摘要

近年来，教师提问越来越受到众多研究者的关注。提问是课堂教学最常用的策略之一。无论何种层次的教师都会向学生提出大量的问题，而课堂教学的相当部分时间都花在教师提问和学生问答这一环节上。问题的类别、等待时间的长短、问题的反馈、提问过程的控制等对课堂语言习得可产生积极的影响，也可产生负面的效应。基于此，本文从教师的观念与实践这个视角来研究教师的课堂提问技巧。这一定性研究不仅帮助我们对此领域教师的现状有更清楚的了解，并且对教师的职业发展提供有益的参考。

自从苏格拉底阐述了提问的作用以来，提问已逐渐成为探求正确答案的有效手段。大量的课堂观察和调查表明提问是课堂教学中最常用的技巧之一。同时，文献资料也提供了大量课堂提问的理论。有关提问的研究，历史久远，侧重各有不同，具体涉及到问题分类及使用频率、提问的原则和策略、等待时间长短、学生回答过程中语言输出的本质、学生语言熟练程度对理解问题的影响以及为促进提问的交际性对教师进行培训的研究项目。

此项研究从教师观念和实践这一视角来研究教师提问。观念是内隐的而实践是外显的，两者相结合能让人更全面地了解实际情况。教师观念和实践之间的关系则是一个从一致到不一致的连续体。当观念直接影响行为时，教师的教学就呈现观念和实践的一致状态；在研究方法或环境因素的影响下，教师观念和实践之间就有可能出现不一致的现象。

基于对众多文献的分析，本文旨在研究教师针对提问这一教学技能的观念和认识、他们的课堂提问行为以及其观念和行为的关系。研究选取烟台师范大学外国语学院的三位从事综合英语教学的教师作为研究对象进行了个案研究。研究采用了访谈和课堂观察这两种研究手段，因此这项研究在本质上属于自然主义的，在研究方法上属于定性研究。最后的结论表明： 三位教师在教学实践中基本能有效利用提问这一教学手段，但是他们的课堂提问行为并非是其观念的完整体现，其中存在一些不一致性。

本文最后指出从教师观念和实践的关系这一角度来看，教师的课堂提问是复杂的也是存在问题的。此项研究的目的并非是要提出一种新的提问模式，因为教师的课堂行为受到诸多因素的影响，不可能有某种固定的模式或最好的方法。本

文从两个方面提出建议以期改进目前的状况。一方面，学校应提供机会让教师加强理论知识的学习，不断接受本领域的最新发展成果；另一方面，作为教师自身应定期的对自己的教学进行反思，以找到自己实践与观念的差距而不断调整和促进教学。总之，教师应通过参与职业培训和定期的自我反思不断提高自己的业务能力，最大限度地减少自身观念和实践的不一致。

关键词：教师提问，教师观念与实践，一致，不一致

ABSTRACT

In recent years, interest in teachers' questioning techniques has gained many researchers' attention. Questioning is reported as one of the commonly used strategies by teachers in classroom teaching. Teachers of all levels of school ask their students numerous questions, and a great deal of time in class is occupied by the question-and-answer sessions. Those aspects involved in questioning process, such as the categories of questions, the amount of wait-time and the feedback to the students may play a decisive role, whether positive or negative, in the aspect of language acquisition. This paper is to study teachers' in-classroom questioning techniques from the point of view of the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices. This qualitative study would not only reveal further information of the present situation of teacher practice but also provide valuable insights into teacher education and development programs.

"Ever since the time that Socrates first exemplifies their use, questions have seemed promising devices for the pursuit of right knowing and acting" (Dillon, 1988:1). A large number of observations and investigations indicate that questioning is one of the most dominant instructional techniques in classroom and teachers at all levels ask questions in quantities every school day. The literature also provides sufficient information about questioning. Researches on questioning can be dated back far away in history. Studies of teachers' questions in the L2 classroom have focused on the frequency of the different types of questions, principles and strategies of questioning, wait time (the length of time the teacher is prepared to wait for an answer), the nature of the learners' output when answering questions, the effect of the learners' level of proficiency on questions and the possibility of training teachers to ask more communicative questions.

In this research, teachers' in-class questioning is studied from the perspective of teacher's beliefs and practices. The combination of implicit beliefs and explicit practices would enable us to make a thorough understanding of the present situation. The relationship between teachers' beliefs and instructional practices varies from

consistent to inconsistent. Teachers' beliefs may directly influence teachers' behaviors in classroom, resulting in the consistent thesis; while the inconsistency arises when the study is affected by the inappropriate categorization and research measures or when teachers' performance is constrained by contextual factors.

In view of the above discussion, this paper addresses three aspects concerning questioning: teachers' understanding about questioning, their questioning behaviors in the classroom and the relationship between their beliefs and behaviors. The subjects in this study are three teachers giving lectures on the course of Comprehensive English to the English majors at the School of Foreign Languages of Yantai Normal University. The main devices in this study are interview and classroom observation, so this study is naturalistic in nature, and it can be classified into qualitative research in approach. The findings of the study indicate that all the subjects can employ questioning effectively, while their classroom questioning behaviors are not the faithful manifestations of their beliefs about questioning; there do exist some discrepancies between these two.

As the conclusion of the study, the author points out that teachers' in-class questioning is complicated and problematic when it is viewed from the perspective of teachers' beliefs and practices. We do not intend to explore any new questioning models, because teachers' actions are influenced by a variety of factors, and there is not a fixed pattern or a best way to conduct in-class questioning. The purpose of this study is to propose suggestions to promote teacher development in the aspect concerning teaching techniques. The thesis has proposed some suggestions to improve the present situation from two aspects. One is from the perspective of the school, and the other is from the teachers themselves. Considering the changing and developing of teaching English as a foreign language in the past several years, the school should provide opportunities for teachers to enrich their theoretical knowledge and adopt new ideas at regular interval. As for teachers themselves, they should frequently reflect on their teaching in order to find out the differences between their beliefs and practices. The inconsistency between teachers' beliefs and practices can be minimized if teachers improve themselves through professional development and reflection on

teaching.

Key Words: teachers' questioning, teachers' beliefs and practices, consistent, inconsistent

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INTRODUCTION

Since early 1970s, the approach of communicative language teaching has become more and more popular in the field of teaching English as a foreign language. One of its major principles is that students are taught for the purpose of communication, and the class is characterized by classroom interaction between teachers and students. Although TEFL research has put more emphasis on learner-centeredness in recent years, this trend has never denied the importance of the roles played by the teachers. To initiate and sustain interaction in the classroom is the teacher's responsibility most of the time, so the teacher's performance is as important as the learner for a complemented interactive process. This has been foregrounded by a few researchers (Brown, 1994; Nunan, 1995; Todd, 1997). The effectiveness of classroom interaction is mainly realized by the function of teachers to a great extent. The function of the teacher in classroom largely depends on the teacher's talk of which questioning is of a vital aspect. Teachers of all levels of schools ask their students numerous questions, and a great deal of time in class is occupied by the question-and-answer sessions. In recent years, interest in teachers' questioning techniques has gained much attention, as is claimed "A search of the Educational Resources Information Center(ERIC) database using the descriptor 'questioning techniques' will yield well over 100 research reports and professional papers annually for the decade from 1982"(Gall and Artero-Boname 1995： 242).

Researches highlighting the centrality of questions in classroom procedures can be dated back as far as 1912 when Stevens stated that approximately eighty percent of a teacher's school day was spent asking questions to students. More contemporary research on teacher questioning behaviors and patterns indicate that this has not changed. Teachers today ask between 300-400 questions each day and in some classrooms teachers use more than half of the class time exchanging questions and answers. According to Doneau (1985), teachers' oral questions have been found to consume from 6 to 16 percent of classroom time, depending upon subject and grade levels. Freiberg and Driscoll (1996: 203) point out that the two most common verbal

interactions between teachers and students in the classroom are questioning and discussion. Gall (1984) also proposes that questioning by far was the most dominant teaching strategy after lecture in upper-elementary and secondary classroom. In one word, asking questions is one of the most essential teaching tools (if not the most essential one), and teachers at all levels use questions quite frequently during lessons.

Studies of teachers' questions in the L2 classroom have focused on the frequency of the different types of questions, wait time (the length of time the teacher is prepared to wait for an answer), the nature of the learners' output when answering questions, the effect of the learners' level of proficiency on questions, the possibility of training teachers to ask more communicative questions, and the variation evident in teachers' questioning strategies. So much research has been done mainly from two perspectives. Prior to the early 1980s, most researchers used quantitative methods to describe teachers' questioning behaviors and to identify which of those behaviors facilitate students' academic achievement. That is, "teaching is approached from the outside, from the perspective of a researcher or observer looking at observable classroom teaching process of teaching behaviors..." (Woods, 1996). The other perspective is the one "...which is based on a qualitative or interpretive approach to teaching research and which seeks to understand teaching from the inside rather than from the outside, that is , from the point of view of the participants themselves" (Ibid.). In this research, the author will use qualitative method to examine teachers' beliefs and practices of in-class questioning to the English majors at the School of Foreign Languages of Yantai Normal University. Study on the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices of in-class questioning would not only provide further information for the present situation of the teaching practice but also provide valuable insights for teacher education and development programs.

This paper is divided into four chapters. Chapter one is a literature review of theories on questioning. Those investigations on the use of questions are introduced broadly in the first part of this chapter. And then the functions of questions and categorizations of questions are discussed. The last section deals with overall strategies of questioning. Chapter two is a literature review of theories on teachers'

beliefs and practices. It begins with a historical glimpse of research on teaching, and produces that generally there are two perspectives to research on teaching. It continues to introduce the conception of teachers' beliefs. Following this is a brief summary of the relationship between teachers' beliefs and knowledge. And the last part is about the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices. Chapter three is the central part of this paper. It begins with the research design, which includes the objectives, subjects, methodology and procedures; the data analyses follow it, and finally the conclusions are obtained. In the last chapter, the author attempts to present a possible solution to the problems found in the study. Some suggestions for future research are pointed out as the conclusion of this part.

CHAPTER 1

Literature Review of Teachers' Questioning

Teachers' questions are one topic which has attracted many researchers' attention these days (Nunan, 1989). Richards and Lockhart conclude that teachers' questions "play a crucial role in language acquisition" (1994:185).

Teachers, whether in content classrooms or in language classrooms, typically ask a lot of questions. For example, in three hours of language-content teaching, Johnston (1990) observed a total of 522 questions of various types. Long and Sato (1983) observed a total of 938 questions in six elementary level ESL lessons. One reason for the prevalence of questioning is undoubtedly the control which it gives the teacher over the discourse. Questioning is one device to serve educative purposes in classroom circumstances. It is "the second most dominant instructional strategy after lecture" (Freiberg and Driscoll, 1996:227). In this chapter, we shall discuss broadly some aspects of investigations on the use of question, and then come to the functions of questioning, categorizations of questions and finally teachers' questioning strategies.

1.1 Broad Investigations on the Use of Question

Questioning is one of the most commonly employed techniques in the teachers' repertoire. Researchers have been consequently interested in finding out how teachers use questions and what constitutes effective use of questions in the classroom.

Among the aspects of question use that have been investigated are: (a) the frequency of low-level and high-level questions(low-level questions require recall of facts; high-level questions require synthesis , analysis, and critical thinking) (Winne, 1979); (b) the degree to which students are encouraged to ask questions (Graesser and Black, 1985); (c) the amount of wait-time teachers allow after a question (i.e., the length of the pause before which a student is called upon to answer a question)(Rowe, 1974); (d) the amount of multiple-response questions used(questions to which at least three or four students may each provide a response)(Gallagher and Aschner, 1963); and (e) the number of times teachers repeat their own or students' questions (Orlich et

al. 1985).

