

Improving Students' Reading Comprehension through Question – And – Answer Relationship and Timed Repeated Reading (QAR-TIRRE) Strategy at Grade Nine Students of SMPN 4 Jember

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Abstract

There were at least two crucial problems faced by the students of SMPN 4 Jember in reading class. The first problem was the teacher's technique that was not able to improve students' reading comprehension. The second problem was students' inability in answering different level of questions. In other words, the students' score on reading comprehension were poor. To solve the two problems, the researcher conducted a classroom action research by using Question – And – Answer Relationship strategy in improving students' reading comprehension. The findings showed that QAR-TIRRE strategy improved students' reading comprehension. In the first cycle, the number of students who got the score greater or equal to 70 was only 19 students out of 38 students or 50%. It had not fulfilled the criterion of success yet. But, in the second cycle, the students who got the score greater or equal to 70 were 27 out of 38 students or 71, 05%. In addition, the result of the students' participation increased from 05,26% in cycle I to 10,53% in cycle II. It fulfilled the criterion of the success in terms of score improvement. Based on the result, the researcher claimed that the QAR-TIRRE strategy improved students' reading comprehension. Hopefully, it could be significant input for the teacher and other researchers to teach and conduct research especially related to the teaching of reading.

Keywords: Improving, Reading comprehension, QAR-TIRRE Strategy.

Introduction

Reading is the basic skill which students should master because reading can provide students abundant language input. Having a good reading is crucially needed by students to make them understand with any books they used and to make them engage in the learning process. In comprehending the text easily, students need to have and to know reading strategy. Reading strategy is important because it will time consuming if the students read word by word and line by line in a text.

Reading comprehension skills separates the passive unskilled reader from the active readers. Skilled readers do not only read, but also interact with the text. Reading comprehension has been defined as the process of constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written text (Snow, 2002). Reading comprehension, or constructing meaning during reading, is not only a cognitive endeavor but also unmotivated act (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1999). Reading comprehension can be improved by training the ability to self-assess comprehension, actively test comprehension using questionnaires, and by improving metacognition.

Questioning is the way to lead to understanding and comprehension. Questioning is a powerful tool that helps readers before, during, and after reading. Understanding

how questions work is a critical component of learning. According to Cotton (2007), a question is any sentence which has an interrogative form or function. Questioning has a long and venerable history as an educational strategy. Meanwhile, Lewis (2007) stated that the ability to ask and answer questions is central to learning. Questions will help the students understand and gain the study goal effectively. That is why teachers should be able to compose and prepare the questions that are helpful for the students in understanding the subject or the reading text? This is because that questions ease them to find what they should gain effectively and efficiently. In sum, Questions are obligate tools we have for making decisions and solving problems, for inventing, changing and improving our lives as well as the lives of others.

The four question types described by Raphael (1986) include “Right There”, “Putting It Together”, “Author and You”, and “On Your Own” questions. A “Right There” question (formerly called text explicit) is one whose answer is located in the text within a single sentence. A “Putting It Together” question (also referred to as Think and Search) is one whose answer is located in the text within two or more sentences that are either adjacent or occur across paragraphs. An “Author and You” question (formerly referred to as text implicit) is one whose answer is implied in the text, but not stated explicitly. The reader is required to infer the meaning from reading the text. An “On Your Own” question is one whose answer is not in the text but must be supplied by the reader's prior background knowledge

In line with this, Timed Repeated Reading is a reading strategy used as a means to assist unskilled readers to practice a very basic skill (word recognition) and help them move from the non-accurate stage to the accuracy stage and eventually to the automatic stage (Samuels, 1979). This idea is supported by Chang (2012) who says that repeated reading does not have negative impact on reading comprehension. It means that teachers can use Timed Repeated Reading strategy to help the students easier comprehend the text. Even though, timed repeated reading was addressed especially in increasing accuracy stage.

Based on the Ideas about QAR and Timed Repeated Reading above, the researcher combines the strength of those two reading strategies into one to be QAR-TIRRE to solve the problems. This strategy blends the strength of QAR and Timed Repeated reading together. QAR –TIRRE will lead the students to comprehend the text by some levels of constructed questions that the teachers prepared and provide the students certain allocation of time so they can try and trigger their maximum effort in comprehending the text and reread the text in another time provided.

In sum, QAR-TIRRE is an appropriate strategy that can be helpful in training students to respond to questions asked and comprehending the text. It can make students take an active role in exploring, finding and searching their own questions, and support students’ learning to use this knowledge in the context of their reading and discussion. Moreover, QAR-TIRRE helps students and teachers to focus on developing a common language for discussing questions and relationship to the text.

Methods

This was a classroom action research and cyclical model was applied in research. Elliot (1991:69) states that classroom action research is a study of a social situation with a

view to improve the quality of action within it. The research specifically refers to a disciplined inquiry done by a teacher with the intent that the research will inform and change his or her practices in the future. This research is carried out within the context of the teacher's environment which is with students and at the school in which the teacher works. For this research, the researcher conducted the research collaboratively. It means that the researcher and one of her colleagues conducted the research together.

