



IRAQI
Academic Scientific Journals



العراقية
المجلات الاكاديمية العلمية



ISSN: 2663-9033 (Online) | ISSN: 2616-6224 (Print)

Journal of Language Studies

Contents available at: <http://www.iasj.net/iasj/journal/356/about>

The Role of Questioning the Author Strategy in Improving Students' Comprehension of Poetic Texts

Asst.Prof. Ibtisam Jassim Mohammed*

University of Tikrit / College of Education for Humanities / Department of English
ibtisamjassim914@gmail.com

Received: 12 / 6 / 2023 , Accepted: 31 / 7 / 2023, Online Published: 30 / 9 / 2023

© This is an open Access Article under The Cc by LICENSE
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Abstract

Comprehension is a real challenge that might affect EFL university students' achievement in comprehending texts. Further, many students apply reading activities in the class with limited strategies such as reading silently, or following after the teacher, then attempting to answer questions of comprehension. It is important to equip students with several skills and strategies in reading comprehension and make the reading class an interesting place. **Questioning the author's strategy** has a good effect on the student's reading comprehension achievement. The sample consists of (40) students who are randomly chosen from second-year/ Morning studies in English Department / Tikrit University for the academic year (2021-2022). Pre and post-tests have been applied. The data has been collected and treated statistically. The obtained results sound good.

Key Word: Questioning the author's strategy, Reading comprehension, Achievement

* **Corresponding Author:** Ass.Prof. Ibtisam Jassim, **Email:** ibtisamjassim914@gmail.com
Affiliation: University of Tikrit - Iraq

دور استراتيجية اسأل المؤلف في تحسين فهم الطلاب للنصوص الشعرية

أ.م.د. أبتسام جاسم محمد

جامعة تكريت /كلية التربية للعلوم الانسانية/قسم اللغة الانكليزية

المستخلص

يعد الفهم تحديًا حقيقيًا قد يؤثر على تحصيل طلاب الجامعة في تخصص اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في استيعاب النصوص الأدبية. إضافة إلى ذلك، يطبق العديد من الطلاب أنشطة القراءة في الفصل باستراتيجيات محدودة مثل القراءة بصمت، أو المتابعة بعد الاستاذ، ثم محاولة الإجابة على أسئلة الفهم. من المهم تزويد الطلاب بالمهارات والاستراتيجيات الخاصة في فهم القراءة وجعل مهارة القراءة من المهارات الممتعة. استراتيجية أسأل المؤلف له تأثير جيد على تحصيل الطالب في الفهم القرائي. تكونت العينة من (40) طالباً تم اختيارهم عشوائياً من السنة الثانية / الدراسة الصباحية في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية / جامعة تكريت للعام الدراسي (2021-2022). تم تطبيق الاختبارات المطلوبة وتم جمع البيانات ومعالجتها إحصائياً. النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها كانت جيدة.

الكلمات الدالة: الفهم القرائي، استراتيجية اسأل المؤلف، التحصيل .

Section one

Introduction

1.1 Statement of the problem

Students face many problems that may hinder their learning, and one of the most important problems is the difficulty of the meanings used in texts and the difficulty of remembering these meanings. Also, students find problems in analyzing the text and linking the theme text with the external events on which the text was written. Also, one of the problems that the student faces is knowing the rhetorical images, positions of irony, symbolic images, and other methods used in writing any text.

Students can not appreciate the text and cannot understand the imagination and thought contained in the text. Sometimes students have a problem identifying the era in which the poem was written or distinguishing between them. It is also difficult for them to understand the reality in which the poem was written, how it relates to the poem, the life of the poet, its impact on society, and the issues it deals with in its contents. Thus the current research

sheds light on the Questioning the Author strategy as a teaching strategy to help students to overcome all the previous difficulties

1.2 Aims

This research aims to shed light on Questioning the Author's strategy for teaching poetry to be applied by teachers to facilitate understanding the poetic text.

1.3 Limits :

This research is limited to some selected poems from the second-year material.

1.4 Hypotheses of the study

1. There are not any statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and that of the control group in the pre-test.
2. There are not any statistically significant differences in the mean scores of the experimental group and that of the control group in the post-test.
3. There are not any statistically significant differences in the mean scores of students' performance of the experimental group in the pre and post-tests.

