being taught (pp. 52-56). Hamiloglu (2012) concludes that good questioning is a skill of effective teaching which involves good planning, higher cognitive thinking and creating cognitive improvement in the class (p. 1). It is therefore of crucial importance to concentrate on the questioning process within EFL. As Walsh and Sattes (2005) believe, questions promote student learning. Teachers should plan their questions before asking to ensure that questions match the instructional objectives and promote thinking. A few carefully prepared or selected questions are preferable to large numbers of questions. Moreover, a focus on questioning can enhance the professional development of teachers (pp. 10-12).

It has been illustrated that questioning plays a key role in the teaching and learning processes. If it is carried out in a professional way, it supports students´ learning. Teacher questions are defined as tasks rather than interrogatives. Next, it is necessary to define different question types and consider their usage in EFL.

Types of Teacher Questions in EFL

Most authors distinguish different question types according to their syntax and discourse features. A number of different typologies and taxonomies of questions can be found in various resources, with individual question types often overlapping

and mingling. Categorizing particular teacher questions precisely can thus become difficult in some cases. Nevertheless, Ma (2008) points out that "all of these types of questions have their places in the interactive classroom" (p. 93). Feng (2013) makes a similar point and he further states that different question types develop different cognitive thinking strategies with students and make various demands on their answers (p. 150). The most frequent taxonomies are dealt with next.

Display and Referential Questions

Shomoossi (1997) defines *referential* questions as "those questions for which the answer is not already known by the teacher, these questions require interpretation and judgement on the part of the answerer" (p. 3). In the same context, Ur (2012) uses a term *genuine* questions and she further points out their communicative authenticity, as they involve a real transfer of information. If EFL teachers want to give students experience of using English for communication, there should be a place for these in classroom interaction, she concludes (p. 229). Gabrielatos (1997) uses the term *authentic* as a synonym of referential (p. 1). Darn (n. d.) claims that in EFL, referential questions often focus on the content rather than language (p. 1). Shomoossi (1997) points out that referential questions increase the amount of learner output. Therefore, they play an important part in successful second language acquisition (SLA). If they are used regularly and effectively in L2 classroom, they may create discourse resembling the normal conversation outside the classroom. Moreover, referential questions often lead to students forming complex, linearly coherent sequences, accompanied by a greater number of connectives (pp. 28-29). Darn (n. d.) concludes, "The best referential questions are those that are divergent or open-ended in that they are broad, may have multiple answers, and require a higher level of thinking from the learners" (p. 1).

Display questions, on the other hand, are defined by Shomoossii (1997) as those "for which the questioner knows the answer beforehand; these types of questions are usually asked for comprehension, confirmation or clarification" (p. 3). Gabrielatos (1997) uses the term *pedagogical* as a synonym of display (p. 1). Darn (n. d.) further specifies that in EFL, display questions often focus on the form or meaning of language structures and items (p. 1). Ur (2012) believes that such questions, in spite of their inauthenticity, are essential for teaching because they allow students to demonstrate what

they know, practise something, or speak in order to increase fluency (p. 229). Brown and Wragg (1993) state that "recall questions are often used in the initial stages of a lesson to assess knowledge and to start the children thinking" (as cited in Betáková, 2010, p. 100). Another author who advocates display questions in a similar manner is Sage (2000), who believes that they can be used to "erect a scaffold to help the students arrive at solutions and build appropriate spoken responses" (as cited in Betáková, 2010, p. 100). Van Lier (1988) considers the difference between referential and display questions to be of subordinate importance, emphasising the fact that both types of these questions "are made with the aim of eliciting language from the learners" in L2 classroom, for they provide comprehensible input and encourage early production (as cited in Shomoossi, 1997, p. 28). Nevertheless, Shomoossi goes on, responses to display questions, which call for the recognition or recall of factual information, are typically much shorter. Within classroom interaction, Hamiloglu (2012) sees display questions as typical of teacher-centred lessons, in which transmission of knowledge from teacher to student is the focus, and they are therefore non-contributory to discussion (p. 6). Betáková (2010) points out that while evaluating students´ answers to display questions, teachers should keep in mind that "a student who can provide an acceptable answer has not necessarily mastered learning" (p. 100).

A highly interesting recent research study carried out by Farahian and Rezaee (2012) in EFL Iranian adult-learner classrooms shows a ratio of ca. 75% display questions, as opposed to ca. 25% referential questions. The surprising numbers within this study regard the length of student responses. Answers to display questions contained three or less words in ca. 85% cases; this fact fully corresponds with what has been said above. The striking number is attached to the length of answers to referential questions: ca. 98% of these answers contained three or less words. This fact contrasts with many authors´ assumptions; referential questions should typically elicit longer stretches of speech. Farahian and Rezaee deduce that the problem of short answers might dwell in lack of wait time before the answer, lack of students´ background knowledge on the topic discussed, and ineffective questioning techniques of the teacher. The few cases of longer answers regarded referential questions that related to the students´ own lives and that sought their personal opinions (p. 163).

Open and Closed Questions

Ur (2012) explains that the difference between *open* and *closed* questions (she uses terms *open-ended* and *closed-ended* questions) dwells in the number of expected responses. The key feature of open questions is that they lead to multiple responses; they are beneficial in situations where an EFL teacher wants to get lots of practice of a particular language point. She further claims that such questions lead to more student activation and, at the same time, they elicit more interesting responses (p. 229). Betáková (2010) defines open-ended questions as those which encourage a full expression of an opinion, and which allow the respondent to answer freely, without having to select an answer from a predetermined set, and, at the same time, without fear of failure. The open approach often involves *how* and *why* questions, which generate ideas about processes, feelings, and motives. Betáková further shows that some authors prefer slightly different terminology: *convergent* or *narrow* for closed questions and *divergent* or *broad* for open questions (pp. 102-103). Denton (2007) points out that in the classroom, open questions represent a powerful tool to "stretch children´s curiosity, reasoning ability, creativity, and independence" (as cited in Betáková, 2010, p. 103). Darn (n. d.) believes that within EFL, "open-ended questions are ideal for developing skills such as inferring, predicting, verifying and summarising, as well as eliciting more language" (p. 1). Hamiloglu (2012) points out their importance in a similar tone, for they provide a free production and active use of the target language (p. 6). Also Scrivener (2011) supports appropriate use of open questions within ELT, calling them a "key technique" especially in teaching speaking (p. 212).

Closed questions are defined by Ur (2012) as those having a single right answer and usually eliciting short responses. They are useful for quick checks of knowledge or comprehension, or for testing (p. 229). However, Betáková (2010) shows that closed questions are more restrictive than open questions; she also deduces that excessive use of closed questions yields short answers of a single word or a short phrase and frequently inhibits discussion. The closed approach typically involves questions starting with *what, who, where* and *when* (pp. 102-103). Šeďová et al (2012) point out that open questions dominate common, out-of-school, communication; in a classroom situation, on the other hand, closed questions form a higher percentage. Some authors thus call classroom dialogue *pedagogic pseudo-dialogue*, as it lacks authenticity. Šeďová et al conclude that

closed teacher questions typically demand student lower cognitive operations (p. 58). Sage (2000) comments that many teachers shoot questions at students as if they were firing on the enemy and he adds, "Closed questions place power entirely with the teacher and the only reward for the student is if the answer is correct. Many students´ hatred of questions is based on their knowledge of this format and they are very unwilling to respond if they do not know the exact answer" (as cited in Betáková, 2010, p. 103).

Considering various research studies on open and closed teacher questions, the results most often show very high percentages of closed questions, and correspondingly low percentages of open questions. At Czech primary schools, a recent research study states the percentage of 75% closed and 25% open questions (Šeďová et al, 2012, p. 58). This result fully corresponds with a similar, though older, research study carried out by Kollárik (1979) at Czechoslovak primary schools in 1970´s: "76% of all questions aimed at factual memory questions" (as cited in Mareš & Křivohlavý, 1995, p. 80). As for EFL research, most results show a similar tendency. A recent Swedish research study in primary EFL classes shows the ratio of 92% of closed, as opposed to 8% of open questions (Andersson, 2012, p. 21). Another recent research study within EFL classrooms in Turkey states a more balanced result: convergent questions formed ca. 65% of teacher questioning (Hamiloglu, 2012, p. 5).

Cognitive Level of Questions

Ur (2012) differentiates between two question types according to the level of thinking they encourage. *Lower-order* thinking is simple recall or basic factual information, whereas *higher-order* thinking (some authors use the term *critical* thinking as a synonym) involves deeper understanding, application, analysis, criticism, evaluation or creativity. She claims that lower order questions are usually display, closed and short-response, and vice versa. There is a place for both these types of questions in English language teaching. Ur further explains, "One difference is that you cannot do without lower-order questions for initial teaching and reviewing new material, whereas you can manage without the higher-order ones. As a result sometimes the latter are neglected. Higher-order questions are important for the cultivation of critical and creative thinking, and arguably lead to more challenging, interesting and richer language-learning procedures" (pp. 229-230). Brualdi (1998) makes another conclusion on higher order

questions: they enable teachers to make sure whether or not a student has truly understood a concept (as cited in Qashoa, 2013, p. 55). Feng (2013) goes further; he regards critical thinking as an essential outcome of education and an indispensible part of every school subject (p. 148). Also in the eyes of Dewey (1933), learning to think is the central purpose of education (as cited in Feng, 2013, p. 148).

Most authors, while considering the cognitive level of teacher questions, follow the taxonomic system established by Bloom, which was later revised by Krathwohl and Anderson. This system is hierarchical, discriminating different thinking skills according to their complexity. As Feng (2013) explains, "Lower level questions refer to those at the knowledge, comprehension, and simple application levels of the taxonomy, while higher level questions are those requiring complex application skills such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation" (p. 150). Švaříček (2011) defines lower cognitive questions as those demanding verbatim recall of a fact which has been presented by the teacher. This type corresponds with *knowledge* and *comprehension* levels in Bloom´s Taxonomy. Higher cognitive questions, according to Švaříček, need to fulfil two conditions: they correspond with the levels of *application, analysis, synthesis* or *evaluation* in Bloom´s Taxonomy, and the answer to such question must not be directly available from any resource (p. 20).

Most research studies on higher order and lower order questions show that higher order questions are under-used in classrooms. Šeďová et al. (2012) states the ratio of 39% higher order questions, as compared to 61% lower order questions observed at Czech primary schools (p. 61). Švaříček´s (2011) research study at lower-secondary level of Czech basic schools in selected humanities subjects distinguished and examined four question types and found out their following occurrence: closed lower order questions 52%, closed higher order questions 25%, open lower order questions 9%, open higher order questions 14% (p. 24). This research study thus shows under-usage of higher order, as well as open questions at Czech basic schools. One of the few research studies which showed a favourable structure of teacher questions regarding their cognitive level was Popperová´s research study (1971) carried out at Czechoslovak grammar schools in various subjects. In the observed lessons, higher order, often problem questions, prevailed (as cited in Mareš & Křivohlavý, 1995, p. 81). Cotton (2001) presents slightly different research results: approximately 60 percent of the questions asked are lower cognitive questions, 20 percent are higher cognitive questions, and 20 percent

are procedural (p. 4). Gall (1984) considers the average numbers of questions asked in a lesson and their cognitive level. It makes sense that if teachers ask one to three questions per minute, the questions do not require much higher order thinking. How much could students be thinking if they respond to questions every 20 to 30 seconds? In fact, research confirms that only about 20 percent of the questions posed in most classrooms require thinking at higher levels (as cited in Walsh & Sattes, 2005, p. 12).

As for the relationship of student learning achievement and cognitive level of teacher questions, various research studies suggest different results. For example, Švaříček (2011) explains that soon after Bloom´s *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* was first published in 1956, a hypothesis appeared stating that if teachers used higher-order questions, their students would achieve better learning results. In the following decades, scholars tried to verify this hypothesis. Although numerous experiments were realized, most showed no clear relationship between the frequency of teachers´ higher-order questions and students´ learning outcomes (p. 11). Cotton (2001) presents analogous data: quite a number of research studies have found higher cognitive questions superior to lower ones, many have found the opposite, and still others have found no difference (p. 4). Nevertheless, most authors advocate a balanced use of lower-level and higher-level teacher questions in the classroom, citing those few studies which claimed a positive impact of higher-order questions on student achievement, such as Redfield and Rousseau´s (1981) meta-analysis. Redfield and Rousseau came to a conclusion that higher order questions have a positive impact on student learning, especially while using group work in the classroom (as cited in Švaříček, 2011, p. 11). Walsh and Sattes mention Gall´s (1984) findings; young or low-income students who are learning basic skills benefit most from low-level questions, whereas middle and high school students appear to have higher achievement when exposed to more higher-level questions (as cited in Walsh and Sattes, 2005, p. 13). Also Cotton (2001) claims that lower cognitive questions are more effective with primary level children; higher cognitive questions, on the other hand, produce superior learning gains for secondary students. She recommends the ratio of 50 percent of lower cognitive and 50 percent of higher cognitive questions for secondary school students (p. 4). Walsh and Sattes (2005) conclude that even with the differences in the findings, most researchers believe that higher-level questions promote the development of thinking skills. Teachers thus should purposefully plan and ask questions that require students to implement different levels of thinking (p. 13).

Another course of research studies has concentrated on the accordance of cognitive levels of teacher questions and student answers. Cotton (2001) states that these studies show rather ambiguous results and provide no clear conclusions (p. 4). Walsh and Sattes (2005) refer that several research studies have confirmed nearly half of student answers at a different cognitive level than the teacher question. Nevertheless, teachers generally accept these answers as sufficient without trying to probe or prompt student correct responses. The authors give the following advice: "When students give either incomplete or incorrect responses, teachers should seek to understand those answers more completely by gently guiding student thinking with appropriate probes" (p. 15).

On the basis of their own research study, Farahian and Rezaee (2012) provide teachers with another advice. In order to let the EFL learners produce syntactically longer responses to the question and get them involved in interaction with higher levels of cognitive interaction, teachers should give them enough background regarding the topic of classroom discussion. Specifically, they conclude that "it might be the case even when people are interacting in their native language and do not have enough time they would be reluctant to talk" (p. 167).

As Feng (2013) suggests, teaching thinking is a great challenge for all EFL teachers. He recommends two ways of promoting students´ critical thinking: implementation of cooperative learning and variation of the levels of questions. It is widely recognized that different types of teacher questions prompt different types of cognitive thinking processes. He further claims that critical thinking skills and abilities can be taught (pp. 147 - 150). Darn (n. d.) points out another principle of crucial importance: "in the context of language teaching and learning, Bloom himself maintained that the major purpose in constructing a taxonomy of educational objectives is to facilitate communication" (p. 1).

