IMPROVING SECONDARY STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION THROUGH QUESTION-ANSWER-RELATIONSHIPS (QAR) STRATEGY

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ABSTARCT: This research aimed to improve students' reading comprehension achievement using Question-Answer-Relationship (QAR) strategy and to determine students' perception toward the application of QAR strategy. The research design was a pre-experimental design. The population in this research was seven grade students of SMP Tri Dharma consisting of three classes, namely VII A, VII B, VII C. The researchers used 33 students of class VII B as the sample for this research. This research used reading test and a closed ended questionnaire to collect the data. This research used paired sample t-test and percentage analysis to analyze the obtained data. The results of paired sample t-test showed that t- obtained was 25.438 and p. was 0.000 (p<0.05). This means that there was a significant improvement in students' reading comprehension after being taught with the QAR strategy. The results of percentage analysis showed that the students' perception of the QAR strategy was positive. It perceived that the QAR strategy was effective to help the students improve their reading comprehension achievement significantly. Those findings indicated that the QAR strategy was effective in improving students' reading comprehension achievement of descriptive texts for the seventh graders of SMP Tri Dharma Palembang in the academic year 2021/2022.

Keywords: *reading comprehension, descriptive text, QAR strategy*

MENINGKATKAN PEMAHAMAN MEMBACA SISWA SMP MELALUI STRATEGI HUBUNGAN-TANYA-JAWAB

ABSTRAK: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan prestasi pemahaman membaca siswa dengan menggunakan strategi Question-Answer-Relationship (QAR) dan untuk mengetahui persepsi siswa terhadap penerapan strategi QAR. Desain penelitian adalah desain pra-eksperimental. Populasi dalam penelitian ini adalah tujuh siswa kelas SMP Tri Dharma yang terdiri dari tiga kelas, yaitu VII A, VII B, VII C. Para peneliti menggunakan 33 mahasiswa kelas VII B sebagai sampel penelitian ini. Penelitian ini menggunakan tes membaca dan kuesioner tertutup untuk mengumpulkan data. Penelitian ini menggunakan paired sample t-test dan analisis persentase untuk menganalisis data yang diperoleh. Hasil uji t-sampel berpasangan menunjukkan bahwa t- yang diperoleh sebesar 25,438 dan p sebesar 0,000 (p<0,05). Ini berarti bahwa ada peningkatan yang signifikan dalam pemahaman membaca siswa setelah diajarkan dengan strategi QAR. Hasil analisis persentase menunjukkan bahwa persepsi siswa terhadap strategi QAR adalah positif. Ia merasa bahwa strategi QAR efektif untuk membantu siswa meningkatkan pencapaian pemahaman bacaan mereka secara signifikan. Temuan tersebut menunjukkan bahwa strategi QAR efektif dalam meningkatkan capaian pemahaman bacaan siswa terhadap teks deskriptif bagi siswa kelas tujuh SMP Tri Dharma Palembang pada tahun ajaran 2021/2022.

Kata kunci: *pemahaman membaca, teks deskriptif, strategi Hubungan Tanya Jawab*

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the basic skills that Junior High School students' must learn. Reading is not negotiable in the word of education. Reading activities help students in obtaining knowledge from a variety of sources in order to support learning in the classroom. Then daily activities cannot be separated from reading activities, so various information can get by reading. According to Ramadhona, Manurung, and Sari (2022), reading is one of important skills of English that must be mastered and develop by the students. According to Harmer (2007), reading is useful for language acquisition, reading have a positive effect on students. Related to the 2013 curriculum, at the English syllabus in Kompetensi Dasar (KD) for the seventh grade in Tri Dharma Junior High School. Reading is one of the competency standards in the curriculum, because reading is very important in learning activities, reading is a students' activity to get information from the text used. Students' frequently run across while learning to read that have a negative impact on their reading skills. These problems include the lack of students' interest in reading, low motivation in reading, lack of reading materials owned, or teachers' errors in selecting appropriate reading materials for students. Furthermore, Bojovic (2010) stated that reading is a time-consuming and resource-intensive activity due to its complexity, meaning, interaction, comprehension, and flexibility.