Section Two

Theoretical Background and Previous Studies

2.1 Defining Questioning the Author Strategy (QtAS, for short)

Beck and her associates in Buehl (2009 p.137) define the Questioning the Author strategy as an especially powerful strategy to help students adopt an inquiring orientation to the text. It means the Questioning the Author strategy focuses on a series of questions that one might naturally pose about any message students might receive. Questioning the Author Strategy is a strategy that can build comprehension of the text by giving the queries in questioning the author as the students' discussion moves in recounting the text (Tria Erviani,2016,p.24).

This strategy gets the student the ability to think about the author's idea and meaning that doesn't appear in the real text, and this strategy focused on a series of questions that are asked by the student naturally, and it is developed by Beck, Mckewn, Hamilton, and Kucan. It is based on that the reader must sometime question the text to contract to mean, "the aim of Questioning the Author is students learn to build meaning from the text as they read it, not after they finish their reading" cited in (Tria Erviani,2016,p.24). Questioning the author is a question-answering and-generation strategy that helps students increase comprehension by allowing them to pose questions while reading a text, allowing them to reinforce their understanding and challenge it. During reading, QtAS is employed. This strategy helps comprehension by allowing students to analyze the authors' work while participating in classroom discussions and activities.

2.2 The Procedures for Questioning the Author Strategy

Applying any strategy, some procedures must be followed. QAtS has two major components:

First, teacher's planning in this phase the teacher makes instructions by selecting from the text some points and reads the selection, and developing queries for discussion we have two steps:

- a- analyzing the text: the text reading by the teacher and expecting the problems that pose to students, the teacher will divide the text into parts

(orientation), (event), (and reorientation), which make the students understand the text and move to the discussion phase and develop questions.

b- developing queries: it is a question used to develop the students' comprehension, which is used by students during the reading which help them to understand the text.

Second, implementation: in this phase, the teacher asks the student to read the text and give them some questions to help them understand by answering these questions, and give them information to understand the unclear part of the text. (Triandis, 2016, p.26). It can be summed up as follows

- 1-choose a text that fits the level of the student and read the text aloud and carefully, maybe more than one time, and mark the unclear point or the the point that needs more explanation, develop queries for the points that you marked to facilitate understanding.
- 2-present the student know that the authors sometimes do not explain their thought to the students and that require all of the reader to work hard to understand what the author means.
- 3-reading the text aloud and using the think-aloud strategy is the marked place, then clarifying unclear ideas by using some questions during reading.
- 4-explain how to produce meaning based on text and background knowledge, try to answer the question presented, and give the student the chance to contribute to asking and building meaning.
- 5-give the student another text and ask them to read and mark the difficult part and then ask them to write a query about this part, share the questions with the entire class, and try to make them answer the question.

Examples of initiating and follow-up queries:

- What is the author trying to say here? (Initiating queries).
- What does the author mean here? (Follow-up queries).

2.3 The Advantages of Questioning the Author Strategy

1. Improve the student's observation of the author's thoughts, and ideas.
2. Increase both monitoring and comprehension of the students which in turn increases their reading quality.
3. Open sustained discussion of reading content (Op.Cit. Foni Vionita,2013,p.5).
4. Reduce the frustration of text difficulty because students will realize that part of understanding the text is related to the author, which makes the student understand the text deeply.
5. Author questioning is a comprehension-building strategy that helps students understand and memorize the poem based on comprehension. (Triandis, 2016, p.25)

2.4 The Disadvantages of Questioning the Author Strategy

The disadvantages of the Questioning the Author strategy are:

- This strategy of learning allows the learners to be more dominant than the other learners.

- Students rely on other students (Beuhl, Dough, 2009,p.139).

2.5 Teaching Poetry

Poetry can be defined as a verbal, written art form that uses a heightened sense of language to convey experience, feeling, or modes of consciousness.

There is no concrete definition for poetry. It means many different things to different people(Ruba Jamal "Mohammed Hilmi" AL-Bakri,2019 p.27).

Mittal (2014) defines poetry as "a piece of writing in which words are arranged beautifully and rhythmically" (p. 21)."Poetry is embellished with rhythm, beautiful diction, and elevated grammatical features" (Ahmad, 2014, p. 123).