Other Taxonomies

According to Ma (2008), other types of questions that can be heard in EFL classrooms and that various authors recognise belong e.g. *rhetorical* (those which the teachers answer themselves) or *procedural* (those which relate to classroom, lesson and student control processes) (p. 100). Barnes (1969) divides questions into four main categories: *factual* (What? questions), *reasoning* (How? and Why? questions), *open* (not requiring reasoning, where there is a variety of acceptable answers), and *social*

(mainly *control* and *appeal* questions) (as cited in Betáková, 2010, p. 99). Feng (2013) mentions the common question categories based on their syntax: *yes/no, either/or, tag* and *wh-* questions (p. 149). Brown and Wragg (1993) distinguish *managerial* (those which are to do with running the lesson), *information/data* (those which involve the recall of information), and *higher order* questions (if pupils have to do more than just remember facts). According to content, the same authors divide questions into *conceptual* (those concerned with ideas, definitions and reasoning), *empirical* (those requiring answers based upon facts or upon experimental findings), and *value-related* (those concerned with relative worth and merit, with moral and environmental issues) (as cited in Betáková, 2010, p. 99). Ur (2012) also differentiates between *short-* and *long-response* questions and claims those requiring longer responses to be better, because they lead to more student activation and better learning. However, if the teaching aim is only to find out if a student has understood or not, short-response questions are appropriate (p. 229). Cazden (2001) concentrates on *metacognitive* questions (those calling the students´ attention to their own thinking and their own knowledge). She points out the importance of such questions in non-traditional lessons, where teachers encourage students to explain their own thinking and reflect on what others have said (as cited in Betáková, p. 104). Scrivener (2011) points out the importance of *guided discovery* questions, which can be used in EFL e.g. to encourage students to reflect on and articulate reasons for their choices, to build on earlier questions and answers to construct a growing picture of the language item, or to ensure that all students are grasping the issues and not just the faster ones (p. 167). The various question types that have been discussed above are overviewed in the following table.

Question types	Explanation	Noted by
Referential / genuine / authentic	The questioner does not know the answer and is genuinely seeking information	Shomoossi, Ur, Gabrielatos
Display / pedagogical	The questioner knows the answer beforehand	Shomoossi, Ur, Darn, Gabrielatos
Open / open-ended / divergent / broad	Those leading to multiple responses, there is no predetermined set of answers	Ur, Betáková, Scrivener
Closed / closed-ended / convergent / narrow	Those having a single right answer or a small set of answers	Ur, Betáková
Higher order	Those involving deeper understanding, application, analysis, criticism, evaluation or creativity	Feng, Ur, Švaříček
Lower order	Those requiring simple recall or basic factual information	Feng, Ur, Švaříček
Rhetorical	Those which the teachers answer themselves	Ma
Procedural / managerial	Those which relate to classroom, lesson and student control processes	Ma, Brown & Wragg
Factual	what? questions	Barner
Reasoning	how? and why? questions	Barner
Social	Control and appeal questions	Barner
yes/no, either/or, tag and wh- questions	Based on syntax	Feng
Information / data	Those which involve recall of information	Brown & Wragg
Conceptual	Those concerned with ideas, definitions and reasoning	Brown & Wragg
Empirical	Those requiring answers based upon facts or upon experimental findings	Brown & Wragg
Value-related	Those concerned with relative worth and merit, with moral and environmental issues	Brown & Wragg
Short-response	Those requiring short responses	Ur
Long-response	Those requiring longer responses	Ur
Metacognitive	Those calling the students´ attention to their own thinking and their own knowledge	Cazden
Guided discovery	Those which build on earlier questions and answers to construct a growing picture of a piece of new knowledge	Scrivener

Table 1. Question types.

Recommendations on Question Types

Most authors agree that using a wide and balanced range of question types is highly important in a successful learning and teaching process. For Brown (2001), developing a rich repertoire of questioning strategies is one of the best ways to keep your role as an initiator and sustainer of classroom interaction (p. 169). Ur (2012) claims that "most questions in most lessons are display, short-response, closed-ended

and lower-order"; both teachers and course books tend to under-use genuine, long-response, open-ended and higher order ones. The main reason for this might be that the under-used categories are harder to formulate, and their responses are more difficult to monitor and correct. She concludes that EFL teachers should make sure that there are at least some of them in every lesson at any level, as they can be adapted and used from the most elementary and youngest classes up to most academic adult ones (p. 230). Hamiloglu (2012) concludes her research study by several implications, stressing a variety of questions to be used in the class and claiming that "a good questioning strategy can help teachers to create a learning context initiating communication and negotiation of meaning in the class" (pp. 6-7). Darn (n.d.) perceives good questioning strategies as a model which will hopefully promote correct and intelligent questions from learners (p. 3).

Once the different types of questions have been examined, with the key recommendation being a well-balanced implementation of all question types in classroom interaction, it is also useful to elucidate the different functions and roles that teacher questions play.

Functions of Teacher Questions

Various scholars distinguish different functions of teacher questions, with taxonomies ranging from two to multiple items. For most authors, the term *function* means *purpose* of questions asked in a lesson; nevertheless, some taxonomies seem to blend functions and types of questions. Also, different scholars occasionally use identical terms with different meanings, e.g. *instructional questions* as seen by Mareš and Křivohlavý (1995, p. 76) in contrast with Kauchak and Eggen (1989, as cited in Ma, 2008, p. 93). Moreover, several authors point out that individual functions often overlap within a single question. The domain of teacher question classification thus becomes an ample base of further analysis.

Mareš and Křivohlavý (1995) work with a straightforward classification of three functions; they distinguish *instructional, formative* and *organisational* functions. They explain that the instructional function relates to the factual lesson content (e.g. *What is the capital of Scotland?*), whereas the formative function relates to students´ socialization (e.g. *What is your opinion on this problem?*). These two functions often overlap. Organisational questions are usually factual and emotionally neutral (e.g. *Is*

anyone absent?); such questions help manage the lesson, they relate to different classroom procedures and routines (p. 76). Other authors also distinguish organisational questions, using slightly different terminology: *procedural* (Quashoa, 2013, p. 53), *managing* (Gabrielatos, 1997, p. 7), or *managerial* (Brown & Wragg, 1993, as cited in Betáková, 2010, p. 99). Mareš and Křivohlavý (1995) further point out that questioning should activate students. This stimulating role must be stressed when a new topic is introduced, when students´ preconcepts are examined, or when a problem-based learning is applied. For many teachers, it is a difficult task to stimulate students´ thinking through effective questioning (p. 77).

Kauchak and Eggen (1989) concentrate on the learning value of questions and they distinguish three categories of functions: *diagnostic*, *instructional* and *motivational*. As a diagnostic tool, classroom questions allow teachers to glimpse into the student minds to find out what they know and how they think about a topic. The instructional function means that questions can be used as a technique to facilitate learners to learn the new knowledge and relate it to their preconcepts. As to motivational function, skilful use of questions can effectively involve students in the classroom discourse, encouraging and challenging them to think (as cited in Ma, 2008, pp. 93-94). Donald and Paul (1989, as cited in Quashoa, 2013, p. 52) and Yan (2006, as cited in Hamiloglu, 2012, pp. 2-3) use identical taxonomy and understand the three functions in an analogous way.

In his research study, Shomoossi (1997) uses Kearsley´s (1976) complex taxonomy which was later extended by Long and Sato (1983); it comprises of six question categories (*echoic, epistemic, expressive, social control, attentional,* and *verbosity*) and several subsets. Echoic questions are those which ask for the repetition of an utterance or confirmation that an utterance has been interpreted as intended. Epistemic questions serve the purpose of acquiring information, the main subtypes of epistemic questions being referential, display, and rhetorical questions. Expressive questions convey attitudinal information to the addressee. Social control questions are used to exert authority by maintaining control of the discourse. Attentional questions allow teachers to take over the direction of the discourse, their meta-message being "*listen to me*" or "*think about this*". The last category is represented by verbosity questions; such questions are asked only for the sake of politeness or to sustain conversation (Shomoossi, 1997, p. 27).

Although this taxonomy is quite exhaustive, further in his research study Shomoossi points out that teacher questions most often have two crucial functions: turn allocation

and talk initiation. Students who are less likely to participate are usually encouraged, or forced, to speak when asked to speak. Questioning is also used to distribute turns of speaking in a fair way among all students. Some students are less confident or shy, but they can also participate when the teacher allocates a turn. Sometimes, teachers prefer a question asked by a student to be answered by another student, which is also a kind of turn allocation by questioning (Shomoossi, 1997, p. 44). Farahian and Rezaee (2012) provide some other examples of functions of teacher questions, such as focusing attention, exerting disciplinary control, getting feedback and, most important of all, encouraging students to participate (p. 162).

As has been suggested above, some taxonomies seem to blend functions and types of questions; one of the most often cited is the one by Richards and Lockhart (1996, as cited in Quashoa, 2013, pp. 53-54; or as cited in Hamiloglu, 2012, p. 3). These authors classified teacher questions into three categories: *procedural*, *convergent*, and *divergent*. Quashoa (2013) explains that procedural questions are used to ensure the smooth flow of the teaching process; they relate to classroom procedures and management. Convergent questions encourage similar student responses and short answers; they require students to recall the previously taught material to answer the questions without getting involved in high level thinking skills. Divergent questions, on the other hand, encourage diverse long responses with higher-level thinking that require students to give their own answers and express themselves (p. 54). A similar classification that merges functions and types is the one by Brown and Wragg (1993); they divide questions into three categories: *managerial*, *information/data,* and *higher order* (as cited in Betáková, 2010, p. 99).

Gabrielatos (1997) introduces a synoptic table of functions. In his view, pedagogical questions can be used to elicit (e.g. level of interest, needs and problems, relevant knowledge and experience, or language use), guide and help (e.g. by limiting the range of choices, towards discovering aspects of language structure and use, or towards development of strategies), check (what and how much learners have understood, or what learners can do), and manage the lesson (e.g. checking instructions or sequencing activities) (p. 7).

Many authors (for example Qashoa, 2013, p. 52) formulate question functions as specific aims that are to be achieved in the lesson. A complex and practical list of EFL teacher question functions is provided by Ur (2012); in her view, teacher questions help:

- To provide a model for language or thinking
- To find out something from the students (e.g. facts, ideas, opinions)
- To check or test understanding, knowledge or skill
- To get students to be active in their learning
- To direct attention, or provide a "warm-up", to a new topic
- To inform the class through students´ answers rather than the teacher´s input
- To provide weaker students with an opportunity to participate
- To stimulate thinking (logical, critical or imaginative)
- To probe more deeply into issues
- To get students to relate personally to an issue
- To get students to review and practise previously taught material
- To encourage self-expression
- To communicate to students that the teacher is genuinely interested in what they think (pp. 228-229).

This list distinguishes different functions of EFL teacher questions and, at the same time, provides teachers with good clues regarding questioning effectiveness and variety. Other lists to be found in literature include Brown and Edmonson´s classification of teachers´ questions purposes (2009, as cited in Hamiloglu, 2012, p. 2), Cotton´s list of purposes (2001, p. 1), or Turney´s enumeration of twelve reasons for teachers´ questions (1973, as cited in Betáková, 2010, p. 105).

Darn (n. d.) relates questioning purposes and different lesson types and their stages. During the lead-in to a lesson, *referential* questions form the basis of brainstorming a topic, generating interest and topic-related vocabulary. When new language is being presented, questions are used to elicit students´ prior knowledge, and guide them into recognising patterns and forming hypotheses. *Noticing* questions are used to help learners identify language in context. *Concept-checking* questions check meaning and understanding before language is practised. *Nomination* questions are essential during guided oral practice. *Form-based* questions, which are often suggested in globally designed materials for the sake of language practice, may be personalised and transformed into divergent questions, so they are more likely to stimulate students´ interest and generate language. While practising different language skills, questions may focus on strategies as well as language. The success of many fluency activities depends on the use of *open-ended*

referential questions, but the teacher can also increase motivation by expressing interest through questions. Questions focusing on form, function, meaning, concept and strategies may all be termed *guidance* questions; their overall aim is to raise awareness of language and skills and to help students develop strategies for learning. Questions also play an important role in classroom management throughout the lesson (p. 2).

There are other several aspects of EFL teacher questions and their functions that need to be mentioned. Malamah-Thomas (1991) points out that it is crucial to distinguish between a *social* and a *pedagogic* purpose of questions. If a teacher asks a student, *"What did you do last night?"* in an attempt to establish friendly relations with the student and find out more about his personal life, then the content of the answer is important. If the same question is asked in the context of an exercise on the Past Simple tense, with a pedagogic purpose, then the correct form is important. The teacher needs to provide appropriate feedback that corresponds with the purpose of the question (p. 18). Malamah-Thomas further stresses that if teachers are to achieve their objectives, then the learners must be able to perceive their intentions. If the intentions are unclear, or subject to misinterpretation, then the learners are unlikely to learn what the teacher wants them to learn (p. 41). Betáková (2010) also illustrates that the teacher may control both the form and the content of the students´ responses through questions; she concludes by citing Cook (1989): indeed the teacher who constantly interrupts the students´ discourse to correct every grammatical mistake not only violates usual turn-taking procedures but may also hinder the students´ acquisition of them (as cited in Betáková, 2010, p. 106).

Betáková (2010) further stresses the function of teacher questions of providing a language model for students. "It is important to point out here that at the beginning of the 21st century the normal practice is to conduct a foreign language lesson in the target language, which is connected with the prevalence of the communicative method all over the world under the strong influence of Anglo-American methodology" (p. 130).

To summarize the reasons for asking questions in the classroom, Wragg and Brown´s (2001) definition seems to be appropriate: questions are asked to facilitate learning, so they are linked to the aims of lessons and the underlying purpose of the lesson (as cited in Betáková, 2010, p. 106). EFL teachers should bear that in mind while designing, controlling and evaluating questions for their students; these skills of questioning are discussed next.

Skills of Questioning in EFL

In this chapter, three basic skills and stages of questioning, i.e. designing, controlling and evaluating, are examined, and the most frequent arguments from literature are presented. Following the advice provided by different authors can facilitate a more effective questioning process in EFL classroom.

