

The Effects of Questioning Strategy in Teaching Simple Poetry in Introduction to English Literature

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Abstract. *This study aims at determining the effects of questioning strategy in teaching simple poetry in introduction to English literature. A quasi-experimental study applying a pretest-posttest control group design was employed. A sample of 99 students was purposefully selected from the accessible population of S1 students taking Introduction to English Literature at an English Department Surabaya. The experiment was conducted for 16 weeks. Two types of data were collected: the students' scores of reading comprehension and the types of questions generated by the students. Two types of test, and objective reading comprehension test and a subjective reading comprehension test were administered. The study proved that both provided and generated questions promote reading comprehension better than reading-only. The study also proved that self-questioning is the most effective strategy for comprehending selections.*

Key words: *questioning strategy, simple poetry, and English literature.*

General Background

The teaching of literature in Indonesia has always been “an uncharted area”. No one knows what to do. The teaching of Indonesia literature is only concerned with memorizing authors and their works. The objectives of literary education which involve the understanding and evaluating deep thoughts, human emotions, human problems and conflicts, hierarchies of values, etc have never been achieved.

In fact, the objectives of teaching literature should be in line with what literature basically is. A workable definition of literature might be that literature is a verbal artifact expressing thoughts and feelings concerning life's most important issues any teaching of literature should be geared to this definition. And we should also bear in mind that it takes two important forms: lyrical poetry and narratives.

Being the most intensely emotive, poetry makes sound and formal structure parts of its means of expression. Understandably, it is far from being easy to understand poetry. A student should not only master the language elements such as structure and vocabulary but also have adequate general background knowledge and sufficient sensitivity.

To make sure that the students understand what thoughts and feelings concerning a particular human issue a writer is expressing in a piece of poetry, a certain teaching strategy should be applied. A set of questions will enable the students of focus their attention to certain aspects of the poem concerned, for example, what kind of human problem the poem is dealing with, or the writer's personal opinion. The set of

questions should be compiled in such a way that the teaching objectives will be achieved.

The study is addressing the following question: is the set of questions effective in achieving the objectives of teaching poetry to English department Students? In line with this question the objectives of the study.

1. To find out whether, by a questioning strategy, the objectives of teaching poetry to English Department Students can be achieved.
2. To find out whether the set of questions being used is effective good or poor students.

Theoretical framework

1. Verse vs Poetry

A clear distinction should be made between verse and poetry. Verse is that kind of writing which exploits the sounds of words in a systematic way using rhythm, rhyme and other sound effects to heighten and intensify expression. Poetry, on the other hand, is most highly emotive form of expression though it also makes use of the techniques of verse (Little: 133) poetry develops its theme in a carefully ordered sequence of statements and, most importantly, it displays the almost indefinable quality of emotional and imaginative impact.

2. Schemata View of Reading Process

In schemata theory, the process of interpretation is said to be guided by the principle that every input is mapped against some existing schemata and that all aspects of that schemata must be compatible with the input information. This principle results in two basic modes of information processing: bottom-up and top-down. The bottom-up processing is evoked by the incoming data: the features of the data enter the system through the best fitting, bottom-level schemata.

3. Questions in Reading

Question is one of technique which can be used to develop students reading ability or it can be used as a means of teaching reading comprehension and evaluating the students' mastery of reading comprehension.

This questioning plays an important role in reading comprehension because questions a teacher know whether the students have understood the given text or not. This is especially true when the learners are forced to make their own questions about the passage.

Research Methodology

It was a quasi-experimental study applying a pretest-posttest control group design. Two groups are involved, a relatively good class (IH) and a relatively weak class (BC). Both undergo a pretest and a posttest, consisting of the same set of questions on an unseen poem. The pretest is

administered on the first day of the semester the posttest on the last day. To ensure their seriousness the students are told to do their best as their achievement might contribute to their final score. It really does. The pretest takes place on the first day of the semester, the beginning of March 2000 and the posttest is administered on the last day, June 26, 2000. The BC group consists of 21 students and the IH group is made up of 24 students.

In this study the following statistical analysis was utilized.

- (a) One way ANNOVA. Since the study was designed at a random basis, one way ANNOVA was used to analyze the expected data. This analysis was used to test the significance of the means difference among the groups. According to Ary, et. al., (1979:262) and Linn (1980) one way ANNOVA is capable of maintaining the internal validity of an experiment designed at random. If the obtained F was less than the significance level of .05, the null hypothesis was rejected. If the null hypothesis was rejected, the Tukey HSD .050 procedure at the significance level for .050 was employed to determine which of the three treatments was the most effective.
- (b) In addition, for the generated questions condition, the types of questions produced by the students were identified. T-test was employed to detect the effects of the types questions generated by the students on their reading comprehension. This test was used since the questions generated could be grouped into two types: factual and conceptual questions.

