

Contingency, Convergence, and Divergence of Teachers' Questions In Classroom Interactions

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to analyze questioning activity uttered by EFL teachers in terms of contingency, convergence, and divergence in their interactions with students. Data were gathered from six chosen EFL teachers' questions teaching to college students, hereupon were attentively transcribed and analyzed using Conversation Analysis (CA) principle. The results found that contingency questions were in the form of extending, disputing, transforming, and repeating former utterances through clarification, display, and referential questioning types. Apart from contingency, convergence appearing in teacher questions might flourish students' responses through display questions. Meanwhile, divergent questions tend to enlarge the talks. The seemingly endless "questioning problems" improvising limitless further research studies therewith, employing more data sources in a different methodology as well as the perspective of analysis are suggested as it directly affects the teaching-learning process.

Keywords: *classroom interaction, contingency, convergence, divergence, question*

1. INTRODUCTION

Classroom, as one of the social setting where a teacher along with his/her students interacts with each other, questioning acts serves a function to facilitate knowledge construction. However, despite the most customary activity, it sometimes turns away from its purposes. As highlighted by Lee and Kim (2016), though most teachers actively put their attention on interactive communication with students, their focal points were still the talk typologies. Meanwhile, the function in the context which routinely carries the intentions of their talks was disregarded from their attention. In this sense, another angle to discern is questioning strategy which in turn, benefits the learning process.

In agreement with the context-based function afforested, a further function of question can manage the structure transfer of speaking opportunities or turns in conversation. Concerning this, the former studies have found that teachers' questioning could facilitate students to be more active resulting from the process of meaning exchanges through clarification check, repair, and recast they use (Eckerth, 2009; Palma, 2014; Saito & Hanzawa, 2016). Besides, the questioning might be of benefit for stimulating learner thinking levels and guiding and scaffolding students to respond during the interactions (Barnett & Francis, 2012; Engin, 2013; Hasanuddin & Ciptaningrum, 2021; Milawati; 2017; Phillips, 2013; Paran, 2012; Sarandi, 2016; Tofade, Elsner, & Haines, 2013). As such, the functions serving more objectives are not solely examined in the very immediate moment of responding but also in the whole context of the classroom talk-speech event.

There have been many previous research studies regarding the questioning strategy. Since teachers' questioning is regarded as the powerful eminent factor in constructing good discourse moves in teacher-student interactions (Irawati, Nirmalasari, & Styati, 2021; Walsh & Hodge, 2018;), strategies are highly demanded. As such, questioning activity and the way of practicing it in the teaching-learning process are closely related. Meanwhile, different questioning strategies are important for learners to effectively scaffold and provide more inputs (Aprina, & Andriyanti, (2020); Engin, 2013; Durrleman & Franck, 2016; Hill, 2016; Milawati & Suryati, 2019; Salerno & Kibler, 2015; Şimşek & Gönen, 2020; Wright, 2016; Yap & Pillai, 2017). In this respect, questioning types' choices along with effective strategies might help them to learn in the teaching-learning process.

Differently, previous studies have pinpointed teacher strategies in responding to student responses. To put their students actively, pertinent conversational facets such as repair, clarification check, elicitation, and recast are robust in terms of attracting students' responses in meaning negotiation process, (Eckerth, 2009; (Darong, 2021; Saito & Hanzawa, 2016).) As such, teachers' strategies might be linguistic examples providing input and facilitating learner language production (Wright, 2016). Along the line of this argument, (Palma, 2014) has claimed the input process in question. As such, explicit and implicit feedback, using explanation, elicitation, repetition,

clarification requests, metalinguistic, and recast, are the most common strategies done in the feedback process. Thus, teacher strategies might be beneficial to enact the students' response as it hones the opportunity to respond.

