

An Analysis of English Major Students' Interrogative Constructions

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Abstract

Questioning is known to have been used to probe the validity of an assumption, analyse the logic of an argument, and explore the unknown. Instead of lecturing what is true or false, philosophers utilized questioning for students' understanding of a subject and then leading them to discover logical conclusions. Although role and types of questions utilized by teachers have been investigated in various learning environments, not the same attention has been given to students' questions. This study aims to explore English major students' question formation in the target language and analyse their interrogative constructions in terms of correct question forms and identify the specific difficulties they face while forming questions. In line with this purpose, 30 students were provided with a set of pictures and asked to write down as many questions as they could about these pictures within the time given. The study was conducted with students in the Department of Translation and Interpreting Studies, and the participants were 14 first-year and 16 second-year students. The study also utilised an open-ended questionnaire regarding the difficulties students had while conducting the activity and forming interrogative sentences in English. Students' productions and the data collected from the open-ended questions were subjected to content analysis. It was found that the students constructed mostly Wh-questions and demonstrated errors in word order and verb form and that they had difficulties in forming interrogative constructions. Results are believed to help educators have a picture of challenges students face in this process.

Key Words: Interrogative Constructions, Questioning, EFL, Pictures, Question types



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Branşı İngilizce Olan Öğrencilerin Soru Yapılarının Analizi

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Öz

Soru sorma bu zamana kadar bir varsayımın geçerliğini araştırmak, bir düşüncenin mantığını incelemek ve bilinmeyeni bulmak için kullanılagelmiştir. Filozoflar bir konunun öğrenciler tarafından anlaşılması ve mantıksal sonuçlara ulaşılması için neyin doğru veya yanlış olduğunu söylemek yerine soru sorma tekniğinden yararlanmışlardır. Öğretmenler tarafından sorulan soruların rolü ve türleri ile ilgili farklı öğrenme ortamlarında yapılmış araştırmalar mevcuttur. Fakat öğrencilerin soruları hakkında daha fazla çalışmaya ihtiyaç vardır. Bu çalışma, branşı İngilizce olan öğrencilerin hedef dilde soru cümlesi oluşturmalarını incelemiş, doğru soru cümlesi kurmalarını araştırmayı ve soru oluştururken karşılaştıkları belirli zorlukları tespit etmeyi hedeflemiştir. Bu amaçla, 30 öğrenciye birtakım resimler gösterilmiş ve bu resimler hakkında verilen süre zarfında mümkün olduğunca çok soru oluşturmaları istenmiştir. Araştırma Mütercim Tercümanlık bölümüne kayıtlı öğrenciler ile yapılmıştır; katılımcıların 14'ü birinci sınıf, 16'sı ise ikinci sınıf öğrencisidir. Katılımcılara ayrıca aktivite sırasında ve genel anlamda İngilizce soru cümlesi oluşturmada yaşadıkları zorluklarla ilgili açık uçlu bir anket de uygulanmıştır. Açık uçlu sorulardan elde edilen veriler içerik analizi ile incelenmiştir. Öğrencilerin çoğunlukla 5n 1k soruları sorduğu, söz dizimi ve eylem biçiminde hata yaptıkları, ve genel olarak soru yapısı oluşturmada zorlandıkları bulunmuştur. Çalışmadan elde edilen bulguların, öğrencilerin bu süreçte karşılaştıkları zorluklar konusunda eğitimcilere ayna tutacağı düşünülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Soru Yapıları, Soru sorma, Yabancı dil olarak İngilizce, Resimler, Soru türleri



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INTRODUCTION

The role of teachers' questioning in student learning has been investigated in EFL context. Given that teachers' questions could enhance students' English learning skills (Hill & Flynn, 2008), it could be concluded that teacher questions occupy a significant place in language learning and teaching environments. However, asking questions in the phenomenon of language learning, which is an interactive process, cannot be confined to teachers, and students' questioning holds importance as much as teachers' questioning because questioning is two-dimensional in nature; teachers pose questions and students get involved in the process through their responses (Arslan, 2006). As a matter of fact, it seems difficult to separate teacher and student questioning since students' questions could give a direction to the type of question that a teacher asks, and teachers could ask questions that are likely to develop students' questioning skills.

The type of questions that students ask could also provide hints about their thinking skills. Based on Bloom's taxonomy (1956), Forehand (2010) provides a classification of cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains, which was meant to develop a method of sorting the thinking behaviours. Cullinane (2010, pp.2-3) also refers to Bloom's Taxonomy of learning and explains each step of the cognitive domain as knowledge: "the recall of information, comprehension: the translation, interpretation or extrapolation of knowledge, application: the application of knowledge to a new situation, analysis: breaking down knowledge into parts and show relationships among the parts, synthesis: bringing together parts (elements, components) of knowledge to form a whole and building relationships for new situations, and evaluation: judgements about the value of material and methods for given purposes".