Sithamparam (2001) finds that there are three phases to approaching poetry: warming up, listening to or reading a poem, and following up, teachers should consider the following factors while bringing poetry into the classroom, complying with directions. First, teachers should provide learners a wide chance to take taking part in the learning process, such as employing pair or group work. It allows students to express and discuss their opinions, which improves their interactions.

Teachers should provide projects that students can complete, They should be applicable and not beyond their degree of expertise, and they should also be motivating. Finally, teachers should remember that the goal of these procedures is to assist learners in efficiently using the language and improving their language skills.

Duff (1989) suggests employing imagery, monitoring students' reactions, acting out drama or role-playing, and writing as techniques to mentally prepare students for the intended poetry. Teachers, according to Sithamparam (2001), can create a set of questions to attract student's attention to the poetry being presented. In addition, he suggests that inquiries be both demanding and mediating. This is the stage where you are reading or listening while you are doing something else. Learners engage with poetry via listening to an audio tool, having the teacher read aloud, or reciting it themselves.

When students listen to their teachers reading the poem, they develop an understanding of what they listen to and allow learners to engage more. Learners' reciting is a very beneficial way to get personal responses and reinforce appreciation of poetry.

Additionally, students can perform poems using mime or role-playing. Furthermore, by providing various writing exercises and allowing students to express their thoughts and feelings, teachers may promote real-world interaction. Teachers can, for example, invite students to rework the poem from various angles, create a comic strip, write an essay utilizing the poem's title, or even write their poetry in their language. (Ruba Jamal "Mohammed Hilmi" AL-Bakri,2019 ,p.28,29).

Vardell, Hadaway, and Young (2001; 2002; 2006) published three articles on the benefits of poetry in the ESL classroom. They emphasize the importance of teachers selecting poetry that are relevant to their student's lives and experiences. Students are familiar with and understand topics such as school, weather, animals, and seasons. Students can also be encouraged to submit poetry that is meaningful to them. Making these connections through poetry allows students to better understand

the poems' topics, vocabulary, and meaning while also enjoying the use of language.(Jennifer M. Norris,2010,p.23)

2.6 The Role of The Teacher in Teaching Poetry by Using QAS

The teacher has an important role in this strategy and as follows :

- Reading the text and analyzing the literary text for the students.
- Preparing instructions where he reads the selected text, divides the text for reading, and develops questions for discussion.
- Preparing queries for the text, such as (what is the writer's message ?),(what is the writer talking about ?)(what does the writer mean in this poem).
- Directing the students to read part of the text and making them participate in the discussion by asking questions to the students. these inquiries help the students to understand and reach the meaning intended by the author.
- Directing the students to answer the questions so that they can understand the text. when it appears to the students that the author is not conveying the desired meaning, the teacher's role is to give the information to complete the meaning of the text.
- Responding to students' comments that highlight an important idea that has been raised within the text, when the student has difficulty expressing his thoughts, the teacher rephrases the comment to help clarify it.
- Providing information to fill in the gaps left by the author.
- Summarizing the information generated by the students as they interact with the text.(Patricia A. Antonacci et al, 2015, pp.131-132).

2.7 The Role of the Students in Using QAS

The role of the student in this strategy is to try to answer the questions raised by the teacher, participate in the discussions, ask about unclear points and put forward ideas that he thinks are important.(Tria Erviani,2017,p.27,28).

2.8 Previous Studies

This section includes previous studies which are related to the current research

1. Monica Reichenberg (2014)

This study aimed to see how teachers develop QtA conversation moves in small groups of six people. The QtA debate motions were examined in the video recordings from the sessions. According to the findings, (a) developing QtA in the classroom takes time. Initial improvement was made throughout the first year of intervention, but the teachers struggled to keep the dialogue focused and productive. These challenges had generally vanished by the second and third years. (a) Some discussion moves, such as turning back, recapping, revoicing, and annotating, appeared to be practiced more fluently than others. c) The strategies/discussion of the teachers

2.Tria Erviani (2017)

The researcher used the QtA approach as one way to help students to comprehend the text while they work in groups. Results of this study showed that (QtA) strategy has a significant impact on students.

2.8 Discussion of the Previous Studies

All the previous studies are experimental studies like the current research and they prove that QtAS has a good role in improving the different language skills.