Focusing on the pragmatic aspect, beyond its literal meaning, as noted by Yazdanfar & Bonyadi (2016) and Darong (2020), an utterance is aimed at carrying certain purposes toward the interlocutor by referring to the situation wherein the negotiation takes place in a well-founded manner. At this point, the strategy may be employed through many actions depending on the setting and scene of reoccurring discourse conditions. Pinpointing on politeness principles, speakers (teachers) may make use of their questions either to mitigate or aggravate the request by using external (an adjunct to head) and internal modification devices (Zhu, 2012). Meanwhile, questions can be employed using a consultative devices marker. As such, the utterance is produced to ask for cooperative action by the addressee and involve him/her in a certain action. In addition, the use of modalities like may, will, would, and could, indirect utterances using interrogative construction that is more acceptable and polite rather than declarative forms in request questioning strategy (Roever & Al-gahtani, 2015). Likely, questioning essence, the ways of its employment can be a reflection of the speaker's hearer's social relations. (Eshghinejad & Moini, 2016; Zhu, 2012). These have been echoed by Yazdanfar & Bonyadi, (2016), Tajeddin & Pezeshki (2014), and Darong, Kadarisman, & Basthomi (2020) saying that using modality in teacher questions is needed to lessen the request effect as Face Threatening Acts (FTAs) in which the relationship among speaker and hearer is revealed. At this point, modality brings the effect of the illocutionary act of questioning functioning as a request.

After all, previous research studies have investigated questioning strategy as a conservation management tool focusing on inputs, corrective feedback, and politeness. However, it is important to note that as a management tool, questions can also be examined in terms of their contingency, convergence, and divergence within conservation. Therefore, this study was an attempt to examine the three aspects in question. In this regard, teacher questions are not seen as interactive teaching in the learning process. It should also be seen as a tool for managing the flow of communication resulting from strategies used such as contingency, convergence, and divergence which might broaden, narrow, and extend the flow of interaction.

Questions containing an explicit reference to a teacher or student contribution made during the three previous utterances are known as contingent questions (Boyd, 2016). The form might be open or closed, authentic or display, but it has the purpose of promoting student discovery and thought since it provides a cogent link between ideas and contributions. The idea of uptake is expanded by contingent inquiries, which take into account both expanding on earlier contributions and advancing and directing their influence on the range of future discourse. Furthermore, Boyd (2016) emphasized that it is possible to examine convergence or divergence in classroom interactions in addition to noting if a question was dependent on earlier contributions. The goal is to determine whether a question was posed to broaden the discussion's focus (the answer

is not clear) or to focus on a particular aspect (expecting a specific, definite answer). The difficulty of educational questioning is to design inquiries so that convergent inquiries do not "restrict the possibilities of creating unique and creative ideas" and divergent inquiries are not "limitless" and "floating." Convergence-divergence serves as a helpful marker to track the part that questioning (and the questioner) plays in shaping the breadth of the discourse. As a result, Convergence contains a question that focuses on a certain facet of the topic at hand. Divergence often involves teacher questions that shed light on a particular facet of the topic at hand.

The pivotal focus of this study was to bring into light how the course of interaction is taking place within the scope of oral expression. Subsequently, the existing knowledge of conversation analysis might be proven more acceptable and of benefit in the area of classroom interaction analysis. More importantly, is the contribution of this research to provide insight for teachers to manage their interactions with their students in classroom activities.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study belongs to a larger corpus project of UMSpEAKs (Universitas Negeri Malang Spoken English in Academic Kontexts). As the topic of this study deals with the teacher questioning activities in a classroom setting, a descriptive qualitative using a corpus study method was used by the researcher. Then, to cope with the objectives of the study, six EFL teachers teaching college classes were chosen as the subject of the study. The observed classes were not outlined and structured by level, skills, or even content since the study relied on the corpus employing Conversation Analysis (CA). In this context, CA was used because of its nature to investigate the actual interactions without assuming a priori the relevance of the sociocultural context in which the interactions take place.

In an attempt to get purposeful views of teacher questioning activities, the researcher principally depended on the observation data. The attempt of doing such observation is to have comprehensive data about the discourse happening in the class where questions are employed by the teachers. Besides classroom observations, field notes supporting data from classroom observations were used.

