

Improving students' reading ability by using question-answer relationship

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Abstract

QAR (Question- Answer Relationship) strategy is a teaching strategy which asks the students to read narrative text and classify question and answer it into each of QAR categories. The objective of this research is to determine whether or not Question Answer Relationship Strategy can improve reading ability of the second semester students of Universitas PGRI Madiun. This research is classroom action research consisting of two cycles. Each cycle consists of four steps. They are planning, action, observation and reflection. The result of this research shows that the students' reading ability is increase. It can be proven from the mean score of cycle one is 70.56 and cycle two is 75.83. The researcher also found that QAR helps the students to understand the text. The students are interested in answering the question based on the text, are motivated to read the text, and feel not bored in teaching reading process.

Keywords: *reading, QAR (Question- Answer Relationship) strategy, motivation*

Abstrak

Strategi QAR (Question- Answer Relationship) adalah strategi pembelajaran yang meminta siswa membaca teks naratif dan mengklasifikasikan pertanyaan dan jawaban ke dalam masing-masing kategori QAR. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui apakah strategy Question Answer Relationship Strategy dapat meningkatkan kemampuan membaca siswa semester dua Universitas PGRI Madiun. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian tindakan kelas dengan terdiri dari dua siklus. Setiap siklus terdiri dari empat tahap. Tahapan tersebut adalah merencanakan, melakukan tindakan, observasi dan refleksi. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa kemampuan membaca siswa menggunakan strategi QAR (Question-Answer Relationship) meningkat. Hal ini dapat dibuktikan dari rerata siklus satu yaitu 70,56 dan siklus dua adalah 75,83. Peneliti juga menemukan bahwa QAR (Question-Answer Relationship) membantu siswa untuk memahami teks, siswa menjadi lebih tertarik untuk menjawab pertanyaan berdasarkan teks, siswa menjadi lebih termotivasi dalam membaca teks, dan membuat siswa tidak merasa bosan dalam mengikuti proses pembelajaran membaca.

Kata kunci: *membaca, QAR (Question- Answer Relationship) strategi, motivasi*

Introduction

Reading is one of the four language skills that are important to learn by the students especially in University. The students cannot be obtained the information without reading because of the information can be found the student by reading fluently. Through reading process, the students can approved the knowledge from reading book, text, or newspaper. "Reading is defined as the ability to read at an appropriate rate with

adequate comprehension (Nunan, 2003: 68). It means that reading is an activity where people or learners comprehend about what they read something.

According to Grabe & Stoller (2002: 9) "Reading is the ability to draw meaning from the printed page and interpret this information appropriately". It means that reading is a way to get information from a text, such as newspaper, magazine, internet, watching television and others.

Furthermore, according to Patel and Jain (2008: 113- 114). "Reading is the most important activity in language class. Reading is not only a source of information and pleasurable activity but also as a means of consolidating and extending one's knowledge of the language" It means that reading not only used to gets some important information but also help the learners to build knowledge from they read a text.

Through reading process, the students not only focus on the understanding meaning of content but also needs to comprehend in some aspects as follows; identifying topic, controlling idea, main idea, generic structure, language feature, vocabulary and grammatical structure. Therefore teaching reading is very needed by the students to increase their ability in reading skill but they are still difficult to reading in the classroom.

In fact, second semester students of Universitas PGRI Madiun still have problems in reading. Students cannot understand the content of the text. The students are passive in teaching learning process. They do not have enough vocabularies to comprehend the text. They also keep silent in reading class. The teacher only asks students to read the text and answer questions based on the text. It makes the students difficult to know the content of text comprehensively.

There are many ways to solve the problem above. One of them is using learning strategy. One of the strategies is Question Answer Relationship (QAR). By using QAR strategy, it can assist the students to comprehend the meaning of text in reading process. Raphael and Au (in Fard & Nikou, 2005: 206) argue that, "Question-Answer relationship (QAR) is a strategy to be used after students have read. It also, teaches them how to decode what types of questions they are being asked and where to find the answers to them". It means that Question Answer-Relationships (QAR) is a strategy to be used after students finish reading the text. Then, the teacher gives instruction to the students to choose what types of question and where to find the correct answer based on the categories of QAR.

