

Pre-Service English Teachers Ponder Over Asking Referential Questions to Increase Student Talking Time

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Abstract

Teacher talk could be maintained to be a pivotal component of language classroom discourse. Language learner learning is substantially contingent upon teacher talk in that it can be regarded to be a valuable and reliable source of input for students. Teacher questions constitute a considerable proportion of teacher talk, and thus, could impinge upon student talking time. Encouraged by the lack of research into exploring the impact of using referential questions on student talking time and pre-service English teachers' viewpoints on the functions of teacher talk, what student talk indicates, and what to do to increase student talking time, the researcher decided to conduct this research. The data was gathered from the audio recordings of the lessons taught by two Turkish pre-service teachers of English, post-lesson and end-of-the-study meetings, and field notes. The findings indicated asking referential questions helped increase student talking time. Moreover, the participants believed teacher talk performed various pedagogical functions and student talk carried many positive implications. The participants also offered suggestions for increasing student talking time while decreasing teacher talking time.

Keywords: *Referential Questions, Student Talking Time, Teacher Questions, Teacher Talk, Teacher Talking Time*

INTRODUCTION

Teacher talk (TT) occupies a central position in foreign language learning since it functions as one of the most invaluable sources of input. That is, foreign language learners view their teachers as the authority on the target language, and in line with this, attach more importance to TT in comparison to the learning materials they are to use. For this reason, characteristics of TT bear upon student engagement with the lesson and are contingent on that student's learning. TT in English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) classes in the context of this study, and presumably in other EFL contexts, comprise the preponderance of classroom discourse, which brings to the forefront the issue of how foreign language learners can develop their communicative competence unless they use the target language. Therefore, minimal student talking time (STT) appears to be an obstacle to be surmounted.

Questions are a significant proportion of a foreign language teacher's talk as teachers ask several questions in every lesson for several purposes such as checking student understanding, eliciting answers from students, directing students' attention to lesson and making students speak in the target language. The kind of questions asked by the teacher could affect STT because whilst yes/no questions lead to the production of answers in few words, referential

questions are likely to have students use more words in their answers, meaning that STT might be increased.

In view of the inadequate STT in EFL classrooms, the likelihood of increasing it through asking referential questions, and the lack of study aiming at investigating the influence of the use of referential questions on increasing STT, the researcher decided to conduct this research. Another motive the researcher was inspired by was that pre-service foreign language teachers' perceptions regarding the functions of TT, what student talk (ST) signifies, and how to increase STT have not been undertaken thus far. This study thereupon may substantially contribute to the literature by exploring the topics mentioned in the preceding two statements. What are the theoretical and practical implications of the study?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teacher Talk

Ellis (2003) defines TT as the adjustments made by the teacher at phonological, grammatical, lexical, and discourse levels to fine-tune it by seeing students' proficiency levels. According to Dracos (2018), TT could aid the language teacher in improving communication with students. TT, which could be stipulated to be the modeling of the language (Fisher et al., 2008), dominates language classrooms where the target language is both the subject and the medium of instruction (Pissarro, 2018). TT has been shown to signal quality teaching and to impact student learning (Applebee et al., 2003; Danielson, 2011; Sun & Verspoor, 2022). Banbrook and Shekan (1989) claim that TT is the vehicle for involving students in discourse and fine-tuning the used language to enhance student comprehension and enable personalization. Cullen (1998) shifts the attention from the quantity of TT to its quality; that is, to how effectively teachers can use their talk to promote communicative classrooms and student learning. Thoms (2012), reviewing the studies on foreign language discourse from the angle of socio-cultural learning theory, pointed out that it was the teacher who can either impede or facilitate student learning by their talk because it was the teacher determining the speaking activities and the questions to be asked to students.

TT is attested to be based on a pattern of interaction comprised of initiation-response and follow-up (Brazil & Sinclair, 1982), but could also take disparate forms and display variations in the course of instructional practices depending on student age (Heller & Grøver, 2021), the teacher's pedagogical beliefs and knowledge of their students (Lim, 2023). TT, if used effectively, could serve for developing students' language skills. For instance, dialogic talk, which is the talk among interlocutors about reasoning and thinking, between the teacher and students was found to positively influence young learners' persuasive writings (Al-Adeimi & O'Connor, 2021). In addition, TT might enhance student engagement. For example, the research by Chen et al. (2020) revealed teachers' productive classroom talk, which is positioning students as "active thinkers in classroom conversations" (p. 631), induced higher levels of student engagement.