Section Three

Procedures

3.1 The Experimental Design

To fulfill the aims of the present study a post-test design. See Table (3-1)

Table (3-1)

The Experimental Design of the Research

Group	Independent variable	Post-test
Experimental	QtAs	Post-test
Control	Conventional method	Post-test

3.2 Population and Sampling

Population means all the people or objects from whom or from which we select the sample (Patel,2011:340). The total number of those students is (94) who are chosen randomly. The sample of the current study includes (70) students majoring in EFL and divided into two groups (experimental and control groups). See Table (3-2).

Table (3-2)

The Sample of The Study

Group	N. of students	Strategy
Experimental	40	QtAS
Control	30	Traditional

3.3 Equivalence of The Groups

An equivalence of the groups has been done depending upon certain information provided by the students such as the age of the involved students, and the educational attainment of their parents.

3.5 Construction of The Test

To achieve the aim of the test, the researcher has constructed an achievement test based on the subject matter, The researcher has designed a written test of five questions, and each question scores (20) marks, the total is (100) marks. The specific aims, contents, and behaviors of the test are specified.

3.6 Validity and Reliability of the Test

Validity of the test means the suitability and accuracy of the research data used are valid or not (Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun,2012:22). Validity can be divided into three subdivisions (content, construct, and face) (Bachman and Palmer,1996:38) and to ensure

the face validity of the test, it has been exposed to a jury of six college faculty from English Department / Tikrit University. The jurors have agreed that the test items are valid and appropriate for the student's level expect some modifications which are taken into consideration. Reliability is defined as “a measuring device which measures the degree to which a test or other instrument measures consistently whatever it does checking (Good,1973:448). Concerning the present study, the Pearson correlation coefficient formula is used by applying the split-half method. According to this method, the total items of each test are divided into two equivalent halves and the correlation of these halves has been found.

3.9 The Difficulty Level and Discrimination Power of the Test Items

The difficulty level (DL) and the discrimination power (DP) are viewed as highly statistical procedures which are usually followed in the process of standardization of a test, and this is more than what a classroom teacher is expected to know. They are used for selecting and rejecting the items of a test based on their DL and DP (Patel,2011:172). The obtained discrimination power of the test items ranges between 0.34 to 0.62.

3.10 Scoring Scheme of the Test

A scoring scheme increases the reliability of a test and helps to obtain consistent data about students' performance. So that the test maker should prepare the procedure for scoring the answer scripts which is done according to the test objectives. The test consists of five questions, testee's answers are scored out of 100. One score is specified for each correct answer and zero for the wrong one.

Section Four

Discussion of Results and Conclusions

4.0 Introductory Note

The collected data have been analyzed to verify the following hypotheses:

1. There are not any statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and that of the control group in the pre-test.
2. There are not any statistically significant differences in the mean scores of the experimental group and that of the control group in the post-test.
3. There are not any statistically significant differences in the mean scores of students' performance of the experimental group in the pre and post-tests.

4.1 Comparison between the performance of the control group and that of the experimental group in the pre-test.

The obtained mean score of the control group in the pretest is (19.53) and that of the experimental group is (19.57). Then t-test formula for the two independent samples is employed to point out whether there is any statistically significant difference between the

obtained mean score. The computed t-value is found to be (2.54) and the tabulated t-value is (2.000) at (50) degree of freedom and (0.05) level of significance, as shown in Table (4-1) This means that there is no significant difference between the two groups of the study in the pre-test. Thus, the first hypothesis which states that "there are not any significant differences in the mean scores of students' achievement in the pre-test between the two groups", is accepted.

Table (4-1)
The results of the two groups in the pre-test.

Group	No. of Students	Mean Scores	SD	DF	T-Value		Level of Significance
					Computed	Tabulated	
Experimental	40	19.57	5.51	50	2.54	2.000	0.05
Control	30	19.53	5.49				

4. 2 Comparison between the performance of the control group and that of the experimental group in the post-test.

The obtained mean scores of the control group in the post-test are (20.00) and that of the experimental group is (22.44). Then, the t-test formula for the two independent samples is employed to point out whether there are any statistically significant differences between the obtained mean score. The computed t-value is found to be (4.95) and the tabulated t-value is (1.96) at (50) degree of freedom and (0.05) level of significance, as shown in table (4-2).