Question Answer-Relationships (QAR) is the part of ideas from students to answer the question related the text. It refers to in teaching reading can be run well. According to Raphael, et al, (in Furtado & Pastel, 2012: 2) "The QAR language conveys the idea that answers can be found in text sources or in our background knowledge and experiences ("In the Book" and "In My Head")". It means that Question Answer Relationship (QAR) involves the idea to answer the question that can be found by students in the book or their background knowledge and experience.

Question-Answer Relationship strategy is a strategy that is useful to help the students to improve reading skill. It is supported by McKnight (2010: 118), "This is one of the most challenging content reading strategies. Begin teaching this strategy by helping students understand that their questions will come from the text or their previous knowledge". It means that QAR strategy is an alternative for teacher to teach reading because this strategy to help students to comprehend the text that their question can be found from the text or background knowledge.

Based on those phenomena above, the researcher is going to analyze about improving students' reading ability by using Question-Answer Relationship. The objective of the research is to determine whether or not Question Answer Relationship Strategy can improve reading ability of second semester student of Universitas PGRI Madiun.

Research Method

This research is using classroom action research. Tomal (2003) stated that action research is a systematic process of solving educational problems and making improvements. Furthermore, Valsa (2005) doing action research needs evaluation and

reflection in order to implement important changes in practice both for an individual and within an institution- with increased understanding and confidence.

Moreover according to Susan E. Nofke in Sandra Hollingsworth (1997) the term in its broadest sense refers to research conducted in a field setting with those actually involved in that field, often alongside an outsider, into the study of question influenced by practitioners rather than solely by experts.

It can be concluded that action research is a structured process in learning activity and can increase the students understanding on the material which are given by the teacher and can be conducted especially by teacher in the classroom.

The subject of this research was students of class 2A, Guidance and Counseling Department at University PGRI Madiun.

There are several steps that would be applied in action research. Each step has five stages: planning, actions, observations, reflection; and revised of planning (Kothari 2004). These five stages take place in an ongoing cycle in which the critical reflection is done at every end of cycle in order to make a further revision and planning.

The procedure that is described shows that the plan is made by considering the fact findings from the preliminary observation. Then, the teacher as the researcher conducts Question Answer-Relationships (QAR) strategy in teaching reading.

The selection of CAR is based on some characteristics. They are as follows: first, Action research is contextual, small scale, and localized. It identifies and investigates problems within a specific situation. Second, it is evaluative and reflective as it is aimed at bringing out change and improvements in practice. Third, it is participatory as it provides for collaborative investigation by team of colleagues, practitioners, and researcher. Fourth, change in practice is based on the collection of information or data which provide the stimulus for change.

The researcher used CAR for some reasons. First, the characteristics of CAR are focusing on solving problems in the class or specific situation. Second, it is a form of self-reflective undertaken by the teacher to improve the teaching learning process and to improve his or her professionalism in teaching. Third, the cycle will be done until the improvement occurs. Fourth, it is one way to improve the students' capability in comprehending reading passage.

Research Findings and Discussion

1. The implementation of Question Answer Relationship in teaching reading at the second semester students of Universitas PGRI Madiun

a. *Description of Cycle I*

This cycle consisted of four steps. They were planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The steps will be elaborated further as follows:

Planning

After knowing the problems from the preliminary observation, the researcher planned some activities to solve the problems. They are sharing ideas with collaborator, designing lesson plan, and preparing materials. The researcher shared ideas with her collaborator related to the activities that could be applied in cycle 1. After the discussion, the researcher and the collaborator agreed to use QAR Strategy to improve students' reading comprehension since this technique allowed the students to be more active in the classroom. This technique gives both students the opportunity to better understand it. Meanwhile, before applying QAR Strategy, the researcher would give a model how to find main idea, find detail, draw inferences, and predict word meaning.

In addition, the researcher also asked her collaborator to observe the whole activities of teaching and learning process and to give suggestion and advices for better results. There were three meetings in cycle 1.

Acting

In the pre-activities, firstly teacher greeted the students and prayed together. After that, teacher asked who are absent in the meeting. Second, teacher explained purposes of the meeting. The teacher asked the students in pair to identified the generic structure of narrative text and discuss together. After that, the teacher divided groups consisting of 4 students. The teaching procedures of QAR (Question- Answer Relationship) strategy by Bouchard (2005) are as follows; The teacher gives a smart QAR worksheet and the text with question to all groups. Next, the teacher asked the students to read a simple text (narrative text). The teacher given the explanation of how to read and answered the question and classify it into each of QAR question categories of QAR strategy, as follows; **RT** (Right There), **PT** (Putting the part together), **AM** (Author and Me), and **OMO** (On My Own)". The teacher asked the students to answer the question in worksheet based on QAR strategy. The teacher asked one of the groups to present in front of class to discuss together about their work. The teacher and the students concluded the content of the text. In the last activity, the teacher reviewed and concluded the material. Then the teacher asked the students' difficulties. Finally, the teacher closed the meeting and said good-bye.