The principles of Conversation Analysis (CA) were used in analyzing data. First, all the observed lessons were transcribed using the conversation analysis convention which was mostly adapted from Atkinson and Heritage, 1984 (Atwood, 2010). Second, the transcriptions were carefully coded and analyzed. Teacher questions were coded and classified into their types namely referential, display, request, and clarification, (Boyd, 2015), and thus, analyzed. Third, an analysis of the teacher's ways of employing the questions was carried out. The researchers examined the contingency (building on a teacher or student contributions made within three preceding turns), and divergence-convergence (opening up or honing in on aspects of what is discussed).

For the sake of validity, data triangulation was done. In this respect, the researcher triangulated observation data, field notes, and audio records. This method of triangulation was used in such a way to help the researcher in drawing the ultimate inference from the research findings.

3. FINDINGS

As a speech act, questioning affects the message construction. As a question has multi-functions, verbal construction alone is not sufficient to understand its message. It is very dependent and refers to the context employing social- relations and the ways of teachers within conversation. As stated in the method, to reveal the employment of questions, contingency aspect, and convergence-divergence, were sequentially displayed. Table 1 highlights the contingency of the question.

Table 1. Questioning Contingency

Ty	Participant											
	Te1		Te2		Te3		Te4		Te5		Te6	
	Tt	Co	Tt	Co	Tt	Co	Tt	Co	Tt	Co	Tt	Co
Dis	286	280 (98%)	68	63 (93%)	125	103 (82%)	25	22 (88%)	111	99 (89%)	84	79 (94%)
Ref	25	23 (92%)	49	10 (20%)	52	24 (46%)	2	-	16	7 (44%)	15	6 (40%)
Cr	9	9 (100%)	10	10 (100%)	43	43 (100%)	6	6 (100%)	23	23 (100%)	8	8 (100%)
Req	5	3 (60%)	5	2 (40%)	16	13 (81%)	5	2 (40%)	6	3 (50%)	8	3 (38%)

Note: Ty: Type; Dis: Display; Ref: Referential; Cr: Clarification; Req: Request; Tt: Total; Te1: Teacher 1, Te2: teacher 2; Te3: Teacher 3; Te4: Teacher 4; Te5: Teacher 5; Te6: Teacher 6; Co: Contingen

Data in Table 1 indicates that the teacher questions were not contingent. As such, each teacher has different classroom discourse moves which reflect the occurrence of contingent questions. As such, clarification and display questions appeared contingent. This is understandable as clarification question is always contingent and is concerned with the previous contribution.

An important note should be highlighted in case of using display questions in the process of interaction in the classroom. Employing display questions occurs as teachers want to have an effective information exchange. To add on, regardless of having different types, display questions were the results of the information exchanges in question during the interactions. In this respect, instead of teachers' efforts of gathering information, students talk extension and interaction patterns deal with a contingency on previous contributions

Aside from knowing contingent, questions about the convergence-divergence should be also highlighted. This is very important to examine the questions in terms of broadening or narrowing the classroom discourses.

Table 2. Distribution of Convergent - Divergent Questions

Type	C											
	Te1		Te2		Te3		Te4		Te5		Te6	
	Tt	C	Tt	C	Tt	C	Tt	C	Tt	C	Tt	C
Dis	286	279 (97%)	68	61 (90%)	125	96 (77%)	25	21 (84%)	111	105 (95%)	84	78 (93%)
Ref	25	21 (84%)	49	37 (76%)	52	42 (81%)	2	2 (100%)	16	14 (86%)	15	13 (87%)
Cr	9	9 (100%)	10	10 (100%)	43	43 (100%)	6	6 (100%)	23	23 (100%)	8	8 (100%)
Req	5	3 (60%)	5	3 (60%)	16	13 (81%)	5	5 (100%)	6	4 (67%)	8	6 (75 %)

D												
Type	Te1	D	Te2	D	Te3	D	Te4	D	Te5	D	Te6	D
Dis	286	7 (3%)	68	7 (10%)	125	29 (23%)	25	4 (16%)	111	6 (5%)	84	6 (7%)