Forman (2012) reported six functions of TT both in first language (L1) and second language (L2) in EFL contexts: animating, translating, explaining, creating, prompting and dialoguing. The functions of animating, creating and dialoguing were fulfilled in L2 whereas those of creating and dialoguing were also carried out in L1, and translating, explaining and prompting were performed in L1. One of the objectives of TT might be inviting students to the classroom

discourse, which is to a large extent tied upon its content. Investigating the relationship between two Chinese EFL teachers' discourse behaviours and students' evaluation of effective teaching, the research by Yang and Tao (2018) suggested that the teacher should combine content types and information type ably at a proper level of difficulty to catch students' attention and interest. Drawing on the pedagogical functions of TT in the classroom context, Cullen (1998) specified the qualities of communicative TT involving the use of referential questions, content feedback, speech modifications to rephrase questions and instructions, and negotiating meanings with students. According to them, characteristics of uncommunicative TT are excessive use of display questions, form-focused feedback, repeating students' responses and following initiation-response and follow-up interaction pattern.

The number of words produced by teachers and students when they take turns is highly likely to vary. Exploring TT and ST in American university classrooms, the study by Csomay (2007) yielded that students took more turns vis-à-vis teachers in lessons but used fewer words in their turns. Teacher support may encourage students to utter more words in their turns. For instance, the paper by Clifton (2006) showed that facilitator (teacher)-learner interaction enabled the learner to take the floor more and the scaffolding provided by the teacher through such means as backchannelling and recasting motivated the language learner to increase the quantity of output. The paper also pinpointed the affordances of allocating more responsibility for the selection of topics to the learner, and thus positioning them as a teacher-figure, to restructuring TT and lessening its weight in the lesson. Similar to what was reported by Clifton (2006), Wilson (2008) noted the beneficial effect of facilitator (teacher) talk on teaching reading as it enhanced students' engagement with the text through "unobtrusive task management, re-channeling students' attention to the text, increased prospectiveness and offering sensitive feedback" (p. 366).

How teachers perceive TT may differ. For instance, in Skinner's (2017) study while there were student EFL teachers viewing TT as a vehicle serving for pedagogical purposes, there were student teachers not associating it with pedagogical purposes yet as a manifestation of clarity, accuracy and volume. Training teachers in effectively using their talk might bring along benefits for student learning. In Moser et al.'s (2012) research, TT training in the use of task-based approach in communicative classes with young learners led the teacher participants to provide rich comprehensible input to students and to scaffold them. Porath (2014) reported the development in the reading conferences of a teacher in fostering student-centeredness. The strategies they used in the second conference involved asking thick and open questions and inquiring more about students' responses. Box et al. (2013) suggested that real classroom talk should be analyzed in teacher education programs to help teachers gain an understanding of how their talk in the classroom can facilitate or impede student learning.

Teacher Questions

Teacher questions are viewed to be interactive events between teachers and students (Yang, 2021), to shape classroom discourse (Troyer, 2023) and to stimulate student learning (Machaba & Mangviro, 2024; Plyman & Ward, 2020); nonetheless, teachers' ability to ask good questions is an under-researched topic. One of the small amount of research on that topic was conducted by Tawarah (2012), who examined teachers' effectiveness in asking questions, receiving students' questions and interacting with student responses. The findings revealed that the participating teachers' effectiveness in the mentioned three domains was at moderate level. Teachers can ask questions with a great deal of objectives in mind one of which is evaluating

student learning. Therefore, quality evaluation is equated with quality questioning (Drummond, 1996). Bearing in mind copious amounts of teacher questions in classroom discourse, language teachers are to be knowledgeable about and skilled in how to ask questions to scaffold students as they confront difficulties in constructing meaning (Boyd, 2015). In addition, it is important for both practicing and student teachers to acquire skills of asking effective questions. In line with this necessity, the study by Ahtee et al. (2011) suggested that primary student teachers should gain experience of producing questions grounded on scientific observation.

