

استخدام إستراتيجيات ما قبل القراءة في تحسين فهم طلبة المرحلة الثالثة لمادة الشعر

نادية مجيد حسين

د. حيدر كاظم خضير

طالبة دكتوراه

دكتوراه

طرائق تدريس اللغة الانجليزية

طرائق تدريس اللغة الانجليزية

## Employing Pre-reading Strategies in Enhancing Third Year College Students' Understanding of Poetry

Dr. Haider kadhim Khudhier&Nadia Majeed Hussein

Ph. D. in ELT

Ph. D. Candidate in ELT

المستخلص

كعينة تجريبية ( تم إتباع استراتيجيات ما قبل القراءة معهم)، و ٣٠ كعينة ضابطة ( تم إتباع الطريقة التقليدية في تدريسهم). وبعد المعادلة بين المجموعتين بعدة عوامل كالعمر، الجنس، ومستوى تعليم الوالدين تبين بان أداء المجموعة الضابطة أفضل في الفعاليات المتعلقة بفهم واستيعاب النصوص الشعرية. وان استراتيجيات ما قبل القراءة قامت بتحفيز الطلبة على حل مشكلات تفسير وشرح المعاني في الشعر. وعلاوة على ذلك جعلت الطلبة أكثر نشاطا وجاهزية لحل المشكلات في فهم واستيعاب مادة الشعر.

غالبا ما يواجه الطلبة صعوبات في فهم معاني النصوص الشعرية. قد يعزى ذلك إلى حقيقة كونهم لا يلاءمون بين المعلومات الجديدة وتلك الموجودة في أذهانهم. من هذا المنطلق نجد انه من الضروري التعمق في الإستراتيجيات التي يمكن استخدامها لتحسين فهم واستيعاب النصوص الشعرية التي تدرس للمرحلة الثالثة في قسم اللغة الانجليزية كلية التربية ابن رشد. يهدف هذا البحث إلى اكتشاف اثر استخدام استراتيجيات ما قبل القراءة على مدى فهم طلبة الكلية لمادة الشعر. تم اختيار ستون من الطلبة كعينه مقسمة إلى مجموعتين بالتساوي: ٣٠

Abstract

Moreover , they appear to be more active and ready to solve problems of Staiger ( 1973:37 ) contends that reading is essentially a cognitive process "during which the reader not only comprehends ideas found in a text but also interprets and evaluates them. Expressed another way, reading is the most crucial of the four language skills comprehending poetry 1.0 Introduction

for EFL learners ,as it enables them to gain exposure to the target language and receive valuable linguistic input to build language proficiency. Readers often need to go through an active process rather than simply decoding the graphic representation . For this, Anderson (1999:1) states that :

Reading is an active, fluent process which involves the reader

and the reading material in building meaning. Meaning

does not reside on the printed page ,synergy occurs in reading which combines the words on the printed page with the

reader's background knowledge and experiences.

Students are often found to have difficulties in understanding the meaning of poetic texts . This may be attributed to the fact they do not match the new information with the one existing in their minds. Hence , it seems necessary to dig in the strategies that can be employed to enhance understanding and comprehending of poetic texts as taught in the third year stage , College of Education/ Ibn Rushd , Department of English. This paper tends to explore the effect of using pre-reading strategies ( such as: *word splash*, *key words* , *pre-write questions* , *storyimpression* , *pictures* , *do-now* , *think-pair- share* , *KWL chart* and *I-search* )on the college students' understanding of poetry.

Sixty students are selected to be the sample of the study ,divided into two equal groups : 30 representing the experimental ( following the pre-reading strategies in teaching poetry) and 30 representing the control ( following the traditional way of teaching poetry) . After conducting the process of equalizing these groups in terms of factors such as age , sex , level of parents' education , it has been found that students of experimental group perform better in activities related to comprehending poetic texts . The pre-reading strategies motivate students to be enthusiastically engaged in problems of interpreting and explaining the meaning of poetry.

understanding poetry of the third year classes.

### .1 Reading Process

Traditionally, reading has been conceived as a passive or receptive skill, but an examination of the abilities involved in fluent direct reading with comprehension of meaning can reveal that readers are far from passive during the activity of reading. If they have had a purely aural-oral introduction to the language, they must now learn to recognize their combinations as language units already encountered. They must be able to identify structural cues: the indicators of word classes ( or parts of speech ) and of persons and tenses of the verb, the words that introduce phrases and clauses and the particular modifications of meaning these indicate, etc. ( Rivers, 1981:266 ). Simultaneously, "the readers' mind is then free to assimilate the message being communicated by the of unfamiliar elements through their relationship to the whole text interrelationships in the coding, and to deduce from the context the meaning ( ibid:267 )" .