The Results of the Tests

What follows below is the result of the test, Administered to the BC group and the IH group, which consist of 21 students and 24 students respectively. The IH group is relatively a letter class than the BC group.

Paired Samples Statistics

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1 PRE_BC	46.95	21	7.20	1.57
1. POST_BC	59.05	21	9.92	2.17
Pair 2 PRE_IH	56.54	24	9.65	1.97
2. POST_IH	68.83	24	9.78	2.00

Next is the Paired Samples Correlations.

Paired Samples Correlations

	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1 PRE_BC & POST_BC	21	.806	.000
Pair 2 PRE_IH & POST_IH	24	.586	.003

It can be seen that the coefficient correlation between the pretest and the posttest of the BC group is 0,806 and is statistically significant while the coefficient correlation between the pretest and posttest of the IH group is 0,586 and therefore also statistically significant.

Note: the correlation is not significant when the sig is higher than 0,05.

Below is the table of Paired Samples Test.

Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences							
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95 % Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1 PRE_BC & POST_BC	-12.10	5.92	1.29	-14.79	-9.40	-9.357	20	.000
Pair 2 PRE_IH & POST_IH	-12.29	8.84	1.81	-16.03	-8.56	-6.809	23	.000

It can be observed that the scores increase in the BC group is statistically significant because the sig is 0,000 (higher than 0,05) and the score increase in the IH group is also statistically significant because the sig is 0,000.

Group Statistics

TAG	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
TOTAL 1	21	12.10	5.92	1.29
2	24	12.29	8.84	1.81

Independent Samples Test

	Leven's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95 % Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
TOTAL Equal Variances Assumed	1.854	.180	-.086	43	.932	-.20	-9.357	20	.000
Equal Variances not Assumed			-.088	40.414	.930	-.20	-6.809	23	.000

The Leven's Test indicates that both groups have variances which do not differ significantly because the significant is 0,18 (higher than 0,05). Further, the statistics also concludes that the score increase in both BC and IH groups does not have a significant difference, as the sig. is 0,932 which is higher than 0,05.

Discussion of the Findings

The study was an attempt at finding the effects of provided and generated questions on the students' reading comprehension. The study demonstrated some interesting finding on the effects of both provided and generated questions.

Consistent with the previous research on adjunct questions with adult readers (see Hamilton, 1985) provided questions were found to enhance comprehension and retention of main ideas and subordinate facts (supporting details) contained in the given texts.

The result also supports Hamilton's conclusion that groups given adjunct questions tend to have higher efficiency rating than control groups and that the effects of adjunct questions could not be attributed to increase study time alone. The study reveals that provided conceptual and factual questions produced more efficient recall of passage ideas than simply reading the passage. This implies an altered processing strategy produced by these questions. The questions provided affected the distribution of

study time by shifting the focus attention from selecting the subordinate details to extracting the main ideas of the passage, thus enhancing study efforts (Mayer, 1984). Previous investigations have also argued that questions such as these alter the learner's processing of the text (Rickard, 1985; Rickard & DiVesta, 1974). It was thus an important finding because focusing on the essential message is mark of effective studying and high-level of adjunct question significantly increase the efficiency of that process.

The results of the present study also support the finding of the studies done by Andre & Anderson (1979, Fraser & Schwart, 1975). Students-generated questions increase the retention on passage information when compared to as reading-only condition. Therefore, a technique such as generating questions may be of practical significance because comprehension is enhanced.

Another interesting finding which has not been found by previous studies was the effects of types of questions generated by the students on their reading comprehension. Comparing the effects of factual questions to conceptual questions generated by the students on their reading comprehension, the present study revealed that generated conceptual questions produced better comprehension than generated questions.

Conclusion

The study demonstrated the effects of questioning strategy in teaching introduction to literature the investigation was based on Wittrock's model of generative learning and Baker and Brown's metacognitive model. The findings proved that both proved and generated questions promoted reading comprehension better than reading-only. The result of the investigation also proved that self-questioning was the most effective strategy for comprehending reading selections. Thus, it supports both generative learning model and metacognitive model. Metacognitive awareness of the learner affected active processing, which in turn increased comprehension. Termine which of the three treatments was the most effective.

In addition, for the generated questions condition, the types of questions produced by the students were identified. T-test was employed to detect the effects of the types questions generated by the students on their reading comprehension. This test was used since the questions generated could be grouped into two types: factual and conceptual questions.

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