



Teacher's Questioning Techniques:

A Qualitative Study

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ABSTRACT

One of the aspects of teaching, which is always the center of attention, is the techniques teachers utilize in teaching and the consecutive interactions to achieve their appealed objectives, mainly in EFL and ESL classes. This study looked at questioning strategies from the perspective of the interactions they made among the teachers and the students in a class. The interaction types investigated in this research were based on the classification presented by Kumaravadivelu (2006), namely: Textual, Interpersonal, and Ideational Interaction. In regard to the theory of Halliday's systemic functional linguistics (1973), as the original base, the main objective of this study was to probe into the depth of questioning techniques, the interactions raised by these techniques between the teachers and the learners, and how this would have an effect on the development of EFL learners to grasp the ideas better in two levels of Elementary and Intermediate in different phases of teaching in order: Engagement, Study, and Activation. During data collection process, 20 sessions (10 Elementary and 10 Intermediate levels) of EFL classes and a population of 300 students in Rasht Kish Language Institute were observed by the researcher and the different types of questions and strategies were recorded. In this study the techniques that the teachers used, maintained or invented different types of interactions were discussed.

Keywords: Ideational Interaction, Interpersonal Interaction, Textual Interaction

1. INTRODUCTION

Questioning techniques and strategies have been the favorite subjects to most of researchers and practitioners not since the beginning of scientific era in teaching methodology and psychology but rather from Socratic era. According to Halliday (1973), language is a meaning potential which is a set of options available and accessible to the speaker-learner in a social context. Instead of what Chomsky (1980) believed that language is something exclusively internal to the learner, Halliday (1973) considers language as a means of functioning in society. From this perspective he defines three metafunctions or macro functions for the language including: *Ideational*, *Interpersonal*, and *Textual*. The *Ideational* metafunction refers to the individual's meaning potential and how it is demonstrated based on the expression and experience of the concepts, processes, and objects ruling the physical and natural phenomena of the world around us. The *Interpersonal* metafunction represents the individual's personal relationships with other people. And finally the *Textual* metafunction deals with the linguistic recognition of both *Interpersonal* and *Ideational metafunctions*, which makes the individual capable of constructing a coherent, meaningful text, spoken or written. (Kumaravadivelu, 2006)

According to what has been said, different forms of questions and new strategies to ask questions raise in classes were investigated in 3 different phases of *Engagement*, *Study*, and *Activation*. *Engagement phase* refers to the pre-lesson activities in which the teacher tries to warm up the topic under the discussion. *Study Phase* refers to the actual