In spite of the educational benefits of student-generated questions, it is generally the teachers who pose content questions (Faulconer, 2016). In such a typical classroom environment, it is hard for a teacher to identify the confusion that students may have if their questions are not voiced; additionally, questions constitute psychological tools for thinking since they could scaffold ideas and questions contribute to active learning (Chin, 2002). Therefore, teachers should encourage students to ask questions. Davis (2013) believes that active engagement of students is the key to effective learning, and students' forming their own questions enables them to feel connected to the lesson. Likewise, given the current focus on critical thinking and student-centeredness, it should be noted that knowing how to ask questions is also knowing how to learn well (Chin, 2001). Yu (2009) also refers to positive influence of student-generated questions on learning and adds that students are promoted to construct their personal knowledge and employ different cognitive and metacognitive strategies while dealing with question formation tasks. Therefore, providing students with question formation tasks is likely to boost learning efficiency and critical thinking. Student-generated questions are as important as the type of the questions asked. Those questions could provide insights about how much students comprehend the material and how they approach the content.

Since language learning is an interactive and multi-faceted process, critical thinking becomes the cornerstone in the EFL environment. Critical thinking is defined as a cognitive activity, which is related to using mind (Cottrell, 2005); however, it is not confined to mere thinking about thinking or making judgement; it utilizes evidence and reason and tries to overcome prejudices (Halpern, 2014). Critical thinking determines what to believe and how to behave through using reason (Tittle, 2011), and it includes three phases as analysing, evaluating and improving thinking (Paul & Elder, 2006). The objective of critical thinking is to enable students to construct their own knowledge and assume the responsibility of their learning (Khatib, Marefat & Ahmadi, 2012). It is obvious that critical thinking results in autonomous learning, which is also one of the basic elements of lifelong learning. According to Yang and Gamble (2013), globalization and spread of English have increased the importance of EFL instruction, and in this context learners are subjected to not only a new language but also new cultures and ways of thinking; therefore, EFL classrooms present ideal environments to probe critical thinking skills. Xu (2013) views asking appropriate questions as one of the features of critical thinkers, and thus suggests building a classroom environment that encourages inquiry for students to question, predict and organize ideas.

Additionally, Asgharheidari and Tahriri (2015) state that there is a close integration between language development and thinking; however, in many educational settings students develop lower order learning and rote memorization; hence, critical thinking is a requisite skill that language learners need to have for their academic and social achievements. Without a questioning and interpreting mind, students cannot go beyond being passive recipients of knowledge; that is why, student questioning enhances analysis, synthesis, interpretation and evaluation. Malmir and Shoorcheh (2012) also view asking relevant questions as one of the dimensions of critical thinking. Concerning the issue, Elfatih (2017) refers to the importance of Bloom's

taxonomy in distinguishing evaluation, synthesis and analysis as higher order thinking skills, and application, comprehension and knowledge as lower order thinking skills. This classification made integration and evaluation of these skills in the curriculum feasible. Elfatih (2017) also asserts that the best context to develop critical skills is the language classroom by giving four reasons. The first reason is the integrated nature of language and thinking, so it is difficult to separate them; the second reason is the connection of critical thinking to other processes such as comprehension, memory and metacognition, which are quite important for learning. The third reason presents itself as use of critical thinking in most of the current methods and techniques employed in language teaching. The last reason is that critical thinking skills have become employability skills which can be promoted in language classrooms. Infusion of these skills into learning and teaching process through various tasks could help learners to become more conscious of how and when to use them. Using these skills gains greater importance in higher education settings since university education requires learners to absorb, analyse, integrate and evaluate knowledge, which will prepare them better for the academic and professional world.

Student questioning was also investigated in different disciplines such as science (Chin & Brown, 2002), maths (Gonzales, 1996; Foster, 2011), biology (Colbert, Olson & Clough, 2007) and medicine (Pittenger & Lounsbury, 2011) across different levels as high school (King, 1992) and middle school (Silver & Cai, 1996). Most if not all languages have developed some particular means dedicated to eliciting information; as stated by Siemund (2001), these means are referred as interrogative constructions or simply interrogatives. An interrogative construction is a grammatical form used to ask a question. Despite the fact that interrogative constructions exist in all languages, coding these interrogatives vary substantially across the languages (Siemund, 2001).

Spada and Lightbrown (1993) report that learners of a second language (L2) do not move in a straight line toward the target language; they accumulate the structures available or frequent in the language they are learning. Given that questions are asked mostly by teachers and students generally work on affirmative and negative sentences, students' challenges while forming questions at advanced level was the main concern of the present study. The difficulties in forming question sentences at elementary and intermediate levels have been documented in literature, and the errors were considered to reflect students' stage of learning (Abdallah, 2017). How this stage of learning is reflected in advanced levels and whether problems still existed or not seemed to be a topic worth investigating.

A study conducted in Sudan (Osman, 2011) reported that 50% of teachers recommended to have a separate course for the generation of negative and interrogative sentences. The same study also highlighted the need for training students on asking questions in real life communication opportunities. Dealing with the differences in terms of sentence structures between two languages is challenging for students, and these difficulties could be observed more while generating questions. Although such difficulty is somewhat expected in the elementary and intermediate levels, the picture in advance learners seems to be a topic worth investigating.

This study dwells upon the English-major university students' forming questions, and it especially addresses the use of correct question forms as well as the difficulties they face while forming questions. Considering the importance given to fluency over accuracy in learning English, it must also be noted that accuracy is quite important for English-major students because, given the context of the present study, those students will become translators, who bridge between two cultures through the knowledge of two or more languages. Despite the reported benefits of student questioning, many students do not get engaged in making questions in formal schooling and are not used to initiating questions (Yu, 2009); thus, the present study gives some thought to correct use of language through student questioning. It also emphasizes that not only content but also form should be given importance in translator training.

