Mastering German Reading Skills
Unlocking Success with The PQRST Learning Method

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ABSTRACT

Acquiring proficiency in reading German is a challenging endeavor. The students' limited German vocabulary hinders their comprehension of a text. Students who do not have a strong command of German grammar find it difficult to understand the meaning of phrases in German-language writings. The use of appropriate learning methods for reading skills is assumed to support students in understanding the content of texts more deeply. One method that can be applied to address this issue is the Preview, Question, Read, Summary, Test (PQRST) learning method. The objectives of this research were to determine the reading comprehension of German language students before and after the implementation of the PQRST method and the effectiveness of the PQRST method in German language reading skills learning. This research was quantitative, using the Quasi-Experiment method with a Non-equivalent Control Group design. The research instruments used were written tests and questionnaires. The findings show that there is a significant difference in reading comprehension before and after the implementation of the PQRST method and the PQRST method is effectively used in German language reading skills learning, as evidenced by the t-test results producing a significance value (2-tailed) of less than 0.05 ($0.017 < 0.05$) and the questionnaire results indicate that students responded positively to the implementation of the PQRST method. Therefore, the PQRST method can be used as an alternative learning method in German language reading skills learning.

Keywords: German language learning, reading skills, the PQRST learning method.

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading skills are highly important in life as every aspect of life is inseparable from reading activities, especially in language learning. Improving reading skills can help enhance other language skills such as listening, speaking, and writing. According to Ambarita, Wulan, and Wahyudin (2021), by actively engaging in reading activities, an individual will naturally enhance their vocabulary, expand their knowledge, hone their speaking skills, develop their thinking abilities, and be capable of providing responses to the content they encounter.

Reading comprehension is the process in which an individual attempts to recognize, understand, and retain information found in a reading material. It is a fundamental necessity and a key factor in a student's success in the educational process. The majority of information that students acquire comes from reading activities, not only through formal education at school but also through reading in their everyday lives (Johan & Ghasya, 2018; Fahrurrozi, Aprilentina, Anwar, & Wicaksono, 2020). From these quotes, it can be understood that readers need to integrate the text's content with their own knowledge and opinions. If the reader successfully accomplishes this, they can be said to have successfully engaged in reading comprehension.

Thomas F. Staton introduces the PQRST Method to enhance memory performance in understanding the content of texts, encouraging readers to engage in deeper and broader material processing. Abidin (2012) explains the main goal of using the PQRST method is to enhance understanding of the reading material and preserve the acquired knowledge for an extended duration. The PQRST is a five-step reading method for comprehending material or texts, consisting of Preview, Question, Read, Summary, and Test.

The first step is Preview. This step aims to allow learners to read quickly before starting to read the text. Trianto (in Negara, Suarni, and Margunayasa, 2013) explains that learners can begin by reading the topic, main subtopics, titles and subtitles, sentences at the beginning or end of paragraphs, or summaries at the end of chapters. If not available, learners can quickly read each page, reading one or two sentences here and there to get a brief idea of what needs to be learned. During the preview phase, it's also important to pay attention to the main ideas that are the core of the discussion in the reading material. This is in line with Hidayah, Suwandi, and Hastuti's (2014) opinion, which explains that the purpose of the first step of preview is to get an overall impression or general idea of the content of the text. These main ideas facilitate understanding the entire text.

The second step is the Question. In this stage, learners are asked to formulate questions based on what they read during the Preview. Muhibbah (2023) says in the second stage, students create questions using the question words what, who, where, when, why, and how. Hidayah et al. (2014) explain that in this second step, learners are necessary so that students while reading, have special attention to the parts that will serve as answers to their questions.

The third step is to Read. Mulyono and Sumarwati (2011) explained that students are encouraged to engage in attentive reading by closely examining provided questions, images, and summaries as tools to direct their focus. They should underline the key concepts in each paragraph, grasp the core ideas of the text, and briefly pause their eye movements when encountering significant content. Readers tend to read more attentively when seeking answers to the questions posed in the questioning stage.

The fourth step is Summary. At this point, learners stop reading and then summarize what they have read or take important notes. Mulyono and Sumarwati (2011) explained that students are tasked with summarizing the key points of the reading in their own words, either through internal reflection or by responding to the initial questions given at the start of the task. They are also expected to elucidate the primary theme with reference to the supplied images. Furthermore, Sulastri (2019) explains that the summary can be in the form of writing or an outline. The summary task contains information obtained based on the questions posed in the second Question stage. The goal is to sharpen learners' memory of the material read.