The quantity and quality of questioning that teachers engage in are thought to influence the quality of classroom learning (Orlich et al. 1985). For example, higher-level questions are thought to facilitate better learning (Redfield and Rousseau, 1981). Increasing the wait-time after questions can lead to increased length of student responses, a greater frequency of student questions, a greater degree of student involvement in lessons, and more participation by slower students (Rowe, 1974). Multiple-response questions encourage student participation in learning, while repetition of questions wastes class time.

Questions have been investigated in so many aspects. What purpose do teacher have when using questions? What are the uses of questions? We will discuss the functions of questions in the next section.

1.2 Functions of Questioning

According to Kerry (1982), a teacher asks about 1000 questions per week. They mainly serve for the following purposes:

- to determine what students know and don't know
- to develop critical and creative thinking skills
- to provide a review of material and content
- to prepare students for what is to be learned
- to check for comprehension or level of understanding
- to attract student attention
- to practice life-long learning skills
- to have fun learning
- to engage students in discussion
- to teach students to ask questions

Some other scholars (Bull and Solity, 1987; cole and Chan, 1994; Freiberg and Driscoll, 1996) have also done some research on the functions of questioning. In summary, questions can help students to reflect on information and commit it to memory. They can develop thinking skills, encourage discussion and stimulate new

ideas. Questions allow teachers to determine how much a class understands and enable them to pitch lessons at an appropriate level. They are an important tool for managing the classroom, helping to draw individuals into the lesson and keeping them interested and alert. And questions have a symbolic value—sending a clear message that students are expected to be active participants in the learning process. When properly used, questioning aids the process of productive communication between teachers and students, and thereby enhances learning. It engages students in verbal interactions with the teacher about important aspects of subject matter. Many question-and-answer sessions facilitate class discussion, which is a most desirable objective. Through questioning, a skilled teacher can help students reinforce basic skills, experience success, and enhance self-concepts. "It is difficult to overstate the value of questioning skills in teaching" (Kauchak and Eggen, 1989:103).

Teachers' questions are pervasive in classroom and at any one time, a single question may serve more than one of these functions. According to Kauchak and Eggen (1989: 104), these functions can be grouped into three broad areas: diagnostic, instructional, and motivational.

"As a diagnostic tool, classroom questions allow the teacher to glimpse into the minds of students to find out not only what they know or don't know but also how they think about a topic"(Ibid.). Some researchers (Champagne et al, 1980; Cornbleth, 1985; Mayer, 1987) suggest that the structure of students' existing knowledge is a powerful determinant of whether and how new information will be learned, and that often students' misconceptions and prior beliefs interfere with the learning of new materials. Teachers often ask questions to determine if students have knowledge and understanding of content presented in a lesson. If students' answers demonstrate poor understanding, then the content has to be retaught or made easier. Alternatively, if students show good understanding, then more advanced subject matter can be presented. So through strategic questioning, the teacher can examine the state of students' understanding and thinking in order to identify students' established knowledge including their misconceptions.

The instructional function emphasizes the role that questions play in facilitating

students to learn new knowledge and integrate old. For fact and skill learning, questions can provide practice opportunities. Questions also function as a clue, alerting students to the important information. Questions are also valuable in the learning of integrated bodies of knowledge. For this goal, the teacher uses questions to help students review previously learned material to establish a knowledge base for the new material to be learned. And as the new material is being developed, questions can be used to clarify relationships within the content and to make explicit the internal organization of the content being discussed.

As for motivational function of questioning, the teacher can involve students actively in the lesson, posing problems so as to provoke students to think. When teachers ask cogent questions, they encourage a range of responses, from recall of facts to the analysis, application or evaluation of knowledge. Besides, questioning can be used as a preliminary activity to aid group discussion which has an important place in many class activities. Question-and-answer session often prompts discussions about a wide range of issues.

1.3 Categorizations of Questions

Much of the work on questions has centered on developing taxonomies to describe the different types. There are many ways to classify questions. Each reflects a somewhat different focus or purpose. Different scholars make categorizations of questions from different perspectives.

In one of the earliest taxonomies, Barnes (1969;1976) distinguishes four types of questions he observed in secondary school classrooms in Britain: （1） Factual questions('what?'), (2) Reasoning questions('how' and 'why?'),(3) Open questions that do not require any reasoning, and(4)Social questions(questions that influence student behavior by means of control or appeal). Barnes makes much of the distinction between two types of reasoning questions: those that are *closed* in that they are framed with only one acceptable answer in mind, and those that are *open* because they permit a number of different acceptable answers. Barnes also points out that many questions have the appearance of being open, but, in fact, when the teacher's

response to a student's answer is examined, they will turn out to be closed. He calls these *pseudo-questions.*

Kearsley (1976) provides an extensive taxonomy of question types based on conversational data. Long and Sato (1983) make use of this framework in their study of ESL teachers' questions, but find it necessary to make a number of changes to include new categories to accommodate questions not accounted for by Kearsley's categories, and to eliminate other categories not exemplified in their classroom data. Their taxonomy can be found in Table 1.1. It centers on the distinction between echoic questions, which ask for the repetition of an utterance or confirmation that it has been properly understood, and epistemic questions which serve the purpose of acquiring information. The latter type includes *referential* and *display questions*, which Long and Sato discuss in some detail. This distinction is similar but not identical to the open/closed distinction of Barnes. Referential questions are genuine information-seeking, while display questions 'test' the learner by eliciting already known information. Referential questions are likely to be open, while display questions are likely to be closed, but it is possible to conceive of close referential questions and of open display questions.

Type	**Sub-category**	**example**
1 Echoic	a comprehension checks	All right; Ok?; Does everyone understand 'polite'?
	b clarification requests	What do you mean?; I don't understand; What?
	c confirmation checks	S: Carefully T: Carefully? Did you say 'he'?
2 Epistemic	a referential	Why didn't you do your homework?
	b display	What's the opposite of 'up' in English?
	c expressive	It's interesting the different pronunciation we have now, but isn't it?
	d rhetorical	Why did I do that? Because…

Table 1.1: A taxonomy of the functions of teachers' questions (from Long and Sato 1983; based on Kearsley 1976)

Other taxonomies have focused on other aspects of teachers' questions. Koivukari(1987), for example, is concerned with depth of cognitive processing. Rote questions (those calling for the reproduction of content) are considered to operate at

the surface level, while two kinds of 'comprehension' questions (those calling for the reproduction of content and those calling for the generation of new content) operate at progressively deeper levels. Hakansson and Lindberg (1988), in an analysis of questions in Swedish, distinguish questions according to form and cognitive level as well as their communicative value and orientation. There are three formal categories: nexus questions (questions that can be answered 'yes' or 'no'), alternative questions (that provide the responder with an alternative to select from), ands x-questions (where there is an unknown element, as in *wh*-questions. At the cognitive level, questions are distinguished according to whether they relate to cognitive memory (i.e. they require some kind of reproduction of information), convergent thinking (i.e. they require the 'analysis and integration of given or remembered data within a tightly structured framework', 1988:77) or divergent/evaluative thinking (i.e. they require data to be generated freely and independently). The categories relating to communicative orientation reflect the referential/display distinction, while those relating to communicative orientation concern whether the question is focused on the language itself (the medium) or on real-life topics(the message). This latter distinction is viewed as continuous rather than dichotomous. Hakansson and Lindberg's taxonomy is probably the most comprehensive yet devised for the language classroom.

A familiar categorical structure is provided by Benjamin Bloom's taxonomy of objectives in the cognitive domain. According to this taxonomy, questions and learning activities are categorized as follows:

Category	**Type of student thinking required**	**Examples**
Knowledge/ Memory	Recognizing or recalling	What is the name of …? What is the capital of …?
Comprehension	Demonstrating understanding	What is the main idea of …? How would you describe…? How would you explain…?
Application	Solving a problem with a correct answer	Using the rules you learned, calculate… Which principle applies…?

Analysis	Critical thinking — breaking a whole into component parts for purposes of making inferences and drawing conclusions	What were the probable influences on…? Which are facts and which are opinions?
Synthesis	Divergent, original thinking-combining and reorganizing components to produce a new whole	What would the United States be like if the Confederates had been victorious? If you wished to manufacture a better pen, what might you do?
Evaluation	Judging in relation to defined standards and criteria	What is the least costly solution to the problem? Did the individual break the law in this situation?

Table 1.2

Another helpful way to categorize questions is provided by Performance Learning Systems, Inc. PLS has identified the following four modes of questions:

1. Memory
2. Comprehension
3. Creative
4. Evaluation

As in Bloom's classification, memory questions require the recognition or recall of facts of information, and comprehension questions require a demonstration of understanding. Creative questions require original thinking to produce new ideas and solutions. In order to think creatively, one must be able to recall, understand, and apply learned information to a new context. The application of knowledge in this scheme requires higher level thinking because a single right answer does not exist. Creative questions subsume the areas of analysis and synthesis as well.

Examples:

If you redesigned our playground, what would it look like?

If you had eyes all around your head, then…

Evaluation questions are those that ask for informed judgments and opinions. This type of question corresponds to Bloom's category with the same label.

Examples:

Which architectural design best meets our needs?

Has a criminal act been committed in this case?

Cole and Chan (1994) have summarized six category systems in their book *Teaching Principles and Practice,* and have pointed out that there is great overlap among these categories and sometimes the same question type can be included into several categories. Based on Cole and Chan's summarization as well as other scholars (Koivukan, 1987; Wajnryb, 1992; Call and Artero-Boname, 1995; Kauchak and Eggen, 1989; Cox, 1996), an overall classification can be obtained as the following.

Low-order and high-order questions

This dimension relates to the levels of questions. Low-order questions refer to questions that require one to recall information that has been registered in memory. Low-order questions are also called fact questions, which request knowledge of subject matter or the recall of facts and specifics. High-order questions can be defined as questions that require students to use higher order thinking or reasoning skills. By using these skills, students do not remember only factual knowledge. Instead, they use their knowledge to solve problem, to analyze, and to evaluate. High-order questions are also called thought questions, which are related to comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis or evaluation of subject matter. High-order questions include several types. Comprehension questions are used to examine students' understanding of content, which require students to explain, summarize and elaborate on facts presented to them. Application questions ask students to use previously acquired knowledge in new situations. Analysis questions require students to determine the relationships among the parts of the content, while synthesis questions require students to combine disparate elements into a coherent whole. Evaluation questions require students to make judgments and decisions about the worth of something.

Teachers spend most of their time asking low-order cognitive questions (Wilen, 1991). Ellis (1993) claims that many teachers do rely on low-order questions in order to avoid a slow-paved lesson, keep the attention of the students, and maintain control of the classroom. Arends (1994) argues that many of the findings concerning the effects of using lower-order versus higher-order questions have been inconclusive. While some studies and popular belief favor asking high-order questions, other

studies reveal the positive effects of asking low-order questions although it is widely believed that this type of question can limit students by not helping them to acquire a deep, elaborate understanding of the subject matter. Gall (1984: 41) , for example, cites that "emphasis on fact questions is more effective for promoting young disadvantaged children's achievement, which primarily involves mastery of basic skills; and emphasis on higher cognitive questions is more effective for students of average and high ability…". Nevertheless, other studies do not reveal any difference in achievement between students whose teachers use mostly high-order questions and those whose teachers ask mainly low-order questions (Arends, 1994; Wlilen, 1991).

Therefore, although teachers should ask a combination of low-order and high-order questions, they must determine the needs of their students in order to know which sort of balance between the two types of questions needs to be made in order to foster student understanding and achievement.