As Nelešovská (2005) explains, teacher questions and student answers form the basis of verbal pedagogic communication. Many teachers see the process of questioning as a traditional, smooth, almost easy matter (p. 42). Mareš and Křivohlavý (1995) list the main reasons of this belief: historical traditions that see a dialogue as an ideal teaching method, prevalence of traditional teaching methods at Czech schools, prevalence of teacher-centred approach, and absence of detailed research studies on pedagogic questioning (as cited in Nelešovská, 2005, p. 42).

Effective questioning is certainly not an easy matter; there are many aspects that need to be taken into account while designing or controlling teachers´ questions and evaluating students´ answers. Brown (2001) suggests that one of the best ways to develop the role of an initiator and sustainer of interaction is to develop a repertoire of questioning strategies. Therefore, what kind of and how questions are used in the class is important to provide an effective interaction (as cited in Hamiloglu, 2012, p. 3).

Shomoossi (1997) warns that the success of interaction in the classroom cannot be taken for granted, and it cannot be guaranteed by exhaustive planning either. If the interaction is totally planned in advance, then the result is a play-reading rather than a lesson. Interaction is to be managed by all the participants as it goes along, and it must be seen as co-production of teachers and students (p. 32). Walsh and Sattes (2005) name the most frequent barriers of best practices concerning classroom questioning: content coverage, time constraints, habit or tradition, a felt need to maintain control of class, ease for teacher, and not wanting to embarrass students. These issues need to be carefully considered by teachers who strive for creating a quality questioning classroom (p. 16).

Designing

The first point that needs to be made is that effective questioning involves preparation before class. Ma (2008) explains that even if some teachers can ask questions without planning, sometimes the arrangement of questioning lacks logic, or there are problems in language organization. The questions then cannot make students use their knowledge and skills to answer as expected (p. 94).

Deciding on the purpose and content of questions. Teachers ask questions with different goals and aims. For instance, Ma (2008) illustrates that different lesson styles and teaching goals should have corresponding questioning strategies. Teachers should take into account different skills and methods of questioning. Ma believes that teacher questions give guidance to emphasis of students´ study. The process of questioning leads students to see the content that teachers view as important (pp. 94 - 95). Quashoa (2013), on the basis of his research study, recommends EFL teachers to "tailor, design and balance their questions according to students´ levels, lesson objectives and learner strategies" (p. 60). Gabrielatos (1997) considers some problematic questions (e.g. *Do you understand?* or *Is it clear now?*), which are not likely to elicit a true or helpful response and which are thus to be avoided (p. 6).

Adjusting questions to students´ level. Nelešovská (2005) states that correct wording of a question is the main precondition of receiving an appropriate student response. The first aspect to concentrate on is the adequacy of the question; the teacher must remember the students´ age and their knowledge level. Questions that are too difficult or too simple will probably get no answer (p. 43). Harmer (2007) explicates that teachers give students more support when they are at beginner or intermediate levels; more advanced students are expected to be more resourceful (p. 97). Other authors consider usage of different question types in classes of different levels. For instance, Walsh (2006) points out that the frequency of why? questions increases with both age and level of students (as cited in Betáková, 2010, p. 104). Ma (2008) believes that the use of display questions encourages beginner students to get interested; referential questions, on the other hand, are typical of higher proficiency language classrooms, as they usually require long and syntactically complex answers (pp. 95-96). While considering the EFL concept, the use of L1 in questioning should also be mentioned. Harmer (2007) believes

that while it may make sense to use the students´ L1 in some situations at lower levels, this becomes less appropriate as the students´ English improves (p. 135).

Not asking all the time. Mareš and Křivohlavý (1995) point out that teachers overuse their right to talk in the classroom. As a result, long IRF interaction chains appear. Under such circumstances, it is almost impossible for a student to ask a question or to develop a dialogue with other students (p. 88). Instead of asking questions, Mareš and Křivohlavý suggest alternative ways of stimulating students´ thinking, e.g. using declarative sentences, thoughtful summary, or student questions, expressing surprise, and prompting students to develop their ideas (p. 91). Quashoa (2013) also recommends using more tag, alternative and indirect questions in ELT (p. 60). Darn (n. d.) puts it simply: "as with all aspects of teacher talking time, it is not the quantity, but the quality and value of questions that is important" (p. 3).

Not using questions as weapons. According to Mareš and Křivohlavý (1995), teachers should not nominate students who are apparently not paying attention. Also, teachers should not see questioning as a form of duel with only one side winning. Approaches such as ridiculing or startling students by questions do not stimulate their activity. Another point is that teachers should not ask their students about their personal affairs in front of the class; most people, especially teenage students, see this as highly unpleasant. Indiscreet questions may lead to students´ negative attitude to the teacher and any future communication (p. 89). The same authors, on the other hand, recommend using personal questions that aim at personal opinions, attitudes, or emotions, as such questions provide a greater space for students´ initiative and support their involvement in the discussion. Personal questions may result in feigned responses, in case students do not wish to externalise their personality. Therefore, teachers must be cautious while designing and evaluating personal questions (p. 67).

Providing enough background knowledge. Walsh and Sattes (2005) point out that students need time to reflect on their past experiences if they are to gain new understandings. Also, teachers should encourage their students to draw upon their own and their peers´ experiences and prior knowledge as they try to grasp new concepts and ideas (pp. 3 – 4). Mareš and Křivohlavý (1995) advise teachers not to ask right after the topic of discussion is announced; such practice can, in fact, prevent students from discussing. Classroom interaction then decreases back to the IRF pattern; students do not have a chance to take part in a discussion, and they are, over again, in roles of silent

spectators (p. 90). Nelešovská (2005) emphasises that questions should be based on students´ experience; they should be connected to practical life. Only such questions can motivate students and encourage their interest in the topic (p. 44). Ma (2008) shares this view (pp. 94 – 96).

Formulating questions well. Mareš and Křivohlavý (1995) warn teachers not to ask their students vague and unprepared questions just because the teacher wants them to come to a specific conclusion. Students sense they should discover something that is on their teacher´s mind and start guessing. The teacher loses precious class time by vague questioning (p. 89). Nelešovská (2005) states that questions must be comprehensible, brief and unambiguous, so that students see what the teacher is aiming at. Factual correctness and accuracy of questions is based on teacher´s expertise (p. 43). Walsh and Sattes (2005) state that "questions promote student learning; teachers should plan their questions before asking to ensure that questions match the instructional objectives and promote thinking. A few carefully prepared or selected questions are preferable to large numbers of questions" (p. 12). Ma (2008) points out that in order to receive good quality answers, teachers should use clear vocabulary and familiar terminology while formulating questions (p. 95).

Asking challenging and interesting questions. Ma (2008) believes that if teachers use questions that are challenging and interesting for students, it can stimulate the pursuit of knowledge and encourage passive students to get involved. Good questions can stimulate students to discuss and think (p. 95). Walsh and Sattes (2005) presume that a) good questions help students learn; b) all students can think and reason beyond rote memory; c) divergent thinking is important; and d) not all questions have one right answer (p. 8).

Using a wide range of question types. As has been pointed out above, it is advisable for teachers to use a balanced range of various question types. Many authors (e.g. Ma, 2008; Walsh & Sattes, 2005; Quashoa, 2013; Darn, n. d.; Betáková, 2010) agree on this point. If teachers use the same types of questions, they, in fact, restrict their students´ learning opportunities. For example, Ma (2008) illustrates the necessity of asking both referential and display questions in EFL classroom, and provides examples of objectives that can be reached by using these two question types. She states that "each context requires an appropriate strategy for itself" (pp. 95 - 96).

Creating a good language model for students. According to Nelešovská (2005), all teachers should ensure that their classroom language is correct and literary, including their pronunciation, accent, stress, intonation, and speaking dynamics. Teachers´ utterances serve as language models for students (p. 44). In EFL situation, as Betáková (2010) points out, the difficulty of non-native speaker teachers is that they need to have the same knowledge of teaching skills as native speaker teachers and they have to perform all the teacher talking activities in a language which is not their mother tongue. They need to know the language and they have to be able to talk about the language in that language (p. 107). Appropriate language proficiency is thus a crucial precondition of effective questioning in EFL.

Controlling

Controlling means the actual process of asking questions in class, managing the questioning process by the teacher. Malamah-Thomas (1991) concludes that "knowing what you want to do, what you want to communicate to your students, in the classroom is a good start. Actually doing it, actually achieving communicating, requires a lot more effort and expertise" (p. 11). The most important controlling strategies to be used while questioning are discussed below.

Nominating after the question. Ma (2008) advises teachers to ask questions first, give students time to think, and only then nominate a student to answer. If teachers nominate students before asking questions, where will be just the nominated student thinking about the answer, while the others will not feel involved (p. 96).

Directing attention to all. Many teachers prefer to nominate volunteers to answer their questions. Such volunteers usually belong to the high-achievers category. If teachers keep nominating these students, the gap between the high-achievers and low-achievers increases. Ma (2008) explains that if teachers distribute questions in this way, some students feel neglected and their interest in learning decreases. She recommends calling upon non-volunteers in a friendly, non-threatening manner, and she further points out that "the opportunity to respond should be available to all" (p. 97). Walsh and Sattes (2005) suggest a similar procedure and they add that classroom norms should indicate that every student deserves an opportunity to answer and all students´ answers are important (pp. 13 – 14).

Increasing wait-time. One of the most common problems that occur in the area of classroom questioning is not providing students with enough time to think about their answers. Ma (2008) defines wait-time as the length of time the teacher waits after asking the question before calling on a student to answer it, rephrasing a question, directing the question to another student, or giving the answer. She points out that in EFL classes, students should be provided even longer wait-time, as there are two aspects of their answer, the factual content and the foreign language form (pp. 96 – 97). As Darn (n. d.) explains, many teachers find it difficult to estimate the amount of time needed for a student to respond to a question, often due to pressure of time, impatience or fear of silence. Rushing learners might result in mistakes and frustration. Sufficient wait-time is needed for learners to comprehend the question, formulate an answer, process language and respond. Wait-time before nominating and after the initial response encourages longer answers, learners´ questions, self-correction and level of student involvement (p. 2). Mareš and Křivohlavý (1995) point out that if a teacher asks a higher-order question, it is only logical that students need more time for formulating their answers. Also, students do not have much experience with verbalising their thoughts, they do not have many opportunities for sifting their opinions and confronting them with others. Teachers should therefore be patient and give their students enough space (p. 88). Walsh and Sattes (2005) mention Dr. Rowe´s research study and they explain: "She discovered that if we wait three to five seconds before anyone speaks, student answers are better! The answers are more complete, they are longer, and they are more ´on target´ with the question. She also found that students are more sure of their answers. They do not just guess as often". Walsh and Sattes also warn about teachers´ tendency to provide more wait time, but also more cues, clues, and other prompts, to high-achievers. This feature of teacher behaviour means another disadvantage for weaker students. The authors further explain the need for both, wait-time 1 (after asking a question, space for thinking about the answer) and wait-time 2 (after hearing an answer, space for self-reflection and self-correction). If teachers pause for three to five seconds at those two points, more students participate in class discussion, their answers are longer and of higher quality, and achievement improves on cognitively complex measures. Nevertheless, research reports that teachers typically wait only one second or less for students to begin their responses (pp. 4, 9, 14 - 18). Cotton (2001) provides analogous data, and specifies some aspects of student performance that are positively affected by increasing wait-time beyond three seconds (pp. 5 – 6). Feng (2013)

concludes that if teachers provide enough wait-time, the nature of the discourse in class changes in a positive way. More students answer questions and their answers are more accurate, more elaborate and more reasoned. The application of wait-time is of great significance in the effective use of questioning strategies (p. 150).

Creating positive classroom atmosphere. Numerous authors (e.g. Ma, 2008; Ur, 2012; Feng, 2013; Mareš & Křivohlavý, 1995; Byrne, 1991; Scrivener, 2011) agree that creating satisfactory classroom atmosphere is one of the prerequisites of successful questioning (and also learning and interacting) process. Brown and Wragg (1993) see asking questions in a threatening way as one of the most common errors in questioning (as cited in Betáková, 2010, p. 204). Ur (2012) points out that if students are to interact with the teacher actively, they must be sure that the feedback to their responses will be respectful, that they will not be put down or ridiculed if they say something inappropriate (p. 231). Mareš and Křivohlavý (1995) explain that when nominated, most students feel stressed, which can reflect in the quality of their answers. Younger students often speak in lower volume, with different voice quality, their answers being hesitant and less fluent. Their tension also shows in the language forms they use while answering. Teachers should try to soften this tension by positive feedback (p. 83). Byrne (1991) recommends EFL teachers to make the students feel that their ideas are just as interesting and just as important as the teachers´. Students must feel that everybody in the classroom is listening to what they say rather than how they say it (p. 55). Feng (2013) believes that fostering students´ higher order thinking requires a positive classroom environment; in order to strengthen students´ critical thinking skills through the use of questioning, EFL teachers need to establish a safe, non-threatening, encouraging and mutually respectful environment in the classroom. If students feel no pressure, their minds work faster and their thinking is conducted at a higher level (p. 151).

Letting students finish their answers. Various authors warn teachers not to finish students´ responses. For instance, Scrivener (2011) explains that people need to finish their own sentences. If teachers cannot wait and add "tails" to students´ unfinished answers, they "do the hard work for them", which is counter-productive. Students need help to produce their own sentences, using their words and their own ideas. If teachers let students finish what they are saying, they also allow themselves more time to really listen to the student (p. 75).

Probing. Ma (2008) sees probing as one of the key questioning skills. Teacher probes are based on student responses, which may be superficial. The teacher can use this strategy to make students explore their initial comments, to get students more involved in critical analysis of their own and other students´ ideas. Probing thus means using further teacher leading questions that encourage students to put together their partial knowledge into more complete answers. Probes can be used to analyze a student´s statement, make a student aware of underlying assumptions, help students deduce relationships, etc (p. 96). Quashoa (2013), on the basis of his research study, recommends EFL teachers to use more follow up questions to help students, particularly slow learners, to produce more complex utterances (p. 60).

