



Original Contribution

**REGARDING THE PROBLEM OF ASKING QUESTIONS
INDEPENDENTLY TO LITERARY WORK (1-4 GRADE)**

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ABSTRACT

This article regards a problem that is not covered to a satisfactory extend in the methodological literature – problem related to the children asking questions independently at the primary school level as a method of the analytical work on a literary text. The students are involved in a particular dialogue situation where special attention is placed on the interactive aspect of the communication. The methodological way of development of the skill of asking questions independently is pointed out. This approach is regarded in two aspects: first, analysis of ready-to-use questions, prepared by the teacher or by the authors of the textbook; and second, work on independent preparation of questions. The typology questions stimulate the transmission of the skills in a different educational situation (a new literary work).

Key words: literary communication, interaction, typology questions

INTRODUCTION

The problem related to children asking questions independently at primary-school stage is insufficiently covered in the methodological literature, related to the Bulgarian language and literature teaching in the primary school. The formulation of questions by the children themselves is usually accepted as one of the methods of work with a text and is regulated in the school curriculum for first and second grade in *nucleus* (main body) 4 Socio-cultural and literary competences: Creation of statements and written texts. Standard 1: The student participates in a talk concerning the subject-matter of a literary work: answers questions; makes comments choosing relevant elements of the text in order to substantiate them; composes and asks questions. Expected result 4: The student composes and asks elementary questions related to the literary work that is studied. In third and fourth grade is envisaged that children could ask questions considering the particular subject-matter of an independently-read literary work [3].

The formulation of questions by the student in relation to unfamiliar words or on

the subject-matter of a literary text after the first reading is added by N. Mateeva to the skills of reading a literary text and more precisely to the student's ability to differentiate between known/unknown in the semantic structure of the text (word-paragraph) [2].

According to N. Ivanova, the young readers asking questions with regard to a literary work is an approach that contributes to the deepening of perception, to the enrichment of readers' impressions, and to the satisfaction of aspirations and interests of the students [1].

We can look at the process of independently asking questions as:

- stimulus to provoking in students of willingness for literary communication;
- motif for participation in the educational activity through personal choice and principle of voluntary action;
- criterion for diagnosing of students' interests;
- evidence for the extent of depth and gaps in the readers' acquisition in order to avoid associations that are out of context and fragmentation of the impression about the artistic figurativeness;
- type of speech task through which children learn how to express themselves correctly and clearly – the training for better formulation could be carried out in

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compulsory lessons of Bulgarian language.

Regardless of the genre, author and theme of the studied work conditions could always be created thus stimulating children to ask questions about the literary work spontaneously and without embarrassment. The independently asked questions are directed at the different components of the subject-matter and the type of work, that is to say: to the plot, the figures of the characters, the style, composition, the theme and the idea of the literary work.

According to I. Znepolski ‘...the perception of the artistic message is a complicated conglomeration that involves perceptiveness, emotional reaction to the message and understanding’ [5].

The aim of the aesthetic communication at primary school cannot be limited to acquaintance of the students with the basic subject-matter components of the readings in the textbooks and to impartial reading of the text. There should be created different pre-conditions for activating the representative imagination, of the empathy, and the aesthetic emotions of the students in order to obtain, as a result, an effective literary communication.

However, the independent asking of questions is predominantly oriented towards the understanding. Analysing-summarising work with text ‘after the author’, i.e. in the process of the action development, involves a system of questions and it is directed at the implied meaning (cause-effect links, motives for the behaviour of the characters), author’s judgement, general mood of the work, personal attitude towards the reading. More unrestricted forms of analysis are also possible when the questions are asked with a view to waking up the personal attitude of the students towards the work, presupposing a discussion and a lively and spontaneous exchange of thoughts.

The questions to the literary text that have been independently formulated by the children during the talk could be asked directly to the teacher or to the classmates. Regardless of the person to whom they are directed (it is possible the use of the didactic game ‘Whom do you want to ask a question to?’), a socio-cultural type of communication is realised in the lessons of Literature through the following basic communicational chains.

First communicational chain: teacher – literary work – students

The ability of children to ask questions with

regard to the literary work at primary school is built in two ways: first – implicitly – when the communication between teacher and students becomes a model for independent literary communication and – second – through exercises set on purpose for conscious acquisition of approaches, activities, operations.

The independent formulation of questions with regard to a literary work should not be put aside but on the contrary – in the created dialogue situation the young learners should receive an answer even if such one that does not satisfy them. We should not forget that usually the student receives from the teacher answers to questions that he or she has never asked.

Second communicational chain: students – literary work – students

The contact with works of art usually breeds in the recipient a need for communication with other people in order to share impressions, experiences, thoughts, and estimations. Consequently, group work is most frequently used – one part of the group asks questions about the literary work while the other is looking for the answers in the work itself – an example of the apparatus for work with a text to the poem ‘Hubavets’ by Leda Mileva, and to ‘Velikdenski iaitsa’ – extract from ‘Patilantsi’ by Ran Bosilek in ‘Chitanka za tretii klas’ [4].

The Literature lessons are especially important as a place for the interactive mechanisms for asking questions with the support of multiple answers, i.e. different versions of answers that are really or virtually possible – e.g. a student asks the class questions and chooses a student who has to answer, another adds comments in order to receive more complete information in the process of making out the artistic code.

Formation of skill for independent formulation of questions with regard to a literary work requires preliminary preparation of the students that is expressed in:

- observation of the literary text concerning the characteristics of the subject-matter, composition, characters, style, and authors attitude;

- self-observation of the personal impressions and emotional reactions with regard to the text;
- motivation of the reader’s expectations, preferences, estimations;
- comments on the plot, the behaviour of the characters.

The methodology of teaching for asking questions with regard to a literary work involves two aspects: analysis of ready-to-use questions and work-to-prepare questions.

Analysis of ready-to-use questions prepared by the teacher and by the authors of the textbook:

Why is the question asked?

What kinds of words support the question to be asked?

Which question appears to be the most interesting, the most difficult, etc.?

Work for preparation of questions at home including written ones:

Before asking a question read carefully the text;

Mark off this part of the text with regard to which you want to ask a question;

Think of the question formulation by choosing the most precise from several versions;

Exercise yourself in asking questions.

We offer to students different model typology questions related to the text intended to stimulate the transfer of abilities for independent work in another educational situation (a new literary work). The contemporary tendency is that the attention is more and more focused on productive-cognitive questions from the type 'Why?/How?', rather than reproductive-cognitive (What is described? Where? When?), in order to provoke cause-effect thinking and to provide opportunity to observe as a whole the form and the content

of the literary work.

By means of the independently asked questions the teacher can observe the style of the student, the capacity of his vocabulary, and the acquisition of linguistic means. The work in this respect involves development of the general intellectual qualities of a particular student, the impact on his abilities to understand the specific code in the information of the literary text. Thus, the abilities for interpersonal communication of the student are widely developed.

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