

*The Effect of Using "Question –Based
Discussion" Technique on University Students'
Achievement in English Novel*

By
Sahira Ibrahim Suleiman

Supervised by
Asst. Prof.

Nagham Qadoori yahya(Ph.D).

Abstract

Teacher's questions are the chief verbal tool for shaping and modeling interaction in the classroom as well as the primary source of data for evaluating the substantive knowledge and intellectual skill of his/her students.

The present study, therefore, aims at:

1. Investigating the effect of using question based discussion technique in teaching English novel on students' achievement.
2. Finding out whether there are any significant differences in using question- based discussion technique at recognition and production level.
3. Finding out whether there are any significant differences in using QBD technique between male and female.

Three null hypotheses have been stated as follows:

1: There is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and those of the control group in the novel achievement posttest.

2: There is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores and the theoretical mean of students' recognition and production level.

3: There is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of male students and those of female students in the novel achievement posttest.

The sample of the study consists of 60 college students in the Department of English at the College of Education/, University of Kirkuk for the academic year 2016-2017. The two groups were randomly chosen one of these two groups was assigned as an experimental group (**EG**) which was taught novel by using Question Based- discussion strategy, and the other as a control group (**CG**) which was taught novel by using traditional method. The achievement test was carried out by the researcher to measure the students' progress in the dependent variables of the study. The statistical analysis of the results reveals that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean achievement scores of the **EG** and those of the **CG** in the novel achievement posttest. The research ended up with a number of recommendations. Furthermore, some suggestions for further studies.

Section One

1.1 The problem

Teaching is the process of which learning is expected to take place. Students should be encouraged to take a lot of practice in the process of learning language structure, therefore, teachers of English should use various forms of classroom techniques and activities which are suitable to their students and enable them to use English communicatively (William, 2007:67).

It is necessary for English teaching and learning to interact between teachers and students. Questioning is a fine effective strategy in the interaction, and it benefits the construction of new teacher- student relationship, because it has positive influence on English learners' affection. (Ramsden, 2003: 87).

One of the problems that English foreign language teachers are facing is to deal with a passive class, where students avoid interaction with the teacher. This is because teachers are asking questions to the class as a whole expecting at least a few students to respond. The learners as a whole don't respond to the instructor's questions and do not participate in class.

Giacomozzi (2007:18) states that questioning techniques are a key element of the interactive classroom which are constantly being invented to help facilitate active learning. Active learning puts the responsibility of learning on the learners themselves.

The question-based discussion technique starts by posing questions, problems or scenarios rather than simply presenting established facts or portraying a smooth path to knowledge (William, 2007:77).

Therefore, the study is going to investigate the effect of using question-based discussion on undergraduate students' achievement in English novel.

1.2 Aims

The present study aims at:

1. Investigating the effect of using question based discussion technique on university students' achievement in English novel.
2. Finding out whether there are any significant differences between students' achievement at the recognition on one hand, and their achievement at the production level on the other hand.
3. Finding out whether there are any significant differences between the achievement of male students and that of females in English novel.

1.3 Hypothesis of the study:

- 1: There is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and those of the control group in the novel achievement posttest.

2: There is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of students' performance at the recognition and production level.

3: There is no statistically significant difference in the mean scores of students' performance between males and females.

1.4 Limits of the study:

The current study is limited to the following:

1. Third-year students in the Department of English / College of Education/ University of Kirkuk for the academic year 2016-2017.
2. Teaching English novel namely Wuthering Heights by" Emily Bronte".

1.5 Value of the study:

The current study can be benefit and valuable in the following matters:

It is feasible method for stimulating students' imagination in addition to its importance in developing students' critical thinking and it is the most straight forward method of encouraging student participation and engagement.

1.6 Plan of the study:

1. Selecting a sample of EFL third year student and dividing them into two groups (a control group and an experimental group).
2. Teaching the two groups some units from novel (wuthering height).The control group is taught by using traditional method whereas the experimental group is taught by using the technique of QBD.
3. Constructing a posttest to stimulate students' performance in English novel.
4. Estimating validity reliability, discrimination power and difficulty level of the post test.
5. Subjecting the two groups of students to the post- test.
6. Collecting the required data and treating them statistically and gaining results.