D												
Type	Te1	D	Te2	D	Te3	D	Te4	D	Te5	D	Te6	D
Ref	25	4 (16%)	49	12 (24%)	52	10 (19%)	2	-	16	2 (14%)	15	2 (13%)
Cr	9	-	10	-	43	-	6	-	23	-	8	-
Req	5	2 (40%)	5	2 (40%)	16	3 (19 %)	3	-	6	2 (33%)	8	2 (25%)

Note: Dis: Display; Ref: Referential; Cr: Clarification; Rq: Request; Te1: Teacher 1, Te2: teacher 2; Te3: Teacher 3; Te4: Teacher 4; Te5: Teacher 5; Te6: Teacher 6; C: Convergence; D: Divergence

In spite of the fact that the appearance of display questions might extend and narrow in on previous responses, other teachers' questioning types appearing in a distinctive degree of constancy also functioned to the extended discourse of interactions. Interestingly, in Te4, there were no referential questions that, indeed functioned to enlarge the classroom talks. Similarly, the absence of clarification questions in some teachers' interactions occurred as a logical consequence of classroom discourse exchanges in teacher-student interactions.

Heretofore, data di Table 2 highlights all teachers' convergent questions. Owing to the fact the most frequent question type raised was in the form of display questions, the functions mostly to examine students' knowledge. In the meantime, divergence questions appeared less, the functions were of benefit to enlarge the classroom interactions. In this context, their employment was to extend the classroom discussion and yet, point still to the student's previous responses. The teachers raised them on purpose to get the contribution that opened a feature being discussed. In sum, contingent questions contributed to the teachers' convergence and divergence questions.

4. DISCUSSION

Table 1 highlights teacher contingent questions relating to the foregoing responses. In this case, they are the responses of teachers toward both content and form that were dependent on students foregoing answers. In addition, the topics refer to the precursory endowment. In this regard, Gan (2010) and Nakatsuhara, (2014) have highlighted that acknowledging contingently to a co-participant must suitably tone with content as well as the form of the preceding expressions. Saying it differently, contingency is concerned with or occurs tightly in the immediate foregoing responses along with a new proposition pointing to the form and content in question.

Moving back to the table, the first teacher posed 315 contingent questions consisting of 280 display questions or for about 98 % of 286, 23 (92%) of 25 referential questions, 9 (100%) clarification questions, and 3 (60%) of 5 request questions. In the second teacher, it was found that there were 82 contingent questions which were predominantly dominated by clarification forms that were 10 (100%) and followed by 63 (93%) of 68 display questions, 10 (20%) of 49 referential questions and 2 or 40% of 5 request questions.

In the meantime, in the third teacher, out of 167 contingent questions, there were 43 (100%) clarification types, 103 of 125 or for about 82% display questions, 24 of 52 or for about 46% referential questions, and 13 (81%) of 16 request questions. Meanwhile, the contingency of referential questions in the fourth teacher did not appear. The contingency, out of 30, was shown by the use of clarification questions that were 6 (100%) and followed by display questions 22 (88%) of 25 and 2 of 5 or for about 40 % of request questions. Then, in the fifth teacher, there were 132 contingent questions posed by clarification types, in total, 23 (100%) and followed by display questions, in total, 99 (89%) of 111 questions and 7 (44%) of 16 referential questions. The last teacher employed 96 contingent questions consisting of 8 clarification (100%) 79 of 84 for about 94% of display questions, 6 of 15 or for about 40% of referential questions, and 3 of 8 (38%) request questions.

Besides, Table 1 shows the contingent questions that are different in terms of their appearance, in each teacher's classroom interactions. The questioning type which was mostly appeared as contingency was clarification. Following the name, the type in question is concerned with previous contributions from which a new topical statement is provided or referred back to the foregoing one. As such, the content may be reflecting previous content or the things proposed previously. Student responses might lead to new information and proposed in the natural context of the immediate discourse. And yet, it takes no notice of a clarification type.