As has been revealed in the review of literature, pre-service teachers' use of referential questions to increase STT and their viewpoints on it have not been investigated heretofore. Further, the literature review has unpacked the need for examining their perceptions about what functions TT has, what ST signifies, and what must be done to maximize STT aside from asking referential questions. Given these gaps, this research targets seeking answers to the following research questions:

- 1- Does asking referential questions in EFL classrooms increase STT?
- 2- What do Ellie and Enda think about the effect of asking referential questions on STT?
- 3- According to Ellie and Enna,
 - a) what are the functions of TT?
 - b) what does ST indicate?
 - c) what should be done other than using referential questions to increase STT?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Background of the Study

This research was designed as an instrumental case study because instrumental case studies are studies aiming at "illuminating a particular issue" (Creswell, 2012, p. 465). This study set out with an eye to investigating the impact of pre-service English teachers' use of referential questions on increasing STT and unearthing their views about the functions of TT, what ST indicates, and what could be done to maximize STT apart from asking referential questions. Given the purposes of this research, it becomes clear why it was designed as an instrumental case study.

Pre-service English teachers in the context of this research are to take the Teaching Practicum 1 course in the fall term of the last academic year of the four-year pre-service English teacher education program and the Teaching Practicum 2 course in the spring term of the same academic year. They have to teach at least 20 lessons in teaching practicum each term. Each lesson taught by the pre-service teacher is required to be evaluated by the English teacher mentoring them in the placement school. The university supervisor is expected to observe four lessons taught by the pre-service teachers they supervise. University supervisors' evaluations of the taught lessons determine pre-service teachers' final grades in Teaching Practicum 1 and 2 courses.

The researcher had been supervising pre-service English teachers in teaching practicum for three years when this research was undertaken. The common issue in all the lessons pre-service English teachers taught and the researcher observed was that it was the pre-service teacher whose talk dominated the lesson and the student who listened or pretended to listen to the teacher. As well as what was revealed by lesson observations in teaching practicum, the

researcher believes that TTT is more than STT in EFL classrooms, and ways to decrease the former and to increase the latter must be sought. In the fall term of the academic year 2021/2022, she supervised Ellie and Enna (pseudonyms) in teaching practicum. After listening to the audio recordings of the first lessons they taught, it became evident that there was a big difference between their TTT and STT as they talked a lot more than the students did.

The study participants are two female pre-service English teachers, Ellie and Enna, who were 22 years old when this research was carried out. The researcher decided to conduct this investigation in the first meeting she had with Ellie and Enna in which she listened to the recordings of the first lessons they taught to the same 12th graders at a state-run upper-secondary school. Ellie recorded the lesson while Enna was teaching and Enna recorded the lesson while Ellie was teaching. In the meeting, the researcher drew the attention of Ellie and Enna to how much they talked during the lessons. She realized that they asked a lot of yes/no and display questions but either did not ask any referential questions or asked one or two. She negotiated with Ellie and Enna over whether the students would have talked more if they had posed referential questions as well as yes/no ones and shared her desire to research to explore the effect of asking referential questions on STT. She obtained their consent to take part in the research. The extracts taken from the first lessons illustrate the kinds of questions Ellie and Enna asked the students.

Extract 1

Enna: What is the name of our founder's mother, father?

Student: Annesinin adını soruyor. (The student translates Enna's question into L1.)

Extract 2

Ellie: Are you generous?

Student: Cömert misin diyor, hoca? (The student translates Ellie's question into L1.)

A group of students: (Laughing) Hayır, değil. (The students answered in L1.)

The talk between the researcher and Ellie and Enna on the recorded lessons in the first meeting enabled raising Ellie and Enna's awareness of how much they talked in the lessons and confirmed the researcher's long-held conception of more TTT and less STT in EFL classrooms in the context of the study. The following dialogue between the researcher and Ellie and Enna exemplifies the questions she put to them about their talking time and Ellie and Enna's views about the potential impact of asking referential questions on increasing STT.

The researcher: What do you think about the length of your talking time in your lessons?

Ellie: May I start?

The researcher: Sure.

Ellie: My talking time was more than that of the students.

Enna: My talking time was longer, too.

The researcher: Enna, did you realize you asked yes/no questions to your students but didn't continue with a referential question? For instance, you could have asked, after getting your students' answers to the question of if Jacky (pseudonym) was generous, "What kind of people are generous? or "What do generous people do?"

Enna: I asked a similar question, but towards the end of the lesson not after asking the yes/no question.

The researcher: Would it have been more suitable to ask it after asking the yes/no question? It could have increased STT because you are asking if one of the students is generous and because of that it can be the right time to get the students to talk more about being generous.

Enna: Yes, ma'am. I guess it would have been better.

The researcher: Ellie, you frequently asked display questions and the students answered in one or two words. Would you have been able to increase STT if you had posed referential questions?

Ellie: I am sure the students would have talked more.