1.7 Definition of the Basic Terms:

1.7.1 Effect

It is the "Treatment or the effect of an experimental factor under controlled condition on the control variable (Good, 1973:195).

The operational definition: Is the positive change of learner's performance in novel caused by teaching them English literature according to question-based discussion technique.

1.7.2 Question based discussion:

Question- based discussion method "is a process in which a small group assembles to communicate with each other using speaking

,listening ,and nonverbal processes in order to achieve instructional objectives(Thangasamy ,2008 :80).

The operational definition: it is as a means of teaching students to think and how to engage in an exchange of idea or examination by comment especially to explore solution .

1.7.3 Achievement

It refers to "the mastery of what has been learnt or the degree of acquisition achieved by an individual in any instructional material in a specific educational field" (Allam, 2000:305).

The operational definition : It is action of accomplishing third year college students in English novel.

Section Two

2.1 The Concept of novel

A novel is a fictious prose narrative or tale of considerable length representative of the real life of past or present times portrayed in a plot of more or less complexity (Hawthorn, 1985:12). There are a lot of characters and subplot because the novel is longer than a short story ,the author has time to develop ideas in more depth and tie together the stories of several characters into one ultimately cohesive unit (foster,1927:27).

2.2 Types of novel

The novel of the action deals with external events ,and has not much to do with the mind .it deals with vigorous and violent actions .the action has irresistible appeal .the novelist attaches very little importance to the development of character .The characters are introduced only for throwing the actions into relief ,e.g. Walter scotl' (Sengupta and Mudra ,1993:22).

2.2.1. Picaresque novel

The word (pizaro) is a Spanish which means vague. It is a string of adventures .The hero is constantly on the move in quest of a adventures, the picaresque novel emphasis the character only on the hero,e.g Charles Dickens, Oliver twist (Hawthorn,1985 ,13) .

2.2.2. Gothic Novel

It is a novel of horror, the hard core of which is supernaturalism .Since it is a reaction to the reign of reason and authority .Gothic novel may be described as the quintessence of romanticism E.G. Emily Bronte's' wuthering Heights.(Davis,2006:69)

2.3.3.Allegorical Novel

The Allegorical novel depends on an extended symbol, sometimes a whole story, such as a tale of a journey symbolizing the main character's entire life. (Eiland, 2000:1)

2.3.4.The epistolary novel

This type is told through letters .The letter would have to be long contrived. This type of novel contains psychological potential .An example of this type of novel is Pamela by Samuel Richardson (Foster, 1927:34).

2.3.5. The historical novel

This type of novel sets its events and characters in a well-defined historical context, and it may include both fictional and real characters (Davis, 2006:74).

2.3.6. Satirical novel

This type of novel is defined as art that ridicules a specific topic in order to provoke readers into changing their opinion of it. By attacking what they see as human folly, satirists usually imply their own opinions on how the thing being attacked can be improved (Foster, 1927:36).

2.3. The Concept of Question Based Discussion Technique.

All over the world, classroom interaction is usually dominated by question and answer, with teachers asking most of the questions. Questions provide the practice and feedback essential for the development .Students learn best when they take an active role and practice what they have learned.

The philosophy of questioning finds its antecedents in constructivist learning theories, such as the work of Dewey, Vygotsky, and Bruner among them and can be considered a constructivist philosophy.

Theorists such as John Dewey believed that that questioning approach could improve education .Dewey advocated that teachers should let learners use their natural activity when learning about a new concept.

Constructivist learning theory holds that knowledge is socially constructed, rather than received or discovered .Constructivist learners create meaning, learn by doing, and work collaboratively in mixed groups on common projects.

Questions require more than simply answering them or getting a right answer, it espouses investigation, exploration, search, quest, research, pursuit, and study .It is enhanced by involvement with a community of learners .each learning from the other in social interaction. Question based discussion is an approach to teaching and learning that allocates students question thought, observations at the center of the learning experience. (Scardamalia , 2002:67).