Differently, the employment of display questioning type indicates something discrete. Data obtained from the transcript highlights the contingency of display questions in the text-based talks. In this respect, they are considered directive and aimed at eliciting a particular aspect or to a greater extent developing logical thought. Display questions were of benefit to facilitate students' higher-level thinking which then, brings on

students to further articulate or keep the responses. The teacher consistently pushed students to state more propositions up to launching themselves to convoluted responses. As such, it is conducted in such a way by giving them back their vocables, always syntactically reordered or reformulated or semantically clarified for students to give responses. Forcing them to evolve and utter the responses reflects the basis of the contingent display type of questioning. In sum, the employment teacher questions were in line with or were contingent on student responses, discourse moves, the subject proposition, and the norms and expectations of classroom discourse.

Aside from looking at the contingency of teacher questions, an examination for the convergence-divergence was crucial to cope with. This is of benefit to know whether they were employed and functioned to enlarge the classroom talks (unsettled responses) or highlights certain aspect (specific, precise contributions). Table 2 shares the distributions of teacher convergence and divergence questioning employment. Data in Table 2 indicate that the questioning types were mostly convergent for all teachers. Despite, using display questioning types to extend and shorten student responses, referential and request questioning types were able to enlarge classroom discourse along with their different appearance consistency. This case tends to appear as the change of discourse or talk, responses provided by students, and possible classroom features appearing during the interactions. Referring to data, despite the difference in terms of consistency, such questions were employed in such a way that they could function to broaden the talks by referring to the proposition of preceding ideas. To sum up, as the text-based discussion occurred, display types would be beneficial for the talk enlargement in the half time. Yet, as there was inspired text, entwining outer features, referential types most of the time, might broaden the talks and extend the interactions (Bilaloğlu, Arnas, & Yaşar, 2016; A. Y. Lee & Lee, 2006; Qashoa, 2013; Wright, 2016).

Moreover, data in Table 2 show that three teachers raised more on the display questioning types than others. Such employment occurred with the function of confirming the foregoing explanation. For each, the questions were successively in 97 %, 90%, 77 %, 84%, 95%, and 93%. The convergence appears as the questions refer back to the matter being talked about. Differently, the convergence utilizing the referential question types, that of 84%, 76%, 81%, 100%, 86%, and 87% for each participant appeared when the students were mediated to develop the matter being discussed. Students' contribution toward new propositions was discursively allowed by the teachers within interaction which in turn, holds the discourse's scope. Even though the teacher questions sometimes provided no responses, teachers appraised students' ability in case of broadening the talks to freshly supply a value for classroom interaction. Out of the teacher's scenario, such questions, thus, serve the latent to construct the talks' zone.

Similar to contingency, clarification requests endured convergent in classroom discourse. This occurred as the teachers' questions were concerned with an effort to redefine the preceding responses given to have students doing actions. Then, the

questions were, factually, convergent when they refer to the feature being discussed. At this point, in their degree difference, the questions tend to be convergent following the talked-topic. (Boyd, 2015; Boyd & Rubin, 2006; Gilson, Little, Ruegg, & Bruce-davis, 2014; Wang, 2020)

Unlikely, though teachers' convergent questions had a big amount during the classroom talks, teacher questions occupying divergence occurred less. However, they could still guide their students to encounter higher-level thinking by providing the discourse moves. In this context, teachers' efforts to extend the aspect of the discussion were of benefit to the classroom discourse. Data shown in Table 2 highlight that teachers' display questions were respectively 3%, 10%, 23%, 84%, 5%, and 7 % for each. Meanwhile, questions categorized as referential questions were the most type used which is 16%, 24%, 19%, 14%, and 13% for each teacher (except T4). An important note is that the questions categorized as clarification were not divergent at all though they were closely related to convergence as to their contingency. Ultimately, although the request questions (not for Te 4) successively occupied 40 %, 40%, 19%, 33%, and 25% of each participant, they principally had the actions performed by the students, that so-called perlocutionary. Therefore, they are regarded as divergent questions in case of what has been being talked about. The following Extract (The 1's classroom interactions) highlights the contingency and convergence-divergence of questioning employment.