However, reading activities in Indonesia are very pathetic because many students do not like reading books. This statement is also supported by the 2018 survey program for international (PISA) which has the problem of low educational scores in Indonesia. Indonesia ranks 74th out of 79 countries. So from some of the explanations about reading above, it is stated that reading is needed very important in all circles. But the problem statement in Indonesia shows that Indonesia has the lowest level of reading. Another problem is also identified at SMP Tri Dharma Palembang based on the personal conversations with one of the teachers. She stated that all students have difficulty in understanding an English text during the learning process. Based on statement above the researcher conclude that in the learning process students experience various kinds of problems, one of which is a lack of understanding of reading texts. Therefore, researchers would apply the QAR strategy in the learning process, because the QAR strategy has advantages in the reading learning process. To cope with these problems, the researcher would apply *Question-Answer-Relationship* (QAR) strategy. QAR strategy is a strategy that will be used after students finish reading. This strategy was very useful for students because this strategy can be used in the classroom and make students think creatively because this strategy QAR have a low questions level to be difficult questions in reading.

According to Khasanah and Cahyani (2016), the use of the QAR strategy had a positive effect, namely that students were active in reading activities. Then according to Siregar (2018), that students' understanding of using the QAR strategy very effective because there was an increase in students' scores from 49.87 to 81.79. To find out the effectiveness of a strategy in learning reading comprehension in the classroom, the researcher would test whether the QAR strategy can improve students' reading comprehension ability. QAR strategy never use in learning reading comprehension, in class VII SMP Tri Dharma Palembang. Therefore, in this research, would examine whether Question-Answer-Relationship (QAR) strategy was effective in improving learning reading comprehension in class VII SMP Tri Dharma Junior Palembang.

Thus, the objectives of the research were formulated as follows: 1) to find out the improvement of reading comprehension in descriptive text after being taught with the QAR. 2) to find out the perception of students who were taught reading comprehension in descriptive texts using the QAR strategy

The Importance of Reading Comprehension

Reading is a skill that helps us to understand the content of the text we are reading. By reading, the reader can obtain any message or information that can help them acquire knowledge. Reading skills can improve the process of getting information and can help achieve the goals of reading. Reading can also create imagination in people. According to Suyitno (2017), Students can get any knowledge and information for their learning through the reading process, which is useful for finishing their task. Reading is not just receiving information but also getting understanding and being able to manage reading texts into something meaningful. Students must master reading comprehension because reading can help students find meaning about what students read.

Definition of Descriptive Text

Descriptive text is one of English text types. According to Wren and Watts (2002, p. 33), descriptive text is like painting with words, readers get the impression that they are seeing the description as well as the visuals when they read a descriptive text.

Based on the definition of descriptive text above, it can be concluded that Descriptive text is a text that describes to the reader about something such as a person, animal, place, or event consisting of characters or objects. The purpose of descriptive text is to describe the researchers' point of view so that the reader can feel, see, or hear the object that is done for the reader.

According to Bamanti and Oktaviani (2011, p. 50), descriptive text is separated into two parts: 1) Identifying It is a general paragraph section that introduces or identifies the character. So in this section, in the first paragraph, the goal is to identify an object that you want to describe. Identification serves to introduce the reader to the object that we will explain, before we tell about the object in more detail in the next paragraph. 2) A description is a paragraph that describes a character. This section, which is in the second paragraph and so on, contains the characteristics inherent in something that you have introduced to the reader in the first paragraph.

The grammatical features of descriptive text focus on language features (general present tense, action verbs, and adjectives). The purpose of descriptive text according to Febriani (2011, p. 17), is to make the reader imagine in the story so that they get pleasure and information.

Definition QAR Strategy

According to Ruddell (2005, p. 372), QAR strategy is an activity design where students categorize understanding questions according to how and from what sources the questions are answered. The level of QAR strategy questions according to Wiesendanger (2001, p. 108), has three terms, namely: the first level is "*right there",* answers can be obtained from reading or making questions from explicit texts. The second is "*think-and-search*", answers can be obtained from thinking or questions in the

form of implicit answers. Third, *"on my own"*, readers can find answers through reading comprehension based on their personal experiences.

