IMPROVING READING COMPREHENSION
THROUGH QAR STRATEGY

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research is to find out weather or not the use of Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) Strategy is effective in improving reading comprehension of the tenth grade students of SMK Negeri 1 Bungku Tengah. The researcher used quasi-experimental research design. The sample was GP (Geologi Pertambangan) 1 as the experimental group of 16 students and GP (Geologi Pertambangan) 2 as the control group of 16 students. The pre-test was given to measure the students' prior reading comprehension and the post-test was given to measure the students' reading comprehension after the treatment. The treatment was given eight times in the experimental group. The data were analyzed statistically in order to find out the significant achievement of the students in pre-test and post-test. By selecting the 0.05 of significance and 30 degrees of freedom (d.f. 16+16-2=30), the results of the research indicate that the t-counted value (2.18) is greater than the t-table value (2.042). In conclusion, the use of QAR Strategy can improve students' reading comprehension of the tenth grade students of SMK Negeri 1 Bungku Tengah.

 Keywords: Improving, Reading Comprehension, QAR Strategy

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui apakah penggunaan Strategi Hubungan Tanya-Jawab efektif dalam meningkatkan pemahaman membaca siswa kelas X SMK Negeri 1 Bungku Tengah. Peneliti menggunakan desain penelitian kuasi eksperimental. Sampel penelitian ini adalah GP (Geologi Pertambangan) 1 sebagai kelompok eksperimen berjumlah 16 siswa dan GP (Geologi Pertambangan) 2 sebagai kelompok kontrol berjumlah 16 siswa. Pra-tes diberikan untuk mengukur pemahaman membaca siswa sebelumnya dan pasca-tes diberikan untuk mengukur pemahaman membaca siswa setelah perlakuan. Perlakuan diberikan delapan kali pada kelompok eksperimen. Data dianalisis secara statistik untuk mengetahui pencapaian signifikansi siswa dalam pre-test dan post-test. Dengan memilih 0.05 signifikansi dan 30 derajat kebebasan (d.f. 16 + 16-2 = 30), hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nilai t-hitung (2.18) lebih besar dari nilai t-tabel (2.042). Kesimpulannya, penggunaan strategi QAR dapat meningkatkan pemahaman membaca siswa kelas X SMK Negeri 1 Bungku Tengah.

 Kata kunci: *Meningkatkan, Pemahaman Membaca, Strategi QAR*

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INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the main skills in learning the language. Generally, people read to get information. Reading can help people to expand their knowledge, to study new words, to comprehend ideas, and to use grammatical rules. The information can be obtained from a number of sources such as books, newspapers, or magazines.

Reading is essential to every aspect of learning, and the purpose of reading is to construct meaning from text (comprehension). Reading can be silent (in our head) or aloud (so that other people can hear). When we were read, we use our eyes to receive written symbols (marks and punctuation) and use our brain to convert them into sentences or paragraphs. In everyday life we come across different written texts, which we read in order to find some information or we read them just for pleasure. But when we read in life, we mainly do it in our mother tongue. As long as we can read and understand a text and find the needed information, we do not pay attention to how we do it. Alyoursef (2006:64) states that reading is an interactive process between readers and a text to automaticity or (reading fluency). In this process, the reader interacts and tries to get information of various kinds of knowledge are being used: linguistic or systemic knowledge (through bottom-up processing) as well as schematic knowledge (through top-down processing). It means that in reading comprehension is needed interaction between the reader and writer in order to get information text through the bottom-up or top-down process.

Reading is a difficult skill in language particulary for the students who try to understand the content of a specific reading text. They can read the words in a good way but they cannot get the main ideas. That is why sometimes they feel sleepy in class because they get stuck on comprehension about the text they read. Lastly, they are not able to answer the questions correctly based on the text. This problem happens because the teacher just asks the students to read the text and answer all the questions without giving any explanation that helps the students in comprehending the text well.

Reading is not straight forward process of lifting the words off the page. It is a complex process of problem solving in which the reader works to make sense of a text not just from the words and the sentences on the page but also from the ideas, memories, and knowledge evoked by those words and sentences. According to Mart (2012:91), "Reading is a process of readers combining information from a text and their own background knowledge to build meaning and the aim of reading is comprehension". There are background knowledge of the reading text is avery important aspect that helps students arrest the main points of a text with the natural process.