Observing

The researcher and the collaborator observed the teaching and learning process when QAR strategy was applied in the class. In the first meeting, the students looked so serious when the researcher introduced QAR strategy to them. They kept silent and paid attention to the explanation of the researcher.

Based on the observation, in this meeting, the students showed some improvements. The students responded or gave feedback each other and they could answer the questions well mainly detail question. Nevertheless, few students still could not find main idea, draw inferences, and predict word meaning from context. It could be caused by lack of practices. Therefore, the researcher would try to cover these problems to make the complete comprehension of the text.

Furthermore, when the researcher changed the pairs or dyads every meeting, it allowed students to become better acquainted with their friends and it could make them fresh to start the lesson. Also, it avoided boredom of the same pairs.

After the work in post test was scored, the researcher then could report that there was improvement on students' reading ability. The highest score improved from 78,21 in pre test into 83.33 in post test 1 and the lowest score improved from 36,75 into 43.83. The mean score also improved from 68,67 into 70,56. In brief, the post test score of cycle 1 could be seen in table below:

Table 1. Post test Score of Cycle 1

Description	Pre Test	Post Test
Highest Score	78,21	83.33
Lowest Score	36,75	43.83
Mean Score	68,67	79,56

Reflecting

Based on the observation and interview, the researcher and collaborator reflected some positive and negative results of implementation of QAR strategy in cycle 1. The positive results were (1) the students' reading comprehension improved. (2) The students were more active in class. They could participate well and they were actively involved in their pairs. They gave feedback each other. Although not all of students involved actively in the class, it could reduce the dominance of the researcher in teaching

and learning process. (3) The students were more enthusiastic in joining the reading class. It was so because it was new strategy for them. It improved their willingness to ask questions. On the other hand, there were also negative results in implementing QAR strategy. They were (1) students were not brave enough to raise their hands if they got stuck on making questions. As a result, they did not get help for a question, so they were slow to move on to the next questions. (2) The researcher could not assist the students equally because some students needed longer assistance. Therefore, in cycle 2, the researcher and the collaborator recommended some following things to solve the problems of reading comprehension : (1) giving exercises in finding main idea; (2) giving exercises in drawing inferences; (3) giving exercises in predicting word meaning from context; (4) Asking the students whether the speed of explanation was acceptable or not.

Description of Cycle II

Planning

To overcome the problems arising in Cycle 1, the researcher revised the planning in cycle 2 so that the problems would not occur anymore. The researcher and collaborator shared ideas about what they should do in second cycle in order to reach the better achievement of the teaching learning process and the improvement of students' reading comprehension. There were many things that should be revised in second cycle. In cycle 1, the students did not get the same proportion in guidance since there were twenty pairs in class. Therefore, the researcher asked for collaborator's help to assist the students who needed guidance and assistance. Hence, in cycle 2, the collaborator not only observed the teaching learning process but also guided the students who got difficulties in doing the activities.

Also, the explanation of the researcher was considered too fast. Therefore, the collaborator suggested the researcher to reduce the speed of her explanation, so that the students could catch what the researcher talked about.

Meanwhile, the researcher also designed lesson plan which described the activities which would be done in the classroom. Furthermore, as the researcher got the materials, she proposed the materials to the collaborator to get her agreement about them.

Acting

In the pre-activities, firstly teacher greeted the students and prayed together. After that, teacher asked who are absent in the meeting. Second, teacher explained purposes of the meeting. The teacher asked the students in pair to identified the generic structure of narrative text and discuss together. After that, the teacher divided groups consisting of 4 students. The teacher gives a smart QAR worksheet and the text with question to all groups. Next, the teacher asked the students to read a simple text (narrative text). The teacher given the explanation of how to read and answered the question and classify it into each of QAR question categories of QAR strategy, as follows; "**RT** (Right There), **PT** (Putting the part together), **AM** (Author and Me), and **OMO** (On My Own)". The teacher asked the students to answer the question in worksheet based on QAR strategy. The teacher asked one of the groups to present in front of class to discuss together about their work. The teacher and the students concluded the content of the text. In the last activity, the teacher reviewed and concluded the material. Then the teacher asked the students' difficulties. Finally, the teacher closed the meeting and said good-bye.