METHODOLOGY

The quantitative research was used in this research. According to Sugiyono (2017, p. 7) the quantitative research generally used numerical information and statistical evaluation. In this research only used pre-experimental design. This research used pre-experimental design, class VII B SMP Tri Dharma was used as the sample in this research. The first meeting gave a pre-test, the second to thirteenth meetings gave teaching treatment with the QAR strategy and the last meeting was to give a post-test. The research instrument was a reading test. The test was applied in pre-test and post-test. The pre-test was used to determine the students' reading comprehension before using the Question-Answer-Relationship (QAR) strategy and the post-test was used to determine the students' reading comprehension after using the Question-Answer-Relationship (QAR) strategy. In addition to the pre-test and post-test researchers used a questionnaire. Pre-test and post-test with a total of 30 valid questions out of 50 provided. In addition, this research used paired sample t-test, paired sample t-test which was characterized by changes in the mean before and after treatment, was one of the testing techniques used to develop treatment efficacy. The test used the SPSS 25 computer program. If the p-value > 0.05 then Ho was accepted and Ha was rejected. If the p-value was less than < 0.05 then the alternative hypothesis was accepted and Ho was rejected. Then the population in this research were 3 classes with 109 students' namely VII A (36), VIIB (33), VIIC (37). Researcher used class VII B as a sample in this research with a total of 33 students. In this research, the researcher used content validity, which was carried out using the V Aiken index with the help of Microsoft Excel after the validator gave his assessment. The results show that all reading comprehension tests were valid, there was thirteen in the high valid category and seventeen in the medium valid category. Then for the results of this research questionnaire in the high category.

In addition, the reliability testing was carried out with the help of a computer program, namely SPSS *v*.25 in this reliability test which was calculated by the Cronbach alpha formula. According to Sujarweni (2014, p. 193) if the Cronbach Alpha value is >0,60, it is considered reliable, meanwhile if the Cronbach Alpha value is <0.60, it is considered as not reliable. Based on the results of calculations with Cronbach Alpha assisted by the SPSS *v*.25 program, the results of the reliability test coefficient were 0.768 > 0.60. Then the result of the reliability of the questionnaire were 0.631>0.60. So that the researcher concluded the test was reliable.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Normality Test

The researcher must analyze the normality of the data before analyzing the hypotheses. The goal of this analysis was to determine whether the study's data were normally distributed or not. By analyzing the data's significance, researchers used the SPSS v.25 program to determine the data's normality.

Table 1. The Result of Normality Test

	Normality Shapiro-Wilk Pre-Experimental Design	
	Statistic	Sig.
Reading Pre-Test	.953	.168
Reading Post-Test	.942	.080

The normality test in this research used Shapiro-Wilk, the pre-test value in the experimental class was 0.168> 0.05, while the post-test value was 0.080> 0.05, so it can be seen that the data was normally distributed. After the data was normally distributed, the requirements for the t-test can be carried out, because it calculated using the SPSS v.25 program, both data were declared normally distributed.

Table 2. The Descriptive Analysis of the Pre-Test in the Experimental Group

Score range	Category	Experimental Design (Pre-Test)			
		Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD
88-100	Very Good	0	0%	.00	-
74-87	Good	0	0%	.00	-
60-73	Fair	0	0%	.00	-
<60	Poor	33	100%	37.3	5.7
	Total	33	100%		

The result analysis of pre-test scores in the experimental group, there were 33 students in the poor category. In other words, there were 100% students in the poor category, and the mean score pre-test was 37,3.

Table 3. The Descriptive Analysis of the Post-Test in the Experimental Group

Score range	Category	Experimental Design (Post-Test)			
		Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD
88-100	Very Good	0	0%	.00	-
74-87	Good	8	24%	83.7	37.6
60-73	Fair	24	73%	67.7	50.0
<60	Poor	1	30%	53.3	-
	Total	33	100%		

The result analysis of the post-test results for the experimental group was showed in Table above. There were 8 students (24%) categorized in good level, 24 students (73%) categorized in fair level, 1 student (3,0%) categorized in poor level, and none of them categorized in very good level.