Nexus, alternative questions and x-questions

This categorization system is based on the question form. Nexus questions can be answered "yes" or "no", and sometimes can be called yes/no questions. Alternative questions provide the responder with an alternative to select from, and x-questions are the questions where there is an unknown element, as in *wh*-questions (Ellis, 1994:588). Among them, *wh*-question can be subcategorized into *what, when, how*, and *why* questions. *What questions* usually involve knowledge or recall of key ideas and detailed information. *When questions* require students to think about the temporal sequence of events. *How questions* are concerned with procedures and processes. *Who questions* require students to identify persons involved in particular events. And *why questions* require students to explain reasons for particular phenomena.

It is sometimes pointed out(e.g. by Gower et al.1995:139) that yes-no questions are generally easier for learners to answer, and that teachers can therefore direct those questions at weaker learners, or use yes/no questions to check basic understanding of a text or situation before moving on to *wh*-questions to elicit more detailed information. But it is also worth remembering the salesperson's technique of a yes/no question followed up with a *wh*-question to the same person. A yes/no question

(especially if the answer is fairly obvious or non-controversial) encourages learners to accept a part in the interaction, even if they are shy or hesitant. Once they have committed themselves that far, it is easier for them to continue the interaction by answering the follow-up question which, of course, needs a fuller response.

Convergent and divergent questions

Questions may also be dichotomized according to the number of answers they generate. Some questions are convergent, meaning there is only one correct answer. Convergent questions are sometimes called objective questions. An example of a convergent question is "In what year did the U.S. enter the Korean War?". Divergent questions, on the other hand, have more than one appropriate answer, and they may be referred to as subjective questions. "What caused World War II?" is an example of a divergent question. Convergent questions seek to ascertain basic knowledge and understanding. Divergent questions require students to process information creatively. Convergent questions tend to align with the first three levels of Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning Objectives while divergent questions relate to the latter three levels. Kindsvatter, wilen, and Ishler (1992) suggest four levels of questioning:

Level I — Low Order Convergent	Questions requiring students to engage in reproducing information. Emphasis is upon memorization and recitation. Example: "yes" or "no", name, quote, identify, list, and recall (Bloom's knowledge level).
Level II — High Order Convergent	Questions requiring students to do productive thinking. Students understand and mentally organize information. Examples: summarize, explain, translate, paraphrase, and compare (Bloom's comprehension and application levels).
Level III — Low Order Divergent	Questions requiring students to supply a reason or cause, citing evidence to support their answers. Implies: five evidence, provide reasons for, infer, deduce, draw conclusions, and analyze causes (Bloom's analysis level).
Level IV — High Order Divergent	Questions requiring students to respond creatively and originally to problems or scenarios. Examples: speculate, give an opinion, pose solutions, value, judge, and generate possibilities (Bloom's synthesis and evaluation levels).

Table 1.3

Convergent questions and divergent questions are named closed questions and open questions by different scholars. Cole and Chan state, " closed questions

encourage convergent thinking and allow only a narrow range of prescribed responses...These kinds of questions demand specific and unambiguous responses. Open questions stress divergent or creative thinking and allow a wide range of acceptable responses... These kinds of questions do not have 'right' and 'wrong' answers in the way that closed questions do"(1994:176). Kauchak and Eggen (1989:119) also discuss open questions in detail, which they call open-ended questions. They list several advantages of asking open-ended questions, particularly at the beginning of a lesson. Firstly, they are motivational because they provide emotional safety, a factor critical for continued student involvement. They are assured of success, and their certain success is a powerful incentive for attending and participating. Secondly, open-ended questions promote student involvement, and involvement is strongly related to learning. Thirdly, open-ended questions also provide an opportunity in informal diagnosis of students' background. Finally, open-ended questions address the objections of teachers who are reluctant to call on non-volunteers.

Display and referential questions

This distinction forms the dimension relating to the purpose of the question: whether it is for display or communication. Referential questions are genuine questions: those for which the teacher does not know the answer, rather than display questions, whose primary purpose is to allow the students to display their knowledge of language. This is probably one of the features of teacher talk that has been most thoroughly researched, and there is plenty of evidence (e.g. Long and Sato 1983) to suggest that the vast majority of questions teachers ask are display questions. In classrooms of all kinds, display questions are far more common than referential questions. Whereas, in 'real life', of course, most questions are referential. Brock (1986) discovers that teachers could be trained to increase the number of referential questions they ask, and that this would prompt students to provide significantly longer and syntactically more complex responses. Nunan (1987) also finds that the use of referential questions by the teacher resulted in more complex language by students.

Memory questions and search questions

Memory questions call for the recall of specifics of subject matter, and search questions require that students discover the answers to questions. Memory is a critical factor in school learning and the use of questions of this type will improve students' capacity to organize their own learning. As for search questions, students have to refer to external sources to answer this kind of questions.

Contextually explicit, contextually implicit and background questions

Contextually explicit or literal questions require answers that are derived from the explicit content of the lesson or from the surface meaning in materials provided for the learner. Contextually implicit or inference questions require answers that can be found in deep structure in text or lesson materials and require inferences beyond surface or literal meanings. Externally implicit or background questions require knowledge of relevant background information not provided in the lesson or text.

1.4 Questioning Strategies

1.4.1 Characteristics of a Good Question

In order to teach well, it is widely believed that a teacher must be able to question well. What types of questions work best? What are the ideal types of questions to be used in different contexts? Research has shown that the value of particular question categories depends on a teacher's purpose in asking the questions and on the context (Wilen, 1984). The social context, the specific content being taught, the linguistic environment and the particular interaction between teacher and students also influence the value of question-asking (Carlsen, 1991). So there is no perfect question category. Teachers should use a variety of question types and judge the value of such questions in terms of actual outcomes in the classroom. However, good questions have common characteristics. Morgan and Saxton (1991:78) summarize some characteristics of good questions in detail:

- A good question is an expressive demonstration of a genuine curiosity; behind every question there must be the intention to know.
- A good question has an inner logic related in some way to the teacher's focus and the students' experiences.

- In a good question the words are ordered in such a way that the thinking is clarified both for the students and the teacher.
- In a good question the intent must be supported by intonation and non-verbal signal.
- A good question can provide surprise.
- A good question challenges existing thinking and encourages reflection.
- A good question is seen as part of an on-going dialogue which involves relationships between speakers.
- A good question has reason, focus, clarity and appropriate intonation.

From the list, we see that a good question is not presented at random. It involves several abilities of a teacher. Firstly, the teacher should judge whether it is time to ask a question. Then the teacher organizes the words of the question in a logic order and makes sure the question is clear and easily understood by the students. Finally, the teacher should try his best to guarantee moderate-to-high rates of success of students' answers, because if the question is too simple, the students will leave away from the present content, while if the question is very difficult, the students will become frustrated. Therefore, how to ask good questions is an inevitable and urgent problem the teachers have to face. This involves another aspect—questioning behavior.

1.4.2 Questioning Behavior

The questioning behavior refers to the process, in which a teacher performs the action of questioning. This behavior is complex and "it is harder to describe than to do"(Dillon, 1988:59). It can be done in a trice. Indeed, teachers must do it in the very moment of classroom action, continually sensing the circumstances and adjusting their moves. According to Dillon(1988), there are ten aspects, which constitute the behavior of questioning.

(1) Usage—whether to question? This is the first decision to make, according as we judge that using questions in this circumstance promises to serve our purpose.

(2) Quantity—how many questions? A given number of questions is suitable or not. We can determine the number in consideration of the classroom process.

(3) Kind—what type of question? Questions can be classified into any number of

types, and suitable types are chosen.

(4) Topic—about what? Given our sense of what students understand, we might ask them about related topics or ask this one about that topic and another student about another.

(5) Form—in which terms? Form describes the choice of words and their arrangement in the question-sentence. All wordings and arrangements constrain or in some way affect the possible answer.

(6) Addressee—to whom? Questions can be addressed to the whole class or to a selected individual. Purposes and circumstances might require posing questions to some students but not to others, or to all students, or yet certain questions to certain students.

(7) Timing—when? For how long? Questions might be useful or not at any time, or over a certain time. A lesson might begin and/or continue and /or end with questions. Timing also entails the sequence of questions and the pace or rate of questioning.

(8) Manner—in which manner? Manner involves the tone and attitude conveyed, the voice, diction, inflection and other aspects of delivery, as well as the non-verbal aspects such as proximity to respondent, and facial gestures.

(9) Presumptions—with which beliefs and expectations? Certain presumptions might be useful to questions in recitation or for asking this student but not another about this or that topic.

(10) Purpose—what for? This is the purpose we attach to the very question, in addition to our purposes for using questions generally, and our purposes for teaching.

Every time a teacher presents a question, the ten aspects must be taken into account. Although usually a questioning behavior is done in a trice and the teacher does not sense the existing of some aspects, the ten aspects always work together potentially.

1.4.3 Principles of Questioning

Questioning can be performed in a twinkle, but it does not mean that there are no principles to follow. Instead, it requires teachers to observe the students' changes and

reactions more sensitively and make judgments and decisions more quickly. In this section, we shall discuss the principles of effective questioning from three aspects, i.e., what questions to ask, how to ask questions, and how to respond to student answers.

1.4.3.1 What Questions to Ask

Deciding what to ask depends a great deal on the subject matter and the role questions play in helping students attain learning goals. Generally, teachers should ask questions that promote learning, ensure high success rates and provide adequate coverage of subject matter. To be specific, according to Cole and Chan (1994), there are eight concrete principles :(1) ask low- order questions early in the lesson and then high-order questions. Students will benefit from reviewing basic concepts before attempting high-order subject matter. (2) Produce a variety of questions that include different levels of processing subject matter. Students' learning is enhanced if questions are varied and require different kinds of information processing. (3) Ensure questions are relevant to instructional objectives. Students learn a great deal from questions that are relevant to subject matter to be learned. (4) Present questions that students can answer correctly most of the time. Students will become confident about a subject area if they are able to answer a teacher's questions correctly on most occasions. (5) Make sure the wording of questions is direct, clear and employ vocabulary and language forms that are well known to students. Students must understand the meanings of questions if they are to answer correctly. (6) Ask questions that are matched with students' knowledge, experiences and abilities. Students will respond willingly if they have the required knowledge and comprehension, but will baulk at questions that are not relevant to their experiences. (7) Often ask brief questions that focus on one or two key points. Students respond well to short questions and learn a great deal from answering questions that require relatively straightforward answers. (8) Ask different questions to students of different levels. Students at all ability levels should be provided the opportunity to respond to questions they can answer correctly.

1.4.3.2 How to Ask Questions

Having decided what questions to ask, it is time to think about how to present

questions. In this context we need to consider how questions should be sequenced, the use of wait-time and how questions should be distributed to students. There are also several principles that can be consulted: (1) Ask one question at a time. Most students become confused if they are asked several questions consecutively before being requested to answer. (2) Present questions in the order from easy to difficult. Students will become confident if the early questions in a series are based on well-known subject matter. (3) Ask questions in logical sequence. Students are better able to comprehend subject matter if a teacher has organized the questions in proper logical order. (4) After presenting a question, give students enough time to form answers. Students who are given adequate time to think will give better answers and participate more actively in the task. (5) Adjust the pace of question-asking and wait-time to suit the questions being asked, the purposes of the learning activity and the difficulty of subject matter. Students benefit from questions sequenced that vary in pace and wait-time. (6) Ask questions before designating a particular student to respond. Students will be more likely to formulate an answer if the question is asked before a member of the class is requested to respond. (7) Distribute questions to all students of the class and do not favor some students at the expense of others. (8) Do not habitually repeat your questions or students' responses to questions. Students will not pay constant attention if they realize that the questions and responses are going to be reiterated.