Stiggins (2008:18) explained that it is important to present students with questions that encourage critical thinking and allow them to draw from their prior knowledge rather than accepting “yes “or “no” responses.

Question based discussion called the Socratic Method after the ancient Greek philosopher Socrates who would engage his students with questions and dialogue., The participants carry the burden of responsibility for the quality of the discussion. This method is based on

good discussions occur among participants, listen actively, share ideas and questions.

2.3.1 Purpose of using question based discussion in classroom

Bender (2003:89) states that there are a lots of purposes for using question based discussion

1. To develop interest and motivate students to become actively in lesson.
2. To evaluate students preparation and check on homework.
3. To develop critical thinking skills.
4. To review and summarize previous lessons.
5. To motivate students to pursue knowledge on their own.
6. To assess achievement of instructional goals and objectives.

Desantis (2009:106) observe that a good discussion is one that leaves issues open for further inquiry and in which as many questions are raised as are answered. Discussion is the open and unpredictable of meaning through collaborative inquiry, an effective group discussion is one in which many different ideas and viewpoints are heard.

A group discussion

- Gives everyone involved a voice .Whether the discussion is meant to form a basis for action, or just to play with ideas, it gives all members of the group a chance to speak their opinions, to agree or disagree with others, and to have their thoughts heard.
- Allow for a variety of ideas to be expressed and discussed. A group is much more likely to come to a good conclusion if a mix of ideas is on the table, and if all members have the opportunity to think about and respond to them.
- Is generally a democratic, egalitarian process. It reflects the ideals of views.

2.3.2. The role of the question based discussion in teaching:

Discussions can play a valuable role in lecture courses, seminars, quiz sections, labs, studios and a variety of other settings. A well-planned discussion can encourage and stimulate student learning and add variety to the class. While “good” discussions can be a powerful tool for encouraging student learning, successful discussions rarely happen spontaneously.

Basturkmen and Helen(2002:192) state that students work to define task ,and seek information ,and accept additional information as a part of their performance .A teacher’s responsibility is to create work that promote learning.

2.3.3. Level of questions based discussion

There are four levels of questions:

1: Confirmation Inquiry:

The teacher has taught a particular science theme or topic. The teacher then develops questions and a procedure that guides students through an activity where the results are already known .

2: Structural Inquiry:

Learners are given the question and the method of achieving, but the goal is to provide an explanation that is already supported by the evidence gathered during and through the investigative process.

3: Guided Inquiry:

Learners are given a question, design investigative methods, and then carry out the inquiry itself; they must present their results at the end of the process.

4: Open /True Inquiry:

Students formulate their own question, design and follow through with a developed procedure, and communicate their findings and results. Teacher should begin their inquiry instruction at the lower level to effectively develop and work their way to inquiry skills (Edwards and Bowman, 1996:95).

2.4 Stages of discussion:

1.Before the Discussion

1. Create a comfortable, non-threatening environment: Introduce yourself and explain your interests in the topic on the first day. Encourage questions from the outset. For example, require each student to submit a question about the course during the first day or week.
2. Get to know your students and the skills and perspectives they bring to the discussions.
3. Clarify the rules and expectations for discussions at the outset. Define what you think of as a successful discussion (for example, one that includes participation by all group members, stays on topic, and explores issues in depth and from4. Plan and prepare the discussion

2.Throughout the Discussion

1. At appropriate points in the session, summarize the major ideas and write them on the board. If you do not do this, students will have a hard time picking out the most important ideas from the discussion and understanding their significance.
- 2.Combine discussions with other methods. Beginning on the first day, use frequent small-group work: divide the class into groups of 2-4 students, then give each group a focused assignment, with specific objectives and roles that they should each take on in order to complete the assignment.

3. Integrate student responses into the discussion without making the discussion merely a student-teacher interaction. Ask students to respond directly to one another's ideas. The use of small-group discussions will allow students to become better acquainted and thus facilitate their communication with one another.

4. Use verbal and non-verbal cues to encourage participation. Call on all students to answer questions, not just those who consistently raise their hands.

3.After the Discussion

1. Rethink, retool, and revise. Take brief notes on how each discussion went and use these as the basis for reorganizing your plan for the discussion, improving your presentation skills, rethinking the material included, or developing ideas for future teaching and research projects (Davis, 2009:112-117).

