

The Experimental Research of Using Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) Strategy in Teaching Reading Comprehension for Indonesian Students in Junior High School

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Abstract—This article is about teaching English on reading comprehension by using Question – Answer Relationship (QAR) Strategy for Indonesian Students in Junior High School. It aims to identify the effects of Question - Answer Relationship strategy (QAR) on reading comprehension ability of EFL students at eighth grade of junior high school in Solok, West Sumatera, Indonesia. The design of the research was quasi experimental. The population of this research was eighth grade students of SMPN 2 Kota Solok in academic year 2016/2017 which consisted of 11 classes (356 students). The samples were chosen by using cluster random sampling; VIII.1 as experimental class (32 students) and VIII.2 as the control class (32 students). The instrument was applied by using reading comprehension test. It was tried out first to other group which had similar capabilities to both experimental and control classes. The data were analyzed by using Liliefors test for normality testing, Variance test for homogeneity testing and T-test for hypothesis testing. The result of this research shows that the students who were taught by using Question – Answer Relationship (QAR) Strategy had better reading comprehension than those who were taught by using conventional strategy. It can be concluded that QAR strategy had a significant result on students' reading comprehension than conventional strategy.

Keywords—Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) Strategy; Reading Comprehension; Indonesian EFL students

I. INTRODUCTION

For most EFL learners, reading in a foreign language is more complicated due to such three main obstacles as specific reading skill, their own background knowledge, difference context and culture, and difficulties in grammar and vocabulary[1]. In Indonesian EFL context, most students especially in Junior High School still face difficulties dealing with reading comprehension texts. With regard to the preliminary observation and interview, the unsatisfactory results of Indonesian students' reading comprehension were caused by several problems. The first problem was most of them had difficulties in comprehending text because they had insufficient

vocabulary. As the result, when the teacher asked them to answer the questions associated to the text, they could not answer it well. The second problem comes from the teaching strategy that the teacher used. The English teachers tend to use strategy which does not give specific instruction in reading. By using this strategy, the Indonesian students read the text once or twice, and then tried to answer the question. If they could not find the answer explicitly in the text, they think that the text was difficult to comprehend. They had no interest to continue reading activity and doing other activities. Based on the problems above, the teacher should find an appropriate strategy in teaching reading to help the Indonesian students comprehend the text.

EFL students' inability to understand the texts is made of some inside and outside factors[2]. The inside factors include students' learning motivation, age, attitude and learning style. Meanwhile, the outside factor is related to the teacher's strategies. As the result, using an appropriate strategy is important for the teachers to solve the students' problems. By using an appropriate strategy, the students' achievement in reading can be improved directly. Raphael as an expert who pays much attention on developing strategy instruction in reading proposed an appropriate strategy that can be used to achieve these two conditions. The strategy is called Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy. QAR is a reading strategy in which students categorize comprehension questions according to where they got the information they needed to answer each question[3]. In this strategy, the students are asked to indicate whether the information they use to answer questions about the text are textually explicit information, textually implicit information, or the information is absolutely come from the students' background knowledge.

II. QUESTION - ANSWER RELATIONSHIP (QAR) STRATEGY

Questioning is important element in teaching reading comprehension for students. It is one of the most important

dimensions of teaching and learning since it gives teachers a chance to find out whether the students understand the content and it allows the students to monitor their own comprehension[4]. A questioning strategy utilized in developing reading comprehension is what Taffy Raphael refers to as Question – Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy[5].

Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy is a strategy which is developed by Taffy Raphael to encourage students' ability in comprehending text and answering comprehension questions. QAR strategy is a reading strategy where the students categorize comprehension question according to where they get information they need to answer the questions[6]. Moreover, using QAR strategy can encourage students' reading interest. In addition, QAR strategy can make the students interest and confident in answering comprehension question. It leads to the improvements of students' score in reading comprehension test[7].