The fifth step is the Test. In this stage, a sort of test is conducted to determine the extent of the understanding gained from the book or previous reading material. Mulyono and Sumarwati (2011) state that, in this final step, learners respond to reading questions presented by the instructor, whether orally, in writing, or through practice, to evaluate their comprehension abilities.

The advantages of the PQRST reading method when compared to other reading comprehension methods are as follows: First, the method is practical and can be applied in various teaching approaches. Second, when employing the PQRST method, students promptly acquire or establish a broad understanding of the subject matter under examination. They formulate inquiries based on the chapter's title or subheadings and then proceed to read in search of solutions to those inquiries. Third, this approach can encourage students to engage with supplementary materials more regularly, nurture a sense of critical thinking in them, and facilitate their comprehension of lesson materials, particularly in the context of reading. (Nigrum, Sartika & Fitri, 2022).

2. METHOD

This study utilized a quantitative research approach employing a quasi-experiment research design, specifically a non-equivalent control group design, comprising both an experimental group and a control group. However, the sample selection was not random; but purposive sampling.

This study was conducted at a private senior high school in Bandung, Indonesia during the second semester of the 2022/2023 academic year. The population under study included all students studying the German language. In this research, a sample of 40 students was selected, 20 students from class XI MIPA 2 as the experimental group and another 20 students from class XI MIPA 1 as the control group.

The research employed the PQRST Method for data collection, alongside assessment tools such as pre-tests and post-tests, in addition to a research questionnaire.

In this study, the treatment was conducted three times. The research theme selected was in accordance with the curriculum for the second semester of the 11th grade in senior high school, which was "*Essen und Trinken*" (Food and Drink). The sources used for the research instruments and treatment in this study were the books "*Netzwerk A1*," "Studio D A1," and the YouTube channel "*Evde Almanaca*." The written test for the pre-test and post-test was the same as the *Goethe-Zertifikat A1* exam. This test consists of 15 items and is divided into three sections.

The assessment tools employed in this study comprise a pre-test administered before the treatment and a post-test conducted after the treatment. The evaluation instruments used have been assessed by experts through Expert Judgment, ensuring their validity and reliability when administered to the sample. This form of evaluation was used to measure the initial and final competencies of the students. The pre-test was used to assess the reading comprehension skills of the students in German language texts before applying the PQRST teaching method. Conversely, the post-test was utilized to assess the students' reading comprehension skills in German language texts following the treatment. In this assessment instrument, a total of 15 questions were provided. Each question carries a maximum score of 15 points. To enhance comprehensibility, the scores were converted into a 100-point scale and interpreted based on the assessment criteria derived from Arikunto's (2010) guidelines, as outlined in Table 1.

The collected data underwent assessments for both normality and homogeneity. The data's significance was then analyzed using paired sample t-tests and independent sample t-tests via the SPSS Version 27 software.

In this study, the non-test evaluation instrument used was a questionnaire. The questionnaire was employed to understand the students' interest in learning using the PQRST teaching method and to identify the strengths and weaknesses of learning reading comprehension skills in the German language using the PQRST method. The questionnaire was administered to the students through Google Forms and consists of 20 statements divided into several aspects: the research evaluated the efficiency of the PQRST Method in enhancing German language reading skills, the advantages and disadvantages of applying this method to German language reading instruction, and the strategies employed to address challenges in learning German language reading.

In this research questionnaire, closed-ended questions were utilized, and the students' responses were measured using a Likert Scale ranging from 1 to 5.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this research, data was gathered through the administration of both a pre-test and a post-test. The pre-test was a test conducted to measure the student's ability to learn reading skills in German texts prior to the treatment, which involved applying the PQRST teaching method. On the other hand, the post-test was a final test conducted to measure the post-treatment students' reading ability. The test instruments provided to the students during the pre-test and post-test were the same.

The student's ability to comprehend German language texts was categorized based on the assessment criteria presented by Arikunto (2010) as seen in Table 1. The calculation results of the pre-test and post-test, with a maximum score of 100, yielded assessment criteria for the student's ability to comprehend German language texts.

Table 1. Assessment criteria presented by Arikunto (2010)

Score	Criteria
81 - 100	Very Good
61 - 80	Good
41 - 60	Fair
21 - 40	Not Good
0 - 20	Very Poor

3.1. Students' Proficiency in Understanding German Language Texts Before Introducing the PQRST Method

According to the findings from the pre-test in the experimental group, the lowest score achieved was 46.67, and the highest was 80, with an average of 64.67. In the control group's pre-test results, the lowest score attained was 40, the highest was 86.67, and the average was 67.67 as presented in Table 2. Following Arikunto's (2010) assessment criteria, it could be deduced that the average pre-test scores in both the experimental and control groups fell within the "good" range.