Observing

While acting all of the activities which had been designed in lesson plan of cycle 2, the researcher and collaborator did observation. In this research, the researcher observed both teaching learning process in the classroom and the progress that the students had achieved related to the improvement of students' reading comprehension.

Table 2. The Result of Post Test of Cycle 2

Description	Pre Test	Post Test of cycle 1	Post Test of cycle 2
Highest Score	78,21	83.33	90,12
Lowest Score	36,75	43.83	49,12
Mean Score	68,67	70,56	75,83

Besides, when the researcher interviewed the students whether QAR strategy was effective or not to improve their reading comprehension, 97.5% students said that it was effective. It was so because it could help them to understand the text easily. Moreover, if they gave wrong answer, their partners would try to correct their mistakes. The students enjoyed following the procedures of QAR strategy and they felt happy if their friends could answer their questions. However, only one student or about 2.5% stated that this strategy was not effective.

Reflecting

After giving the treatment, the researcher would like to reflect the conditions of cycle 2. Based on the observation of the researcher and collaborator, interview, and questionnaire, the researcher could identify some strengths and weaknesses of implementation of QAR strategy in teaching reading comprehension.

2. The strengths and weaknesses of the implementation of Question Answer Relationship in teaching reading at the second semester students of Universitas PGRI Madiun

The Strengths

The strengths of teaching reading by using QAR strategy is helps the students to understand the text. It is in line to Cervený and La Cotti (2003) that QAR is to help the students who have difficulties to understand the content of text. The other strengths of QAR is the students are interested to answer the question based on the text because they can discuss together with their groups. It is also appropriate with the theory of Allen (2004) that QAR can be very enjoyable for learners and provide excellent opportunities in sharing information and negotiating meaning with their friends. Besides, QAR strategy motivates to the students to read the text like the longer text and makes the students not feel bored in teaching reading process. It is supported by Merry (1999) that QAR increases learners' motivation and involvement in the learning process.

The table below described the comparison between previous condition and condition after implementing the treatment of cycle 2:

Table 3. The Comparison between Previous Condition and Condition after cycle 2

Previous Condition	Conditions after cycle 2	Indicators
Previous classroom situation:	Classroom situation after cycle 2	
a. Students were passive	a. Students were active	Students actively asked questions and gave responses to each other
b. Students had no motivation to the reading class	b. Students had motivation to reading class	Students were not late and did not go out from the class anymore
c. Classroom cooperation was low	c. Classroom cooperation was good	The group work activities gave a chance to all students to share their ideas
d. Students had no interest to the subject	d. Students had interest to the subject	Students talked about related topic and produced many questions about text.

The Weaknesses

During teaching learning process of cycle 2, the researcher and the collaborator actually did not find the significant weaknesses or obstacles. All students' reading comprehension problems were effectively solved by QAR strategy. If it could be said a weakness, the researcher had one weakness in implementing QAR strategy. The situation of the class was noisy because some groups talked loudly. They gave questions, answered them, and responded to their friend's answers using loud voice so that sometimes it could disturb the other students. However, this problem was easy to overcome. The researcher could handle it by asking them to reduce their volume of voice.

Conclusion

After the researcher conducted the action research by using QAR strategy to improve students' reading ability, the conclusion is as follows: first, QAR strategy can improve students' reading comprehension. The improvement can also be seen from their results of post test. The means of the scores improve from cycle to cycle. The mean score of pre test is 68,67. Then, it increases to 70,56 in post test 1 and 75,83 in post test 2.

Second, QAR strategy can improve class situation. The students' participations are more active. They demolish their barriers to ask and respond question. Their motivation and confidence also improve. They enjoy following reading class. They are brave and not shy to share their ideas with their friends. They can collaborate with the others. Moreover, QAR strategy can reduce the dominance of the teacher. QAR strategy stimulates the students to be autonomous and active reader. The researcher only monitors and guides them in teaching learning process. Besides, they can work together with their friends well. In other words, their classroom cooperation is good.

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