METHOD

This study aims to explore English major students' formation of questions in the target language and analyse their interrogative sentence productions in terms of the use of correct question forms and identify the specific difficulties they face while forming questions.

Study Design: This study adopted a descriptive research approach, and data were collected through mainly qualitative tools. As stated by Anderson (2010), qualitative research designs enable researchers to collect in-depth data about the phenomena under investigation. The data obtained from this study mainly composed of the students' interrogative sentence productions prompted with the pictures provided and answers to the follow-up open and closed ended questions.

Data Collection Tools: Data were collected using pictures which were selected from the course books of National Geographic Learning: Life Beginner (Stephenson, Dummett & Hughes, 2014, p. 107), Life Elementary (Hughes, Stephenson & Dummett, 2014, pp.21-100) and Reading and Vocabulary Focus 4 (Mazur-Jefferies, 2014, pp. 106-107) (See Appendix-3). These books were selected because they are educational materials and they have quality visuals about different topics for English learning purposes. Although the pictures were not designed for questioning activities, they were considered to give prompt for making students think about questions without any specific focus. The study also utilised follow-up questions regarding the students' interrogative constructions process in order to strengthen the analysis and interpretation of the questions formed and to establish connections, if any. Hence, the participants were asked to indicate whether they had any difficulties while forming interrogative sentences and specify the difficulties they had. For this part, they were provided with options reflecting the specific difficulties which were *"forming an interrogative sentence, finding the appropriate word, finding the correct question word, expressing ideas in English, and understanding the picture"*. The following part included two open-ended questions; the questions were "What kind of difficulties do you generally have while forming interrogative sentences in English?" "What do you do to cope with the difficulties you have while forming interrogative sentences in English?".

Participants: The study involved 30 students who were enrolled in the Department of Translation and Interpreting Studies at Adana Science and Technology University in the 2017-2018 academic year. The study involved first (n=14) and second (n=16) year Translation and Interpreting department students who were selected randomly because of their higher proficiency level in English. In 2017-2018 academic year, there were only preparation, first and second year students in the department.

Procedure

Initially, the students were provided with five pictures and asked to produce as many questions as they could about those pictures. They were asked to write down their questions because making it verbal would cause lack of conversational atmosphere. The students were taken in groups, but each student worked individually. They were shown the picture through the smartboard available in the classroom, looked at the picture for five to seven minutes while producing interrogative sentences about them. As the purpose was to explore students' interrogative sentence constructions, limiting them with one topic and a certain number of question words was considered to provide less examples. Letting students be free about the type and number of questions helped them to focus on the questions rather than the structures or pictures. Once this process was completed, their written questions were collected back by the researchers for analysis. After the participants finished the first phase of forming questions about the pictures, they were administered questions about the activity process in the follow-up section. In this section, the students were asked whether they had difficulties while forming the sentences, and if so what specific difficulties they had. Then, they were asked whether they face difficulties in forming interrogative sentences in general, and what kind of strategies they apply to cope with those difficulties.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from the study were subjected to content analysis methods, and the results were presented using frequencies indicating the number of citations. Analysis involved three sections as illustrated in the figure below.

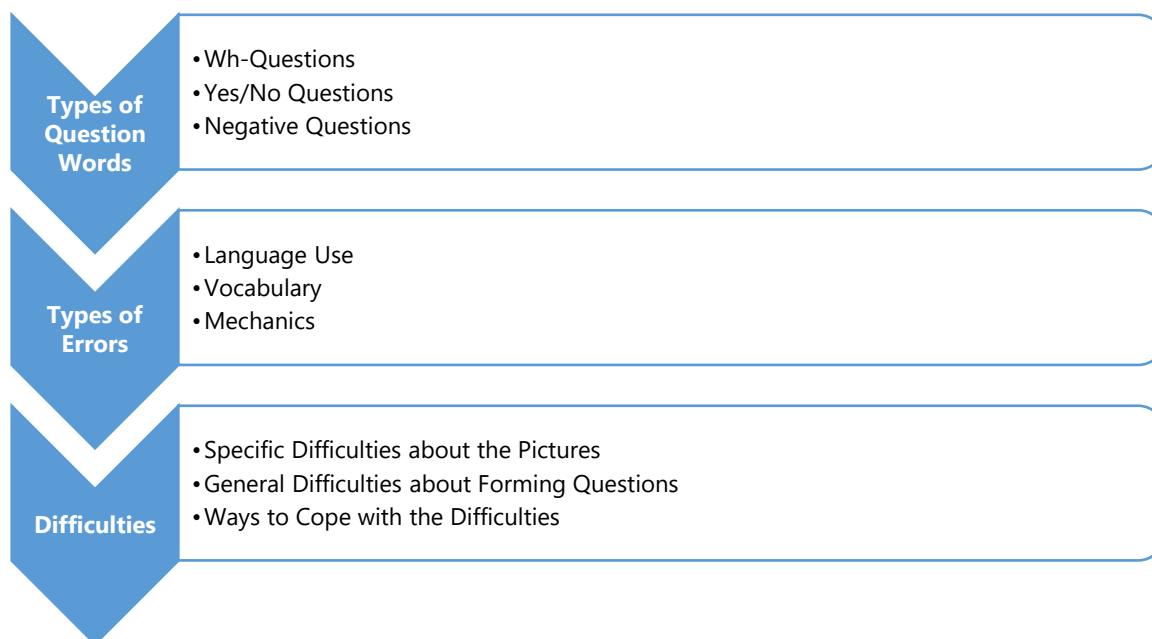


Figure 1. Sections of Data Analysis

As shown in Figure 1, the analysis included “*type of question words used, type of errors, and difficulties*”, which was the first part of open-ended questions. Analysis of the second part of the follow-up questions was performed using content analysis technique. Qualitative content analysis is defined as “a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p.1278).