The researcher encouraged Ellie and Enna to accompany yes/no questions with referential ones in the following two lessons they would teach to the class to which they had taught their first lesson. The researcher observed their second lesson in person in the classroom and asked them to record the third lesson. The researcher arranged a meeting to discuss the effect of asking referential questions on STT after each lesson with Ellie and Enna. Moreover, an end-of-the-study meeting was carried out to disclose their perceptions regarding the functions of TT, what ST signifies, and how to increase STT.

The details of the three lessons taught by Ellie are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Information about the Three Lessons Taught by Ellie

		Objectives of the lesson	TTT	STT
Ellie	Lesson 1	Students will be able to practice the vocabulary used to describe personality and appearance.	Predominantly the teacher talked.	Very little STT. They spoke when the teacher asked a question and most of the time in L1.
		Students will be able to describe personality and appearance of different people.		
		Students will be able to express themselves without being afraid of making mistakes.		
	Lesson 2	Objectives of the lesson	TTT	STT
		Students will be able to learn words related to cybercrime.	The teacher talked more than the students.	Students talked less than the teacher, but took more turns and talked more in comparison to the first lesson.
		Students will be able to talk about cybercrime.		

	Students will learn about how to protect themselves from cybercrime.		
Lesson 3	Objectives of the lesson	TTT	STT
	Students will be able to talk about future using <i>will</i> .	The teacher talked more than the students, but when compared to the first and second lessons, she talked less.	The students talked more in the lesson as against the first and second lessons and mostly in English.
	Students will be able to develop their speaking and writing skills.		
	Students will be able to improve their reading skills.		

The details about the lessons taught by Enna are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Information on the Lessons Taught by Enna

Enna	Lesson 1	Objectives of the lesson	TTT	STT
		Students will learn the vocabulary related to personality.	The teacher talked a lot more than the students.	STT was too short. The students responded to the teacher mostly in L1.
		Students will read a text about the founder of the country.		
		Students will answer the comprehension check questions.		
	Lesson 2	Objectives of the lesson	TTT	STT
		Students will recycle the words related to cybercrimes.	The teacher talked more than students, but less in total as opposed to the first lesson.	The students talked more in comparison with the first lesson.
		Students will produce and talk about the ways to protect themselves from cybercrime.		
	Lesson 3	Objectives of the lesson	TTT	STT
		Students will be able to understand the function of <i>be going to</i> .	Overall, the teacher talked more than the students, but less as against her talking time in the first two lessons.	The students talked more in comparison to the first two lessons.
Students will be able to talk about planned future using <i>be going to</i> .				
	Students will be able to ask and answer questions using <i>be going to</i> .			

Data Collection Tools and Analysis

Post-lesson meetings

Three meetings, which were recorded and transcribed, were held with Ellie and Enna. The first meeting in which they participated together was the one where the decision about carrying out this research was taken. A second meeting was scheduled for Ellie and Enna separately according to their availability after the researcher had observed their lessons in the placement school. The first question posed in the meeting catered to uncovering Ellie and Enna's evaluations of their talking time in the lesson. Then, using her field notes, the researcher shared her thoughts concerning their talking time and asked questions about the kinds of questions they posed in the lesson and their effects on STT. Moreover, the researcher, Ellie and Enna conferred about whether the students could have talked more providing they had asked different and/or additional questions. In the third meeting, which were arranged separately for Ellie and Enna, akin to the second meetings, the researcher listened to the audio recordings of the lessons first, and afterwards, posed questions the same as the ones in the second meeting. Extracts from the meetings will be presented in the findings section to offer evidence relating to Ellie and Enna's views about their talking time in the lessons and the effect of asking referential questions on the amount of STT. The post-lesson meeting data belonging to the second and third lessons was subjected to inductive content analysis by following the steps proposed by Creswell (2012). First, the transcriptions were read iteratively before starting the coding process. Then, the coding began. After the completion of the coding, the transcriptions were reread not to leave behind any code, and following that, the identified codes were gone over to avoid redundancy. The transcriptions were reviewed again thereafter with an eye to extracting quotations to exemplify the determined codes. Finally, themes were developed from the codes.

End-of-the-study meeting

An end-of-the-study meeting was carried out with Ellie and Enna together to unearth their viewpoints on the below-stated questions:

Tell me the functions of TT in an EFL classroom?

Tell me your ideas about the effect of asking referential questions on STT.

Tell me what ST indicates.

Tell me what can be done other than using referential questions to increase STT.