Evaluating

Ma (2008) defines the evaluation process as the manner in which the teacher handles student responses; teachers´ feedback, both positive and negative, is very important. Ma emphasizes that positive feedback is more helpful than negative, as it improves students´ behaviour and study motivation (p. 97). Malamah-Thomas (1991) believes that the teacher should constantly monitor and take account of the students´ reactions, as it is the only check that the teacher has on learning (p. 39). Betáková (2010) defines different forms of feedback, including accepting, praising, commenting, repeating, correcting, and paraphrasing (p. 148). Darn (n. d.) advises EFL teachers to use their feedback in order to extend the dialogue (p. 3). Brown and Wragg (1993) enumerate some common errors in questioning, where they include frequent problems with evaluating, such as: "not correcting wrong answers, ignoring answers, failing to see the implications of answers, and failing to build on answers" (as cited in Betáková, 2010, p. 204). Cotton (2001) illustrates the positives of increasing wait-time, not only regarding students´ performance but also teachers´ feedback. If teachers increase wait-time beyond three seconds, research findings show that teachers are more flexible in their responses, they listen more, engage students in more discussions, their expectations regarding slower students increase, the variety of questions expands, the number of higher cognitive questions increases, and so on (p. 6).

Praising. Cotton (2001) points out that praise is positively related to achievement when it is used sparingly, is directly related to the student´s response, and is sincere

and credible (p. 7). Ma (2008) sees affective feedback as emotional support which facilitates communication to continue and as a beneficial aspect in students´ language development. She believes that positive feedback in the cognitive domain will serve as reinforcement of the forms used and neutral or negative feedback in the cognitive domain will encourage students to try again. Teachers thus must provide students with cognitive feedback as well as affective support. One indirect praising procedure that Ma mentions is quoting. The teacher quotes a student´s correct answer while talking to the class, which can encourage students more than direct praising (pp. 97 - 98). Similarly, Ur (2012) recommends occasional echoing of student responses, which serves as a confirmation of the response and an indirect compliment to the responding student. It also makes sure that the rest of the class hears the response. Ur also sees echoing as an opportunity to correct and extend student responses (p. 233). Betáková (2010) lists several possible phrases that can be used while providing feedback, ranging from neutral accepting to high praising (p. 148). All teachers should have a variety of such phrases on their disposal.

Encouraging. According to Ma (2008), EFL teachers should always provide enough encouragement, even if a student gives a completely wrong answer. She sees the main point of student responses in that students practice their oral English; the factual content of their reactions comes second. When students cannot give the correct answer to the question, she advises teachers to ask easier questions as cues, which can encourage further student participation (p. 98).

Supporting student questioning. Walsh and Sattes (2005), among their eight basic rules of quality questioning, include the following simple statement: "students will ask questions when confused or curious" (p. 8). Mareš and Křivohlavý (1995) believe that developing a real dialogue in the classroom is highly important. They mean such a dialogue where the teacher and students cooperate in the mutual learning process and where they get to know each other on a personal level. Although creating such a dialogue in the classroom is difficult, its portion in classroom interaction should rise with the rising age of the students. The authors also point out that teachers, feeling under time pressure, often prevent students from forming complex utterances, which is an error (pp. 82 - 83). As Scrivener (2011) explains, if EFL teachers allow time for students to listen, think, process their answers and speak, they allow the increase in opportunities for student talking time. In accordance with modern EFL principles,

32

Scrivener strongly recommends encouraging interaction between students rather than only between students and teacher, including the questioning parts of the lesson (p. 61).

Responding to form vs. responding to content. Gabrielatos (1997) illustrates the two possible and very different dialogues between an EFL teacher and a student, depending on the focus of the teacher´s feedback (p. 6). Harmer (2007) explains that during communicative activities, it is generally felt that teachers should not interrupt students in mid-flow to point out a grammatical, lexical or pronunciation error, since it would interrupt the communication and drag an activity back to the study of language form. He concludes that "teacher intervention in such circumstances can raise stress levels and stop the acquisition process in its tracks" (p. 143). EFL teachers thus need to distinguish the focus of their questions, either form or content, and respond to student answers in an appropriate and sensitive way.

The theoretical framework, explaining key concepts, such as various question types, functions of teacher questions in EFL, and especially the numerous skills of questioning, equips the readers with the fundamental information on the topic. The research study, which follows, strives to find out the ratios of selected question types that can be heard in English lessons at Czech grammar schools, to assess the extent to which some skills of questioning are put into practice, and to examine the relationship of teacher questions and student language production.

III. METHODS

This chapter describes the practical part of the thesis. The research methodology, tools, participants, procedures, and the research questions are introduced. The main aim of the present research is to examine EFL teachers´ questioning behaviour and its impact on students´ language production, participation and learning.

Successful classroom interaction largely depends on the types of questions and the ways questions are used. This study thus intends to investigate EFL teacher questions, explore their types and their impact on the teaching and learning process, mainly by analysing the data collected by observing twelve different language lessons and by interviewing four EFL teachers. It also needs to be pointed out that teacher questions explored in this research are only those asked by teachers during frontal teaching, and especially within the IRF pattern.

In the course of writing the thesis and preparing the research, the following research questions developed:

1. What is the frequency of different question types in EFL classes?
2. What is the percentage of questions asked in Czech?
3. In what ways does questioning vary while comparing individual teachers´ lessons and different teachers´ lessons?
4. What is the rate of short and long student answers?
5. What importance do EFL teachers assign to questioning?

Research Tools

Considering the research questions, a combination of quantitative and qualitative method seemed to be the most appropriate for the purpose of the present research. Two main research tools were chosen: direct lesson observations and structured interviews with EFL teachers.

Direct observations in EFL lessons can provide a large amount of statistical data, and, at the same time, they enable one to study specific qualitative features that would be difficult to express statistically, such as students´ and teachers´ language, teaching techniques, classroom affect, etc. Before the observations were carried out, an observation

record sheet (see Appendix A) was designed and tested, so that it was ensured that all the categories could be tallied or examined while observing a lesson. The observation record sheet facilitated tallying the occurrence of five different question types: display lower-order, display higher-order, referential lower-order, referential higher-order, and procedural. The next two columns evaluated the ratio of English and Czech language usage while questioning. The amount of student language production was assessed thanks to the two subsequent columns: short answer and long answer. In the next column, a number of sample questions were written down in every lesson. The last column facilitated taking notes on various aspects, such as teachers´ questioning skills, lesson structure, points for further discussion, etc.

The brief structured interview with four EFL teachers comprised of questions regarding their demographics, i.e. their age, length of teaching practice and qualification. Next, they were asked the following two questions:

- How do you perceive the role of teacher questions in EFL?
- Do you plan your questions before the lessons?

The reason, why the structured interview was so brief and the research questions so simple, is following: it was not the researcher´s intention to test the teachers´ knowledge of different question types or various questioning skills. The desired goal of the interview was to be able to assess the teachers´ perspective of teacher questioning, and to provoke the teachers´ reflection and self-reflection on questioning. Also, the interview provided some space for discussing the teachers´ and the researcher´s feedback, which will be described in the following chapter.

Research Participants

The present research study was carried out at Gymnázium Stříbro, a state secondary school comprising of an eight-year grammar school and a four-year commercial academy. The school is attended by circa 350 students. Four EFL teachers were asked to allow research observations in their lessons, to which all of them agreed.

Teacher A was a 51-year-old male with 26 years of teaching practice. He studied Geography and PE teaching, but later attended numerous ELT courses and passed the CELTA exams, so he is a qualified ELT teacher.

Teacher B was a 55-year-old male who has been teaching for 19 years. He has a degree in technical engineering, and later passed the State English Language Exam, attended a pedagogical course and also an ELT Continuing Education Course, so he is a fully qualified ELT teacher.

Teacher C was a 54-year-old female with 30 years of teaching practice. She studied History and Russian language teaching, but later attended an ELT Continuing Education Course, so she is a fully qualified ELT teacher.

Teacher D was a 36-year-old female who has been teaching English for four years, so she was the youngest and the least experienced in teaching. She has an engineer degree in economics; she has no pedagogical education, so she is not a qualified teacher. She has lived in the USA for some time, and her command of the English language is very good. The school headmaster employed her for a limited time period as a supply teacher.

All research observations were carried out in secondary classes of grammar school (G5, G6, G7, and G8), attended by students aged between 15 and 19, mostly of Czech nationality. The student groups were sized between 12 – 21 students. To specify the classes in more detail, class G5 was attended by 15- and 16-year-old students whose language proficiency was described as pre-intermediate. Classes G6 (students aged 16-17) and G7 (students aged 17-18) were both labelled as intermediate. Class G8 comprised of 18- and 19-year-old students whose English was marked as upper-intermediate. In terms of CEFR, most students´ English presumably fitted into the categories B1, B1+, B2, B2+, several perhaps C1. At these levels, the speakers´ competencies should allow more or less independent self-expression and genuine interaction to take place in the classroom. In terms of Bloom´s taxonomy, the students´ age and cognitive level should allow all degrees of educational objectives to be implemented in the lessons.

It further needs to be explained here, why the present research was carried out at secondary grades of a grammar school. According to various authors´ recommendations, higher-order and referential questions should make circa 50% of questions, especially in classes of older and higher-proficiency students. The older students´ language proficiency and cognitive level should allow more natural communication and space for more complex question types, such as higher-order, open or referential questions.

Furthermore, regarding the use of L1 and L2 in more advanced classes, most authors see using L1 as undesirable in most EFL situations.

Research Procedure

The research was carried out from 22 February to 11 March 2016 at Gymnázium Stříbro, Soběslavova 1426, Stříbro, with the headmaster´s permission. In order to gather enough data and to be able to compare individual and different teachers´ lessons, twelve observations in twelve 45-minute language lessons were carried out. Four teachers´ (teacher A, B, C, and D) lessons were observed, three lessons with every teacher (lessons A1, A2, A3, B1, B2, B3, C1, C2, C3, D1, D2, D3).

The researcher used non-participant direct observation to collect data. During all twelve observations, the observer was sitting at the back or in a corner of the classroom, not interfering in the lessons in any way, trying to be as unobtrusive as possible. Neither the students, nor the teachers seemed to be disturbed by the observer´s presence. All the data were written down on the record sheets during the observations, no audio or video recordings were made.

The teachers were not aware of the research subject beforehand in order not to affect their teaching style. Regarding the structured interviews, the teachers were asked the questions specified above after all three observations had been carried out in their lessons.

The research methods have been introduced in this chapter. It is time now to analyse the data and comment on the findings in the following chapter.

IV. RESULTS AND COMMENTARIES

As it was outlined in the previous chapter, the present thesis aims at uncovering EFL teachers´ questioning behaviour and its impact on students´ language production. This chapter focuses on analysing the data gathered from the observations and structured interviews on the basis of the theoretical background chapter. The structure of this chapter is based on the research questions stated above. Each part starts with the presentation of the results in the form of graphs or tables; commentaries explaining the results in greater depth follow. Finally, the results are summarized, confronted with the research questions and conclusions are drawn.

Frequency of Different Question Types

The first research question focused on determining the frequency of different question types in EFL classes. Most EFL authors focus on the use of display and referential questions in their research studies, as this division is connected with some crucial teaching and learning aspects, such as students´ participation, amount of students´ language output and genuine interaction. These authors mostly agree that referential questions, especially in higher-proficiency classrooms, tend to elicit a greater effort from students to provide an answer, tend to generate longer and more syntactically complex answers, and facilitate more genuine interaction. Nevertheless, most of these research studies also show that language teachers use significantly more display questions than referential questions. Another feature examined in the current study was the occurrence of lower-order and higher-order questions, which encourage different levels of students´ thinking.

Display, Referential, and Procedural Questions

For the purpose of this thesis, three basic categories of questions have been distinguished: display, referential, and procedural. It has been hypothesized that the number of display questions would prevail and that the number of procedural questions would also be significant.

The following graph presents the percentages of different question types that were used in the twelve observed lessons.

Question Types
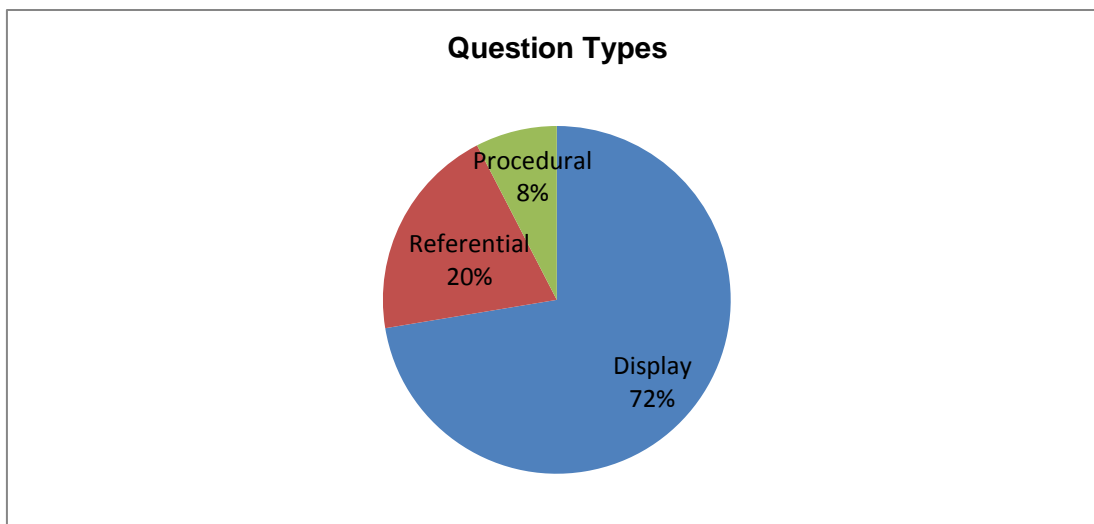
Graph 1. Overall percentages of display, referential, and procedural questions in the observed lessons.

In the present research, display questions made 72%, referential questions 20%, and procedural questions represented 8%. The percentages of display and referential questions correspond with many other research studies, so they confirm the researcher´s expectations. For example, Farahian and Rezaee (2012) state the ratio of 75% referential and 25% display questions in their study. Shomoossi (1997) shows even more unfavourable results: display questions made 82% and referential questions only 18% in his research. Ozcan´s study (2010) introduces the ratio of 80% display and 20% referential questions. All the studies noted above, including the present one, agree that referential questions are underused in EFL classroom. As for procedural questions, Kayaoglu (2013) shows 14% procedural questions occurrence in her study, and Hamiloglu (2012) states that 18% procedural questions appeared in her study. The present result of 8% is considerably lower, which possibly means that the lesson processes were very smooth in the observed lessons. A more plausible explanation is that the ratio of procedural questions was lowered by the high total numbers of display and referential questions. The following table presents the total numbers of these question types.

Display questions	Referential questions	Procedural questions	Questions total
611	169	64	844

Table 2. Total numbers of display, referential, and procedural questions in the observed lessons.