1.4.3.3 How to Respond to Students' Answers

Students may answer correctly, partly correctly or incorrectly. Sometimes they may even not respond at all. How a teacher responds to student's answers will influence whether the teaching goals are achieved and whether discussion will continue and expand, or become slow and difficult. So how to respond to student answers is not only closely related to the effect of questioning, but should be considered as an essential part of the whole questioning process. If a teacher deals with students' answering effectively, students will be encouraged greatly and students' learning will be enhanced greatly. (1) Adopt a relaxed and non-threatening attitude when questioning and responding to student answers. Students can be frustrated by

teachers who are censorious and critical during question-and-answer sessions. (2) Be positive during question-and-answer sessions. Students can be stimulated by teachers who are supportive and encouraging. (3) Give encouragement to students who have difficulty in expressing themselves adequately during question-and-answer sessions. Some students have poor verbal skills and need assistance when answering questions. (4) Encourage students to make intelligent guesses if they are not sure of the answers to questions. (5) Be prepared to accept alternatives to routine answers. Students are stimulated to attempt different kinds of answers if they know that such answers will not be readily rejected. (6) Rephrase questions if students' answers indicate misunderstanding. Students will react positively if they know that teachers will provide them with additional information if questions require further explanation. (7) Provide supportive information if students' answers are inadequate or incomplete. Students react well if teachers help them to achieve satisfactory answers, thus avoiding confusion or inadequate understanding.

1.4.4 Techniques of Effective Questioning

To question well is not an easy job. Though questioning can be finished in a twinkle, a teacher has to consider several factors to make his questioning effective. Some scholars (Koivukan, 1987; Wajnryb, 1992; Call and Artero-Boname, 1995; Kauchak and Eggen, 1989) enriched the study on the techniques of effective questioning. The following can be a summary of their study.

(1) Create a climate conducive to learning. A happy facial expression, nod, or verbal acknowledgement of a correct response encouraged other students to participate in the discussion. Pose questions in a non-threatening way and receive answers in a supportive fashion. A harsh tone, especially when used to interrupt a response from the student, can be devastating for both the student and his or her peers.

(2) Use both pre-planned and emerging questions. Pre-planned questions are those incorporated into the educational plan prospectively that are asked during the teaching session to introduce new concepts, focus the discussion on certain items, steer the discussion in specific directions, or identify student knowledge level on the topic. Emerging questions derive from the discussion itself and the specific answers given to

previous questions. Think quickly and act decisively to phrase these questions accurately and pose them at appropriate time in the discussion.

(3) Use an appropriate variety and mix of questions. One good strategy is to start with convergent questions and then continue with divergent questions, perhaps asking questions in hierarchical sequence and building from the recall of facts to higher levels of thinking and problem-solving. If a question requiring a higher level thinking skill stymies the student, go down to a question requiring a low-level thinking skills and then work up the hierarchy.

(4) Avoid trick questions and those that require only YES or NO response. Trick questions should be avoided, as they frustrate students and tend to encourage frivolous responses. YES or NO questions encourage students to respond without fully understanding or thinking through the issue. When used, such questions should be followed by other questions to determine the thinking process of the student.

(5) Phrase the questions carefully, concisely, and clearly. Improper phrasing and the use of multiple questions related to the same topic may result in unintentional cueing and inability to accurately assess student understanding.

(6) Address questions to the group, versus the individual. Pose the question to the entire group and wait before identifying a student to respond. The wait time encouraged all students to think about the response, as they do not know who is going to be called upon to answer the question. Select students at random to answer questions, as it tends to keep everyone attentive and involved.

(7) Select both volunteers and non-volunteers to answer questions.

(8) Adapt questions to the needs of the learners. Asses the students' needs and tailor questions to maximize the number of correct answers while moving toward more and more difficult questions. Remember, no two groups of students will be alike or at the same level.

(9) Use sufficient wait time. The teacher can significantly enhance the analytic and problem-solving skills of students by allowing sufficient wait time before responding, both after posing a question and after the answer is given. This allows everyone to think about not only the question but also the responses provided by the student.

Three to five seconds in most cases; longer in some, maybe up to 10 seconds for higher-order questions.

(10) Respond to answers given by students. Listen carefully to the answers given by students; do not interrupt students while they are responding to questions unless they are straying far off course, are totally unfocused, or are being disruptive. Acknowledge correct answers and provide positive reinforcement. Do not use sarcasm, reprimands, accusations, and personal attacks. Repeat answers only when the other students have not heard the answers; other repeats waste time. Keep questioning until the learning objectives for the session have been achieved; this may be the best opportunity to teach a particular concept. Handle incomplete answers by reinforcing what is correct and then asking probing questions.

Types of probing questions

Extension	Require students to elaborate on the response given to an earlier question. Such questions indicate to the learner that the original response was in the right direction but was not adequate.
Clarification	Useful when the student's response is unclear or incomplete.
Justification	Require the learner to provide rationale for the previously-given response. Useful in providing insights into thinking and reasoning processes of students and revealing errors in these processes.
Prompting	Useful when students do not respond to the original question.
Redirection	Used to elicit a variety of opinions during problem-solving sessions or discussions.

Table 1.4

(11) Use questions to identify learning objectives for follow-up self-study. Pose questions towards the end of the teaching session to identify specific areas for additional learning opportunities that students can pursue on their own time.

In this chapter, we have discussed some theories on teachers' questioning. We start from a brief introduction to those studies made in this field, and then come specifically to the functions of questions, categorizations of questions and strategies

of questioning. Generally speaking, the latter three aspects are the focus of most investigations and much work has been done centered on them. In this thesis, we will research teachers' questioning from another perspective, which is from the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices about questioning. We will discuss this in detail in the next chapter.

All these principles we have discussed in this chapter are not fixed criteria that suit every situation. The teaching and learning are always a dynamic process, during which changes constantly take place. As a result, teachers are not likely to keep a fixed pattern. Instead, they should always adjust and improve their techniques according to the classroom situation. Therefore, these principles are genera regulations, and although they are not the most powerful determinant, they can facilitate the teaching and learning greatly if used properly.

CHAPTER 2

Understanding Teachers' Beliefs and Practices

In chapter one, we have made an analysis of the theories on teachers' classroom questioning. In this chapter, we will propose a research perspective to study teachers' classroom performance about questioning. The perspective we choose is teachers' beliefs and practices, which is borrowed from the study of education and educational psychology. Two paradigms of research on teaching are discussed at the beginning: one is from the outside, i.e. from teachers' observable behaviors, and the other is from the inside, that is, from teachers' invisible cognition. The latter is often ignored, but has played a decisive role in the structure of teachers' cognition. The second section is a literature review of teachers' beliefs. Next section in this chapter is the discussion on the relationships between teachers' beliefs and their knowledge. The final part of this chapter is about the relationship between teachers' beliefs and their classroom practices.

2.1 Two Paradigms of Research on Teaching

According to Clark and Peterson (1986), the process of teaching involves two major domains: (1) teachers' thought processes (i.e. teacher cognition), and (2) teachers' actions and their observable effects.

Traditional research on teaching is centered upon the second domain, which has attempted to understand the nature of teaching through identifying and describing sets of discrete teaching behaviors. The research belonging to this approach is characterized as process-product research. It involves teacher behaviors, student behaviors and student achievement scores, which are all measurable and easily subjected to empirical research methods. In this research paradigm, teaching is approached from the outside, that is, from the perspective of a researcher or observer looking at observable classroom teaching processes or teaching behaviors. Fang points out that the major goal of this approach "was to determine the criteria for excellence in teaching by estimating the effects of teachers' actions or teaching performances on student learning" (Fang, 1996:48). So the basic tenet of the research

is "to define relationships between what teachers do in the classroom (the process of teaching) and what happen to their students (the products of learning)" (Anderson, Evertson and Brody, 1979:193). Research in this tradition assumes that more knowledge of such relationships will lead to enhanced instruction, that is, once effective instruction is described, supposedly programs can be designed to promote those effective practices.

In recent years, research on teaching has attempted to understand teaching from the "inside" rather than from the "outside" (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1990) with the arrival of cognitive psychology and diversification of research paradigm. Researchers gradually changed their research paradigms from the second domain to the first domain, that is, from teachers' actions and their observable effects to teachers' thought processes. In both general research on teaching (e.g., Cortazzi, 1991) as well as research on second language teaching (e.g., Bailey and Nunan, 1995), the need to listen to teachers' voices in understanding classroom practice has been emphasized: " what is missing from the knowledge base for teaching, therefore, are the voices of the teachers themselves, the questions teachers ask, the way teachers use writing and intentional talk in their work lives, and the interpretive frames teachers use to understand and improve their own classroom practices" (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1990:2). Such an approach seeks to understand teaching in its own terms and in ways in which it is understood by teachers. This approach is in contrast to earlier research traditions, which presented an outsider's perspective on teaching and sought to identify quantifiable classroom behaviors and their effects on learning outcomes (Chaudron, 1988; Duinkin and Biddle, 1974).

In his book *Life in Classrooms*, Jackson (1968) initially describes the mental constructs and processes that underlie teacher behaviors. Searching to find out what teacher thought as opposed to how they behaved, the research focus has shifted from studies on teacher behaviors to an investigation of teachers' thought processes. "The last 20 years, though, have seen the gradual emergence of an alternative conception of teaching as a process of active decision-making informed by teachers' cognitions—the beliefs, knowledge, theories , assumptions, and attitudes about all aspects of their

work which teachers have" (Borg, 1999:22). This conception of teaching has been developed through an ever-growing body of research, and teacher cognition has been studied in a range of diverse instructional settings—in both preservice and inservice contexts and at various levels. "This new line of research is purported to enhance our understanding of how and why the process of teaching looks and works the way it does" (Fang, 1996: 49). "Its underlying assumptions are twofold: first, teachers are professionals who make reasonable judgments and decisions within a complex and uncertain community, school and classroom environments; and second, teaches' thoughts, judgments and decisions guide their classroom behavior" (Stern and Shavelson, 1983).

According to Clark and Peterson (1986), teachers' thought processes are categorized into three fundamental types: "(1) teacher planning, (2) teachers' interactive thoughts and decisions, and (3) teachers' theories and beliefs". Teachers' planning includes the thought process that teachers engage in prior to classroom interactions, as well as the thought processes of reflections that they engage in after classroom interactions that guide their thinking and projections for further classroom interaction. Teachers' interactive thoughts and decisions refer to the conception or ideas in classroom interaction. Teachers' theories and beliefs represent the rich store of general knowledge of objects, people, events and their characteristic relationships that teachers have that affects their planning and interactive thoughts and decisions, as well as their classroom behaviors. Theories and beliefs make up an important part of teachers' general knowledge through which teachers perceive, process and act upon information in the classroom. As early as in 1979, Fenstermacher(1979) predicted that the study of beliefs would become the focus for teacher effectiveness research. Recently, Pintrich (1990) argues that beliefs ultimately would prove the most valuable psychological construct to teacher education.

2.2 Teachers' Beliefs

Beliefs are notoriously difficult to define and evaluate, and a plethora of terms has been used to represent and refine the teachers' beliefs. Clark (1988) calls teachers'

beliefs preconceptions and implicit theories, for they "tend to be eclectic aggregations of cause-effect propositions from many sources, rules of thumb, generalizations drawn from personal experience, beliefs, values, biases, and prejudices" (Clark, 1988:5). Porter and Freeman (1986) term teachers' beliefs about curriculum, pedagogy of students' learning, schooling and themselves as teachers' profession orientations. Sharp and Green(1975) call teachers' beliefs teaching ideology, "a connected set of systematically related beliefs and ideas about what are felt to be the essential features of teaching…a broad definition of the task and a set of prescriptions for performing it, all held at a relatively high level of abstraction"(Sharp and Green, 1975:19). Recently, Freeman (1990) uses the term "teachers' conceptions" and Wubbels (1992) "teachers' preconceptions". Johnstone (2000) adopts "teachers' beliefs" in the summary of several relevant papers. No matter what terms are taken, teachers' beliefs are relatively deep-rooted opinions about their profession. For convenience, the term "teachers' beliefs" will be employed in the following discussion.