The end-of-the-study meeting was recorded and transcribed verbatim. Inductive content analysis was performed by going through the process of coding, the same as the one stated in the sub-section of post-lesson meetings, to analyze the meeting data.

Field Notes

The researcher kept field notes while she was observing Ellie and Enna's second lessons in the placement school. The notes were on the questions asked by them and how much they and the students talked in the lessons. The field notes were used in the second post-lesson meetings and extracts from them will be shared in the findings section to present the results about the influence of asking referential questions on STT.

FINDINGS

The Effect of Asking Referential Questions on STT in the Second and Third Lessons and Ellie and Enna's Views About It

The content analysis of the data obtained from the second and third post-lesson meetings produced the theme of *effectiveness in increasing STT in EFL classes*. Ellie and Enna stated in

the meetings that referential questions got the students to talk longer in their turns, which engendered an increase in their talking time. The following paragraphs involve the extracts from the field notes and meetings, which can help gain an understanding of how this theme developed in the content analysis.

Field notes taken by the researcher while observing Elli and Enna teaching their lessons in the placement school and the meetings carried out after the lessons separately provided insights into the changes in their and students' talking time. The field notes concerning the second lesson taught by Ellie indicated that the students talked more owing to the referential questions asked by her.

The students participated in the second lesson a lot in English. The question "What should we do to protect ourselves from cybercrime?" seems to appeal to the students. Seven students volunteered to talk about what people must do to protect themselves from cybercrime. In general, the topic of the lesson stimulated the students' interests.

The researcher and Ellie talked about the effect of asking referential questions on STT in the second meeting. Ellie stated her belief in the positive influence of using referential questions on STT: "I guess asking referential questions at the right time positively affected STT." Field notes on Enna's second lesson also revealed that asking referential questions to the students and personalizing the questions enabled the increase in STT.

The lesson grabbed the students' attention. Enna started the lesson by explaining the key phrases and words related to cybercrime and personalized the target words by asking questions about their own families. For example, Enna asked: Did anyone try to steal your identity in social networking sites? Four-five students answered in "yes". Then, Enna continued asking referential questions. What happened?, What did your sister do? etc. These questions really made the students talk more.

In the second meeting, the researcher and Enna talked about to what extent using referential questions positively impacted on STT.

The researcher: Enna, did you realize your students talked a lot more than they did in the first lesson?

Enna: Yes, that's why I'm so happy.

The researcher: Why do you think they talked more?

Enna: I think the most important reason is that the topic of the lesson was interesting for the students. I also did not only ask yes/no questions but also referential questions. Whenever I just asked yes/no questions, students replied either yes or no and said nothing more. Because of that, their talking time was short. Referential questions, I believe, definitely helped increase STT.

The audio recordings of the third lesson indicated that STT was longer than the first and second lessons. They showed that referential questions and pair-work activities led to an increase in STT. The audio recording of the lesson taught by Ellie revealed that she started the lesson by asking referential questions such as "What will happen in the world 20 years later?", which increased STT. Furthermore, in the pair work (One of the students was the fortune teller and

the other was the client.) she involved the students in increased STT. In the meeting, Ellie stated that the pair-work activity enabled the increase in STT.

The third meeting held with Enna also presented valuable information about the beneficial effect of the pair work on making the students talk more.

The researcher: What would you say about STT in the third lesson?

Ellie: I believe that the students talked a lot in this lesson.

The researcher: How would you explain the increase in STT?

Ellie: Because the students liked the topic of the pair-work activity (talking about the planned future), they talked more in the activity.

Ellie and Enna's Viewpoints on the Functions of TT, What ST Indicates, and Ways to Increase STT

The inductive content analysis of the end-of-the-study meeting developed the themes *TT has a variety of pedagogical functions*, *ST carries positive implications*, and *STT can be increased in a few ways*. The extracts presented in the succeeding paragraphs elucidate how the students' responses led to the production of the themes.