This means that there are statistically significant differences between the two groups of the study in the post-test. Thus, the second hypothesis which states that "there are not any significant differences in the mean scores of students' achievement in the post-test between the two groups", is rejected. This means that students have improved their performance in writing when they are taught by using QtAstrategy.

Table (4-2)The results of the two groups in the post-test.

Group	No. of Students	Mean Scores	SD	DF	T-Value		Level of Significance
					Computed	Tabulated	
Experimental	40	22.44	6.38	50	4.95	1.96	0.05
Control	30	20.00	6.46				

4.3 Comparison between the performance of the control group and that of the experimental group in the pre and post-test.

The obtained mean scores of the experimental group in the pre-test is (19.57) and that of the post-test is (22.44). Then, the t-test formula for the two independent samples is employed to point out whether there are any statistically significant differences between the obtained mean score. The computed t-value is found to be (3.35) and the tabulated t-value is (1.96) at (51) degrees of freedom and (0.05) level of significance, as shown in table (4-3).

This means that there are statistically significant differences between the pre and post-test scores of the experimental group which is taught by using QtAS, and in favor of the post-test. Thus, the third hypothesis which states that "there are not any significant differences in the mean scores of the experimental group between the pre and post-test", is rejected. See Table (4-3)

Table (4-3)
The results of the two groups in the pre and post-test.

Test	No. of Students	Mean Scores	SD	DF	T-Value		Level of Significance
					Computed	Tabulated	
Pre	52	19.57	6.67	51	3.35	1.96	0.05
Post	51	22.44	7.74				

1. Conclusions

In the light of the obtained results, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- 1- QtAS can be successfully applied to an EFL class.
- 2- Using QtAS can make students enjoy reading poetic texts.
- 3- Using QtAS helps students to read independently.
- 4- Using QtAS increases students` confidence and motivation since they know that understanding the poetic texts is partly related to the author.
- 5- Using QtAS reduces student`s frustration

2. Recommendation and Suggestions for Further Studies:

It may be recommended that QtAS is a good strategy for understanding poetic texts. It is suggested to use QtAs to investigate another language skill and another instructional material.

References

Andreassen, R., & Bråten, I. (2011). *Implementation and effects of explicit reading comprehension instruction in fifth-grade classrooms*. Learning and Instruction, 21(4), 520–537.

- Beck, I. & McKeown, M. (2006). Improving comprehension with questioning the author: A fresh and expanded view of a powerful approach. New York: Scholastic.
- Bennett, K. & Christopher, L. (2011) *what is poetry*
<https://www.palmbeachstate.edu/slc/Documents/whatispoetry.pdf> ,(p.1)
- Beuhl, Dough, *Classroom Strategies for Interactive Learning*, (Chicago: International Reading Association, 2009), p.137-139
- Hadaway, N. L., Vardell, S. M., & Young, T. A. (2001). *Scaffolding oral language development through poetry for students learning English*. [Electronic version]. *The Reading Teacher*, 54, (8), 796-806.
- Jennifer M. Norris 2010 , *Using poetry to teaching comprehension strategies to English language learners*. Hamline University, p.2-4,23-24
- Jessie Lay Hoon Png(2016) *Questioning the Author: English Language Teachers' Perspectives* p.26
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/309358754_Questioning_the_Author_English_Language_Teachers'_Perspectives
- June Preszler, *On The Target: Strategies to Help Readers Make Meaning through Inferences*, (South Dakota: BHSSC, 2006), P. 24.
- Lisa Rahayu, (June 2014) “The Use of QtA (Questioning the Author) in Teaching Reading Comprehension to Senior High School Students”. *JELT*, Vol. 2 Num. 3 Serie A , p. 4
- Mnica Reichnberg (2014). *Questioning the Author in a Scandinavian Context*. Department of Education and Special Education University of Gothenburg, (p.1-4)
- Op. Cit. Foni Vionita, *Teaching Reading by Combining Request and Questioning the Author Strategy at Junior High School*, *JELT*, Vol. 1 Num.1 (February 2013), p. 5
- Tria Erviani (2017), *the influence of questioning the author (QTA) strategy towards students' reading comprehension of recount text at the eighth grade of SMP Kemal Bhayangkari Kotabumi in the academic year of 2016/2017*,p.24-28.