There are several categories of QAR strategy[8]. First category is *In the Book Question* consist of *Right There* and *Think and Search* questions. Second category is *In My Head Questions* consist of *Author and Me* and *On My Own*.

a. *Right There Question*

The characteristic of *Right There* question is the questions and answer usually have the same wording and there is usually one right answer. Some examples of phrases used for right there questions; Who is the main character? Where did? When did?

b. *Think and Search Questions*

The characteristic of *Think and Search* Questions is the questions and answer have different wording and the answer are usually short answers. Some examples of phrases used for *Think and Search* questions; How did? For what reason? Why was?

c. *Author and Me Question*

The characteristic of *Author and Me* is the answer does not lie directly in the text. Some examples of phrases used for *Author and Me*; did you agree with? What do you think of?

d. *On My Own Questions*

The characteristic of *On My Own* is it requires the reader to refer to the passage. Some examples of phrases used for *On My Own*; Have you ever? Would you ever?

Using QAR strategy in teaching reading has several advantages. QAR strategy initially helps students to search for key words and phrases to locate the appropriate information for answering questions. It also empowers students to think about the text they are read. In addition this strategy improves students' critical thinking since it provides with clear instruction to the students in reading activities. That is why this research applied QAR strategy in teaching reading comprehension at eighth grade students.

QAR strategy has some steps in applying in the classroom: Step 1, introduce the strategy showing the relationship of the questions to answers. An enlarged chart of this can be hung in the classroom where the students can

refer to it; Step 2, gives a text to the students and asks them to read it by themselves; Step 3, the teacher gives a model how each level of the QAR questions can be identified and answered step by step in reading comprehension by using the text; Step 4, asks the students to work in pair in answering the following questions by determining which level of QAR (*right there, think and search, author and me, on my own*) the questions are belonging to. "Right there" – the information that the students will need to answer the question is right there in the text. "Think and search" - the information that the students will need to answer the question is implied in the text, but the students will have to combine the ideas in the text with the prior knowledge to form inferences. "Author and me" – these questions require students to connect information from the text to what they have already learned and may require students to consider their own experience and opinion or extend what they have learned. "On my own" – these questions can be answered from the readers own experience without information from the text; Step 5, after the students have answered all questions, discuss the answer together; Step 6, teacher gives some questions to the students to check their comprehension of the text[9].

III. READING COMPREHENSION

Reading comprehension is a complex process in which the reader should combine both information from the text and their previous knowledge to construct the meaning[10]. To comprehend the text, the reader is not only need information in the text but also their previous knowledge. Moreover, reading comprehension is also the understanding of the written word, the contents that is being read and the constructions of the meaning of the text[11]. In addition, comprehension is the process of constructing a supportable understanding of a text. It involves two important features: being actively involved with the text and using appropriate background knowledge to interpret the text[12]. It indicates that in reading comprehension, it is important for a reader to have background knowledge about the topic. In short, reading comprehension is a complex process in which the reader should be able to combine the information get from the text with their own background knowledge in order to understanding written word and contents that is being read.

The crucial thing to do by the teacher in teaching reading comprehension in order to achieve students' reading comprehension is determining the purpose of reading. By determining the goal, the students will be more aware to specific parts of the text since they know the purpose of reading. Moreover, they will be more interest when they know the reason why they read the text.

IV. RESEARCH METHODS

The design of this research was a quasi – experimental research. This design was applied in order to investigate the effect of Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy on the students' reading comprehension.

The population of this study was eighth grade students of SMPN 2 Kota Solok. There were 11 classes and total numbers of the students were 356. The sample was taken by using cluster random sampling. From the eleven classes of SMPN 2 Kota Solok, two classes were chosen randomly as the sample. The sample was about 64 students from the total number of population.

V. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The data analysis of reading comprehension was taken from the result of the students reading comprehension test which was administered in experimental and control class after treatment. The format of the test given for both classes were similar in form multiple choices. Both classes were given different treatment. The experimental class was taught by using Question – Answer Relationship (QAR) Strategy, while control class was taught by using conventional strategy. The finding is reported based on the analysis of data and is grouped based on the research question. The finding of this research shows that the students who are taught by using QAR strategy get better reading comprehension than the students who are taught by using conventional strategy. The students' achievement in reading comprehension can be seen on the table below.