There is a growing body of evidence to indicate that teachers are highly influenced by their beliefs, which in turn are closely linked to their values, to their views of the world and to their conceptions of their place within it. Teachers' belief about what learning is will affect everything that they do in the classroom. Even if a teacher acts spontaneously, or from habit without thinking about the action, such actions are nevertheless prompted by a deep-rooted belief that may never have been articulated or made explicit. Thus teachers' deep-rooted beliefs about how languages are learned will pervade their classroom actions more than a particular methodology they are told to adopt or a textbook they follow.

One comprehensive review of the literature on teachers' beliefs concluded that these had a greater influence than teachers' knowledge on the way they planned their lessons, on the kinds of decisions they made and on their general classroom practice (Pajares, 1992). Beliefs were also found to be far more influential than knowledge in determining how individuals organize and define tasks and problems, and were better predictors of how teachers behaved in the classrooms. Next we will have a discussion

on the relationship between teachers' beliefs and their knowledge.

2.3 The Relationship between Teachers' Beliefs and Knowledge

Although some scholars (Woods, 1996; Nisbett and Ross, 1980; Lewis,1990; Ernest, 1989) argue that teachers' knowledge and beliefs often inextricably interweave, distinctions still exist between them, and they are still different conceptions. In this section, background information about knowledge will be introduced firstly, then the relationship between teachers' beliefs and knowledge will be discussed.

Simply speaking, knowledge of a person refers to the person's acquaintance with facts, truths, or principles in the mind. According to Anderson (1985), knowledge can be categorized as declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge. Declarative knowledge is the knowledge of what, while procedural knowledge refers to the knowledge of how things or systems work. For example, a teacher may have knowledge of geometry—declarative knowledge, while how to put his students in possession of the knowledge of geometry belongs to procedural knowledge. Paris, Lipson and Wixson (1983) add a third type of knowledge—conditional knowledge, which involves understanding when, why, and under what conditions declarative or procedural knowledge should be employed. Another scholar, Shulman (1986) categorizes teachers' knowledge into three dimensions: subject-matter content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and curricular knowledge. Subject-matter content knowledge includes the substantive and the syntactic structures; the former involves the ways where the basic concepts and principles of a discipline are organized and connected with the reality, while the latter are the series of judgments of a discipline, in which the conception of truth or falsehood and validity or invalidity is established. Pedagogical knowledge concerns how to make ideas comprehensible to students. Curricular knowledge refers to the knowledge of alternative curriculum materials for a given subject or topic within a certain grade, and the knowledge of the curriculum materials in other subjects that the students are studying. It is obvious that Shulan's identification is an expansion of Anderson's categorization in the field of teaching.

As for the relationship between teachers' knowledge and beliefs, some scholars hold that they interweave or overlap with each other. Woods (1996) points out that the distinctions between teachers' knowledge and beliefs are blurred. He demonstrates that in many cases it cannot be clearly determined whether the interpretations of the events are based on what the teacher knows or what the teacher believes. For example, a teacher who knows/believes that students don't like to work in groups may interpret a particular case of the students' groans at the suggestion of taking up the homework in groups as being caused by the students' attitudes about group work rather than their particular mood that day, or the effect of the class party the previous evening. This event is remembered by the teacher not simply as groans, but in terms of his assumptions about what caused the groans, and is stored as a further abstracted or generalized item of knowledge/belief. From this perspective, it is hard to distinguish between knowledge structures and belief system. Nisbett and Ross (1980) conceptualize knowledge as a structure composed of a cognitive component and a belief component. As such, belief is viewed as knowledge of a sort. On the other hand, Lewis (1990) argues that the origin of all knowledge is rooted in beliefs, and that ways of knowing are basically ways of choosing values. He insists that the two constructs are synonymous, that the most simply, empirical, and observable thing one knows will reveal itself as an evaluative judgment. Ernest (1989) suggests that knowledge is the cognitive outcome of thought and belief the affective outcome, but he admits that beliefs also possess a slender but significant cognitive component, while knowledge also has its own affective and evaluative component.

However, teachers' knowledge is not equivalent to teachers' beliefs. The distinction between them is a valid and necessary one. Price (1965) states that knowledge is by definition infallible though it need not be exhaustive; the alternatives true or false have not application to it; it can not be called either active or passive; and it is something ultimate and not further analyzable, and it is just the situation in which some entity or some fact is directly present to consciousness. On the other hand, "belief is always fallible. What I believe need not be the case, however firmly I believe it, and however strong the evidence I have for it. Moreover, there is certain

indirectness about belief. When I believe truly, there is a fact which makes my belief true. But this fact is not itself present to my mind. That which is present to my mind is something else, something which in this case corresponds to or accords with a fact, but in other cases does not"(qtd.inYolton, 1965:76).

From Price's statement, we can infer that belief is fallible and indirect, whereas knowledge is infallible and direct. Many other scholars have also discussed about the relationship between the two terms. Woods (1996) suggests that knowledge refers to conventionally accepted fact, while beliefs refer to an acceptance of a proposition for which there is no conventional knowledge, and for which there is accepted disagreement. Nespor (1987) contends that knowledge system information is semantically stored, whereas beliefs reside in episodic memory with material drawn from experience or cultural sources of knowledge transmission—folklore. He also argues that knowledge systems require general or group consensus while belief systems are by their very nature disputable, more inflexible, and less dynamic.

In sum, beliefs are static and represent eternal truths that remain unchanged in a teacher's mind, but knowledge is fluid and evolves as new experiences are interpreted and integrated into existing schemata; beliefs also foster schools of thought, whereas knowledge is unique to the individual; and beliefs are surrounded by an emotional aura that dictates tightness and wrongness, while knowledge is emotionally neutral. In one word, "belief is based on evaluation and judgment; knowledge is based on objective fact" (Pajares, 1992:313).

2.4 The Relationship between Teachers' Beliefs and Practices

A primary source of teachers' classroom practices is belief systems— the information, attitudes, values, expectations, theories, and assumptions about teaching and learning that teachers build up over time and bring with them to the classroom. Shavelson and Stern (1981) suggest that what teachers do is governed by what they think, and that teachers' theories and beliefs serve as a filter through which a host of instructional judgments and decisions are made. Teachers' beliefs form a structured set of principles that are derived from experience, school practice, personality,

education theory, reading, and other sources. Cummings points out: "the kinds of practical knowledge which teachers use in teaching appear to exist largely in very personalized terms, based on unique experiences, individual conceptions, and their interactions with local contexts."

A number of studies have sought to investigate the extent to which teachers' theoretical beliefs influence their classroom practices. The most significant contributions to the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices have taken in the field of reading. Reading research has examined how teachers' personal beliefs about teaching and learning affect their decision-making and behaviors. A substantial number of such studies support the notion that teachers do possess theoretical beliefs towards reading and that such beliefs tend to shape the nature of their instructional practices (Blanton and Moorman, 1987: Leu and Misulis, 1986; Longberger, 1992; Mangano and Allen, 1986). K.E.Johnson (1991), in a study of this kind, found the subjects' classroom teachings were largely consistent with their theoretical orientation. In exploring the relationship between teaches' beliefs and classroom practices, Woods (1991) carried out a longitudinal study of two teachers with different theoretical orientations who taught the same ESL course in a Canadian university. According to Woods (1991:4), "the decisions made in planning and carrying out the course were internally consistent, and consistent with deeper underlying assumptions and beliefs about language, learning and teaching; yet each teacher's decisions and beliefs differed dramatically from the other along a number of specifiable dimensions." Smith(1996), in another Canadian study of ESL teachers in postsecondary ESL classes, found that teachers' instructional decisions were highly consistent with expressed beliefs, and that personal belief systems influenced how teachers ranked their institution's course objectives for the courses they were assigned to teach.

Specifically, these studies indicate that teachers teach in accordance with their theoretical beliefs, and further suggest that teachers' theoretical beliefs not only shape their pedagogy, but have a critical impact on students' perceptions of learning and teaching as well.

Although so much study has proved that teachers' beliefs greatly affect their

classroom behaviors and they are relatively free to put their beliefs into practice, there are well-documented accounts of situations where there is not a high degree of correspondence between teachers' beliefs and their classroom practices. Duffy and Anderson (1986) studied eight reading teachers and found that only four of them consistently employed practices that directly reflected their beliefs. Factors cited as likely to prevent teachers from teaching according to their beliefs include the need to follow a prescribed curriculum, lack of suitable resources and students' ability levels. Hoffman and Kugle (1982) found no significant relationship between teachers' beliefs about reading and the kinds of verbal feedback they gave during reading lessons. Yim (1993) likewise found in studying ESL teachers in Singapore that while they were able to articulate beliefs about the role of grammar teaching from a communicative orientation, these beliefs were not evident in their classroom practices, which were driven more by exam-based, structured grammar activities of a non-communicative kind. Some scholars (Wilson, Konopak and Readence, 1991; Davis,Konopak and Readence, 1993) contend that the relationship between teachers' beliefs and their actual instructional practices lack consistency. The inconsistency between these two may attribute to three factors: contextual factors, research measures, and inappropriate categorization. The most important factor should be the classroom context. "The complexities of classroom life can constrain teachers' abilities to attend to their beliefs and provide instruction which aligns with their theoretical beliefs" (Fang, 1996:53). This means that contextual factor, such as mutual teacher-students respect, classroom management and routine, the way students learn, social and emotional characteristics, and textbook, have powerful influence on teachers' beliefs and, in effect, affect their classroom practices. Another source of inconsistency is the measures used in the research. Some studies employ researcher-determined statements or categories that may be different from those of the teachers. For example, the distinctions among the so-called text-based, reader-based and interactive approaches are not clear-cut. Unfortunately sometimes the teachers are forced to choose either one statement or the other as belonging to a particular instructional approach while such dichotomies do not exist in their belief systems. Thus the invalid research results in inconsistency,

inappropriate categorization in research will also lead to inconsistency. Some instructional techniques employed in the classroom are by nature not exclusive to one another. For example, a whole-language approach does not really exclude the practice of linguistic skills. In this sense, if inappropriate categorization of the teacher's instructions is made, the inconsistency may also appear. All the factors combine to constrain teachers to implement their beliefs in their teaching. So there does exist discrepancy between teacher' belief and their classroom practices.

Ranging from consistent to inconsistent, the relationship between teachers' beliefs and in-class practices really deserves careful study. The role of teaches' principles and beliefs and how these shape their approaches to teaching has become an issue of increasing significance in our understanding of teaching (e.g., Breen 1991; Woods 1996). This paper will investigate the relationship between these two focusing on teachers' questioning—one of the most important aspects of teaching.

CHAPTER 3

Research Design, Data Analysis and Conclusions

3.1 Research Design

3.1.1 Objectives of the Study

This study is to examine teachers' beliefs and practices of in-class questioning. Specifically, the main research questions are:

(1) What do teaches think about in-classroom questioning as conceptualized in the theoretical literature?

(2) How do teachers perform the questioning in their classroom?

(3) What is the exact correlation between the teachers' beliefs and practices in the area?

3.1.2 Subjects

The subjects in this study are three teachers giving lessons on the subject of Comprehensive English to the English majors at the School of Foreign Languages of Yantai Normal University. One of them is an experienced teacher with more than six years teaching experience and obtained his MA degree in English language and literature in the year 2002. The other two ones are young teachers who graduated from university in 2002 and 2001 respectively.