Reading comprehension as the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. We use the words extracting and constructing to emphasize both the importance and the insufficiency of the text as a determinant of reading comprehension (Snow,2002).

Based on Based on School-Based Curriculum (SBC) / Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (KTSP) in reading comprehension, students are expected to identify general information and spesific information from the text, to find out the main ideas in a paragraph. In order to fulfill the purpose, the researcher applied QAR strategy because it can help the students easily in reading. Reading is important to be learned by the students. The teacher should give the students more chances to practice their reading skill in the classroom, but in fact, it is different from the students in SMK Negeri 1 Bungku Tengah.

Based on the observation, the researcher observed the students by giving them reading tasks at that time and the researcher found three problems. First, the students got confused to find specific information. Second, many students had difficulties in finding out the main ideas from the text. Third, when the students were given questions by the teacher and they try to find the answers in the text, the students got confused how to answer the questions based on correct grammatical rules. To help the students in solving the problems, the researcher applied QAR strategy.

The QAR strategy is one of the strategies in reading. QAR Strategy developed by Raphael (1986:516) is a reading comprehension strategy developed to "clarify how students approach the tasks of reading texts and answering questions". It encourages students to be active, strategic readers of texts. QAR outlines where information can be found "In the Text" or "In my Head." It then breaks down the actual question-answer relationships into four types: Right There, Think and Search, Author and Me, and On My Own.

The QAR strategy shows the relationship between questions and answers, how to search for information in a text according to different types of question. The use of QAR can help the students to analyze, comprehend, and respond to text concepts. The strategy can also assist the student in refuting the common conception that the text has all the answer. The QAR conveys the idea that answer can be found in the text source or from our background knowledge and experience.

The QAR strategy has some categories. According to Raphael (1986:518), QAR has two categories which are beneficial to find information and answer the questions. The first category is *In the book* questions consisting of *Right there* and *Think and search*. In *Right there* questions, it is necessary to scan the key information, namely explicit information,

from the text to find the right answers of questions. In the other side, the readers must be able to combine one idea or information to the others by skimming important ideas and information (implicit information) to answer *Think and search* questions. In this sort of question, the readers' critical thought will be stimulated indirectly. Second category is *In your head* questions consisting of *Author and you* and *on your own*. In *Author and you*, the readers will not find the answer from the text directly but they must combine or even compare their knowledge about the ideas or information in the passage with the author's one. Then the readers' background knowledge and experience related to the passage are very useful to answer *On my own* questions.

Raphael (1986:220) explained that the four types of questions can help students to analyze the QAR and this enables them to become skillful at analyzing the types of questions that they are typically asked to respond to when reading a text. The four types of question QAR strategy are as follows:

1) *Right There Questions*: "Right There" questions require you to go back to the passage and find the correct information to answer the question. These are sometimes called literal questions because the correct answer can be found somewhere in the passage. "Right There" questions sometimes include the words, "*According to the passage..*", "*How many..?*", "*Who is..?*", "*Where is..?*", and "*What is..?*".

   The steps that may be purposed to answer *Right There* questions are reread, scan, and look for key words.

2) *Think and Search Questions*: "Think and Search" question usually require you to think about how ideas or information in the passage relate to each other. You will need to look back at the passage, find the information that the question refers to, and then think about how the information or ideas fit together. "Think and Search" questions sometimes include the words, "*The main idea of the passage..*", "*What caused..?*", and "*Compare/contrast..*"

   The steps that may be purposed to answer *Think* and *Search* questions are skim or reread, look for important information, and summarize.

3) *Author and You Questions*: "Author and You" questions require you to use ideas and information that is not stated directly in the passage to answer the question. These questions require you to think about what you have read and formulated your own ideas or opinions. "Author and You" questions sometimes include the words, "*The author implies…*", "*The passage suggests…*", "*The reader's attitude..,*"

The steps that may be purposed to answer *Author and You* questions are reread, think about what you already know and what the author says and predict.