In the same vein, Ur ( 1996: 138 ) argues that reading means reading and understanding . Reading the words, not knowing what they mean, merely indicates decoding ( translating written symbols into corresponding sounds ) . To give a finer explanation, he ( ibid ) affirms that reading implies the following tips :

- 1- perceiving and decoding letters in order to read words,
- 2- understanding all the words in order to understand the meaning of a text,
- 3- gathering meaning from what is read, and
- 4- understanding of a text by understanding the words it composed.

In brief, reading can mostly be viewed as the translation of graphic symbols into their corresponding meaning whether spoken or written. Most definitions of reading seem to be based on the idea that comprehension is the essence of reading, without which no reading can take place. In this connection, this paper intends to investigate the application of pre-reading strategies to enhance

Readers often follow different strategies to tackle a reading task, or to interpret their reading of what they do when they do not comprehend. Brantmeier (2002:1) summarizes reading strategies as follows:

The strategies may involve skimming, scanning, guessing, recognizing cognates and word families, reading for meaning, predicting, activating general knowledge, making inferences, following references, and separating main ideas from supporting ideas.

Reading strategies can consist of evaluating content, such as agreeing or disagreeing, making an association with prior knowledge or experience, asking and answering questions, looking for the key words, using sentence structure analysis such as determining the subject, verb or object of the sentence, skipping and rereading (Singhal,2001:9).

Reading involves connecting new text to that which is already understood (prior knowledge). There must be some strategies that are used to get students to activate existing knowledge, thereby creating a mental framework to which new

Elaborately, Grabe (1991:377) describes perception of reading as "an active process of comprehending [ where ] students need to be taught strategies to read more efficiently ( e.g., guess from context, define expectations, make inferences about the text, skim a head to fill in the context, etc. )". In other words, reading must be seen as an active process in which a readerforms a preliminary expectation about the material, selects, the fewest and most productive cues necessary to confirm or reject that explanation. In this sense, reading is concerned with an interaction between thought and language. The reader's knowledge, coupled with his ability to make linguistic predictions, determines the expectation the reader will develop as he reads. Skill in reading often depends on the well-organized interaction between linguistic knowledge and knowledge of the world ( Mackay and Mountford, 1979: 212 ff ).

## 1.2 Strategies in poetry Comprehension

Comprehension processes of poetry enable readers to construct meaning from the printed page most effectively.

I- WORD SPLASH: Students write a story using some familiar and unfamiliar words that are all found in the text. Some stories are shared aloud; any misunderstood or unknown words are then defined. A Word Splash activates prior knowledge about key vocabulary and concepts. It also activates prior knowledge about key vocabulary and concepts. It is a fun activity that also engages students in writing while providing motivation for reading by setting a clear purpose for reading.

The procedures followed for attaining Word Splash include:

Select 7-10 key words or phrases from the given text; use words that are both familiar and unfamiliar to the students.

Dictate the words to the students so that they have to try to spell the words.

Have students write a short story of at least seven lines using all the words.

Give students a chance to share their stories with a partner; then select several students to read their story aloud.

Read the given text to see if any student-generated story was close to the text.

text, terms, ideas, etc. can be attached. This mental framework is begun before reading even begins, strengthened as students interact with the text.

#### 1.4 Pre-reading Strategies

Pre-reading strategies are employed to activate prior knowledge(schemata) essential for understanding texts. They intend to help students access background information that can facilitate subsequent reading, provide specific information needed for successful comprehension, simulate student interest and set up student expectations. During the pre-reading phase, learners can be encouraged to tune into the content of the text; establish a reason for reading; express an attitude about the topic; review their own experiences in relation to the topic; activate existing cultural knowledge; and become familiar with some of the language structure and organization in the text (Hedge, 2000: 210; and Davis and Pearse, 2000: 92). In order to have a better view of pre-reading strategies, consider the following strategies that should be followed to achieve successful understanding of poetry.

a few students to read their paragraph(s) aloud.

5. Read the given text to see how accurate the essays were.

### III- **PREWRITE QUESTIONS:**

Students survey the text and create questions they think the text was designed to answer. This sets a purpose for reading. (During reading, students should try to answer their questions). Students should survey textbook and create questions that will probably be answered by the text. As students read, they look for information that will answer their questions. An alternative is for students to try to anticipate the questions that a teacher might ask if he/she were planning to assess the students' comprehension. Then students read to locate the answers to such possible test questions.