As it can be seen in the table above, during the twelve observed lessons, teachers asked 844 questions: 611 display, 169 referential and 64 procedural. The average number of questions asked in one lesson was 70. This means that on average, teachers asked 1.6 questions within a single minute.

The total number of the questions, which is considerably high, came as a surprise, the researcher expected lower figures. The numbers seem high also in comparison with other EFL research studies: Shomoossi (1997) states the average number of teacher questions asked in one lesson was 41, Hamiloglu (2012) claims 49 teacher questions were asked on average, Farahian and Rezaee´s study (2012) states the number of 32, and Quashoa´s findings (2013) show the number of 35. These numbers contrast with the present study findings. If students are asked 70 questions during a 45-minute EFL lesson, how many elaborated answers can teachers expect?

Regarding the topics of these types of questions in the observed lessons, they coordinated with the researcher´s expectations: display questions mostly aimed at vocabulary, grammar or revision of facts about English speaking countries. Referential questions mostly sought personal information, such as students´ opinions, experience, etc. Procedural questions most often dealt with the topics of class register and lesson organization.

Concerning the high numbers of questions asked and the high occurrence of display questions in the observed lessons, it seems that EFL teachers at this grammar school concentrated on checking their students´ knowledge of facts and language accuracy and did not see STT and classroom communication as their priority. Most lessons were teacher-centred, with low rates of pair-work or group-work. Another point is that display questions are generally easier to formulate and assess. This can be the main reason why the teachers preferred display to referential questions. All observations were carried out in higher-proficiency classes of older students, where there is much space for using referential questions. Students´ command of vocabulary, grammar and other language resources should be sufficient for them to be able to formulate their thoughts well and express themselves freely. The results clearly show that the students´ skills often stay unutilized. EFL teachers should implement higher portion of referential questions in order to facilitate genuine interaction, to support students´ language production and possibly intensify their effort in expressing themselves. Display questions will always play an important role in the language classroom; the main concern is how to decrease

40

their numbers in favour of referential questions. This surely involves sufficient planning and conscious efforts on the part of EFL teachers. The fact is that many display questions can be quite easily transformed into referential ones in the course of the lesson; for example, instead of asking, "*What does ´chore´ mean*," the teacher could ask, "*What are your usual household chores, David*?" If EFL teachers are to implement more referential questions in their lessons, they need to concentrate on genuine interaction, to be interested in their students´ lives and their opinions, and to show this interest to their students via appropriate questioning strategies and feedback. EFL lessons, unlike other lesson types, provide numerous opportunities for students to speak about their lives, justify their opinions, discuss their beliefs, or outline their plans. It is a shame not to exploit these opportunities. One of the ways surely is effective use of referential questions.

It also needs to be pointed out that if teacher D´s results were left out, the overall results would be slightly more balanced. Teacher D, who is not a qualified EFL teacher, asked extremely high numbers of display questions in her lessons, most of them aiming at vocabulary. In her three lessons, she asked 240 display, 58 referential, and 5 procedural questions. Without these numbers, the overall results of teachers A, B, and C would be as follows: 69% display, 21% referential and 10% procedural questions. The total numbers would also change, with the average number of questions asked within one lesson dropping to 60.

Lower-order and Higher-order Questions

Another division made within the question types in the present study was that of lower- and higher-order questions. The overall results of the ratios are presented in the following table.

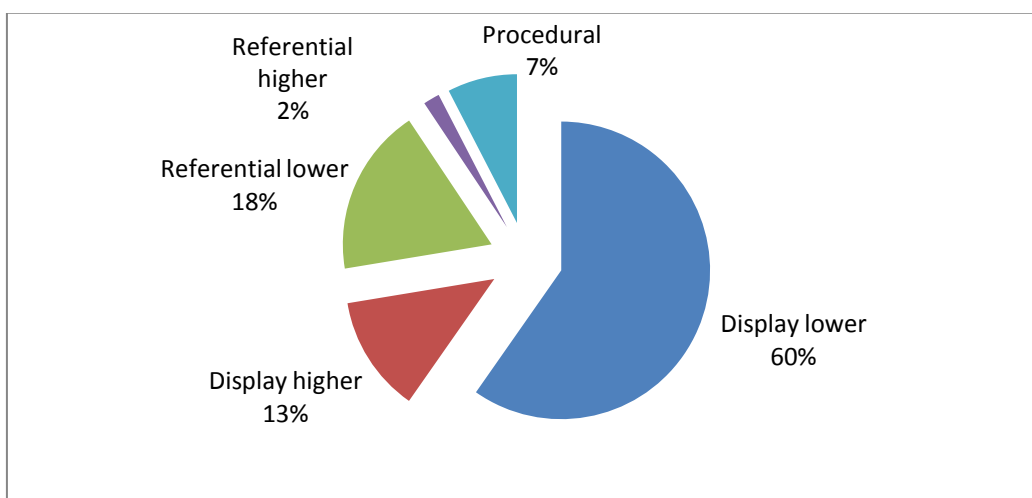| Lower-order questions	Higher-order questions	Procedural questions	Questions total
658	122	64	844
78%	15%	7%	100%

Table 3. Total numbers and percentages of lower-order, higher-order, and procedural questions in the observed lessons.

As it can be seen in the table above, higher-order questions represented only a tip of the iceberg. Out of total 844 questions asked, 658 (78%) were lower-order questions, 122 (15%) were higher-order questions, and 64 (7%) were procedural questions. These numbers can be compared with Cotton´s study (2001) where she presented slightly more favourable results: approximately 60% of the questions asked were lower cognitive questions, 20% were higher cognitive questions, and 20% were procedural.

Most research studies focusing on the cognitive question level, however, do not take into account procedural questions. If procedural questions are left out from the present study, the resultant ratio is 84% of lower-order and 16% of higher-order questions. These numbers did not meet the researcher´s expectations, as a larger portion of higher-order questions was expected. The resultant percentages can then be compared with research studies of Švaříček (2011), who shows more balanced results of 61% lower-order and 39% higher-order questions, or Gall (1984), who states the ratio of 80% lower-order and 20% of higher-order questions (as cited in Walsh & Sattes, 2005, p. 12). The results of the present study thus most approximate Gall´s findings.

Regarding the different question types, a more detailed division was made in the course of the present study. The questions asked in the observed lessons were, in fact, divided into five categories: display lower, display higher, referential lower, referential higher, and procedural. Sample questions of these five types can be found in Appendix B. Their occurrence in percentages and total numbers can be seen in the following two graphs.

Graph 2. Percentages of display lower, display higher, referential lower, referential higher, and procedural questions in the observed lessons.
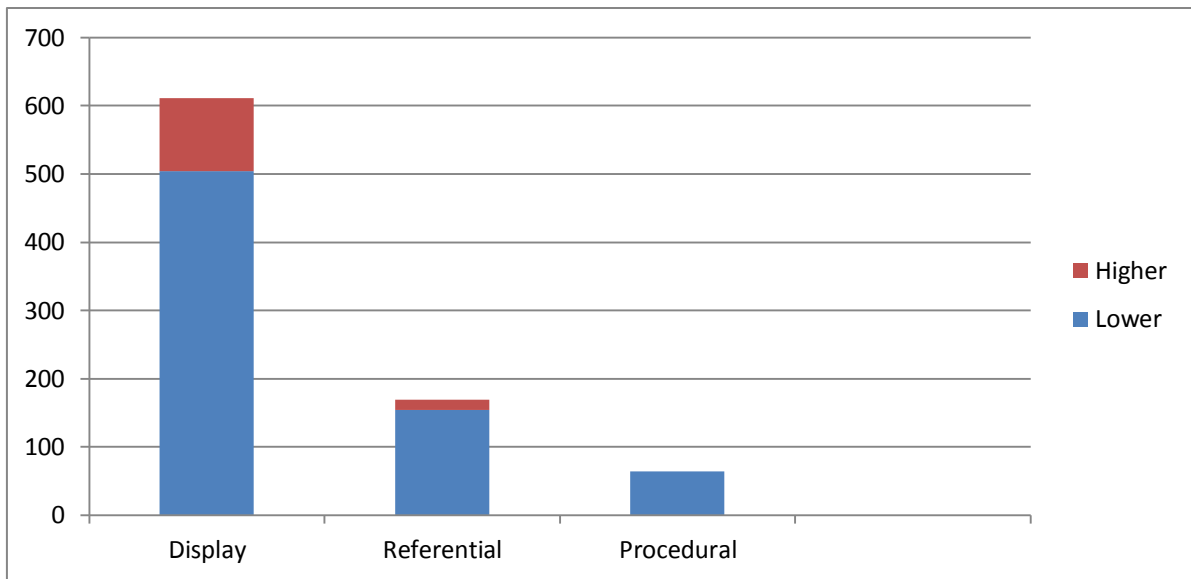
Graph 3. Total numbers of lower-order and higher-order questions in the observed lessons.

The percentages of these five question types can be seen in Graph 2 above: display lower questions formed 60%, display higher 13%, referential lower 18%, referential higher 2%, and procedural 7% of all the questions. The total numbers of the five question types can be estimated from Graph 3 above: display lower questions occurred 504 times, display higher questions 107 times, referential lower 154 times, referential higher 15 times, and procedural 64 times. Thus, the least numerous category was that of higher-order referential questions; only 15 questions of this type were asked in the twelve observed lessons.

Regarding the topics of different question types in the observed lessons, it seems that most display lower questions dealt with vocabulary, most display higher questions aimed at sentence translation or sought students´ reasoning on the covered material. Most referential lower questions dealt with students´ personal information, and most referential higher questions concerned students´ personal opinions and reasoning.

Once again, teacher D´s results seemed to be least favourable. In her lessons, she asked 282 lower-order, but only 31 higher-order questions. She asked no referential higher-order questions. All her 31 higher-order questions were display, mostly dealing with sentence translation. Without these numbers, the overall results of teachers A, B, and C would be slightly more balanced: 80% lower-order and 20% higher-order questions.

The present study, as well as the other research studies mentioned above, show that higher order questions are underused in classrooms. Their importance in learning

and teaching and the reasons of their low occurrence in EFL classrooms have been discussed in detail in the theoretical part of the thesis. Briefly summarized, higher order questions play an indispensable role in the cultivation of students´ critical and creative thinking – skills that are in the central focus of the modern education process. Such questions also often lead to more challenging, interesting and richer language-learning procedures. They also enable teachers to make sure whether or not a student has truly understood a concept. If teachers do not implement enough higher-order questions in their teaching, they de facto prevent their students from learning to think.

The low occurrence of higher-order questions in the observed lessons might dwell in the teachers´ focus on facts, their insufficient lesson planning, or their ignorance on the subject of questioning. According to various authors´ recommendations and findings, secondary-school and higher-proficiency students benefit more from higher-level questions and they should thus be exposed to a balanced variety of questions types, preferably 50 percent of lower cognitive and 50 percent of higher cognitive questions. Teachers should purposefully plan and ask questions that require students to engage in higher-level thinking. In order to do so, various strategies, such as implementing cooperative learning and variation of the levels of questions, are recommended.

It has been showed that both referential and higher-order questions are underused in EFL lessons at Czech grammar schools, and the possible reasons have been discussed. Another issue regarding this underuse might dwell in pre-service teacher training; perhaps pedagogical faculties should cover the topic more thoroughly for the future teachers to understand the importance of questioning better. It has also been displayed that if the overall statistics did not include teacher D´s figures, they resulted in more favourable outcomes. Teacher D is not a qualified EFL teacher; she is also the least experienced. This might suggest that being a qualified EFL teacher does play a significant role in effective questioning.

Questions Asked in English vs. Questions Asked in Czech

Another aspect of questioning that has been observed is the use of L1 and L2 in teacher questions. As has been explained in the theoretical part of the thesis, most EFL authors see the use of L1 as undesirable in secondary or higher-proficiency classes. The students should stay focused on L2 in the lessons, and the teachers should use L1 only

in some situations for the sake of teaching and learning efficiency. The overall percentages of teacher questions asked in English and Czech in the observed lessons are presented in the graph below.
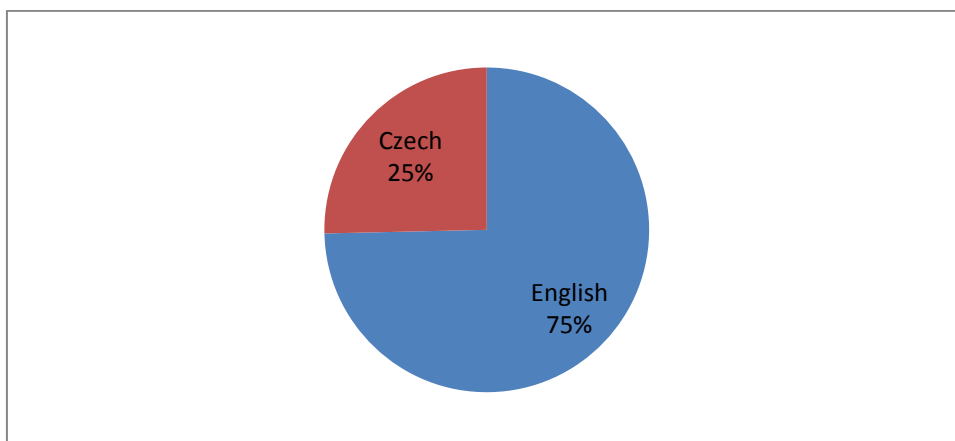
Graph 4. Percentages of questions asked in English and Czech in the observed lessons.