Question word types were analysed in terms of “Wh- questions, Yes/No Questions, and Negative Questions”. Types of errors were analysed using the rubric adapted from the Essay Criteria Checklist (ECC) (Kayapınar, 2014). The original checklist is composed of 5 parts as Organization, Language Use, Vocabulary, Mechanics and Ideas/Content. However, as the present study was at sentence level productions, only three parts were utilised for the analysis: “*Language Use*” (Word Order, Verb Form/Lack of Verb, Word Form, Tenses, Articles, Pronouns, Prepositions, Singular/Plural), “*Vocabulary*”, and “*Mechanics*”. Pattern Variety under the Language Use category in the original checklist was removed, and “Word Form” and “Singular/Plural” criteria were added instead. In the *Vocabulary* part, the sentences were analysed in terms of word choice including equivalence. Word variety and parts of speech categories in the original checklist were not used. As for the *Mechanics*, questions formed by the students were analysed in terms of Punctuation and Capitalization. Paragraphing and indentation criteria in the original checklist were not included in the analyses. Finally, themes were formed for the data obtained from the open-ended questions following the content analysis techniques.

FINDINGS

Findings of the study were presented in four main sections which included a) types of question words, b) types of errors, c) difficulties, and d) responses to the open-ended questions. Firstly, the number of questions formed for each picture ranged between 136 and 171, with highest number of questions belonging to Picture 1 and the lowest to Picture 4. Some examples from the participants’ sentences are demonstrated by picture numbers as follows (see Table 1):

Table 1.
Examples of Students' Interrogative Constructions

Picture Number	Sample Sentences
Picture 1	-Why do these people have so many shoes/sneakers? -Why are there snow boots although the weather is sunny? -Which colour do you detect among the toys mostly?
Picture 2	-Why does the man in red shirt and white pants seem to have a happy face while actually giving a feeling of suffering like something is tearing up inside? -Why did people bother with looking nicer? -Which era does that painting belong to?
Picture 3	-What is the first thing you think when looking at this picture? -Are they gathered there only for the political reasons or do they really have respect for each other? -Why do politicians wear suits?
Picture 4	-What can be the aim of the person who took this photo? -Why do people need something to hold onto? -What do we see ourselves so important?
Picture 5	-What was the first reason that the children wanted to have fun? -According to her stance, is she in search of a solution for the situation they are in or does she doubt whether they did something wrong or not? -What does the woman with white t-shirt wear sunglasses?

The most frequently used question words were "why" and "what" (292 and 188 respectively in total), which was followed by "where" and "who" (71 and 56 respectively), indicating that they focused on people and places in the pictures. In the pictures with various items, "how many" question word was used more frequently. For instance, while in Picture 1, which had a lot of stuff, the number of questions with "how many" was 28 in total; it was limited to 5 to 11 in the other pictures which had less materials. In contrast to the "wh-" questions, students' "Yes/No" questions displayed less variety in terms of the use of auxiliary verbs, namely, the questions were mainly formed with "am/is/are" (n=222) and "do/does" (n=48). In addition, the participants rarely formed negative questions about the pictures. Limited questions that were formed included mainly "to be" word questions and only two or three do/does questions. Of all the questions generated by the participants, only 10 questions were negative questions.

Students' interrogative constructions were also analysed in terms of the errors they contained. The analysis included three main categories as "Language Use", "Vocabulary", and "Mechanics". The sub-categories were Word Order, Verb Form/Lack of Verb, Word Form, Tense, Articles, Pronouns, Prepositions and Singular/Plurals for the *Language Use* category; Word Choice for the *Vocabulary* category; and Punctuation and Capitalization for the *Mechanics* Category. It was found that in all categories except for *Mechanics*, first year students had more errors in comparison to second year students. Analysis results regarding the students' productions are shown in Table 2.

Table 2.
Types of Errors

		1st Year Students (n=14)	2nd Year Students (n=16)	Total	
LANGUAGE USE	Word order	Incorrect word order	31	30	61
	Verb form/Lack of Verb	Using verb forms incorrectly	58	38	96
	Word form	Using word forms incorrectly	9	3	12
	Tenses	Using tenses inappropriately	39	16	55

	Articles	Using articles incorrectly	20	8	28
	Pronouns (missing pronoun/incorrect pronoun)	Using pronouns incorrectly	12	6	18
	Prepositions	Using prepositions incorrectly	19	17	36
	Singular/Plural (S-V agreement)	Using plurals incorrectly	25	8	33
	Word choice	Selecting inappropriate words	17	10	27
VOCABULARY	Punctuation	Using punctuation marks incorrectly	1	1	2
	Capitalization	Using cases (lower/upper) incorrectly	7	9	16
MECHANICS					