The purpose of this study is not intended to check or evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching, but to discover whether their performance about questioning is consistent with their beliefs. What is more important is that we hope to gain some insights from the study to reflect the current classroom teaching. Therefore, the variables such as age, sex, or qualification will not be taken into consideration.

3.1.3 Research Methodology and Data Collection

The approach adopted in this study is qualitative approach. Qualitative research should "provide perspective rather than truth, empirical assessment of local decision makers' theories of action rather than generation and verification of universal theories, and context-bound explorations rather than generalizations" (Patteon, 1990: 491). Quantitative research is not proper for this study, for it requires a "hypothesis" and

variables for organizing and conceptualizing this research at the onset of this study. In Eisenhart's words （1988）,we need a "system" that must be grasped before the goals ,questions and methods of this research. But there is a problem: how could we define them in advance of the actual study of the participant? It is impossible for us to set up the "system" without any investigation because we want to study teachers' mind, activities, and construction of the relationships between the two. We expect for them to be emerging in the process of this study. As Roberts (1982) has shown, attending to the uniqueness of an individual within a particular environment is the specific business of qualitative research, therefore qualitative research is a feasible and effective way to study teachers' beliefs and practices. So doing a qualitative research makes more sense to this study.

Because of its descriptive nature, qualitative research is often based on small samples. Among the five traditional methods in the qualitative research (e.g. biography, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography and case study, Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998), case study would be the most appropriate one to pursue the goal of this study. Eisenhart (1988) mentions that most educational researchers had been trained in the tradition of experimental psychology; their constructs had been used across people, settings, and time to obtain consistent measures of development. But in this study, we do not expect to find a general explanation about the human being. We want to have a holistic understanding about the study. This is why case study is taken among the five traditions of qualitative research: a qualitative case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit (Merriam, 1998:27).

As Merriam (1998:19) says about a case study, the author's interest here is in process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation. Therefore, choosing case study is appropriate in gaining an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for the involved and in seeing through the researcher's eyes. This research is actually a cluster of case studies on three subjects.

The investigation reported in this paper adopts two qualitative research data

collection methods, interview and classroom observation. While doing the literature review, the author devised a semi-structured interview for 30 minutes. The interview protocol was deeply tied to the purpose of this study, the research questions and particularly the conceptual framework of this study. Notes were taken when the participants were being interviewed.

The field observations of three teachers were conducted respectively in their individual classes one week after the interviews to them. During the classes, the author was a complete observer. The classes were tape-recorded in case the author didn't follow the teachers' words while making field notes, and the recordings were transcribed selectively after the observations. An observation protocol was prepared before the observation, and it came from the ongoing initial analysis of the interview data. Therefore, it was a focused observation.

During the observations and interviews, the researcher observed and took notes of the observed activities and teachers' statements, and exerted little control, manipulation, or restriction on the research context. The purpose was to reconstruct what the subjects were experiencing and contemplating as accurately as possible. In this sense, this study was low in the degree of control. The interview notes provided information about understanding the teachers' belief systems about questioning. The field notes from the observations acted as detailed instructional records of the participants. The data were complementary and supportive of each other in the analysis. Also, memos were constantly made whenever the author hit upon any ideas about the data, and were used as another form of data.

3.1.4 Quality Issues

To maintain the rigor in the whole process of study, several methods are taken (e.g. repetitive visits to the previous data, keeping good record of data and so on). The quality issues in terms of enhancing validity and reliability are considered throughout this study.

We know validity includes external validity and internal validity. "External validity is maintained by doing thick description"(Creswell, 1998:185). By thick description, the author tried to describe what actually happened to the subjects

rather than just to describe what the author heard and saw. External validity is concerned with generalisability. In this study, each subject may have his own habit to conduct questioning in class, while the patterns discovered across the data from the three subjects will serve as a basis for making important universal inferences about questioning techniques for a wider population of the same background, e.g. for those readers who are interested in the study of teachers' beliefs and their practices about in-classroom questioning. In this sense, the external validity of this research is assured. Internal validity refers to the extent to which one has really observed what one sets out to observe. According to Seliger and Schhamy (1989), three criteria can be used to judge internal validity, that is, representativeness, retrievability, and conformability. Representativeness relates to the degree to which collected data represent the reality, and it is closely linked with the means of data gathering. Classroom observation and interview are the main devices in this study. By interviews, several core questions were determined in advance, and teachers' elaboration with limit on their beliefs was also allowed in order to explore in-depth information. During classroom observations, the researcher made little intervention by informing teachers that the observations were merely for knowing normality rather than for evaluation and assessment. Thus, aspects of the teachers' performance in the classroom were tape-recorded and noted simultaneously in class and then summarized later after class. Therefore, the data gathered were representative of the normal practices and true beliefs of the subjects. As for the retrievability, all the observations were noted down and the interviews were transcribed manually, which made the original data accessible for later inspection. Conformability is ensured by carrying out triangulation which demonstrates the same findings through other sources. In order to examine teachers' in-class questioning techniques, teachers' beliefs and practices were investigated by interviews and classroom observations respectively. Then the two sources of information could be studied correlatively so that we could get a thorough understanding of the questioning techniques.

Reliability refers to the consistency and replicability. The observations and

interviews were made with the aid of protocol, and all the original materials were kept. An expert who does research in the field of language learning and teaching at this university studied these materials. By comparing the results of the study with those of the expert, a high degree of agreement was achieved. Therefore, the reliability of this study is ensured.

3.2 Data Analysis

The three case studies conducted in this research are presented in the following sections. In order to make sure the subjects' confidentiality that is one of the basic requirements in academic research, the subjects are given code names A, B and C in the following analysis and discussions. All the three interviews were conducted in face-to-face situation and each lasted about half an hour. And the subjects' statements were transcribed immediately after the conversation. All the observations were carried out in the classroom at the School of Foreign Languages of Yantai Normal University one week after the interviews. There were altogether 6 periods of observations, 2 periods for each subject. Teachers' talks were tape-recorded while the researcher was taking notes with the help of the analysis of interview data. The interviews sought the subjects' descriptions and were analyzed immediately after the interviews. The interview analysis provided information about understanding the teachers' belief system of these three subjects. The field notes from the observations acted as detailed instructional records of the subjects. The continuous comparison of the subjects' remarks and verbal expressions were made. Also, memos were constantly made whenever any ideas about the data were hit upon by the researcher.

3.2.1 Case One

3.2.1.1 Interview Analysis

A thought that questioning played an important role in his class and questions' presenting occupied almost two thirds of his talk. He was quite sure that most of his questions were relevant to instructional objectives and students could answer correctly to these kinds of questions most of the time. When there were inadequate

or incomplete answers, he would give some encouragement before choosing another student to try again. He said he didn't want to discourage the student by saying "you are wrong". In that case, the student would be frustrated and hurt. He followed the principle that encouragement to the students was always essential during his teaching. And he cared so much about students' feelings and their confidence. When students' answers indicated misunderstanding, he would surely repeat the question to make it better understood. He believed asking one question at a time was quite proper and he usually did so. But he would present a series of questions if he thought necessary and often began with a simple one and ended with the most difficult one. In most cases, he would like to distribute the questions to the whole class and then waited for students to respond voluntarily but seldom designated particular students to answer. He thought all the students should be cared, and if a teacher only favored some, the others would feel lost and ignored. He seemed to be sympathetic to the students all the time. When it came to the wait-time, he said immediate answers were always welcome and he thought he always encouraged students to respond immediately after the presenting of the question. In this way, students could be forced to follow the teacher and less easily to feel lost. And he would give at most two minutes for students to think if there were no immediate responses. He believed his questions were direct and clear, accordingly students could understand easily. And he tried to avoid those long questions in complicated structure for he himself found such construction was time-wasting and unwelcome by the students.

During his description, the researcher found that when asked some questions, A became less confident. For example, although A admitted that questioning played an essential role in his instruction, he could not explain its diverse functions in detail by just saying that it could help attract the students' attention and encourage their participation. For the terms about the categories of questions asked such as low-order question or high-order question, divergent or convergent questions, display or referential questions, he had some ambiguous ideas before the researcher gave him some hint. Instead, he used such statement to mean those high-order, referential and divergent questions as "I prefer to employ the kind of questions which can help to

foster student thinking and stimulate them to produce answers in their own words based on their own understanding".

3.2.1.2 Classroom Observation Analysis

A's performance in class is basically consistent with his beliefs, though there still exist some minor problems and blur.

In A's class, nearly 80 questions were observed in two periods. The whole question-and-answer session occupied about 75% of the teachers' talking. Most questions concerning with instructional objectives were high-order, divergent and referential questions, for example, "Why did Tom weep tears of anger?", "Why was the answer a croaking one when Tom called up 'goodbye, Peter'?", "How did Tom intend to complete this unfinished sentence 'all I said was…'?", "How did Peter feel about Tom's going away?", "How do you paraphrase it?", "How do you explain 'raged at'?", " What jokes have you ever played on others on April Fool's Day?", "How do you combine these?", "How do you understand it?". These questions did serve very effectively for arousing students' interest in the content they were learning, stimulating their thinking all the time during the teaching-learning process and enhancing teacher-student interaction and communication. The researcher noticed quite few students were at a loss in the class, and the whole class was really energetic. Almost all the students were led to be confident in presenting their own opinions and were always ready to think actively. This is one aspect consistent with his belief. There were 2 to 3 questions used for relaxation and humor, for example, "Ladies, do you like spider up your sleeves?", "Have you ever tried to get a spider and raise it for a time?"

Usually, the teacher presented the questions to the whole class and then let volunteers answer or let all students answer in chorus; the teacher seldom nominated individual students to respond. The students had little difficulty answering those few low-order questions, such as "Have you finished that?", "Do you think it ok?", "Have you ever met this kind of structure?" As for so many high-order questions, sometimes the students felt hard and kept silent; sometimes the teacher did not require students' answering, instead, he answered and explained by himself after questioning. The

researcher found A used quite often such questions as "Any other opinions?", "Anybody else?", "Any other version?", "Any other points?", "Any other explanations?", so as to encourage other students to be brave to state their different answers and to be responsible for creating a warm discussion atmosphere in the class where all the students felt relaxed and eager to be involved. As for the wait-time, just like he described in the interview, A seldom provided students with much time preparing the answer but required immediate responses by saying repeatedly "Come on", "Quickly" to stimulate students' language output. In such cases, the teacher just provoked the students to think or drew the students' attention by questioning. This was consistent with what A expected before the class. During his instructions, sometimes the teacher used the rising tone and then paused to elicit students to speak or complete the sentence together with him. This functioned as questioning. In most cases, the teacher gave feedback to the students' answers by praising such as "very good", "I appreciate your explanation", and "very fresh answer". In this way, students were greatly encouraged despite they produced unsatisfactory response sometimes. So A did achieve such an effect as he had intended to. He had told the researcher that he really didn't want to hurt students' feelings.

In general, the teacher's questions were clear and the students could follow him with no difficulty. But it was true that sometimes he did present some questions puzzling the students because of unfamiliar words or structures. To deal with this, the teacher repeated or paraphrased them and even for one case, he adopted Chinese version in that the students could understand better and his means was very effective. But this might be the only one case contradictory to his belief system, for he had thought he was able to make out easily understood questions with direct and clear words and put them in a simple structure.

From the above discussion, we can see that A's classroom questioning practices were consistent with his beliefs to a great extent. What he did was guided by what he believed. Questioning was a very important technique in A' instruction as he had claimed. Students were always encouraged and eager to participate in the class communication. Although his beliefs and practices might not coincide with what those

scholars had described, (for example, he seldom gave much wait-time for students formulating their answers as was claimed quite important by most researchers and favored by some teachers), he had his own reasons to do so. He did think students should be trained to respond quickly and always be forced to be very attentive in the class.