As it can be seen in the graph above, 75% (630 total) of all questions were asked in English, whereas 25% (214 total) of questions were asked in Czech. Such a high portion of questions asked in the students´ L1 was not expected by the researcher. Nevertheless, if the percentage of questions asked in Czech is again counted only for teachers A, B, and C, the result is much more favourable: 13%. The following graph demonstrates that qualified and experienced EFL teachers (A, B, and C) used L1 with great caution while questioning.
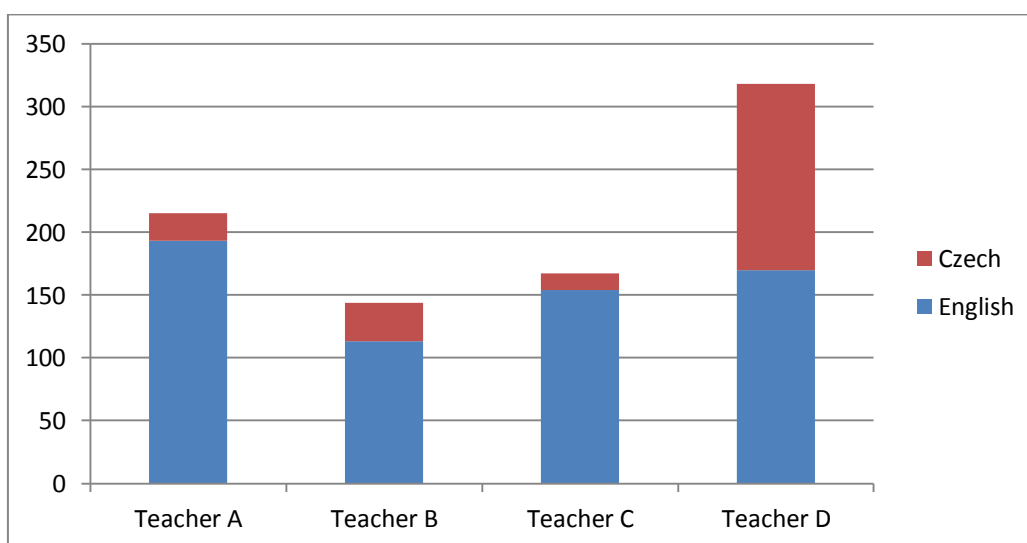
Graph 5. Total numbers of questions asked in English and Czech with teachers A, B, C, and D.

Graph 5 above illustrates the tendencies of different teachers in asking questions in L1 and L2. Teachers A, B, and C, who are all experienced and qualified, showed a similar tendency: they used Czech only in very limited number of questions, mostly while occasionally asking their students to translate a word, phrase, or sentence. Teacher D, on the other hand, concentrated on vocabulary and translations in her questions, and she mostly asked these questions in Czech. This is the reason why the ratio of questions asked in Czech makes striking 47% in her lessons. Her lessons, in fact, contained numerous and long IRF structures aiming at vocabulary translation. It is true that teacher D´s students were the youngest of all to be observed (15–16 years old), their language proficiency being the lowest (pre-intermediate). Nevertheless, it can be argued that being at this level, they should be exposed to more questions in L2.

EFL classrooms are often the only environment where students can practice their spoken English. It is therefore highly important for EFL teachers not to inhibit this opportunity; they should support the use of English and try to maximize STT in their lessons.

Comparison of Lessons

In the following part, the similarities and differences among four teachers´ lessons are briefly discussed, and some conclusions are drawn on their questioning strategies. The following graph presents the ratios of display, referential and procedural questions in the twelve observed lessons.
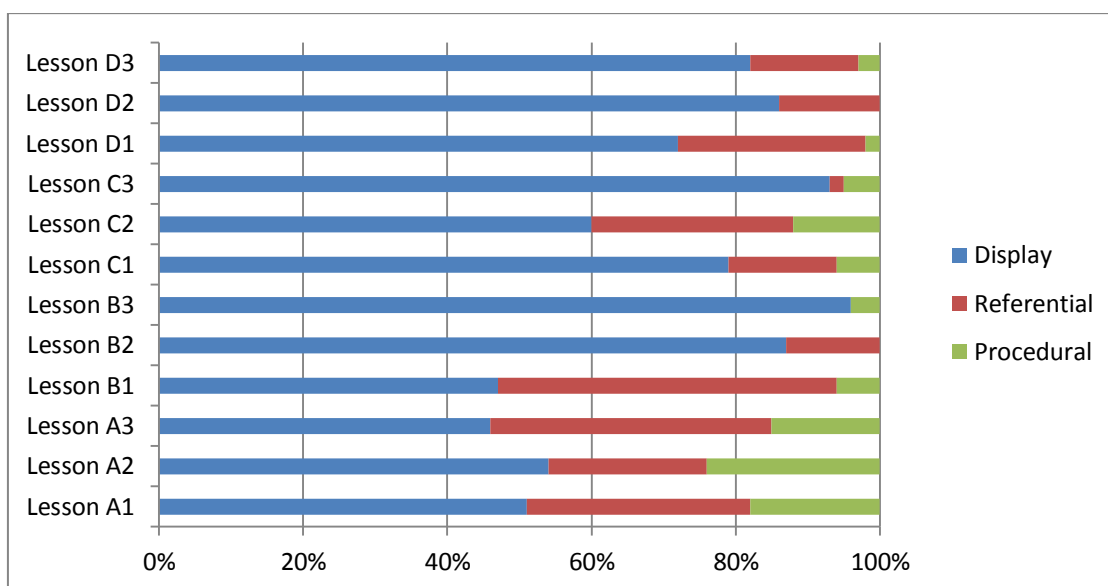
Graph 6. Percentage frequency of display, referential, and procedural questions in 12 observed lessons.

46

The graph above illustrates that the recommended proportions of various question types were roughly reached only in four lessons: A1, A2, A3, and B1. Display questions greatly prevailed in all the other lessons. Teacher A´s questioning behaviour seems to be most favourable concerning the use of display, referential and procedural questions, as their distribution was best balanced in all his lessons (A1, A2, A3).

The following table shows the total numbers, as well as percentage portions of display, referential and procedural questions in the twelve observed lessons.

Lesson	Display questions: total / percent	Referential questions: total / percent	Procedural questions: total / percent	Questions total
A1	41 = 51%	25 = 31%	14 = 18%	80
A2	35 = 54%	14 = 22%	16 = 24%	65
A3	32 = 46%	27 = 39%	11 = 15%	70
B1	16 = 47%	16 = 47%	2 = 6%	34
B2	33 = 87%	5 = 13%	0 = 0%	38
B3	69 = 96%	0 = 0%	3 = 4%	72
C1	37 = 79%	7 = 15%	3 = 6%	47
C2	36 = 60%	17 = 28%	7 = 12%	60
C3	56 = 93%	1 = 2%	3 = 5%	60
D1	72 = 72%	26 = 26%	2 = 2%	100
D2	101 = 86%	16 = 14%	0 = 0%	117
D3	83 = 82%	15 = 15%	3 = 3%	101
Total	**611 = 72%**	**169 = 20%**	**64 = 8%**	**844**

Table 4. Occurence of display, referential, and procedural questions in 12 observed lessons in absolute numbers and percents.

The table above shows great differences in the questioning behaviour of four different EFL teachers, and, at the same time, similarities among the individual teachers´ lessons. The total numbers of questions asked in particular lessons illustrate not only the questioning behaviour of teachers, but also the general pace of their lessons. Most lessons concur in the questioning patterns of individual teachers.

Teacher A asked between 65 and 80 questions; the pace of his lessons was swift. Nevertheless, the ratios of display, referential and procedural questions in his lessons were best balanced and most favourable. Lessons A1, A2, and A3 also resembled one another regarding methodology; they all contained a large portion of genuine interaction dealing with the students´ lives, experiences and opinions. Teacher B´s lessons seemed to differ

a lot, as lessons B1 and B2 focused on conversation and pair-work, but lesson B3 introduced a new course book topic of "giving directions" and it focused on vocabulary, as well as speaking practice in groups. The distribution of different question types in teacher B´s lessons was highly uneven, possibly thanks to different lesson aims. Teacher C asked between 47 and 60 questions in her lessons, which shows the pace of her lessons was quite stable. All three lessons were built in a similar manner, the students working with course books, with occasional pair-work, with a lot of class discussion on the covered topics. The fact that these discussions focused on the course book topics perhaps explains the high occurrence of display questions in teacher C´s lessons. Teacher D´s questioning practice also showed common tendencies in all three observed lessons. The pace of the lessons was very high, with numbers of questions ranging from 100 to 117, most questions aiming at vocabulary knowledge. All lessons were started by a short warm-up discussion about the students´ spring holidays. Most of the lessons were taken up by students doing exercises in their course books or IRF sequences focusing on vocabulary revision.

Regarding various EFL experts´ recommendations on question types, the lesson B1 can be described as ideal, as the ratio of display and referential questions equalled, and also because the total number of questions was the lowest of all twelve lessons. Teacher B in his B1 lesson asked 34 questions, 16 display, 16 referential, and 2 procedural. The lesson aimed at conversation, the main topic being "autism". The students, during the warm-up phase, briefly discussed the topic and their background knowledge. Reading a magazine article and a discussion followed. There was a high occurrence of pair-work discussion, followed by feedback and whole-class discussion. In this lesson, the students produced 20 short, 11 long, and 3 zero answers. It seemed they had enough time and, thanks to pair-work discussions, enough opportunities to consider their answers, to activate their schemata. Also, it was obvious that the teacher planned many of his questions beforehand.

The least auspicious lesson, regarding EFL authors´ recommendations, seemed to be D2. The highest number of questions within one lesson was asked: 117. This means that the students were asked 2.6 questions per minute. How much thinking and language production can occur with students having so little time for answering? In this lesson, 85 display lower, 16 display higher, 16 referential lower, 0 referential higher, and 0 procedural teacher questions appeared. The students produced 95 short, as opposed

to 22 long answers. After a brief warm-up, when the teacher was asking about the students´ spring holidays activities, working with a course book followed. Most questions aimed at vocabulary knowledge and sentence translation. During several IRF sequences, the teacher was firing questions at the students at an enormous speed.

In the following four graphs, the distribution of display lower, display higher, referential lower, referential higher, and procedural questions can be examined in the twelve observed lessons of four different EFL teachers.
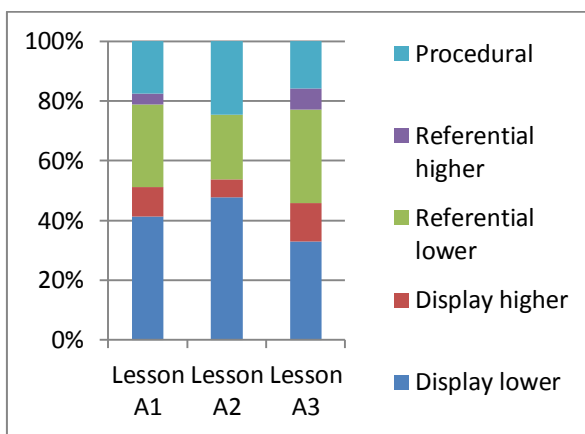
Graph 7. Teacher A´s question usage.
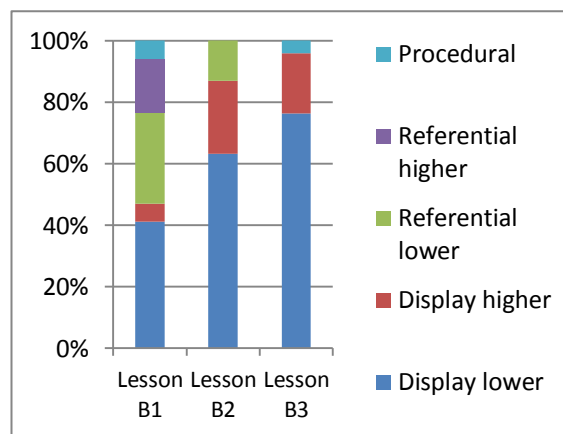
Graph 8. Teacher B´s question usage.
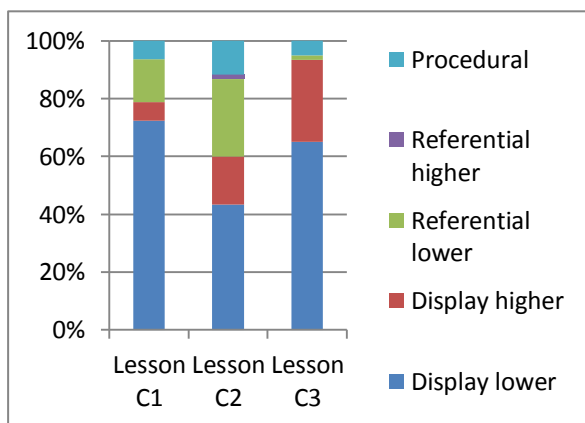
Graph 9. Teacher C´s question usage.
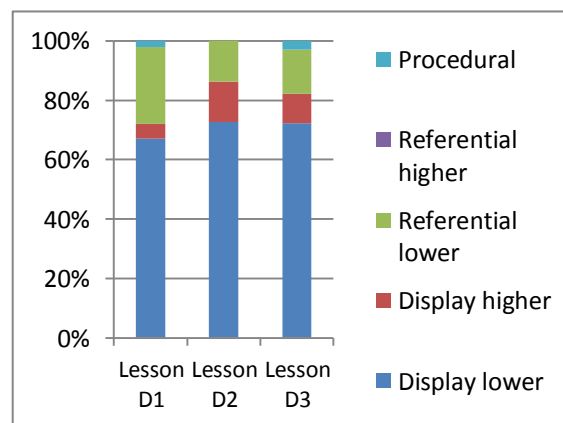
Graph 10. Teacher D´s question usage.

As can be seen in the four graphs above, the questioning behaviour of teacher A was quite stable in all his lessons. He was the only one whose questioning practice, regarding the portions of different question types, approximated EFL experts´ recommendations. Teacher D´s lessons, regarding the question use, also resembled one another; her lessons being the least favourable in this aspect. She used the highest percentages of display lower

questions. No referential higher questions occurred in her lessons. Teachers B and C used different portions of question types in their lessons. Lesson B1 has been described above as ideal regarding the use of various question types. The questioning behaviour of teachers A, B, and C mostly confirmed the researcher´s expectations; teacher D´s questioning behaviour was found as surprising. It reminded one of the Grammar-Translation Method, as most questions were asked on vocabulary and sentence translation. Also, the pace of the IRF sequences seemed unsuitably high, even though the students were 15-16 years old. The fact that not a single referential higher question was asked in the observed lessons of teacher D suggests that she prefers the teacher-centred, transmissive way of teaching.

Short and Long Student Answers

Facilitating more student participation and speaking practice is one of the main concerns of EFL teachers nowadays. The next aspect of teacher questioning that has been examined is thus the length of students´ answers and the conditions which enable students to produce longer reactions to teachers´ questions. The division of short and long answers for the use in the present study was based on Farahian and Rezaee´s research study (2012), where they defined short answers as those having three or less words, and long answers as those having more than three words. Further, while carrying out the observations, it was noticed that some zero answers occurred in the lessons, so these were tallied and included in the overall results, too. The following table presents the occurrence of students´ short, long and zero answers in the observed lessons in absolute numbers.

Question types	Short answers	Long answers	Zero answers	Total
Display lower	406	87	11	504
Display higher	39	66	2	107
Referential lower	87	65	2	154
Referential higher	3	11	1	15
Procedural	55	4	5	64
Sum	**590**	**232**	**21**	**844**

Table 5. Student short, long, and zero answers in absolute numbers in the observed lessons.