Table 2. Pre-test results of experimental class and control class

Pre-test Results					
No.	Class	Lowest Score	Highest Score	Ave-rage	Cate-gory
1.	Experimental Class	46,67	80	64,67	Good
2.	Control Class	40	86,67	67,67	Good

3.2. Students' Proficiency in Understanding German Language Texts After Introducing the PQRST Method

In the post-test results in the experimental group, the lowest score achieved was 60, and the highest was 100, with an average of 85.67 as presented in Table 3. In the control group's post-test results, the lowest score attained was 40, the highest was 93.33, and the average was 75. According to Arikunto's (2010) assessment criteria, it could be deduced that the average post-test scores in the experimental group fell within the "very good" range, while the average scores in the control group fell within the "good" range after the treatment.

Table 3. Post-test results of the experimental class and control class

Post-test Results				
No.	Class	Lowest Score	Highest Score	Ave-rage	Cate-gory
1.	Experimental Class	60	100	85,67	VeryGood
2.	Control Class	40	93, 33	75	Good

3.3. The Discrepancy in Students' Proficiency in Understanding German Language Texts Before and After Introducing the PQRST Method

To discern variations in students' learning outcomes for German language reading skills before and after the treatment, it was necessary to perform a significant data test using the t-test. Before conducting this test, it's crucial to conduct an assumption analysis. The following details the data analysis process:

3.3.1. Test of Data Normality

The outcomes of the normality test for the pre-test in the experimental group showed a value of 0.095, while the control group displayed a value of 0.061. In both cases, the significance values were above 0.05. Therefore, it could be deduced that the pre-test data in both the experimental and control groups adhere to a normal distribution. As for the normality test results of the post-test data in the experimental group, it yielded a value of 0.085, and for the control group, it was 0.063, both with significance values exceeding 0.05. These results indicated that the post-test data in both the experimental and control groups also conformed to a normal distribution.

3.3.2. Test of Data Homogeneity

The obtained significance values for the pre-test and post-test in the experimental group were 0.946. Based on this calculation, it could be inferred that the significance value exceeds 0.05 (0.946 > 0.05), suggesting that the variances of the pre-test and post-test in the experimental group were uniform. Similarly, the significance values for the pre-test and post-test in the control group were 0.149. The calculation results also showed that the significance value was greater than 0.05 (0.149 > 0.05), indicating homogeneity in the variances of the pre-test and post-test in the control group.

3.3.3. Paired Sample t-Test

The significance value derived from the computation of the pre-test and post-test outcomes in the experimental group was 0.001. Upon examining the calculations, it could be inferred that the significance value was below 0.05 (0.001 < 0.05). This suggested a notable difference between the pre-test and post-test data in the experimental group. Thus, it could be concluded that the implementation of the PQRST teaching method led to an enhancement in German language text reading skills in the experimental class.

The significance value resulting from the pre-test and post-test calculations in the control group was 0.041. These calculations indicated that the significance value falls below 0.05 (0.041 < 0.05). This suggested a notable difference between the pre-test and post-test data in the control group. Consequently, it could be inferred that there was an improvement in German language text reading skills in the control class, although the extent of improvement might not be as pronounced.

3.3.4. Independent Sample t-Test

The significance test outcomes for the pre-test in both the experimental and control groups yielded a value of 0.426. This suggested that the significance value exceeds 0.05, indicating there was no substantial difference in the pre-test data between the average scores in the experimental and control groups. Thus, it could be concluded that both the experimental and control groups exhibited similar capabilities in acquiring German language text reading skills.

The significance test outcomes for the post-test in both the experimental and control groups revealed a value of 0.017. This indicated that the significance value was below 0.05, signifying a substantial difference in data between the average post-test scores in the experimental and control groups. Hence, it could be inferred that there was a significant disparity in the abilities of the experimental class and control class to learn German language text reading skills following the treatment involving the utilization of the PQRST teaching method.

3.4. The Effectiveness of Using the PQRST Learning Method in Teaching Reading Skills in German Language

The impact of employing the PQRST learning approach in instructing German language reading skills could be evaluated through the average pre-test and post-test scores in both the experimental and control groups.