3.2.2 Case Two

3.2.2.1 Interview Analysis

B thought that she often asked questions and questioning played an important role in class. She spent nearly half or at least one third of her talk asking questions. As for the categories of questions, B said she preferred the high-order questions, divergent questions and referential questions because these categories could help to arouse students' participation into the class activity and to stimulate their thinking. Besides, presenting these questions could lengthen students' talk, which was helpful for practicing their oral English. Another reason was that the answers to these questions were open and the talking process was much more important than the answers. During the interview, the researcher got to know that she once read some materials on the categories of teachers' questioning and had some ideas about their definitions and functions. This might be used to explain why she was somewhat confident when being asked questions about this. She was sure that her questions were mostly related to the instructional objectives in that students could learn a great deal from questions relevant to subject matter to be learned. B believed she presented questions that students could answer correctly most of the time for the reason that students would become confident about a subject area if they were able to answer a teacher's questions correctly on most occasions. If a student's answer was inadequate or incomplete, she would give him some hint firstly and asked him to sit down if the hint information was ineffective. As to students' misunderstanding of the question, B thought it was proper to rephrase the question instead of repeating it mechanically. She favored one question at a time and if needed, several questions could be presented but in a logical order, mainly from low-order to high-order in her class. She affirmed that usually she presented the questions to the whole class and waited for their

answers in chorus. By doing so, she could avoid the occasions when some students would feel uneasy if they were appointed to give answers. When being asked if she provided adequate time after asking questions for students to formulate appropriate answers, B said it might last one to two minutes. When coming to the issue about questioning wording and language form, she gave the definite answer that she preferred some complicated sentences involving some clauses if possible for it could do some help for improving students' listening.

3.2.2.2 Classroom Observation Analysis

In B's class, about 70 questions were observed, which were about 60% of the teachers' talking. Among these questions, most belonged to the low-order questions, such as "Can you understand?", "Do you know 'synonymous'?", Can you guess?", and "Do you know 'initiative'?". These questions were used mainly to examine students' established knowledge of some words or sentence patterns they had learned before and for attracting their attention to new knowledge. Most of B's questions were about the meanings or usage of certain words. About eight questions could be classified into high-order questions, such as "How can you understand the part after the dash?", "What does 'fast track' mean?", "what's the matter?" and so on. This phenomenon was contradictory to what she said in the interview when she believed most of her questions in the class were set in a high-order, referential and divergent which she claimed to be helpful for stimulation and encouragement. So from this point of view, her practice didn't go the way consistent to her beliefs and there was discrepancy between these two. However, whatever questions she produced, they were effective in the aspect of focusing the students' attention, promoting their thinking and keeping the pace of teaching. The whole class could react to her willingly most of the time.

There was a typical event in B's class, that is, she often employed a series of questions, but they didn't seem to have a logical order. Here is an example,

—"How can you understand the part after the dash?"

—"What does it mean?"

—"What does it mean?"

—"Do you know 'fast track'"?"

—"What does 'fast track' mean?"

—"Do you know 'track'?"

—"What does track mean?"

—"Fast track, what does it mean?"

From this example, we can recognize that B often provided several questions at one time which were presented in a little bit different forms but meant the same thing. This might be her habitual behaviors. But on the students' side, they didn't seem to like this way. For some volunteers who were ready to give answer after the first question, the following ones in other versions only meant timewaster. Even worse, some of them chose to keep silent when the teacher was going on questioning, for they found they were interrupted. However, the whole class was still energetic in spite of so many seemingly redundant questions. This might be another discrepancy between her beliefs and practices. She said in the interview that she usually presented a series of questions in a logical order, from low-order to high-order.

During her instruction, B stated all the questions to the whole class and then expected answers in chorus. Never did she designate particular students to respond when there was no answer at all. Instead, she went on with explanation by herself which she thought might be of some help for her students to generate satisfactory answers. When the students still felt hard, the teacher would tell the answers herself. In fact, it seemed that there was not enough time for students to formulate answers. B was somewhat eager to show the students answers rather than wait there for a while. This might help to explain that some of her students were sitting there always ready to take down what the teacher said instead of thinking actively. So this is another inconsistency between her belief and practice, because she said in the interview that she would leave about two to three minutes for students to think.

The last paradox lay in the wording of the questions. In her classroom practice, she did present most questions concisely and simple-structured and students had no difficulty understanding the questions. This was a little bit far away from her belief

that she favored to ask those questions in complicated forms with the purpose of training students' listening.

In summary, there were many points which embodied the inconsistency between B's beliefs and practices about questioning as listed above. Although she has some theoretical knowledge about questions, she seemed not bound to the theories during the process of questioning. Although most of her questions were effective to some extent, a better reaction and output from the students could be expected if B could have found some way to minimize the gap between belief and practice.

3.2.3 Case Three

3.2.3.1 Interview Analysis

C thought that questioning played an important role in her instruction, and that occupied about one third of her talk. According to her, questions may help to check students' homework accomplishment and their understanding of the text. In addition, she said she sometimes used questions for the purpose of claiming students' attention in the class. About the categories of questions, C believed that she could use effectively those high-order questions for most cases. She didn't think low-order questions of much importance and always tried to avoid them in her instruction. She thought students should be stimulated to think hard and forced to follow teachers in the way of being asked deductive and instructional questions which she thought could be categorized into high-order questions. This was the principle of questioning which she always followed. C was confident that her questions were mostly centered on instructional objectives. If this was not the case, the students would not have a general idea of what they were learning at the moment, instead, their mind would be there wandering around. She said in her lesson, the students were able to give correct answers to those questions related to lessons for she tried to present the questions matched with students' knowledge and abilities. She added that students of different levels should be questioned accordingly, and thus all of them would be encouraged. If there came the occasion that students' answers were inadequate or incomplete, she believed that she usually paraphrased the question and found someone else to try again. She thought she did repeat questions if students' answers indicated

misunderstanding. About the numbers of questions asked at one time, C showed her uncertainty and said it all depended on the context. She thought she was flexible in this aspect. If a series of questions were necessary for furthering the discussion of exploring the truth of some issues, she would make out several questions at one time but not necessarily in the order from simple to difficult. She thought a mixture of different-leveled questions would be helpful. Besides, it was the relationship the questions had with the issues that counted, not the levels of questions. C believed that she did present the questions to the whole class most of the time and seldom designated one particular student to respond. In this way, she said, a warm atmosphere could be set up where students, especially those timid ones would feel at home. As to the wait-time, C thought her students could have two to three minutes for formulating answers after the questions were presented. Finally, she told the researcher that she was trying her best to word her questions clearly and directly rather than employing difficult words and complicated forms which might embarrass the students.

3.2.3.2 Classroom Observation Analysis

There were about 40 questions observed in C's class, and question-and answer session occupied about 25% of the teacher's talking. This percentage was a bit lower than she had thought. Among these questions, about half were low-order questions and the other half were grouped into high-order questions. Here were some examples of both two.

Low-order questions	**High-order questions**
Which one did you choose?	What does this mean?
Do you agree with her answer?	How do you translate this one?
This one, do you think we should check it or leave it out?	What do you mean by 'life'?

Table 3.1

Although she didn't think low-order questions of much importance, she did employ so many in her instruction. This might be the first gap between her beliefs and practices. Whether questions in high order or low order, her students seemed to have

little difficulty producing the answers because most questions were related to the text and might not be very harsh to the students, and furthermore, they were directly and clearly stated as C had believed. The researcher found that most students in the class were in high spirit to follow their teacher. In other words, students could give correct answers most of the time. C often gave positive feedback by saying "yes", "good" and "ok". When the answer was not complete and needed improving, C would repeat that answer in a rising tone which functioned to arouse others' attention, and then asked another one to try again without giving any comment on the first one. In this way, the former one would not feel face lost to some extent. They just sat down and listened to others attentively.

During the class, so many students were nominated to stand up to give answers. This was another inconsistency from her beliefs that most cases she would present questions to the whole class. Although she had explained so many advantages of questioning the whole class, she couldn't avoid nominating individuals to respond. In fact, she used these two ways alternatively in her instruction. But nominating directly particular student failed to give them any time to organize the answer and on some occasions embarrassed the nominated student. This also was not the case she had expected in the interview when she mentioned two or three minutes could be given for students to make out their answers.

3.3 Conclusions

From the data analyses, we can see that all the subjects employ questioning basically effectively in practice, while their beliefs are different from each other in some aspects. But there exist some inconsistency between their beliefs and practices. In general, A's beliefs mostly coincide with his actual performance, though there are still some minor contradictions. B and C's performances are inconsistent with their beliefs in many aspects, though certain consistency exist in some points. However, from the analyses of the three subjects, we can work out some common features as the following:

1. They all believe that questioning play an important role in instruction and they

often ask questions in class. In practice, they really do so. Comparatively speaking, A presents questions more often than B and C.

2. Usually, they can ensure that their questions are relevant to instructional objectives, as they claim during the interview.
3. They all believe that they favor high-order, divergent and referential questions and employ them quite often in class. However, it is only true to A. C fulfills the half and B does in the opposite way.
4. In practice, A and C can make sure that the wording of their questions is direct and clear in most cases, though A fails once or twice. In fact, B also performs in this way although she has believed to the contrary.
5. In practice, if students have difficulty in formulating answers, they would rephrase the questions or give some hints to elicit students to answer.
6. In most cases, they reply with positive feedback after students' answering.
7. Usually, they ask one question at a time, though B prefers a series of questions sometimes. But in fact, they often mean the same.
8. Although they have claimed that they usually present the questions to the whole class and then let volunteers answer or let the whole class answer in chorus, only A does in this way. B seems too hurried to wait for the answer and she gives out the answer herself instead. C just nominates individual student to respond.
9. Although they ask various questions properly in class, when asked the functions questioning plays or some other issues about the philosophy of questioning, they cannot give satisfactory answers. Therefore, they are short of theories in this field.

CHAPTER 4

Discussions and Suggestions

Based on the literature reviews and field investigation in previous chapters, we shall try to find possible solutions in this chapter, and some suggestions for future research will also be pointed out.

4.1 Discussions

Teachers' in-class questioning is complicated and problematic when it is viewed from the perspective of the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices. In chapter one, we discussed some general principles of teachers' questioning technique . But in practice, teacher's actions are influenced by a variety of factors, such as textbook, classroom management and students' reactions. So we can say that there is not a fixed pattern or a best way to conduct in-class questioning. We also do not mean to judge which subject did better than others. However, those common features concluded from the analyses of the three subjects do indicate that generally the teachers are short of systematic theories about questioning. In the classroom they conduct questioning in the way they consider right, or in the way their teachers ever employed when they were students. Their actions are guided by this perceptual knowledge in some sense. The researcher gets to know from some personal conversations with these three subjects and some other teachers in this school that they have few chances to be trained on how to question effectively or on some other teaching skills. Nor do they have much time to do reflective teaching which is becoming a dominant paradigm in ESL/EFL teacher education programs worldwide. The teachers' present situation suggests that teachers' professional development becomes so urgent.

Here, we just intend to propose some suggestions to improve the present situation from two aspects. One is from the perspective of the school, and the other is from the teachers themselves.

4.2 Professional Development

The ELT profession has fallen short in recent years and will continue to do so in the future without better coordination of professional development in both academic preservice settings and in ELT program insercive settings.

Teachers' professional development refers to the process of continual intellectual, experiential, and attitudinal growth of teachers. Professional development in English language teaching is critical for at least four reasons.

Firstly, the role of English in the world has grown so much that there are reportedly more than four times as many non-native speakers as native speakers of English (Strevens, 1980). The spread of English needs many more teachers. Those who teach English need to be able to manage a much broader range of teaching responsibilities and increasingly diverse learner needs.