IV- **STORY IMPRESSION:** Students write a story using vocabulary words; appropriate for literature. A story impression is a prediction of a story; as students begin to do the actual reading, they have a schema in place to which new ideas from the text can be attached, corrected, or enhanced. The teacher chooses key words, phrases, or concepts from several chapters and lists them in the order in which they appear in the chapters. The list will normally consist of 10 to 15 items. Students should be given enough words to form an impression of the chapters

II- **KEY WORDS:** Students write an informational essay using new concept vocabulary; typically this is a way for students to describe what they already know about the terms before they actually read the text. It is a tool for activating prior knowledge and determining necessary instruction. A Key Words activity can be used again after a unit to demonstrate increased understanding.

The Key Word activity is similar to the Word Splash Activity, however instead of writing a short story with the given key word, students are asked to put the words into an informative essay as if they are writing to share their knowledge about the key words with someone else.

It is performed through the following steps:

Select 7-10 key words from the given text that may challenge the students.

Have words on the board for students to copy down or give them a list.

Students are to write an informative paragraph(s) using all the key words provided.

Allow students to share their essay with a partner; then select

C. **THINK-PAIR-SHARE:** Students write down thoughts, discuss with partner, and share meaningful ideas with class. Forces interaction and uncovers various perspectives and prior knowledge. The Think-Pair-share activity is a cooperative learning tool. It involves the following points:

1. Students are given a topic or open-ended question to think about, recording their thoughts on paper. The “Do Now” works well as a Think-Pair-Share activity.
2. Students are then paired up and asked to share their thoughts with a partner.
3. The partners are asked to create one concise statement combining both group members’ thoughts.
4. The combined statements are shared with the class.

D. **KWL CHART:** Using a three-columned poster or page, students write what they “k”now or think they know about a topic, and then add any questions they “w”ant to have answered by the text. Return to the chart after reading to record what was “l”earned through the reading, and/or to correct any prior misconceptions. Students return to the chart after reading to record what was learned through the reading, and/or to correct any prior misconceptions.

but not so many that they are able to create entire episodes that they will encounter in reading. The Story Impression involves the following substrategies:

A. **Pictures :** Students look at pictures/text box/sidebars and predict what text is about.

B. **DO NOW:** Students write their thoughts on a topic or question that relates specifically to text that will be read by students. “Do Now”s are typically done at the start of a class or lesson. A Do Now is a quick question or thought-provoking statement that the students are asked to respond to within a given time (usually 3-5 minutes). The Do Now question can be written on the board, shown on an overhead or duplicated and passed out. The object is to engage students in writing their thoughts without the pressure of being correct and to focus the students on the concept that will be targeted in class that day. "Do Now's" are most often used as “At the bell” activities to enable an efficient transition between hall time and class time, however they can be used to:

1. Introduce a new unit or the next concept in the unit
2. Quickly review a learned concept.
3. Get thoughts on paper for later discussion or reflection.

## 1.6 Findings

The findings reveal that the employed techniques and strategies are so effective in teaching poetry and in the development of students' ability in understanding the proposed poems. Moreover, it appears that there is a significant difference in the mean scores of the students' achievement in understanding poetry between the experimental and control groups which is in favour of the former.

In addition, other conclusions have been drawn. These are:

The application of these strategies (including: word splash, key words, pre-write questions and story impression) provides college students with opportunities which help them improve their level of comprehending poetry.

The thriving application of these strategies motivates actively students in activities related to comprehending and understanding poetry and stimulates them to be more active in attending classroom instruction. They indirectly become more fluent and freer in generating ideas related to solving problems associated with deciphering poetry.

These pre-reading strategies give college students the opportunities to take part in the learning process. Students are no longer seen as passive receivers of knowledge, but

E. **I-SEARCH**: An alternative to a research paper that allows students to write about a topic they are interested in. It is an alternative to a research paper that leads students to investigate a topic they are interested in without the worry of plagiarism and the overwhelming paper deluge.

## 1.5 Methodology

The practical part includes the application of the above strategies to augment teaching poetry of the third year classes. The sample of the study consists of 60 students divided into two equal groups (30 students stand for the experimental and the other 30 for the control group). The teacher responsible for teaching poetry for the stage is going to teach the control group following the traditional method, whereas one of the researchers is going to teach the experimental group according to the pre-reading strategies (including: word splash, key words, pre-write questions and story impression). Equalization between the two groups is made on the basis of variables (such as Gender, The Academic level of the parents, and Age). The selected poems which are taught to these two groups are *MyHeart* by *John Keats*, *The Lamb* and *Holy Thursday* by *William Blake*. At the end of conducting the experimental work, a test has been administered to both groups to verify the idea that "do these strategies enhance teaching poetry?".

implications and recommendations can be drawn:

1. Teachers are highly required to implement pre – reading strategies particularly in teaching literary texts to encourage college students to better read and understand what they read.