Table 4. Average pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental class and control class

No.	Class	Average Score Pre-test	Average Score Post-test
1.	Experimental Class	64,67	85,67
2.	Control Class	67,67	75

As shown in Table 4, it could be deduced that the average post-test scores in the experimental group exhibited a noteworthy enhancement in comparison to their pre-test results. In contrast, the post-test outcomes in the control group, when compared to the pre-test results, did not display a substantial difference.

To evaluate the efficacy of employing the PQRST learning approach, a significance test was conducted using an Independent Sample t-test. According to the computations, the resulting significance value (two-tailed) was 0.017. This signified that the significance value was below 0.05, indicating a substantial difference in the average scores between the pre-test and post-test outcomes. Hence, it could be inferred that the alternative hypothesis (H1) was accepted, meaning that the utilization of the PQRST learning method was effective in imparting reading skills in the German language.

3.5. Student Reactions to the Application of the PQRST Learning Approach in Instructing German Language Reading Skills

The questionnaire provided consisted of 20 questions and was administered online using Google Forms on May 15, 2023. The results of the questionnaire can be explained based on the aspects included in the prepared questionnaire as follows.

Aspect 1: Difficulties Faced by Students in Reading German Language Texts

Table 5. Result of questionnaire data for Aspect 1

The Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
I am experiencing difficulties in reading the German language.	25%	55%	20%	-	-

Based on the obtained results in Table 5, it can be concluded that 55% of the students chose "agree" with this statement, 25% of the students strongly agree, and 20% of the students were uncertain or neutral. From these results, it can be inferred that nearly half of the students were facing difficulties in reading German language texts.

Aspect 2: Students' Responses to the Use of the PQRST Learning Method in Teaching Reading Skills in German Language

Table 6. Result of questionnaire data for Aspect 2

The Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
The PQRST method can help me comprehend learning German language reading skills.	15%	50%	30%	5%	-

Based on the obtained results in Table 6, it can be concluded that 50% of the students chose "agree" with this statement, 30% of the students were uncertain or neutral, 15% of the students strongly agreed, and 5% of the students disagreed. From these results, it can be understood that a majority of the students believed that the PQRST method could assist them in understanding the learning of German language reading skills.

Further, based on the obtained results as presented in Table 7, it can be concluded that 50% of the students chose "agree" with this statement, 35% of the students were uncertain or neutral, 10% of the students strongly agreed, and 5% of the students disagreed. From these results, it can be understood that half of the students believed that if they regularly practiced reading German language texts using the PQRST method, their understanding of the texts could improve.

Table 7. Result of questionnaire data for Aspect 2

The Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
If I consistently practice reading German language texts using the PQRST method, my understanding of German language texts can improve.	10%	50%	35%	5%	-

According to the feedback received from the questionnaire, the utilization of the PQRST learning approach in teaching German language reading skills had a highly favorable influence on the students. It efficiently aided them in overcoming challenges related to comprehending German language texts, including issues with vocabulary and understanding German grammar usage.

4. CONCLUSION

From the study titled "Mastery of German Reading Skills: Achieving Success with the PQRST Learning Approach," several conclusions can be drawn as follows: 1) The average pre-test score for the experimental class was 64.67, while for the control class, was 67.67, both falling into the "good" category; 2) The average post-test score in the experimental class was 85.67, categorized as "very good," whereas the control class had an average score of 75, which was classified as "good"; 3) A notable difference in reading comprehension was observed before and after applying the PQRST method; 4) The PQRST method proved to be effective in the acquisition of German language reading skills, demonstrated by the t-test results with a two-tailed significance value less than 0.05 (0.017 < 0.05); and 5) Feedback from the questionnaire revealed that students responded positively to the implementation of the PQRST method in learning German language reading skills. Consequently, the PQRST method can be considered as an alternative approach for acquiring German language reading skills. The data analysis outcomes underscore the highly positive implications of this research.

This research constituted an experiment designed to assist students in addressing challenges related to comprehending German language texts, including vocabulary gaps and grasping German grammar. The rationale behind this endeavor lay in the PQRST learning method, which primarily focuses on improving reading comprehension and the retention of that comprehension over an extended timeframe. Consequently, through the application of the PQRST learning method, students can effectively store newly acquired vocabulary and gain a lasting understanding of the usage of German grammar.

For other researchers who wish to use the PQRST learning method, it is recommended to select German-language texts according to the proficiency level of the sample under study. High school students can be provided with German-language texts at level A1. For other researchers interested in the application of the PQRST learning method, this method can be used for other materials, such as vocabulary or grammar topics like the use of Nominative, Accusative, Dative, and Genitive cases.

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