Extract 1

- Te* : See the whiteboard. Tell me which option should be excluded?
St : A and F?
Te : Really? Is it A or B only? Do they follow the conception of authentic assessment?
St : emm.. Perhaps F?
Te : Perhaps F? or Perhaps A?
St : F
Te : F ↑ Is it F?
St : yup.
Te : Other ideas? Is it acceptable?
St : Both
Te : Right. Both. .. Any idea? What about paragraphs? Anyone?
St : Two
Te : The topical sentences? If I were you, I would open my diary. Can you?

In terms of contingency questions, the above interaction strongly indicates clarification and display as the questioning types were very beneficial. Students' previous utterances were clarified by the teacher. To restate and rephrase were the teacher's ways to enlarge the talk while considering the IRF pattern of interaction. Pushing further, convergent questions came up with the focus of attention (choice to erase) by questioning "other ideas?", and "Is it acceptable?" and divergent questions which

elongate the feature of the discussed- matter such as "*What about paragraphs? Anyone? "the topical sentences?"*" and "*If I were you, I would open my book. Can you?*" The convergence-divergence questions, then, can expand the point of meaning negotiation.

Specifically, the examination above furnishes three sorts of actions accounting for contingency on prior students' words. The first is working out earlier contributions through repetition, paraphrasing, or summarization. In a certain context, such a case could be done through a pupil's earlier statement transformation. The second is resisting student statements. At this point, the teacher raised questions rather than expressing tokens such as "mm"), contention such as "no or not", and routine words that "it's not a good idea ", or saying "good". In this aspect, Gan (2010), Lam (2018), Luk (2010), and May (2011) have noted that the construction is not pondered as an insufficient replay for co-participant to hold reciprocal interchange within the interaction or dialogue of certain speech event. Finally, the third is drawing out student opinions. In this action, the earlier student feedback was thrived utilizing other convergent (what about paragraphs? and what about the topic sentence? and indirect-divergent probing (If I were you, I would open my diary. Can you?)

To date, to widen the talks, lengthen the classroom interactions, and to discursively establish the conversation, contingency and convergence-divergence questions were demanded. In the context of this research, questioning displays a cumulative, reciprocal, purposeful, and collective, carrying on with circumstantial frame to elicit student participation together with the new understanding they have, to a great degree, by contingent questioning as well as convergent-divergent questions. Then, the findings corroborate Engin (2013), Boyd and Rubin (2006), and (Lam, 2018) confirming that contingency on a former speaker's statement, a competence of interaction, must be possessed by teachers. Students could be able to have contingent responses when they respond to student responses properly. More importantly, Hu and Duan (2018) and Darong et al., (2020); Darong, 2021; Darong, Niman, Menggo & Beda, (2021) have noted that aside from syntactical entanglement and linguistic convolution, convergence- divergence questions are important to have the classroom enlargement talks and incidentally induce student's reasoning magnitude. It implicitly signifies that contingency and convergence-divergence are scanty to reveal teachers' questioning activities in the classroom setting. There should be an examination of the questioning form and the syntactical form as well.

5. CONCLUSION

Modes of teacher questions highlight the purpose by which, the response. In this research study, the modes of question is regarded as teacher strategies for delivering the message, intentions as well as propositions in teacher-student interaction. From the found data, it was very clear that the teachers' strategies were very influential in carrying out the functions. The strategies in question spell out that questioning activity was not solely investigated for the types and functions but also on the contingency,

convergence-divergence, the correspondence between the form and function, and modification devices.

To specify, the contingent and convergent-divergent questions were the ways to have students' responses, whereby might increase the conversations by bringing the question to semantically and syntactically consideration earlier students' responses and placing more on the focus of the talk. These were in the form of extending, disputing, and doing other actions such as transformation, repetition former the wording through clarification, display, and referential questioning types were utilized in context.

However, contingent and convergent-divergent examinations of the act of questioning are not enough to cope with teachers' questioning strategy in teacher-students talks. There are still other aspects to deeply reveal such as types, forms, and syntactical forms. Further studies might be done to put the aspects in question as to the focus of analysis.

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