2.5 Question according to Bloom

Bloom's taxonomy has six levels, divided into lower level thinking and higher order thinking .The lower order thinking classifications consist of knowledge, comprehension and application. But higher order thinking requires students to stretch. According to Bloom's Taxonomy questions can be classified into the following types:

Knowledge: Questions that require simple recall of previously learned material.

Comprehension: Questions that require students to restate or recognize material in a literal manner to show that they understand the essential meaning.

Application: questions that require students to solve problems in new situations.

Analysis: Questions that require students to break an idea into its component parts for logical analysis.

Synthesis: Questions that require students to combine their idea into plan that is new for them.

Evaluation: Questions that require students to judge something based on some criteria(Davis ,2009 :120) .

Section Three

3.1 Population and sample of the study

The population of this research is consists of third - year students in the Department of English, College of Education, University of Kirkuk for the academic year 2016-2017. The total number of the population was;(24) males and (114) females, divided into three classes namely group(A)Which consists of 42students and group (B) which consists of 47students and group(C) which consists of 49students as is shown on the table (1). Sixty third -year students in the morning classes have been

chosen randomly as the sample of the current study. The EG consists of

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Group(A) EG</i>	<i>Group B CG</i>	<i>Group C</i>	<i>Total</i>
Male	7	8	9	24
Female	35	39	40	114
Total	42	47	49	138

23 females and 7 males, whereas the CG consists of 24 females and 6 males as shown in the table (2).

Table 1: The research Sample

<i>Groups of students</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>No of pilot students</i>	<i>Total</i>
Experimental(A)	7	23	60	30
Control (B)	6	24		30
Total	13	47		60

Table 2 The population of the study

The research makes equalization of the two groups in the:

1. The age of testees,
2. The academic level of students' parents
3. The students' general average for the 2015-2016 academic year and,
4. The testees level on the pre-test.

3.1.1 Students' Age

Table 3 signifies that there are no statistically significant differences among the testees of both the experimental and control groups, since the mean of the con. Group is 249.10 and its SD is 7.44, while the exp. Group is 248.60 and its S.D is 7.13. The computed t-value is 0.27 which is found out to be lower than the tabulated t-value which 1.70 is when the level of significance is .05 and the degree of freedom is 58. After student's age have been measured in month, groups. as shown in **table**

(3).

The Equalization between the Experimental and Control Groups on the Age of Testees variable

Group	No.	Mean	Std.dev	Df	T- Value		Level of Significance
					Cal.	Tab.	
Ex	30	249.10	7.13	58	0.27	1.70	0.05 N.S
Co	30	248.60	7.44				

3.1.2 The Academic Level of the Father

Table 4 shows that there are no statistically significant differences among the testees of both groups, the experimental and control, since the computed t- value is 0.08 on a degree of freedom of 58.

Table 4: The Equalization between experimental and control group on the Academic Level of the Father Variable

Group	No.	Mean	St.dev.	Df	T-Value		Level of significant
					Calculated	Tabulated	
EX	30	4.37	1.50	58	0.08	1.70	N.S 0.05
CG	30	4.33	1.67				

3.1.3 The Academic Level of the Mother

Table 5 shows that there are no statistically significant differences among the testees of both groups since the computed t -value is 0.72 which is found out to be lower than the tabulated t -value which is found out to be 1.70 on the degree of freedom 58.

Table 5: The Equalization between experimental and control Groups on the Academic Level of the Mother Variable

Group	No.	Mean	St.dev.	Df	T-Value		Level of significant
					Calculated	Tabulated	
EX	30	3.87	1.55	58	0.72	1.70	N.S 0.05
CO	30	3.57	1.70				

2. 1.5 Students' Scores of novel in the Second Year

The mean of the experimental group is 68.8 and that of the control group is 67.6 Which indicates no significant difference between the two groups, as shown in Table (6).