- a. Findings about the Language Use Category:** The participants' errors in the *Language Use* category included three main sub-categories. Using verb forms incorrectly/lack of verb was the part with most errors. The participants occasionally used wrong forms of the verbs while forming questions. Some examples included *"Why did children sitting* on the roof"*, *"Did they lost* something?"* *"Why is the picture seemed* dispersed and messy to me?"* *"Why the women so happy?"*. Other items that reflected most errors were using incorrect word order, which generally included failing to use auxiliary in the correct place or failing to follow the word order in interrogative sentences and thus forming the sentence in the affirmative form. Some examples included *"Why the little boy doesn't stand with them and try to leave from there"*, *"Why the environment is so crowded and messy?"* and *"Some of them why are standing behind the speaker?"*. The number of word order errors was almost equal in both groups. Next, use of appropriate tense was another common error. Most of the examples for errors included the use of Simple Present Tense for the sentences that required the use of Present Continuous Tense. Although the activity itself did not require or enable the use of various tenses, the limited number of sentences with inappropriate use of tenses caused shifts in meaning. Examples for this category included *"Why do some men walk around the wall?"*, *"What does that girl do with that yellow ball?"*, *"Why did people wear different colours?"*. Use of prepositions and articles also included some errors; some examples were *"Which region are they living?"*, *"Why am I looking this strange photo?"*, *"Why do you think they are just standing there for?"* Some examples about the use of articles included *"Why is the art important and interesting for us?"*, *"Is it a page of book?"*, *"Who is guy that points his finger to something?"*. Finally, the participants' sentences in the *Language Use* Category were analysed in terms of the use of singular/plural words, which also includes Subject-Verb agreement errors. Some examples were *"Did the children want these kind of setting?"*, *"Is there any problem?"*, *"Why does the children stand in the middle of the stuffs?"*
- b. Findings about the Vocabulary Category:** Findings about the vocabulary errors included selecting inaccurate words. Some examples were *"Why are these shoes laying together?"*, *"Where do we want to achieve?"*, and *"What was the first reason that caused trees to be cut excessively, without giving it a second thought, to be lived by people who even don't know the material that kept life safe for a certain amount of time which, I believe, is unbeknownst to the humans?"* The participants were found

to make only one equivalence error in which one student used *Meryem*- the Turkish equivalence of Mother Mary.

- c. **Findings about the Mechanics Category:** Analysis results involved the use of Punctuation and Capitalization. The students were found to make fewer errors in terms of these items. Only one student from each group used punctuation marks incorrectly. On the other hand, Capitalization category included more errors (7 to 9 errors for the groups). Examples about the Errors in the Mechanics category were “*There is a painting inside of the picture who is he?*” “*Why is a chinese person there?*”, and “*What Are the couple doing in there?*”

Findings Obtained from the Follow-up Questions: The participants’ errors were compared with their answers to the difficulties they reported in the closed-ended questions. Based on each picture, the participants were asked to indicate the difficulties they had, if they had any difficulties. The options in this part included 1) Did you have difficulty in forming questions about the picture you were shown (Yes/No); if their answer to this question was yes, they were asked to indicate what specific difficulties they had, to which they responded by choosing the following options: a) Forming an interrogative sentence, b) Finding the appropriate word, c) Finding the correct question word, d) Expressing ideas in English, and e) Understanding the picture. Of the 20 participants who responded to these questions, 12 were found to have difficulty in the second and third pictures mostly. They reportedly had difficulties least in the fourth picture (f=7). In the first picture, while some students did not have any difficulties (f=11), some others were found to have difficulties in finding the appropriate word and understanding the picture (f=4). In the second picture, 8 students had no difficulties, yet finding the right word (f=5) and understanding the picture (f=5) were the difficulties some students had; the third picture indicated similar results (f=7 and f=5 respectively). As for the fourth picture, 13 students had no difficulties in finding the appropriate word (f=3) and understanding the picture (f=3). Finally, in the fifth picture, while 11 students had no difficulties, the highest number of citation was understanding the picture (f=5).

The findings showed that the participants’ main errors were about word order. However, in the analysis of the questions they responded about the specific difficulties, few students reported to have difficulty in interrogative sentence word order. On the other hand, only few students thought they could not express their ideas in English. Hence, in line with the error analysis in Table 2, the sentences did not indicate clues about failing to express questions in English. Finding the correct question word did not seem to be a difficulty for students according to the first part of the follow-up questions. Error analyses also supported this finding.

Findings Obtained from the Open-ended Questions: The participants were asked some open-ended questions for the identification of the specific problems they had while conducting the activity and while forming interrogative sentences in general. The participants’ answers to the questions revealed eight categories for the general difficulties they had while forming questions, which included *finding the correct word* (f=9), *word order* (f=5), *finding the correct equivalence of the words* (f=4), *unfamiliar question words* (f=2), *finding the right question form* (f=2), and *use of correct auxiliary* (f=2). On the other hand, some students reportedly had no difficulties (f=2) or little difficulty (f=2) while forming questions. Students’ main difficulties in the formation of interrogative sentences in general seemed to focus on *finding the correct word* and using *the correct word order*.