Secondly, we know much more today about language learning and language teaching than we ever did before. Over the past 30 years, work in several disciplines such as linguistics, education, psychology, and anthropology has yielded a body of research on the teaching and learning of new languages. We know more about second language acquisition and the considerable factors that affect it. We know more about the intersection between teaching and learning, the classroom experience, and the value of the communication that goes on there.

Thirdly, training paradigms in academic and professional circles are changing: lines between academic and professional preparation are fading. Today, academic work in almost all fields of study is increasingly linked with real-world professional experience. ELT (English Language Teaching) is no exception. Although course work is a critical part of professional preparation, new graduates are in a shock in the world of ELT if they have not been prepared with more than traditional academic course work. Many MA and certificate programs have added components of practical, real-world training in an effort to better prepare teachers for success following their academic programs.

Fourthly, effective English language teachers are obliged to look carefully at

their professional development in order to improve their experience in classroom and to minimize burnout. The vast majority of teachers are self-directed and want to understand the complexity of their task and that of their students. As educators, teachers intrinsically want and need to participate in ongoing development and change in their own professional lives. Too many teachers have become worn out and ineffective as a result of unimproved, traditional teaching assignments that characterized earlier ELT.

We see that English Language Teaching is a profession that has moved in new directions over the last 30 years. This has meant heavier pressure and more interesting work for teachers and students. As the profession has evolved, our focus has broadened. As emphasis on a more analytical approach to learners' communication needs (long-term and short-term) and preferred learning styles translates into more interactive and dynamic classroom experiences. Teachers' roles have also evolved greatly. "Teachers will have to become facilitators, not repositories of knowledge" (Richards and Nunan, 1990:255). The responsibility of teachers does not imply a passive acceptance of students' use of language but rather demands that teachers should move them on beyond the boundaries of their present language repertoire. Progress in language use depends on the function of teachers as experienced users of language who can demonstrate particular models of language, provide appropriate examples and give instruction to improve students' understanding of language and how it is used to create meaning. Changing roles means that teachers need more opportunities for continuing their education on the job. Meeting learners' needs in classroom means meeting teachers needs to be prepared for the classroom. Thus we see it urgent for teachers to be engaged in some training programs to make some iinprovement.

An inservice training program is an opportunity for teachers and program directors to draw on the strengths, training, and experience of teachers and to develop teachers' skills in an English language teaching program. An inservice training program provides the environment for teachers to gain an identity as individual professionals, to work as part of a team of colleagues, and to develop rapport and

effective communication with the supervisor. Many teachers want to learn the latest theories about their profession in order to improve their teaching skills on the job. All teachers deserve inservice professional development.

Therefore, the school should provide opportunities for inservice teachers' professional development. Teachers who are involved in and ongoing effort to build their professional skills are happier, more invested in their teaching, and more committed to the students and to the program than teachers who have not inservice program. "Students who attend classes taught by teachers who are involved in ongoing discussions, brainstorms, and sharing about ways of improving classes are more satisfied than students who are in programs where teachers are not provided with such support" (England, 1998). By providing teachers with opportunities to explore needs of a given student or student group, much can be achieved toward avoiding catastrophe. Teacher frustration caused by lack of preparation or knowledge about students and their needs is also minimized by inservice teacher education. Student satisfaction is maximized in the English language program in which teachers are prepared to meet the needs of their students. Therefore, the school must begin to coordinate with preparation programs in order to provide a continuing education experience for teachers.

4.3 Reflection on Teaching

In the previous section, we suggested that the school provides opportunities for teachers' professional development. Here, from the perspective of teachers themselves, reflecting on teaching regularly is an essential and feasible way.

Reflection-in-teaching refers to teachers subjecting their beliefs and practices of teaching to a critical analysis, and it is a key component of teacher development. According to Pennington (1992:47), reflection is deliberation on experience, and that of mirroring experience. It occurs both during and after teaching, as teachers think about the decisions they make and will make. In a more recent article, she (1995:706) says that teacher change and development require an awareness of a need to change. She defined teacher development as "a metastable system of context-interactive

change involving a continual cycle of innovative behavior and adjustment to circumstances" (Pennington, 1995:706). So through deep reflection, teachers are able to reconstruct a teaching framework to incorporate the previously contradictory elements. Richards also argued that critical thinking can "help teachers move from a level where they may be guided by reflection and critical thinking" (Richards, 1990:5). In other words, reflection on teaching is a response to a past experience and involves conscious recall and examination of the experience as a basis for evaluation and decision-making and as a source for planning and action.

Recent research on reflective practice has used different and conflicting terms to define reflective teaching. According to Farrell (1998), there are five types of reflection: technical rationality, reflection-in-action, reflection-on-action, reflection-for-action, and action research. The first type of reflection, technical rationality, examines teaching behaviors and skills after an event, such as a class. The focus of reflection is on effective application of skills and technical knowledge in the classroom and it also focuses on cognitive aspects of teaching. Many beginning teachers start to examine their skills from this perspective in controlled situations with immediate feedback from teacher educators. The beginning teacher is trying to cope with the new situation of the classroom (Fuller, 1970). Reflection-in-action (Schon, 1983; 1987) is concerned with thinking about what we are doing in the classroom while we are doing it; this thinking is supposed to reshape what we are doing. For this to occur, the teacher has to have a kind of knowing-in-action. Knowing-in-action is analogous to seeing and recognizing a face in a crowd without "listing" and piecing together separate features; the knowledge we reveal in our intelligent action is publicly observable, but we are unable to make it verbally explicit. Schon (1987) says that we can sometimes make a description of the tacit, but that these descriptions are symbolic constructions; knowledge-in-action is dynamic, and facts are static. For Schon (1983), thought is embedded in action and knowledge-in-action is the center of professional practice. There is a sequence of "moments" in a process of reflection-in-action: (a) A situation of action occurs to which we bring spontaneous routinized responses, as in knowing-in-action; (b) Routine responses produce a

surprise, an unexpected outcome for the teacher that does not fit into categories of knowing-in-action. This then gets our attention; (c) This surprise leads to reflection within an action. This reflection is to some level conscious but need not occur in the medium of words; (d) Reflection-in-action has a critical function. It questions the structure of knowing-in-action. Now let's think critically about the thinking that got us there in the first place; (e) Reflection gives rise to on-the-spot experimentation. We think up and try out new actions intended to explore newly observed situations or happenings. Schon (1983, 1987) says that reflection-in-action is a reflective conversation with the materials of a situation. Reflection-on-action deals with thinking back on what we have done to discover how our knowing-in-action may have contributed to an unexpected action. This includes reflecting on our reflection-in-action, or thinking about the way we think, but it is different from reflection-in-action. Reflection-for-action is different from the previous notions of reflection in that it is proactive in nature. Killon and Todnew(1991:15) argue that reflection-for-action is the desired outcome of both previous types of reflection, reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action; however, they say that "we undertake reflection, not so much to revisit the past or to become aware of the meta cognitive process one is experiencing (both noble reasons in themselves) but to guide future action (the more practical purpose)"(Ibid). The fifth type is connected with action research. Action research is the investigation of those craft-knowledge values of teaching that hold in place our habits when we are teaching (McFee, 1993). It concerns the transformation of research into action. It is a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants (teachers or principals) in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices are carried out.

Improvement of teaching may be achieved through reflection. Reflection is more than 'thinking' and focuses on the day-to-day classroom teaching of the individual teacher as well as the institutional structures in which teacher and students work. The description by Kemmis (1986:5) best summarizes the meaning of reflection: "reflection is not just an individual, psychological process. It is an action oriented,

historically-embedded, social and political frame, to locate oneself in the history of a situation, to participate in a social activity, and to take sides on issues. Moreover the material on which reflection works is given to us socially and historically; through reflection and the action which it informs, we may transform the social relations which characterize our work and working situation."

Reflective teaching, like most teacher-based forms of self-inquiry, is not an easy process. It involves a major shift in emphasis in our thinking and acting. Becoming reflective forces us to adopt a critical attitude to ourselves as individual second language teachers and to challenge our espoused personal beliefs about teaching. Becoming reflective through testing our practice systematically also challenges us to think about the influence we directly or indirectly exert on the formation of society in our role as teachers. How we present language through the curriculum and through our teaching has profound cumulative effects on the way our community and wider society changes. Becoming reflective also extends beyond us, making possible a similar form of self-inquiry in students. It may allow them to break the chains of alienation imposed on them not only by the routine of everyday experience but also by the oppressive ignorance of language in the society into which they have been inducted. Students are no longer seen as receptacles of prepackaged knowledge but are given the language of possibility to challenge the very constructs which may relegate them to the status of mere objects in a 'new' culture. For teachers of students of diverse ethnic backgrounds, becoming a reflective teacher offers a very real challenge.

Foreign languages teachers can benefit a lot from reflection on teaching. Firstly, reflection helps free the teachers from impulse and routine behaviors. Secondly, reflection slows teachers to act in a deliberate, intentional manner and avoid the "I don't know what I will do today" syndrome. Thirdly, a reflection distinguishes teacher as educated human beings since it is one of the signs of intelligent action. And finally, as teachers gain experience in a community of professional educators, they feel the need to grow beyond the initial stages of survival in the classroom to reconstructing their own particular theory from their practices. Dewey (1933:8) states that growth

comes from a "reconstruction of experience", so by reflecting on our own experiences, we can reconstruct our own educational perspective. In Lange's words, "the reflective process allows developing teachers' latitude to experiment within a framework of growing knowledge and experience. It gives them the opportunity to examine their relations with students, their values, their abilities, and their successes and failures in a realistic content. It begins the developing teacher's path toward becoming an expert teacher."

If English as a second or foreign language teaching is to become recognized as a professional body, then teachers need to be able to explain their judgments and actions in their classrooms with reasoned argument. Ways of achieving this level of reason include reflecting on teaching experienced and incorporating evidence from relevant scholarship into teaching routines, which can lead to growth and development. Lange (1990) sees an intimate relationship between reflective teaching and teacher development: "the reflective process allows developing teachers' latitude to experiment within a framework of growing knowledge and experience. It gives them the opportunity to examine their relations with students, their values, their abilities, and their successes and failures in a realistic context. It begins the developing teacher's path toward becoming an expert teacher" (Lange, 1990: 240-250).

Therefore, English language teachers should constantly reflect on their own teaching to find out the differences and the distance between their beliefs and practices. The inconsistency between teachers' beliefs and practices can be minimized and gradually eliminated if teachers improve themselves through professional development and reflection on teaching.

In this study, limited time did not allow much longer investigation to be carried out. A larger sample and a longer duration would strengthen the validity of this investigation. In this investigation, tape recording and paper and pen were used .Video recordings as the most effective observation device could be considered to be employed in future study in order to increase the reliability.

APPENDIX

Interview Questions

1. What is your philosophy of questioning?
2. Do you often ask questions? Can you assess how much questioning occupies your talk?
3. What kinds of functions do you think questioning has in your instruction?
4. What are the main purposes for asking questions?
5. What types of questions do you often ask? Low-order or high-order question? Display or referential question? Divergent or convergent question?
6. What do you believe to be effective and ineffective questioning behavior?
7. Do you ensure that your questions are relevant to instructional objectives?
8. What sorts of answers do you encourage from learners?
9. Do you ask questions that students can answer correctly most of the time?
10. What do you do if students' answers indicate misunderstanding?
11. Do you ask one question or several questions at a time? Why? What is the order when you ask a series of questions?
12. In what way do you present your questions? Distribute to all members of the class or favor some students?
13. Do you provide adequate time for your students to formulate answers after questioning? If so, how long do you give them for thinking?
14. How do you word and construct your questions? Phrase the questions carefully, concisely, and clearly or to the opposite?

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独立

附件二：

学位论文评阅及答辩情况表

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