Table 6: The Mean, Standard Deviation and 'T' Value of the Second Year Students, novel Examination

Group	No.	Mean	Standard Deviation	Df	T-Value		Level of significance
					Calculated	Tabulated	
Ex	30	68.8	12.1	58	0.34	1.70	N.S
CG	30	67.6	13.5				0.05

3.1.6 .The Testees' Level on The Pre-test

The Pre -test scores:

The achievement test which has been applied on the sample of this study. The content of the pre – test is taken from "**Wuthering Heights**". Both groups, the experimental and the control group have had the test. The researcher explained the instruction of the test to the two groups at the same time. The time required for this test is 90 minutes; the two groups have been taken the test in the classroom. The answers of the two groups have been scored and analyzed. The mean of the experimental group 55.4 is and that of the control group is 53.9.

This indicates that there is no significant difference between the two groups. The data of pre-test are used to equalize the two groups of this study, as shown in Table (7).

Table 7: The Equalization between the Experimental and Control Groups on the Achievement pre- test Variable

Group	No.	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	T-Value		Level of Significance
					Calculated	Tabulated	
Exp.	30	55.4	11.6	58	0.46	1.70	N.S 0.05
Con.	30	53.9	14.7				

3.2 The experimental design

Best and Kahn (2006:177) define the experimental design as the blueprint of the procedures that enable the researcher to test hypotheses by reaching valid conclusions about the relationship between independent and dependent variables. Thus to achieve the aims of this research and its hypotheses, two groups are selected randomly. Both the experimental group and the control group were pretested. The independent variable QBD is administered to the experimental group only whereas the traditional method is given to the control group.

Table (8) The experimental design

The Groups	The Test	Independent Variable	The Test
The experimental group	Pre – test	Question –Based Discussion	Post – test
The control group	Pre – test	/	Post – test

3.3 The post test

The post test of this study includes six questions. The first three questions are related to the recognition level whereas the last three questions are related to the production level.

3.4 Final Administration of the Test

The test has been applied as a post-test at the end of the experiment on the 15th May, 2017. By the researcher with the help of teacher.

3.5. Scoring Scheme of the Test

The test has six questions. The researcher corrects the answer sheets of sixty students. Question number (one) contains (10) items, each of these is out of (1) mark, the total is (10) marks. Question number (two) contains (10) items, each of these is out of (2) marks. The total is out of 20 marks. Question number (three) contains (10) items each of them is out of (1) mark, the total is (10) marks. Question number (four) contains (one) item, it is given (20) marks.

Question number (five) consists of (two) items. A is out of (10) marks and B is out of (10) marks. The total is (20) marks. Question number (six) contains (four) items, each of them is given (5) marks. The total is (20) marks. The total marks of the test will be 100 marks. The content of the test derived from the novel (Wuthering heights) that has been taught during the period of instruction as shown in table (9).

Table 9: Scoring Scheme

Q No.	Recognition NO. Of items	Scores
1-	10	20
2	10	20
3	10	10
Total	30	50
	Production No. Of items	
4	1	15
5	2	15
6	5	20
Total	8	50

3.5 Validity

Validity is the most crucial issue in the test construction. For this study, face validity has been achieved by exposing the achievement test to a jury of specialists in the field of methodology and linguistics .

3.6 Reliability

Test reliability concerns the extent to which test results are repeatable. Test-re test method is chosen for being more practical and more accurate as well as easy to control and manage. The Spearman-Brown formula is used to calculate if the reliability coefficient would be acceptable or not.

3.7 Statistical Means

various statistical means have been used as shown below:

1. The **t –test** for two independent samples is used to find out the significant differences between the two groups in the dependent and independent variables. The following formula is used:

$$t = \frac{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{(n_1 - 1)S_1^2 + (n_2 - 1)S_2^2}{(n_1 + n_2) - 2} \times \left(\frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2} \right)}}$$

(Glass and Stanley, 1970: 295)

3. Item Difficulty formula is used to determine the difficult level of the items of the written test.

Number of correct answers

I.D = -----

Number of testees

(Madsen, 1983:181)

4. **Item Discrimination Power** is used to estimate the discrimination level of the items of the written test.