When the participants were asked what they did when they had difficulties in forming question sentences, their answers revealed six themes. Accordingly, they *used dictionaries* (f=5), *searched on the internet* (f=3), *paraphrased* (f=3), *answered the question then formed the interrogative sentence* (f=3), *used the patterns they memorised for forming questions* (f=2), and *tried to concentrate better* (f=3) while forming questions. Few students reported to have no difficulties at all (f=2).

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study aims to explore English major students’ formation of questions in the target language and analyse their interrogative sentence productions in terms of the use of correct question forms and identify the specific difficulties they face while forming questions. In line with this purpose, 30 students were provided with a set of pictures and asked to write down as many questions as they could. Data obtained from the

students' sentences were analysed in three main categories, which were *Types of Question Words*, *Types of Errors*, and *Difficulties*.

Initially, in the *Types of Question Words* category, the question words used by the participants were analysed. The most notable findings were that a) "why" and "what" were the most frequently used question words, b) Y/N questions were used, but they were limited with am/is/are and do/does, and c) use of negative questions were quite limited in number. The study conducted by Mahboob and Al-Hassaani (2016) with English-majors also found that the frequency of making Wh-questions, yes-no questions and negative questions was not high, and it indicated that students needed more practice in building interrogative sentences in English, and they experienced difficulties in English question formations. Use of Wh-questions could also be effective improving skills in English. In a study conducted by Khwaileh (2011), it was found that Wh-questions helped students at tertiary level to enhance their writing skills. Similarly, use of Wh-questions was found to contribute to student interest and improvement in speaking skill (Sunyan, 2012).

Findings in the *Types of Errors* category included "incorrect use of word order" and "incorrect verb form/lack of verb", which was followed by "inappropriate use of tenses". Errors in second language acquisition are quite natural at even advanced level, and these errors could result from the inadequate knowledge of second language (L2) and challenges in the application of L2 procedures (Pozzan, 2011). These errors seem to be inevitable in both foreign and second language contexts. In a study conducted by Addaibani (2017), the most common errors in forming Wh-questions were found to be auxiliary omission, wrong question word, aux.-subject inversion, and wrong auxiliary. Additionally, within the Chinese context Wu and Garza (2014) found that subject-verb agreement, sentence structure and verb omissions were among the most frequently made errors in the grammatical errors category.

Word order errors, which are somewhat expected especially at beginning levels, could be considered to result from the L1 word order transfer. Hence, L1 interference in the process of L2 production has been reported in various studies (Caramazza et al., 1973; Flege, 1991; Flege, 1987), which is inevitable because acquiring languages sequentially means that the L2 is learned through the 'filter' of the L1 (Antoniou, Best, Tyler & Kroos, 2011). However, Sanmuganathan (2012) reported that advanced learners' errors do not necessarily result from L1 transfer. Wenfren (2010) also highlighted that learners' errors, to a large extent, are not caused by the influence of their first language but rather reflect some common learning strategies. These errors could be investigated in detail in order to explore the nature of the errors, some of which might in fact be revised in self correction.

Similar to the results of the present study, Lin (2002) found the four highest error frequencies as sentence structures (30.43 %), wrong verb forms (21.01%), sentence fragments (15.94%), and wrong use of words (15.94%) respectively. In her study conducted with Nepali students and teachers, Maharjan (2009) investigated grammatical errors made by the students and explored perceptions of different English teachers' views about these errors. She reported that tense held the highest level of difficulty for the students, where they committed errors at 25.16%. Studies in literature emphasize the L1 effect in the inaccurate use of verb tenses (Jarvis, 2000; Sun, 2000).

Incorrect word choice, namely selecting inappropriate words, was the most remarkable error in the *Vocabulary* category. This finding was supported by the qualitative data in which the participants mentioned the difficulties they had while choosing the correct word. When the students were asked whether they had difficulties in conducting the activity, general results indicated that they had moderate level of difficulty, and these difficulties mainly focused on finding the appropriate word and understanding the picture. These findings were about the difficulties specific to the pictures they were shown. As for the general difficulties they experience while forming interrogative sentences, "finding the correct word" and "word order" were the top two items mentioned by the participants. These findings were in line with the other findings in relation to the error types. However, the third item regarding the difficulties was finding the correct equivalence of the words, which is of great importance for Translation and Interpreting department students. Considering that this item revealed almost no errors in the error analysis conducted in students' sentence productions, it seems that the students were not quite sure about the words they chose in their sentences. Correct word choice requires a better understanding of the target language and culture; the difference in cultures and lexicon between two languages could lead to nonnative-like or misused productions (Chen, 2006). Some of

the participants of the present study also failed in word choice because they used synonyms that are not used in a specific context. As stated by Chen (2006), inappropriate use of synonyms was a factor that caused errors in lexicon.