4) *On My Own Questions*: "On My Own" questions can be answered using your background knowledge on a topic. This type of question does not usually appear on tests of reading comprehension because it does not require you to refer to the passage. "On My Own" questions sometimes include the words, *"In your opinion..?" and "Based on your experience..?"*

The QAR strategy have some strengths and weaknesses, The strengths are it can improve students' reading comprehension, it teaches students how to ask questions about their reading and where to find the answers to them, it helps students to think about the text they are reading and beyond it, and itinspires them to think creatively and work cooperatively while challenging them to use higher-level thinking skills. However, this strategy is intended to describe question-answer types rather than to facilitate the determination of the correct responses. It is therefore not advisable to tell students that the answer to the question is forth coming from such discrete categories as text or reader, This also logically follows the answering of the question, rather than preceding it.

In this research, the researcher focused on students' literal reading comprehension and narrative text as the genre of the text. Literal comprehension is the primary step in reading comprehension that ask the students to identify facts directly stated in the passage. The literal level focuses on reading the passages, hearing the words or viewing the images. It involves identifying the important and essential information. With guidance, students can distinguish between the important and less important ideas.

Walker, Munro and Rickards (1988:88) state that the literal level of reading comprehension may be defined as the reader's ability to "gain meaning from the print" and it "essentially captures surface code features and text-based meanings explicitly stated in the text as well as the connecting devices that bind these text constituents locally". The basis of literal comprehension is recognizing main ideas, details, causes, and effect, and sequences. It is important since it is a prerequisite for higher-level understanding. It means that the literal comprehension question test the readers' ability to think within the text and consider what has been literally and explicitly stated. There is no hidden meaning so the reader can take what is presented at face level. This can include the plot and the themes, setting, turning points, anything that can be draw directly from the text of the story or experience and is factual. In answer the question in the level, the reader reads the text at glance because

usually a stated directly in the text. So, this is the basic in reading comprehension. It requires the reader to understand the explicit information from the text.

Narrative text is a imaginative story to entertain people, spoken or writer account of connected events, a story of complication or problematic events and it tries to find the resolutions to solve the problems. According to Rebecca (2003), a narrative text is a text, which relates a series of logically, and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by factors. Furthermore, states that a key to comprehending a narrative is a sense of plot, of theme, of characters, and of events, and of how they relate. The researcher used narrative text as a genre of the text.

The QAR helps students understand different levels of questioning and the relationships between questions and answers. Often students respond to questions with either a literal answer or by stating that "it" is not in the text. QAR provides four levels of questions – Right There, Think and Search, You and the Author, and On Your Own –to indicate how the question is related to the text. This strategy allows students to understand their thinking processes and develop their metacognitive abilities.

Raphael (1986:521) argues that QAR is a great way to help students figure out how to go about answering questions based on a given text. Often students assume that every question's answer is directly stated somewhere in the text, if only they look hard enough. Thus, many students spend far too much time looking for answers that are not "right there," and their frustration mounts. Teaching our students the four basic QAR is a valuable strategy that will help them to understand the different types of questions and know how to effectively and efficiently approach the text based on the different question types.

Based on the statement above, the researcher used QAR strategy to overcome the problems. The researcher was interested in applying this strategy because of the researcher assumes that it is one of the effective strategies for teaching to improve the students' reading comprehension at SMKNegeri 1 Bungku Tengah. Preszler (2005) states that "The QAR strategy is a reading strategy that is widely used to aid student comprehension: Based on the statement, it can be one of teaching strategy in particular reading,through this strategy the students would think creatively and finding the best answer to those questions.

METHOD

In this research, the researcher used quasi-experimental research design. The researcher intended to increase the tenth grade students' reading comprehension through QAR strategy at SMK Negeri 1 Bungku Tengah. There were two groups in this design: an

experimental group who got pre-test, treatment and post-test, and a control group where the researcher only gave pre-test and post-test without treatment. Those two groups were given the same pre-test and post-test. The design can be presented.

Experimental	O_1	X	O_2
Control	O_3		O_4

(Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2006:353)

Population is very important in the research. The researcher took the tenth grade students of SMK Negeri 1 Bungku Tengah as the population. The researcher used purposive sampling technique to take sample. The researcher took two groups: X GP (Geologi Pertambangan) 1 as the experimental group and X GP (Geologi Pertambangan) 2 as the control group.

There were two variables of the research as the causes and effects of the problem. The independent variable is QAR strategy and the dependent one is reading comprehension.