One of the provisions of the end-of-the-study meeting was uncovering Ellie and Enna's perceptions of the functions of TT. Their explanations as to the functions of TT developed the theme of *TT has a variety of pedagogical functions*. Their responses to the question of what functions TT fulfills included lecturing, providing explanations, prompting, giving instructions and facilitating learning. For instance, Ellie stated: "*TT has several functions. For example, it is the means for providing explanations and lecturing.*" Similarly, Enna said: "*I agree with Ellie. It has a lot of functions. TT is the vehicle for giving instructions, too.*"

The meeting data also presented Ellie and Enna's views about what ST could signify, from which the theme that *ST carries positive implications* emerged. According to them, ST could be the indicator of student understanding and interest in the lesson and a motivated student. To exemplify, Enna stated: "*If students talk in the lesson, this shows that they understand the lesson and the teacher.*" Likewise, Ellie said: "*Yes, it means the student understands the teacher and is also interested in the lesson.*"

The end-of-the-study meeting also unpacked Ellie and Enna's viewpoints on what to do other than asking referential questions to increase STT. Their recommendations produced the theme that *STT can be increased in a few ways*. The suggestions they put forward included using pair- and group-work activities, teacher exemplification, using games in the lesson, and grounding the lesson on topics that could beguile students. To illustrate, Enna stated: "*STT can be increased via using pair- and group-work activities more because they talk more in those activities particularly if the topic is interesting to them.*"

DISCUSSION

This research explored the effect of asking referential questions in EFL classes on increasing STT and Ellie and Enna's viewpoints on it. Moreover, their perceptions concerning the functions of TT, what ST signifies, and what could be done to increase STT other than using referential questions were investigated in the present study. The analysis of the audio

recordings of the first lesson showed that Ellie and Enna predominantly took and held the floor in the lesson in which there was minimal student participation. The analysis of the first lessons also paved the way for deciding to carry out this research. The second and third lessons involving more referential questions brought about a change in STT as the students talked more as against the first lesson though it was still the teacher who talked more in the lessons. The meetings held with Ellie and Enna after teaching the second and third lessons revealed their beliefs in the positive effect of using referential questions on increasing STT because they noted that the students produced more utterances to answer them. The findings suggest that question types used by the teacher impinge on STT. Leading a conversation or taking the floor is not an easy task for EFL learners yet answering yes/no and display questions is probably easier as the number of words they need to articulate is limited.

Teacher questions constitute a significant proportion of TT, which could explicate the importance they have in EFL teaching and learning because, as is alleged by Plyman and Ward (2020), teacher questions could affect student learning. Now that TT is a valuable source of L2 input in scaffolding the EFL learner, teacher questions are also likely to encourage the EFL learner to contribute to classroom discourse in L2.

The findings showed that for Ellie and Enna, TT has a variety of pedagogical functions including giving lectures, explanations, and instructions, prompting, and facilitating learning. This finding confirms the results in the study by Skinner (2017) in that some of the participating student teachers also emphasized the pedagogical functions of TT in that research. Additionally, similar to the findings of the present study, Banbrook and Shekan (1989) reported that TT could facilitate student learning. Similarly, Thoms (2012) pointed to the impact of TT on fostering and hindering student learning. The findings concerning the functions of TT indicate that Ellie and Enna are aware of the significance of TT in EFL classrooms, which implies that they may try to use it effectively when they embark on their teaching journey. Additionally, Ellie and Enna believed that ST signaled student understanding and interest in the lesson and a high level of student motivation. Considering the meanings attributed to ST by them, it can be asserted that they will attempt to increase STT in their professional lives.

TT and ST are closely linked to each other. TT prompts ST and shapes it to a great extent and ST correspondingly affects TT. In light of the significance of the classroom in EFL learning due to the limited opportunities to access L2 and practice it out of school, it becomes obvious that pre-service teacher education programs need to train pre-service English teachers in how to increase STT. The emphasis placed on increasing STT does not mean to undervalue TT; contrarily, it could function as the medium for maximizing STT through asking effective questions and scaffolding students.

CONCLUSION

This research can add to the literature on TT and ST as being the first to explore the effect of using referential questions on increasing STT and to examine student English teachers' views about the functions of TT, what ST signifies, and how to increase STT. The findings indicated the positive effect of asking referential questions on increasing STT, and the study participants believed TT had many pedagogical functions. This research could be intriguing and promising for language teachers looking for ways to increase STT. Moreover, the findings might prompt them to pose more referential questions in their lessons and encourage teacher researchers to research to shed light on the influence of teacher questions on STT.

This research is not free of limitations. The number of lessons analyzed to explore the impact of using referential questions on STT is only four in this study. Investigating more lessons taught by more than two pre-service teachers could help gain clearer insights into the effect of asking more referential questions on maximizing language learners' talking time. Furthermore, the influence of using referential questions on 12th graders' talking time in English lessons was probed in this research. Future studies can be carried out at different levels of education, which might enable obtaining a more comprehensive picture of the place of teacher questions in STT in foreign language classes.

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