Items different from the Turkish language, particularly articles, pronouns, prepositions, singular/plural also demonstrated incorrect uses. According to Yildiz (2016), the grammatical differences between Turkish and English and the absence of some English grammatical forms in Turkish could be considered to be causes of interference. Aydın and Şeker (2013) list the differences as inflections, tense or verb phrases and technical operations like questions and movements, top-down and bottom-up merging, and add that whereas English verbs are inflected with a separate lexicon in line with tenses, Turkish verbs are inflected with suffixes following the root of the verb. They also highlight another difference in the question syntax of the sentences since English requires head movement of tense while Turkish does not. Therefore, it can be said that agglutinative nature of Turkish could be a conflict in forming interrogative sentences in English for Turkish natives. However, the analysis of mechanics in terms of punctuation and capitalization did not demonstrate dramatic errors, which could result from the similarities between the two languages. Language learning involves different processes. One important process is the notion of interlanguage proposed by Selinker (1972). Interlanguage is based on the idea that the learner constructs a new language system influenced by both mother and target language, and this system is between these two languages (Shoostaryzadeh, 2016). During these processes, interferences from the mother tongue are inevitable. First language has interference in second language, and the factors that lead to these interferences include similarities and differences between the structures of the two languages, background knowledge of the learner, and the proficiency level of the learners in the second language; additionally, the more differences between the mother tongue and target language, the more problems the learner faces in L2 acquisition (Derakhshan & Karimi, 2015). Such difficulties bring together errors, and as Fauziati (2011) states, errors are inevitable in learning a new language most probably due to such reasons as lack of attention, poor memory, lack of language knowledge and inadequate instruction. However, these errors should be treated carefully. Fossilization emerges if a state of frozen development occurs (Fidler, 2006). Therefore, error analysis occupies a vital place in language learning environments.

On the other hand, as suggested by Lim (2006), intralingual similarities and differences should be paid equal attention as first language similarities and differences. This point is especially important for advanced learners whose errors could be caused by factors beyond interference from merely the mother tongue. Likewise, in a study examining the language errors in a writing of English-majors in Thai context at tertiary level (Sermsook, Liamnimitr & Pochakorn, 2017), interlingual interference, intralingual interference, limited knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary, and carelessness of the students were found to be the major sources of the errors.

When the participants were asked what they did when they had difficulty in forming question sentences, their answers revealed six categories. Accordingly, the participants used dictionaries, searched on the internet, paraphrased, answered the question then formed the question sentence, used the patterns they memorised for forming questions, and tried to concentrate better while forming questions. Few students reported to have no difficulties at all. Various studies in literature mentioned the use of (online) dictionaries and internet for coping with a difficulty in relation to language learning. For instance, Elola, Rodriguez García and Winfrey (2008) reported that students utilised online dictionaries for six purposes that included correction of grammatical errors, clarification of verb conjugation, spell checking, looking up unknown words, verification of meaning, and consideration of style. On the other hand, learners have to use more varied strategies when they have no access to internet or any other sources. In those times, strategies like paraphrasing, building affirmative form, and using the patterns that were memorised were found to be the coping strategies used by the learners participating in this study. Findings of this study are in line with other studies in the literature. As reported by Kuivamäki (2015), Strategic competence, the model developed by Canale and Swain (1980, 1981), is the ability to use both linguistic and non-linguistic strategies to compensate for difficulties in communication; using a paraphrase is the main strategy that makes up for the lack of mostly grammatical competence.

Fluency over accuracy in the EFL context has been highly debated for communicative purposes. Although the importance of fluency in language skills is quite obvious, the role of accuracy cannot be denied especially for English-majors. For teachers, translators and linguists, expressing ideas in a clear and correct manner holds vital importance. Therefore, not only the meaning but also form should be emphasized in language learning environments. Keeping this in mind, the present study attempted to explore how English-majors form accurate interrogative sentences. Baleghizadeh (2010) suggests that teacher training courses should take a more active step in raising awareness of the instructional value of form among teacher trainees. Just as in teacher training, translator training should also highlight the importance of accurate use of language since they will be the ones who bridge the different cultures. Focus on form could take an active role in leading the learners towards target-like second language ability, and it might accelerate language acquisition processes (Farrokhi & Abbasi Talabari, 2011). Similarly, Leeman, Arteagoitia, Fridman, and Doughty (1995) compared focus on form instruction and focus on meaning instruction in a study where the participants involved two groups of US college students in advanced Spanish classes. Post-tests indicated that the students who took focus on form instruction were more accurate in generating Spanish verbs than were those who were given focus on meaning instruction. However, according to Poole (2005), one of the criteria for focus on form instruction to fulfil its instructional aim is that classes should be proficient enough to conduct the course in English. Therefore, along with the development of communicative ability, EFL learners particularly English-majors, should be trained to value the accuracy of foreign language.

The present study investigated how English-major students handled the interrogative sentence formation in English through the use of pictures. As it is shown in this study, it is quite natural to make syntactical and lexical errors even at advanced level after many years of instruction in non-native setting. Considering the participants of the present study, who will become translators, grammatical rules should be instructed with emphasis on both form and meaning. Accurate use of language should not be underestimated for the sake of communication. English-majors can work as teachers and translators; hence, use of language in a correct and meaningful manner gains greater importance for them. Teachers should raise awareness in word order especially in languages syntactically different from each other. To do this, students could be asked to generate more sentences, or grammaticality judgement tests could be conducted. Moreover, although errors are natural consequence of language learning, they should be taken into account in order to prevent fossilization. Reasons behind these errors should be investigated in detail in different contexts. Not only teachers' but also students' perceived causal attributions for these errors should be explored. Additionally, to help learners to produce more accurate question sentences, use of authentic materials should be encouraged in language classrooms, and students should be given more time and opportunity to voice their questions in the classroom.