2. They are also advised to select the most interesting, suitable and familiar poems and other literary works to students; a point which can motivate them to read.

3. Students should be encouraged to make their own decision as regards the best way of approaching an unfamiliar text ( more complex poems ) in a foreign language.

4. Teachers should always be enthusiastic as they are sources of ideas for developing reading literary texts including poems.. They should prepare students to reach a deeper level of understanding in reading various texts.

5. Both active and inactive students should be aware of these strategies as they help them solving problems more flexibly and more efficiently.

#### 1.8 References

rather they are active participants whose roles cannot be denied.

Utilizing these pre-reading strategies increases students feeling towards being more confident in reading poetic texts. They are now more ready to take part in classroom activities.

Students exposed to these strategies may significantly have increased their vocabulary knowledge. They can improve their way of reading ,i.e., they feel that they are more mature to face reading problems faced in poetic text. They can monitor their comprehension and connect what they read to their own knowledge and to other parts of the text.

They, in one way or another , aid students develop a purpose for reading a poetic text and overcome boredom and failure to recall what they have read previously . They can create their own interests in what is being read.

Finally, the use of these strategies consolidates the relationships between the teachers and his students , and between the students themselves. These pre-reading strategies create an atmosphere of intimacy . They encourage the spirit of cooperation among students.

#### 1.7 Recommendations

In the light of the conclusions stated above, some pedagogical

ed.). Boston, MA: Heinle and Heinle. P191.

8-Gronlund, N.E., ( 1976 ). *Assessment of Student Achievement*. Boston: Ally N and Bacon.

9- Harmer, Jeremy (2001). *How to Teach English*. Essex : Pearson Education Limited.

10-Hedge, Tricia (2000) *Teaching and Learning in the Language Classroom*. Oxford: OUP.

11-Mackay, R. and Mountford, A. (1979)." Reading for Information ". In R. Mackay, B. Barkman and R. Jordan ( Eds.) *Reading in a Second Language*. Rowley: Newbury House.

12-Nunan, David (2004) *Second Language and Learning*. New York: Heinle and Heinle.

13-Pearson , Purtee L. ( 1990 ). "The Comparison of The Effects of Three Pre- reading Advance Organizers on The Comprehension of Fifth-Grade Social Studies Materials". Un Published Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

14-Peter, Johnston and Rodgers, Rebecca (2006). *Process Improvement*. Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

1- Ajideh, Parviz (2003) " Schema Theory Based Pre-reading Tasks : A Neglected Essential in the ESL Reading Class ". *The Reading Matrix*, Vol.3,No.1(1-14).

2- Brantmeier, ( 2002 ). "Building a Comprehensive Theory of Adult Foreign Language Reading : A Variety of Variables and Research Methods". *The Southern Journal of Linguistics*, 27,pp. 1-7.

3-Broughton, G.; Brumfit; Ch. R. Flavell; Hill, B. and Pincas, A.(1981). *Teaching English as a Foreign Language*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.  
4- Brown, Douglas H. (2007). *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed ).San Francisco : San Francisco State Univ.

5-Davis, Paul and Pearse, Eric (2000) *Success in English Teaching*. Oxford: OUP

6- Ediger, Anne (2001)."Teaching Children Literacy Skills in a SecondLanguage". In Marianne Celce-Murcia, ( ed.) *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language* ( 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York: Heinle and Heinle .  
7-Grabe, William, and Stoller, L.F., (2001). "Reading for Academic Purpose: Guidelines for the ESL/EFL Teacher". In M.Celce Murcia, (Ed.), *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language* (3<sup>rd</sup>

15-Rivers, Wilga M. (1981) *Teaching Foreign-Language Skills*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

16-Singhal , M. (2001 ). "A Comparison of L1 and L2 Reading: Cultural Differences and Schema " *The Internet TESOL Journal* , 4 (10 ) <http://iteslg.org/articles/singhal-readingL1,L2>.

-Staiger, R.C.(1973). *The Teaching of Reading*. UNESCO: Ginn and Co. ١٧

Spears, Deanne, ( 2006 ). *Developing Critical Reading Skills*. McGraw Hill Companies, Inc.

18-Ur, Penny, (1996). *A Course in Language Teaching: Practice and*

*Theory.* Cambridge: CUP.