The table above shows that out of 844 answers, 590 were short, 232 long, and 21 questions remained unanswered. Expressed in percents, short answers represent 70%, long answers 28%, and zero answers 2% in the observed lessons. These percentage figures confirmed the researcher´s expectations. Surprisingly enough, in this case, these figures stay without any significant changes, if teacher D´s results are left out. The overall percentages can be compared to Farahian and Rezaee´s research study (2012), who found out that the occurrence of short answers was 91%, as opposed to 9% long answers in the lessons they observed. The results of the present study thus seem slightly more beneficial.

Very interesting results appeared by comparing the occurrence of short, long and zero student answers in different teachers´ lessons. These results are presented in the graph below.
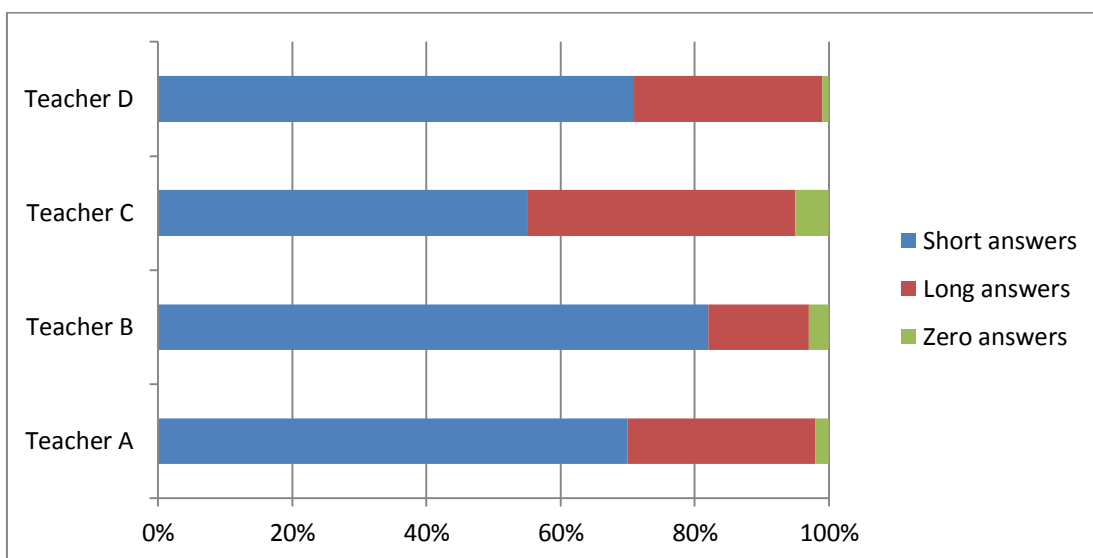
Graph 11. Occurence of short, long, and zero student answers with different teachers in the observed lessons.

The percentages shown in graph 11 appeared extremely surprising to the researcher; different numbers were expected with individual teachers. While discussing the use of question types above, teacher A´s practice was marked as best and teacher D´s practice as worst. Yet these two teachers receive the same portions of short (70%) and long (28%) student answers in their lessons. Teacher B´s lesson B1 has been described as ideal regarding the question types. During the observations, his lessons and questions seemed well-planned, and pair-work discussions seemed to support long answers. Nevertheless, he received only 15% of long answers in his lessons. As it can be seen in the graph above,

51

teacher C has the most favourable results, as 40% of student answers in her lessons were long. This number also came as a surprise, as her question use was presented as slightly dim and not very well balanced. What practice of hers supported students´ long answers? Why were her questioning techniques more effective in eliciting long answers? The answer will be sought further on.

According to numerous EFL authors, different types of questions typically support short or long student responses. The occurrence of short, long and zero student answers with different question types is presented in the following graph.
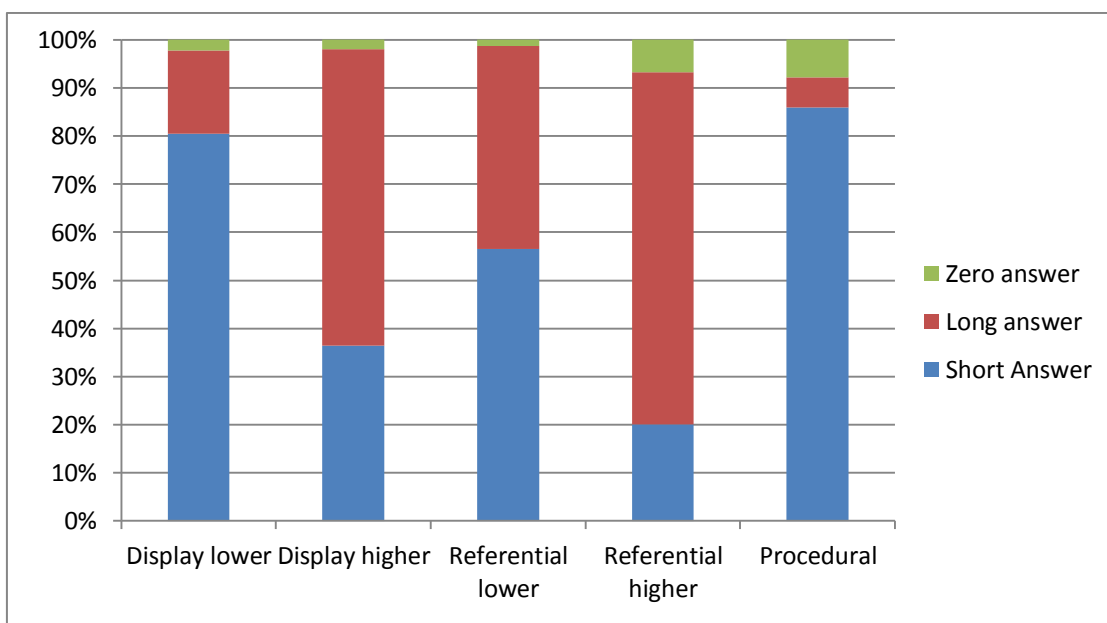
Graph 12. Percentages of short, long, and zero student answers with different question types in the observed lessons.

The results of the present study, shown in the graph above, fully correspond with assumptions stated in various sources. Display lower questions elicited more than 80% of short answers. Referential questions showed a higher portion of long answers in comparison with display questions. It can also be seen that higher-order questions received much more long answers than lower-order questions. The most beneficial teacher questions in this aspect are referential higher questions, as they received nearly 80% long answers. Unfortunately, only 15 referential higher questions occurred in the twelve observed lessons. This graph clearly indicates that if EFL teachers wish to increase STT and elicit long student answers, they should decrease the numbers of display lower questions and increase the numbers of higher-order and referential questions.

Concerning the higher participation of students while answering referential questions, which is suggested by numerous authors, this could be investigated only in the subjective manner while observing the lessons. Nevertheless, it really seemed that the students were answering referential questions, and especially personal questions containing the "I" factor, with greater willingness or enthusiasm. The researcher believes that secondary school students desire to express their opinions, take part in various discussions, and, at the same time, practise speaking English. It is up to the teachers to prepare suitable conditions for their students to be able to do so.

The smallest, yet a very interesting category, is represented by zero answers. As can be seen in Table 5, 21 zero answers occurred in the observed lessons: 11 as responses to display lower questions, 2 with display higher, 2 with referential lower, 1 with referential higher, and 5 with procedural questions. Zero answers represented more than 2% of student answers in the observed lessons. The surprising finding was that the usual teachers´ reaction to zero answers was moving on and asking another question. The teachers did not try to reformulate the question, probe or encourage the students. This practice of not stopping and trying to reach an answer could indicate that the teachers felt under constant time pressure, concentrated on covering the studied material too much, or did not regard their students´ answers important enough to spend more time elaborating them. What is more, several of the questions seemed so trivial that the students perhaps did not feel the need to bother with answering them.

At the end of this part, the focus needs to be turned back to the most important question. What kind of teachers´ questioning practice supports students´ language production most effectively? It has been showed that teacher C´s questions elicited the largest proportion of long student answers. In what ways did her questioning techniques differ? The secret does not dwell in richer usage of referential or higher-order questions – this has been demonstrated above. This teacher used far more display questions than referential ones; only a few referential higher questions appeared in her lessons. The key condition seems to be the activation of student background schemata and enough preparation time before the IRF sequence. In lesson C1, most long answers appeared while revising the topic which had been covered in the previous lesson, and also after a pair-work task of reading and discussing short magazine articles. This pattern repeated in lesson C2, where the topic of the previous lesson was also revised at the beginning as a warm-up discussion; this elicited a number of long answers. Later

in the lesson, while the teacher was testing one student at her desk, the others worked in pairs, read a short text in the course book and discussed their opinions. An IRF sequence followed, with many questions eliciting long student answers. Most of lesson C3 focused on the skill of describing pictures. The students were explained and showed how to describe a picture, what to concentrate on, what aspects can be described with any picture. A pair-work followed, where students practised describing several pictures, they tried out the language needed, they helped each other. The following IRF sequence contained two thirds of long answers and only one third of short answers. It also needs to be pointed out that teacher C´s lessons seemed well-prepared, with friendly and yet professional atmosphere, the pace was reasonable, and the students seemed very cooperative. Teacher C provided students with some wait-time, spoke clearly and correctly, and always formulated her questions intelligibly. She, in fact, fulfilled all the requirements of skills of questioning in EFL (these have been discussed in detail in the theoretical part of the thesis) except one: using a wide range of question types. If she used all question types more evenly, her questioning behaviour could be called perfect.

It seems that the key ingredients for successful teacher questioning, i.e. such questioning that elicits long student responses and high student participation, are three. First, it is the right mixture of question types that should contain high portions of referential and higher-order questions. Second, it is the student preparation phase before the questioning session. If students are provided with appropriate language input, some time to consider their responses and the opportunity to consult a partner prior to answering, the chance of their answers being extended and meaningful considerably rises. And finally, the third condition probably lies in the teacher´s use of general questioning skills.

Although no data were collected regarding TTT and STT, in the course of all observations, it seemed that it was the teachers rather than the students who practised speaking during the IRF sequences. The teachers presumably produced much more language than the students. With proper question planning and good use of questioning skills, this problem can be avoided in most cases.

Importance of Questioning

The last research question will be dealt with in this part. What importance do EFL teachers assign to questioning? Also, some typical features of their questioning behaviour in the observed lessons will be examined.

As it has been stated above, the teachers were not aware of the research subject beforehand in order not to affect their teaching style. Once the observations were completed in their lessons, the teachers were announced the topic of the present research study, they answered the structured interview questions, and discussed some feedback with the researcher.

In the structured interview, the teachers provided several answers regarding their demographics; these have already been stated in Chapter III. Next, they answered two research questions on teacher questioning:

- o How do you perceive the role of teacher questions in EFL?
- o Do you plan your questions before the lessons?

Teacher A sees the role of teacher questions as crucial, for they should support students´ oral production. Before the lesson, he sometimes plans several key questions that are connected with the main topic.

Teacher B defines the role of teacher questions as the basis of classroom communication; teacher questions support students while expressing their opinions, discussing a topic, describing a picture, etc. He plans the key questions of each lesson beforehand.

Teacher C believes that teacher questions should primarily force students to speak; it is the oral production that counts, the information that students know or provide comes second. She always plans several key questions before the lesson.

Teacher D sees the role of teacher questions as an instrument to get students to speak and to check their knowledge. She usually does not plan her questions before the lesson.

The answers to the research questions were not surprising in any way. The teachers clearly realise the importance of teacher questions very well. Teachers A, B, and C, who are all qualified and experienced, answered the first question in a similar manner: questions should primarily support students´ speaking in the classroom. These teachers also agreed on the second question: all of them consider the key questions before their lessons. However, it is not clear what kind of questions these teachers usually plan. Considering

the overall results of the study, it can be speculated that they concentrate on planning display rather than referential questions before their lessons. Teacher D, who is neither qualified, nor very experienced, answered both questions differently. She pointed out that teacher questions support students´ speaking practice, as well as assessing their knowledge. This opinion fully corresponds with her questioning behaviour; she asked the highest numbers of questions in her lessons, most of them aiming at lexical or factual revision. She was also the only one who admitted no planning of her questions before the lessons. In the light of the present thesis, this may be perceived as a mistake on the part of the teacher. It has been showed above that effective teacher questions require a significant amount of planning and cognitive effort, and that question quality is superior to question quantity.

The structured interviews naturally led to further conversations with the teachers, which provided space for reciprocal feedback of the teachers and the researcher. The teachers informed the researcher about the classes she had observed, about their students´ English levels, their teaching practice, and so on. Three of the four teachers expressly asked the researcher for providing them with her feedback – teachers A, B, and C. They were all interested in the researcher´s opinion on their questioning behaviour. Teacher C also expressed her concern about her language proficiency. Teacher B wanted some feedback on his methodology. The only teacher who showed no interest in a further discussion was teacher D, which might also be another sign of her insufficient professionalism. True professionals should see feedback on their own work as desirable, as it provides impulses for their further development.

In the course of the observations, some typical patterns or habits of questioning behaviour were noticed with every teacher. Several of them were discussed with the teachers. Most of these habits regarded the teachers´ questioning skills. For instance, teacher A typically nominated students before asking his questions and provided very little wait-time. Teacher B´s thought processes, cognitive style, and question wording were so peculiar that the researcher sometimes could not understand what the exact task or question was. The students, on the other hand, showed no difficulty in understanding teacher B´s questions, as they were used to his teaching style. Teacher C´s questioning habits have already been described as close to ideal. Teacher D´s typical questioning strategies included providing no wait-time, very high pace, and frequent use of L1.

All teachers have their unique teaching style, with its own strategies and techniques which can rarely be found in others. Nevertheless, good EFL teachers should strive for professional development all the time, should not be afraid of getting feedback on their and their students´ performance, should want to learn about their strengths and weaknesses. Based on the current research findings, a recommendation could be made for all four teachers to attend a training course on teacher questioning or devote some time to self-study of the issue.