1. **Chi-square** formula is used to determine whether there are any significant differences between the experimental and the control groups in the variables of the level of parents' education

Its formula reads as follows:

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

Where:

χ^2 = Value of Chi-square, O= the observed frequencies, E=the expected frequencies. (Alderso, Clapham and

Wall, 1999:277)

3. **The t-test** for two dependent samples, to test the significance of difference between the pretest and posttest.

$$t = \frac{\bar{d}}{Sd / \sqrt{n}}$$

: Where

$\bar{d}$ = the mean differences $d/\sqrt{n}$ = the standard error of the mean difference

(Devellies,2003:24).

Section Four

Analysis of Results

4.1. Comparison between the mean scores of the Experimental Group and that of Control Group in the Posttest Scores

In order to determine whether there is a significant difference between the two mean scores of the experimental and the control groups in the total scores of the post test, the researcher has compared the mean scores of the two groups: the mean of the experimental group is 71.5 and the mean of the control group is 63.9 The t-test was used for the two independent samples, the calculated t-value is 2.77 which is found to be higher than the tabulated value (1.70) at 0.05 the level of significance and 58 degrees of freedom. This indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between both groups. Therefore the first null hypothesis is rejected as is shown in the table below: Table 9: The Mean, Standard Deviation and 'T' Value of Post-test Scores

Group	NO. of Samples	Mean	Standard Deviation	Degree OF Freedom	T-Value		Level Of significance
					Cal.	Tab.	
Experimental	30	71.5	10.6	58	2.77	1.70	Significant difference 0.05
Control	30	63.9	10.8				

4.2 Comparison between students' performance at the Recognition Level and at the Production Level.

By comparing the mean scores of students' performance at the recognition which is found to be 31.43 with that production level which is found to be 41.83, t-test for one –independent sample is used in order to find whether there is any significant difference between the two mean scores .

The calculated t-value is found to be 6.84 which is considered to be higher than the tabulated t- value which is 1.70 .This means that there is a significance difference between the students' performance at the two levels at 0,05 level of significance and 58 degrees of freedom. The obtained difference is for the benefit of the production level, i.e. students' performance at production level is better than their performance at the recognition level, thus the second hypothesis is rejected. See **Table 10: The Mean, Standard Deviation, T-Value of the**

Two Levels Recognition and Production.

Groups		No.	Mean Scores	Standard deviation	DF	T-Value		Level of Significant t
						Calculated	Tabulated	
EX.	Re.	30	31.43	3.29	28	6.84	1.70	0.05 Significant Difference
	Prod.	30	41.83	7.65				

4.3. Comparison between Males' performance and that of Females' Performance in the Post-test.

In order to determine whether there is a significant difference between male and female scores. The mean scores of males which are found to be 60.71 while the mean scores of females which are found to be 74.83. The calculated t-value is 3.45 which is considered to be higher than the tabulated t-value which is 1.70, which indicates that there is a significant difference between the two groups, at 0.05 the level of significance and 28 degrees of freedom, the obtained difference is for the benefit of females. Which indicates the performance of female students is better than that of male students on the post-test, thus the third hypothesis is rejected. (See Table 11)

Group	No. of students	Means scores	SD	DF	T-Value		Level of significant
					Cal.	Tab,	
Male	7	60.71	9.74	28	3.45	0.048	0.05 S.D
Female	23	74.8	8.59				

4.4 Discussions

The statistical analysis of the results indicates that the achievement of learners in the experimental group is significantly higher in average than the achievement of learners in the control group in the total scores of the post-test. Since the students of the control group are unfamiliar with QBD because the method of teaching novel according to which they were taught did not help them to realize as the QBD task. This means that QBD technique is an efficient technique for teaching English novel.

Section Five

Conclusions:

In Light of the findings of the study the following points are concluded:

1. Teaching QBD for college students would help them become more effective real-world language operators and make themselves to use the English language so as to be able to share and take measure in and outside the class.

2. From a theoretical point of view these results uphold the point of view that language teaching is communication between the student and teacher; and student themselves. The students should read the text, and then they should try to prepare questions and cooperate with the teacher and communication among themselves.

3. From a pedagogical point of view the results uphold the importance of discussion and communication between the students themselves, which enables the former to develop critical thinking inside the classroom.

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