Limitations

The present study, which was conducted with 30 English-major students enrolled in one university, has a number of limitations. Participation of more students from different universities might provide more generalizable results; or participation of non- English major students could provide more data about the factors resulting from language level. Possible reasons for having difficulties in forming interrogative sentences could be elicited from students' points of views as well.

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APPENDICES

Appendix-1.
Types of Questions

	WH-Questions			Yes/ No Questions			Negative		
	1 st year	2 nd year	Total	1 st year	2 nd year	Total	1 st year	2 nd year	Total
QUESTIONS OF 1ST PICTURE	Why (42)	Why (40)	82	am/is/are (29)	am/is/are (16)	45	to be (2)	to be (0)	2
	What (16)	What (11)	27	do/does (4)	do/does (3)	7	do/does (1)	do/does (0)	1
	What kind of (1)	What kind of (3)	4	was/were (0)	was/were (1)	1			
	How (3)	How (4)	7	did (0)	did (1)	1			
	How many (13)	How many (15)	28	have/has (0)	have/has (0)	0			
	How much (0)	How much (0)	0	modals (1)	modals (1)	2			
	Who (3)	Who (3)	6						
	Whose (1)	Whose (0)	1						
	Where (7)	Where (4)	11						
	When (2)	When (0)	2						
	Which (1)	Which (2)	3						
	89	82	171	34	22	56	3	0	3

	WH-Questions			Yes/ No Questions			Negative		
	1 st year	2 nd year	Total	1 st year	2 nd year	Total	1 st year	2 nd year	Total
QUESTIONS OF 2ND PICTURE	Why (28)	Why (26)	54	am/is/are (26)	am/is/are (18)	44	to be (1)	to be (1)	2
	What (21)	What (19)	40	do/does (12)	do/does (3)	15	do/does (0)	do/does (0)	0
	What kind of (3)	What kind of (1)	4	was/were (0)	was/were (0)	0			
	How (2)	How (0)	2	did (0)	did (1)	1			
	How many (6)	How many (3)	9	have/has (0)	have/has (0)	0			
	How much (1)	How much (0)	1	modals (2)	modals (0)	2			
	Who (6)	Who (5)	11						
	Whose (0)	Whose (2)	2						
	Where (6)	Where (3)	9						
	When (0)	When (2)	2						
	Which (3)	Which (2)	5						
	76	63	139	40	22	62	1	1	2

	WH-Questions			Yes/ No Questions			Negative		
	1 st year	2 nd year	Total	1 st year	2 nd year	Total	1 st year	2 nd year	Total
QUESTIONS OF 3 RD PICTURE	Why (31)	Why (23)	54	am/is/are (20)	am/is/are (19)	39	to be (1)	to be (0)	1
	What (18)	What (19)	37	do/does (4)	do/does (2)	6	do/does (0)	do/does (0)	0
	What kind of (2)	What kind of (0)	2	was/were (0)	was/were (0)	0			
	How (0)	How (0)	0	did (1)	did (0)	1			
	How many (8)	How many (2)	10	have/has (1)	have/has (0)	1			
	How much (0)	How much (2)	2	modals (2)	modals (1)	3			
	Who (8)	Who (16)	24						
	Whose (0)	Whose (0)	0						
	Where (5)	Where (7)	12						
	When (0)	When (2)	2						
	Which (2)	Which (2)	4						
	74	73	147	28	22	50	1	0	1

	WH-Questions			Yes/ No Questions			Negative		
	1 st year	2 nd year	Total	1 st year	2 nd year	Total	1 st year	2 nd year	Total
QUESTIONS OF 4 TH PICTURE	Why (33)	Why (17)	50	am/is/are (22)	am/is/are (25)	47	to be (2)	to be (0)	2
	What (21)	What (25)	46	do/does (8)	do/does (2)	10	do/does (0)	do/does (0)	0
	What kind of (1)	What kind of (1)	2	was/were (0)	was/were (0)	0			
	How (3)	How (3)	6	did (0)	did (0)	0			
	How many (5)	How many (0)	5	have/has (1)	have/has (1)	2			
	How much (0)	How much (0)	0	modals (3)	modals (2)	5			
	Who (1)	Who (6)	7						
	Whose (0)	Whose (0)	0						
	Where (7)	Where (8)	15						
	When (1)	When (0)	1						
	Which (0)	Which (4)	4						
	72	64	136	34	30	64	2	0	2

	WH-Questions			Yes/ No Questions			Negative		
	1 st year	2 nd year	Total	1 st year	2 nd year	Total	1 st year	2 nd year	Total
QUESTIONS OF 5 TH PICTURE	Why (24)	Why (28)	52	am/is/are (22)	am/is/are (25)	47	to be (2)	to be (0)	2
	What (15)	What (23)	38	do/does (8)	do/does (2)	10	do/does (0)	do/does (0)	0
	What kind of (0)	What kind of (0)	0	was/were (0)	was/were (0)	0			
	How (4)	How (3)	7	did (0)	did (0)	0			
	How many (8)	How many (3)	11	have/has (1)	have/has (1)	2			
	How much (0)	How much (0)	0	modals (3)	modals (2)	5			
	Who (2)	Who (6)	8						
	Whose (0)	Whose (0)	0						
	Where (9)	Where (15)	24						
	When (1)	When (0)	1						
	Which (3)	Which (1)	4						
	66	79	145	34	30	64	2	0	2