Overall Results

The results analysed and discussed above provided answers to the five research questions. A summary of the key findings follows. First of all, regarding the use of different question types, it was discovered that display and lower-order questions are used more frequently by Czech EFL teachers at grammar schools. This could indicate that teachers focus on language form rather than content in their students´ answers. The occurrence of display and referential teacher questions corresponds with other studies, with 72% display, 20% referential, and 8% procedural questions in the current study. Nevertheless, its results differ from other studies while comparing the cognitive level of teacher questions, with the present results being far more unfavourable. 78% teacher questions were lower-order, as opposed to 15% higher-order questions. The least numerous category, referential higher-order questions, which are most difficult to design, formulate and assess, formed mere 2% of all questions asked during observations. The absolute numbers of questions asked in the twelve observed lessons were also considerably high: 844 questions were asked, 70 questions being an average number for each 45-minute lesson. These high numbers suggest that Czech EFL teachers concentrate on checking their students´ knowledge of facts rather than supporting genuine communication.

Regarding the usage of L1 in teachers´ questions, it was found out that 25% of all questions were asked in Czech. This portion seemed very high, but with teacher D´s numbers being left out of the statistics, it dropped to 13%. Teacher D, unlike teachers A, B, and C, is neither qualified, nor experienced. The research thus showed that most EFL grammar-school teachers use questions in L1 with caution, which fully corresponds with many authors´ recommendations.

In the next part, the four teachers´ habits, mainly in terms of question quantities and types used in their lessons, have been compared. It has been illustrated that two teachers´ questioning patterns in the observed lessons were stable, whereas the other two teachers´ question use differed, most probably due to different aims of their lessons. It was also showed that all teachers have their individual teaching style and use different questioning strategies; their questioning behaviour is specific in terms of question-type rates, numbers of questions asked in their lessons, and so on.

Very interesting findings within the current research study appeared by analyzing students´ answers. It has been demonstrated that short answers made 70%, long answers 28%, and zero answers 2% of all student answers. In accordance with other studies, it was found out that referential (both lower and higher) and higher-order (both display and referential) questions elicit higher rates of long answers and thus support students´ speaking and learning more effectively. The most surprising finding within this part was that balanced usage of various question types does not necessarily mean higher percentages of students´ long answers. By comparing different teachers´ questioning behaviour, it was hypothesized that there were three key conditions supporting students´ long answers: balanced usage of question types, activating or providing background knowledge, and effective use of questioning skills.

As for the last research question, it was found out that all four teachers realised the importance of teacher questions, and saw questions as a crucial instrument in providing their students with speaking practice. Most of them planned the key questions before their lessons; however, it is not clear what question types they concentrate on while planning. Also, most teachers were interested in feedback on their questioning behaviour.

This chapter attempted to answer the research questions by analysing the data which were collected during twelve lesson observations and structured interviews with four EFL teachers. The most significant findings were summarized at the end of the chapter. After the research questions have been answered, it is now time to discuss how these findings can be used in EFL classroom, what the limitations of the research are, and what kinds of further research could be carried out.

V. IMPLICATIONS

This chapter includes three parts: pedagogical implications, limitations of the research, and suggestions for further research. The first part aims at providing EFL teachers with some advice based on the research findings. The following section reveals some drawbacks of the research; the final part briefly examines several possibilities of expanding the current research.

Pedagogical Implications

In the previous chapter, it was showed that teachers´ questioning behaviour largely depends on their individual methodology and lesson aims. Nevertheless, based on the current research, it seems there are some general implications regarding teacher questioning, which lead to its higher effectivity, more student participation, larger language output, and thus to better learning.

Teacher questions, like any other aspect of ELT, need to be carefully planned so they correspond with the lesson aim, students´ language proficiency and their cognitive level. At grammar school classes, where students´ language proficiency and cognitive level are presumably advanced, the occurrence of various question types and their cognitive level should be wide and well-balanced, so the students get enough opportunities to be engaged in cognitive processes of different levels and in various communication situations. Teacher questions also play an important role in maintaining student participation and efficient learning atmosphere.

Lower-level and display questions, usually used to elicit factual information, will always play an important role in ELT. These question types are generally easier to design and assess. Nevertheless, the teachers´ focus should be on higher-level and referential questions, as these require good planning and specific questioning skills, such as probing or responding to content rather than form. Higher-level questions promote critical thinking, which is one of the crucial educational aims. Referential questions are necessary to involve students in real communication. They result in more purposeful communication and facilitate students´ second language development. What is more, it has been showed that higher-order questions and referential questions achieve more participation, more language output, and thus better learning on the part of the students. EFL lessons should

provide students with enough space for expressing their thoughts and opinions, for experiencing genuine communication in the school environment, for experimenting with the language, and for developing different levels of thinking.

EFL teachers should further be careful not to slip to long IRF sequences of high pace. Asking many questions within one lesson does not necessarily mean that better learning or better communication take place. On the contrary, shooting questions usually leads to very short answers and possibly lower participation on the part of the students, and display lower-level question usage on the part of the teacher. Question quality is superior to question quantity.

As for the use of L1 and L2 in questioning, EFL teachers should, especially in secondary school classes, prefer English to Czech in most situations. English lessons are often the only situation and environment where students can produce the target language. Therefore, a good working atmosphere needs to be created in these lessons, where L2 is the not only the learning aim, but also a means of purposeful communication. Czech language usage is recommended only in such situations, where it highly contributes to teaching or learning effectivity, such as grammar explanation or occasional translation.

One of the key conditions of eliciting higher quality and quantity language output is providing and activating students´ background knowledge. In order to let students produce syntactically longer responses to the questions and get them involved in interaction with higher levels of cognitive interaction, teachers should give them enough background regarding the issue they are asking about. Also, students need to be given enough time to consider their answers, and possibly discuss them with their peers. Teachers should carefully implement sufficient wait-time, so students have the opportunity to prepare and translate their answers. Next, as has been demonstrated above, peer discussions often lead to high student participation and more language output in the course of subsequent questioning. Implementing pair-work or group-work prior to IRF sequences activates students´ background knowledge and motivates students to take part in the lesson.

All the implications suggested above are, in fact, embraced in the so-called questioning skills. These have been discussed in detail in the theoretical part of the thesis. Based on the present research results, it can be argued that EFL teachers who master these questioning skills achieve high occurrence of long responses, more participation, and possibly better learning on the part of their students. The main aim of teacher

questioning should dwell in providing students with more space for quality interaction in EFL lessons.

It seems that Czech EFL teachers are well aware of the importance of questioning in their lessons. They see teacher questions as a key to providing their students with speaking practice; they often plan the principal questions before their lessons. However, the present research suggests that there is a lot of space for improvement in this area. Most teachers´ implementation of questioning skills seems to be rather unsatisfactory; EFL teachers should gain more awareness regarding their questioning techniques. Further professional development on teacher questioning is thus highly recommended for Czech EFL teachers.

Limitations of the Research

The main limitation of the present research is, of course, its sample size. More reliable results could be obtained by including more teachers, more students, and more observation lessons. This study employs both qualitative and quantitative techniques to examine what types of teacher questions are processed in EFL classes at Czech grammar schools, what are their proportions, and how they relate to student participation and learning. The sample size is too small for making generalizations. The main aims of the study include gaining a certain perspective on teacher questioning, initiating the participants´ and readers´ reflection of the topic, and adapting its findings into the field of EFL professional development.

Another drawback that needs to be mentioned is closely related to the observation process. As there were no audio or video recordings made, all the tallying and data collections had to be done while observing the twelve lessons. It was sometimes difficult to hear or recognise some teacher questions and student answers because of occasionally poor acoustic classroom conditions. Also, the data needed to be classified and tallied immediately, in the course of observations. Display and referential questions were easily recognised from each other; nevertheless, the distinction of lower- and higher-level questions sometimes occurred problematic. The final data might therefore include some slight inaccuracy.

Although the researcher judged that all participants felt at ease during the observations, the reality might have been different. The teachers might have

used different teaching strategies and the students might have behaved or spoken differently because of the researcher´s presence. This is known as the observer´s paradox. It can be speculated that if there were more observations carried out in these teachers´ EFL lessons, all participants would gradually become accustomed to being observed and their behaviour would be more natural. Another option would be avoiding direct observations and making recordings of the lessons instead.

Suggestions for Further Research

The present research could certainly be deepened or extended in various ways. The most obvious one would be to enlarge the sample size, gather more data, and thus increase the reliability of the research results. The reliability could also possibly rise by avoiding direct observations and using audio or video recordings of the lessons instead. It has been speculated that the researcher´s presence might have affected the participants´ performance.

The present research was carried out at secondary classes of grammar school, one of the main arguments being that higher-proficiency and older students should be exposed to a wide and balanced range of question types. Realizing a similar research at classes of lower-proficiency and younger students, possibly at primary school, could illustrate to what extent EFL teachers adjust their questioning behaviour to their students´ language proficiency and cognitive development.

Some findings of the present research suggested that questioning skills could be connected with teachers´ experience and qualification. Another direction of further research could thus deliberately concentrate on comparing questioning techniques of qualified and unqualified EFL teachers to see how much and in what ways they differ, the main concern perhaps being whether Czech pedagogical faculties educate the future teachers adequately in this area.

Without any doubt, teacher questioning skills, as described in the theoretical part of the thesis, influence students´ performance and participation to a great extent. The scope of the current research unfortunately did not allow examining these skills in detail. Suggested further research could strive to analyse the individual skills, such as wait-time usage, probing, or question wording, and how their use and misuse affect students´ answers

and participation. The results of such research would surely provide numerous pedagogical implications.

Although the present research presented many interesting results and some implications for EFL teachers, it needs to be pointed out that the outcomes should not be generalised too much, as there are many ways of improving and extending the research. That said, the chapter focusing on the possible improvement of the educational process through the research outcomes, the limits and drawbacks of the research, and the potential directions of further research is finished. The following chapter, which is also the last, focuses on summarising and highlighting the main points of the thesis.

VI. CONLUSION

The thesis intended to investigate the current questioning practices of Czech EFL teachers and analyse the relations of these practices to student classroom participation. The Background Chapter provided the theoretical framework; it included information on various aspects of teacher questioning. The key part of the Theoretical Chapter was the one dealing with EFL questioning skills, for it provided specific recommendations that can help teachers to make their questioning more effective, mainly in terms of higher student participation.

The research, carried out at a grammar school and defined by five questions, showed very interesting results. The prevalence of display and lower-order questions implied that Czech EFL teachers concentrated on language form rather than meaning, and also that they did not demand their students to employ their higher-order thinking skills very often. These conclusions fully corresponded with another finding: the students were, on average, asked 70 questions in each 45-minute lesson. How much learning, thinking, and language practice could take place in a classroom where students were asked nearly two questions every minute? A favourable conclusion was drawn regarding the use of L1 in questioning. Experienced and qualified EFL teachers used Czech only on a small scale. Next, it was demonstrated that all teachers had their unique questioning behaviour, their lessons thus often resembling in this aspect. Nevertheless, the questioning techniques of different teachers varied a lot. Regarding the students´ participation, the main feature to be examined was the length of their answers. 70% of all answers were classified as short. How can EFL teachers support their students´ participation better? The answer is not simple; the research suggested three conditions of effective questioning. A wide and balanced range of question types needs to be employed. It was demonstrated that higher-order questions and referential questions elicited more language output. Next, students need to be provided with enough background knowledge and enough time prior to answering. The most important condition seems to dwell in the overall application of questioning skills (as described in the theoretical part).

Although some might consider classroom questioning an easy discipline, the thesis suggested otherwise. Improving teacher questioning techniques can facilitate more STT, more critical-thinking implementation, and more space for learning. EFL teachers´ further professional development in this area is thus well worth their effort.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Observation Record Sheet

Displ lower	Displ higher	Refer lower	Refer higher	Proced	Eng	Cz	Answ short	Answ long	....Sample Questions...	......Notes......

Appendix B

Sample Questions

Display lower questions:

1. What is the capital of Ireland?
2. Where was Saint Patrick born?
3. What does consumerism mean?
4. What is the most famous film about autism?
5. You feel ill, so you go to the...?
6. How many states are there in the USA?
7. What´s the meaning of suspicion?
8. Víme "porota"?
9. What´s the colour of the rock?
10. Jak to napíšeš?

Display higher questions:

1. Why is there a line?
2. Why is it divided into two parts?
3. How would you explain the term "consumerism" to a small child?
4. What is the problem for autistic people?
5. Summarize the third paragraph.
6. How can I get to the police station?
7. What have you learned about Washington, D.C.?
8. Why is it important to be educated?
9. Why do you think it´s false?
10. Why is it illegal?

Referential lower questions:

1. Where do you work?
2. Did you study last night?
3. Why are you grinning at, Honza?
4. What are you doing next week?
5. How many times have you read that?
6. Did you watch the Oscar ceremony?
7. Would you like to study at a private university?
8. What´s your father´s job?
9. Do you like diving?
10. Co píšou ve slovníku?

Referential higher questions:

1. What does it depend on?
2. Is it a good job?
3. Why do Czech people say "Jesus" so often?
4. How do you see your social status now?
5. What´s the role of money in your life?
6. Why didn´t you like the film?
7. In what ways are you different?
8. What helps you learn things by heart?
9. What are you good at?
10. Why wouldn´t you like to study at a private university?

Procedural questions:

1. Who´s absent?
2. Should I repeat something?
3. Máte všechno?
4. Ready?
5. Have you done it?
6. How many gaps do you still need to fill in?
7. Have you finished?
8. Is it clear?
9. Chcete znova ten poslech?
10. Milane, co máme dělat?

SHRNUTÍ

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá učitelskými otázkami ve výuce anglického jazyka na českých gymnáziích a jejich efektem na zapojení žáků do výuky. V první části, která slouží jako teoretický rámec pro následný výzkum, se čtenář seznámí se základní terminologií a různými aspekty učitelských otázek, a zejména pak s řadou doporučení, jak dosáhnout efektivního dotazování ve výuce anglického jazyka. Hlavní část výzkumu byla provedena pomocí náslechů, tj. přímého pozorování vyučovacích hodin. Výsledky výzkumu odhalily, že dotazovací dovednosti většiny učitelů mají velké rezervy. Ve výuce anglického jazyka převažovaly pedagogické otázky nižší kognitivní úrovně, které dostatečně nestimulují komunikační, ani rozumové schopnosti žáků vyššího stupně gymnázia. Výzkum dále naznačil, že ke zvýšení jazykové produkce žáků přispívají zejména tři podmínky: častější využití autentických otázek a otázek vyšší kognitivní úrovně, uplatňování všech doporučení o efektivním dotazování, a poskytnutí dostatku času na přípravu a přemýšlení před samotným dotazováním. Výsledky výzkumu jsou okomentovány, možné příčiny a následky zmíněny. V závěru práce jsou navrženy možné implikace pro výuku anglického jazyka.