In conducting the research, the researcher used test an instrument of this research. The test was divided into; pre-test and post-test. Pre-test and post-test were given to the experimental group and the control group. The pre-test was given before the treatment in order to test the students' reading comprehension and post-test was given after the treatment in order to test students' progress of reading comprehension after doing treatment. The format of the pre-test was reading comprehension test. The researcher asked the students to read the passage. Then, they should answer the question based on the text. The scoring system is presented as 1) Corretc content, grammar, and spelling is 5, 2) Correct content, grammar, and spelling is 4, 3) Correct content, spelling, and incorrect grammar is 3, 4) Correct answer, incorrect grammar, and spelling is 2, 5) Incorrect content is 1, and 6) No answer is 0.

FINDINGS

In this current study, the researcher collected the data by using test. The result of pre-test and post-test is the instrument to prove the technique is effective or not. After computing the scores, the researcher found some differences between the results of two groups. They showed that the experimental group has a higher score than the control group.

The researcher gave the pre-test to the students in order to assess students' reading prior knowledge before the researcher conducted the treatment. The researcher also gave the pre-test to the control group to compare their knowledge.

The treatment was conducted after giving the pre-test to the students. The researcher applied QAR strategy as a technique in the treatment for the students of the experimental group. Meanwhile, the control group learned as usual. There were eight meetings to both to experimental group and control group.

After doing the treatment, the researcher gave the post-test to the experimental group and the control group. It aimed to find out whether using QAR strategy improves students' reading comprehension or not. The result of pre-test and post-test are presented in the following table.

Table 1 The Result of Pre-test and Post-test in The Experimental Group

NO	Initials	Students' Standard Scores	
		Pre-test (x_1)	Post-test (x_2)
1.	AS	42	74
2.	BE	58	82
3.	BN	20	80
4.	DD	42	74
5.	EY	36	56
6.	FI	42	60
7.	FH	42	72
8.	GN	24	60
9.	IH	74	86
10.	KA	18	66
11.	MR	40	80
12.	NA	54	82
13.	RA	44	74
14.	SW	36	82
15.	YI	62	78
16.	ZF	42	82
Total Score		**634**	**1.188**

Table 2 describes the students' pre-test and post-test score. After counting the result, it shows that the post-test mean score of the experimental group and the control group are different. The score of the experimental group of post-test is higher than a score of pre-test. After calculating the result of pre-test and post-test in the experimental group, the researcher

calculated the result of pre-test and post-test in the control group. It is presented in the following table.

Table 2 The Result of Pre-test and Post-test in The Control Group

NO	Initials	Students' Standard Scores	
		Pre-test (x_1)	Post-test (x_2)
1.	AF	32	50
2.	AK	36	46
3.	AH	42	54
4.	AN	54	70
5.	FM	36	62
6.	IL	48	50
7.	JS	26	44
8.	KM	48	52
9.	ML	60	76
10.	MI	44	50
11.	MN	28	54
12.	NA	32	46
13.	RI	28	56
14.	RN	78	80
15.	RS	24	48
16.	SL	20	44
Total Score		**636**	**882**

Table 2 describes the students' pre-test and post-test score in the control group. The score of post-test higher than a score of pre-test. After counting the result, it shows that the post-test mean score of the experimental group and the control group are different. The score of post-test of the experimental group is higher than a score of the control group.

Based on the calculation,the mean deviation of the pre-test and post-test in the experimental group is 32 while the control group is 15.37. After getting the mean deviation of the experimental group and the control group, the researcher continued to calculate the sum-squared deviation. The sum-squared deviation of the experimental group is 2.434 and the sum-squared deviation of the control group is 1.147.75.

To prove whether the hypothesis of this research is accepted or rejected, the researcher needs to test it based on the result of the data analysis. There are two standard criteria of acceptance and rejection that if the $t_{counted}$ value is higher than t_{table} value, the hypothesis is accepted. In another word, applying QAR strategy improves reading

comprehension. If the $t_{counted}$ value is lesser than t_{table} value, it means that the hypothesis is rejected and applying QAR strategy does not improve reading comprehension. After obtaining the sum-squared the researcher needs to analyze the data in order to find out the significant difference between both groups by using $t_{counted}$ formula. The researcher tested the $t_{counted}$ value with the t_{able} value by using the level of significance 0.05. Degree of freedom (df) of the table is NX + NY − 2 = 16 + 16 − 2 = 30. The researcher uses 0.05 in two-tailed test level of significance so that the t_{table} value gotten is 2.042. By looking at the data, the value of $t_{counted}$ 2.18 is greater than the value of t_{table} 2.042.