TABLE 1. STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION TEST IN EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL CLASS

Class	N	Mean	Max	Min	SD	Var	Sum
<i>Experimental</i>	32	76.87	100	48	14.32	205.14	2460
<i>Control</i>	32	62	92	40	13.32	177.55	1984

From the table above, it was found that the maximum score of students' reading comprehension in experimental class is 100 and the minimum score is 48. The mean score is 76.87, the standard deviation is 14.32, and the variance is 205.14. While, the maximum score of students' reading comprehension in control class is 92 and the minimum score is 40. The mean score is 62, the standard deviation is 13.32, and the variance is 177.55.

Then, the data analysis about students' reading comprehension in experimental class and control class were analyzed through some steps. The normality and homogeneity of students' reading comprehension score were tested. Then, the hypothesis was tested by using the t-test formula.

TABLE 2. NORMALITY TESTING OF STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION

Variable	Class	N	$L_{observed}$	L_{table}	Note
<i>Reading Comprehension</i>	<i>Experimental</i>	32	0.076	0.156	$L_o < L_t$ Normal
	<i>Control</i>	32	0.114	0.156	$L_o < L_t$ Normal

Based on the table description, it was found that the data analysis of students' reading comprehension in experimental and control class was normally distributed. It is because the value of $L_{observed}$ is lower than L_{table} .

The next step is homogeneity testing. It aimed at

finding out if the variance of each group is the same or not. Variance test (F-test) was used to find out the homogeneity. The finding of the data analysis is shown on the table below.

TABLE 3. HOMOGENEITY TESTING OF STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION

Variable	$F_{observed}$	F_{table}	Conclusion
<i>Reading Comprehension</i>	0.86	4.00	Homogeneous

Based on the table above, it was found that the value of $F_{observed}$ of the students' reading comprehension was lower than the value of F_{table} . The value of $F_{observed}$ was 0.86 and F_{table} was 4.00 with significance 0.05. It indicated that the variance of those groups of data analysis were homogeneous.

TABLE 4. T-TEST ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION IN EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL CLASS

T-test Analysis	$t_{observed}$	t_{table}	Note
<i>Students' Reading Comprehension</i>	4.32	2.00	$t_{observed} > t_{table}$ H_0 : accepted

Based on the result of data analysis of reading comprehension by using t-test for the hypothesis, it was found that the value of $t_{observed}$ was 4.32, while the value of t_{table} with level of significance 0.05 was 2.00. Since the value of the $t_{observed}$ was higher than the value of t_{table} , it means that H_0 was rejected. Consequently, H_a is accepted. It means that students who are taught by using QAR strategy get better reading comprehension than the students who are taught by using conventional strategy.

Question - Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy is a strategy which is emphasized on helping students in getting understanding of the text by giving clear instruction. All students need clear instruction in reading comprehension especially on the activities required to answer and generate challenging questions[8]. QAR instruction aims to ask the different types of questions and show the possible information sources students need for finding answers. If students are able to answer all or almost all of the questions associated with the text, this means that they comprehend the whole picture of the text. In short, Question - Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy gave better result to students' reading comprehension because this strategy provided with clear instruction.

In addition, the students also get better critical thinking in reading comprehension through the activities of making relationship between questions and answer. In making relationship between questions and answer, the students were asked to locate the answer of the questions in the text. When students are consciously aware of the different sources of information available to answer questions, they become active in their reading and thinking, and their critical thinking will be improved. QAR strategy is an instructional strategy which can increase student's critical thinking by asking them to analyze the different sources of information that they can use to answer the questions[7]. It means that QAR strategy is confirmed having great value in increasing student's critical thinking as well as their reading

comprehension because it provides the easy ways to answer the question by using the types of its categories, and it also makes students more active in answering the questions.

VI. CONCLUSION

It was concluded that using QAR strategy in the experimental class increased the students' reading comprehension and the statistical analysis revealed that there was a significant difference between the experimental class' performance and the control class performance in post-test. This happened because of Question – Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy is emphasized on helping students in getting understanding of the text by giving clear instruction. In addition, students also get better critical thinking in reading the text through the activities of making relationship between questions and answer.

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