Table 4. The Result of Paired Sample Test in Experimental Group

Variable	Experimental Group Pre-Test	Post-Test	Mean Difference Pre and Post Exp.	T-Value and Sig. Within
Reading	37.3	71.1	33.8	-25.438 (.000)

Based on the data above, t-$_{obtained}$ was 25,438> t-$_{table}$ (df=32) was 3,622 at the significant level of 0,05 and sig. (2-tailed) was 0,000< 0,05. From these results the researcher can conclude that 0.000< 0.05 then the null hypothesis (Ho) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) was accepted

In this research, the researcher only used one class to conduct fourteen meetings in the experimental class. In the first meeting, the researcher gave a pre-test to the experimental class. Then at the second meeting to the thirteenth meeting gave treatment in the experimental class, namely teaching descriptive text using the QAR strategy. And at the last meeting, the researcher gave a post-test to the experimental class. There was improvement in students' reading comprehension achievement in descriptive texts using the QAR strategy. This can be seen from the pre-test score of 37.3 and the post-test value of 71.1, it can be seen that there was significant mean difference between the two. Furthermore, during the teaching process, the researcher gave material to students about descriptive text, so that students could read and answer questions from the researcher. During the teaching process, the researcher invited students to open the dictionary if they had difficult words. The researcher carried out several activities to improve students' reading comprehension achievement.

The researcher first gave motivation to the students and some questions related to descriptive text. After that, the researcher explained to the students what descriptive text was, the linguistic features of descriptive text, and the generic structure of descriptive text. Then the researcher explained to the students what the QAR strategy was. After explaining the material, the researcher gave a descriptive text related to the material that the students would study. In the QAR strategy there were five steps that must be taken, namely, (1) reading the question (2) understanding the question (3) reading the reading text (4) answering the question (5) sharing the question. Supported by Tompkins, Gail (2010).

In this study, the researcher used descriptive text to apply students' reading comprehension. One of the titles used was "My Pet", this text tells about beloved animals. Students can find answers from the text they read, because the QAR strategy has a question level, namely: the first level was "right there", answers can be obtained from reading or making questions from explicit texts. The second was "think-and-search", answers can be obtained from thinking or questions in the form of implicit answers. Third, "on my own", readers can find answers through reading comprehension based on their personal experiences. The level of QAR questions was very influential on the level of students' understanding of reading, this was supported by Wiesendanger (2001).

In this research, it was seen that there was progress in students' reading comprehension. This was due to the QAR strategy that made students more active and confident in learning. During the treatment, the researcher could see that the students

were happy in learning. Because by using QAR strategy, the students were more active during the question-and-answer session. This happened because the researcher gave the students time to read and understand the text. The aim of the QAR strategy was to teach students to focus on meaning in context. It also encouraged students to parse the information obtained from reading. Supported again by Ronthong (2013) The QAR strategy helps students made connections between the information in their choices and their prior knowledge and improves reading comprehension, as readers were asked to think at different levels of cognitive processing.

In addition, researcher paid more attention to the texts, because texts that were too difficult and not in accordance with students' understanding standards will cause students to had difficulty understanding the contents of the text. So the selection of texts that match the level of students' learning was very influential in the learning process. This statement was supported by Nurgiantoro (2013, p. 356) who states that what must be considered in having reading texts was not only the level of students' proficiency in English but also the level of reading difficulty. After the students finished reading the researcher asked the students to share their answers. In this session, students explained what they know in the text. It aims to find out that students understand the reading text that the researcher given.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher concluded that the used of the QAR strategy can provide a significant difference in the learning process of students' understanding. This can happen because the QAR strategy made students more active in the learning process. QAR strategy was a good technique to improvement students' reading comprehension. This statement can be seen from the results of the improvement in the pre-test and post-test scores that the researchers have done. So the researcher concludes that QAR was an effective strategy in reading comprehension achievement at SMP Tri Dharma Palembang in the 2021/2022 academic year.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research in chapter IV, it is proven that the Question-Answer-Relationship (QAR) strategy was quite effective in improving students' reading comprehension. This implied that the existence of QAR strategy in the learning process can helped teachers when managing learning in the classroom. This was also expressed by the scores obtained from the experimental class, the pre-test was 37.3 and the post-test score was 71.1 and the difference was 10.2 in the acquisition value. That was, these results indicate that there was a significant difference in students' reading comprehension achievement in descriptive texts taught with the QAR strategy. To sum up that, the QAR strategy was effective in improving students' reading comprehension in descriptive texts for grade VII students of SMP Tri Dharma Palembang in the academic year 2021/2022.

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