Based on that result, the researcher concludes that hypothesis of this research is accepted since the value of $t_{counted}$ is greater than the value of t_{table}. It means that applying QAR strategy improves reading comprehension of the tenth grade students of SMK Negeri 1 Bungku Tengah.

DISCUSSION

In conducting this research, the researcher focused on teaching reading comprehension with QAR strategy. QAR strategy has four types of questions which were right there question, think and search question, author and you question, and on my own question. In this research, the researcher focused on right there question and think and search question. The technique of data collection is systematically done before analyzing and the conclusion is made. There are two groups. The experimental group were given pre-test, treatment and post-test, and the control group were given pre-test and post-test without treatment. Those two groups were given the same pre-test and post-test. The students were very enthusiastic to follow every step of QAR strategy.

Before conducting the treatment, the researcher provided pre-test for both groups in order to measure the students' reading comprehension. The researcher gave reading comprehension test to them. Based on the standard of passing grade is 70, the researcher found that in the experimental group and the control group, there is only one student that passed the test 6,25% for both groups, in the experimental groupintial IH obtained score 74 and in the control group initial RN obtained score 78. The mean score of the experimental group is 42.25 and the control group is 39.75. The slight difference indicates that the level of knowledge between the both classes in pre-test was nearly equal before conducting the treatment.

After administering pre-test, the researcher conducted the treatment for eight meetings in the experimental group. The researcher implemented the activities based on the

research procedure that has been explained previously. The researcher focused on the students' literal comprehension. In the first meeting, after giving the pre-test, the researcher taught the students based on the lesson plan. The researcher contributes reading test, gives explanation about 5W1H, then, the researcher guides the students to read the text one by one, every student read aloud one sentence till he last sentence of paraghraph, furthemore, the reseracher guides the students to find out the main ideas from the text and asks the students answer the question based on the text. Unfortunately, there were many students which are still confused with the use of it because this strategy is still new for them.

In the second and third meeting, the students felt that the teaching-learning activity in the class is enjoyable. They seem interested in taking parts the activities. The reason is because the strategy is very simple and helpful. QAR strategy provided the directions how to deal with the question. It also required the students to provide the reasons of their answer. For that, it spurred the students to understand what they read and enabled them to reflect it.

In the next meetings, the researcher found that the teaching and learning the process by implementing QAR strategy has improved. This situation occurred because the treatments have already done for several times and the students were able to find specific information, to find the main ideas, and answer the question with the correct sentences based on the information given in the text. Therefore, they could answer the questions of the test confidently.

After conducting the treatment, the researcher gave post-test for both groups in order to know how well the students' improvement in reading comprehension after giving the treatment by applying QAR strategy. In post-test there are twelve students that passed the test 75% got the score 72-86, while in the control group only three students that passed the test 18,76%. The mean score of post-test of the experimental group is 74.25 and the control group is 53.5. Regarding the mean score of pre-test and post-test, there is a significant progress in the students' score. It showed that QAR strategy can improve the students' reading comprehension.

Based on the result above, the researcher also relates it to the previous studies done by Permata (2015), Bemani (2013) and Furtado (2012). The title of the first researcher was The Use of QAR Strategy in Developing Students' Reading Skill. The second was Comparing Effect of 'Summarizing', 'Question-Answer Relationship', and 'Syntactic Structure Identification' on the Reading Comprehension of Iranian EFL Students. The third was QAR Strategy in Increasing Reading Comprehension among Kindergarten Students. Based on three related studies. We see that QAR Strategy can improve their reading

comprehension because of the result from pre-test until post-test. To facilitate the students to understand the reader's topic, the researcher explains and describes the text meaning.

CONCLUSION

By considering the result of the test, The researcher concludes that QAR strategy improves reading comprehension of the tenth grade students of SMK Negeri 1 Bungku Tengah. It was proved by looking at the result of $t_{counted}$ value (2.18) was higher than the t_{table} value (2.042) by applying 0.05 level of significance and degrees of freedom (df) of the table is NX + NY – 2 = 16 + 16 – 2 = 30. All in all the research hypothesis applying QAR strategy improves reading comprehension of the tenth grade students of SMK Negeri 1 Bungku Tengah is accepted.

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