This action research was done in some cycles which consisted of several stages. Action research achieves its goal by using a cyclic or spiral process which alternates between action and critical reflection. In each cycle exists several steps or stages. Every cycle has four steps: planning, doing action, observing, and reflecting or evaluating.

The participants of this research were the ninth year students of SMPN 4 Jember. They were 38 students of class IX A. Based on the researcher's experience in teaching and discussion with some teachers of English at SMPN 4 Jember, some students felt unable to comprehend their text. They did not know where the information/answers came from. As a result, some of the students had low score in reading and they did not have good understanding of what the text was about. Besides, there were also found some students met their problem when they tried to answer some questions which asked about information that need their prior knowledge and were not stated in text.

The researcher used two data sources those are reading comprehension test and observation. The test was administered at every end of each cycle. For observation, the researcher used checklist observation for students' activities and teacher's activities during the reading class.

The data was collected by the researcher and one of English teachers of SMPN 4 Jember through classroom observation and reading comprehension test. With classroom observation, the researcher collected qualitative data in the form of students' reactions and feedback while he was applying the QAR-TIRRE strategy to the teaching of reading comprehension. During this observation, the researcher tried to recognize possible difficulties experienced by the students in comprehending a reading text.

The researcher collected quantitative data in the form of students' score on the comprehension test. The test consisted of 20 questions that contained the 10 items for literal comprehension and 10 for inferential comprehension. Each item scored 5 points, so the total score was 100 point. The time allocation was 40 minutes. The data imply the level of students' comprehension of a reading text. To measure students' ability to comprehend reading text, he asked the students to answer the test items. The researcher used multiple choice test because it is practical, easy to administer and can be scored quickly.

Findings and Discussion

This action research was done in two cycles and in each cycle there were four phases, namely plan, action, observation, and reflection. Every cycle consisted of three meetings. Each meeting was 80 minutes. The result of each cycle was used as recommendation for the next cycle or kept doing the activities likes the previous cycle. After reflection stage there might be recommendations of each cycle.

Cycle I

The actions in Cycle I were conducted in three meetings including two meetings of teaching reading and one meeting to the test. Planning of the action, implementation of the action, observation, and reflection of the action were done in cycle. Then, based on the lesson plan 1 the implementation of the first meeting was done and the second meeting was done based on lesson plan 2.

To evaluate the students' participation in the teaching learning process of reading comprehension through QAR-TIRRE strategy observation was done in each meeting. Checklist was used to evaluate the process. Besides, there was also product evaluation obtained in this action. The product evaluation focused on the students' reading comprehension achievement by applying reading comprehension test after having the action of reading comprehension done by using QAR-TIRRE strategy.

The observation data in meeting 1 showed, it was known most students (30 students) were still unconfident to ask the questions dealing with the reading text to the researcher. There were 23.68% who were brave enough the questions to the researcher. In Meeting 2, the number of students who asked questions was 39.47% of the total of students. There were 60.52% who did not ask the questions to the researcher. It means that most of students still found difficulties in asking questions.

During the reading comprehension teaching learning process, there were 13 students or 34.21% of the total students who answered the questions given by the researcher in meeting 1. Meanwhile, in Meeting 2, the total students who answered the researcher's questions were 17 students or 44.74%.

Dealing with answering questions, the students got difficulties in answering Think & Search questions and Author & Me. It happened because they still found difficulties in finding the idea presented in the text and they could not relate the content of the text with their background of knowledge. They could answer "On My Own" questions and "Right There" questions easily. For "On My Own" questions, they could answer the questions easily, because the students had been familiar with the topic of the text. For "Right There" questions, the students did not find any difficulties in answering the questions because the answers were stated clearly in the text.

The data from the observation in cycle 1 showed that there were 47.36% of 38 students were involved actively in the teaching and learning process in meeting 1. Meanwhile, in Meeting 2, there were 22 students or 57.89%. This condition showed that the students' participation in reading instruction was still far from the target requirement that is 70% of the students are actively involved in the teaching and learning process of reading by using QAR-TIRRE strategy.

The reading comprehension test was conducted at the end of the cycle or at the third meeting of cycle 1, the scores were analyzed as follows.

Range of Score	Frequency	Percentage
0-20	0	0
21-40	0	0
41-60	5	13
61-80	30	79
81-100	3	8
Total	38	100

Table 1. The Students' Achievement in Reading Comprehension in Cycle I

Based on the table 1, the mean score of the reading comprehension test in cycle I was 68.29. It means that, it had not achieved the criterion of success yet.

The result of the reflection of Cycle I is as follows.

1. The target mean score of reading comprehension achievement in this research had not achieved yet.
2. The students' participation was less since it was a new strategy in their reading activities.
3. From the observation in cycle I, it was noted that the students still found difficulties in answering "Think and Search" questions and "Author and Me" questions. It happened because the students still found difficulties in finding the idea presented in the text.

Since the result of the reading test obtained by the students had not achieved of the standard score requirement, the action in cycle II in order to solve the problems found in cycle I was carried out. In cycle I, the students read the reading text and answered the questions give. In cycle II, the researcher has enclosed some difficult words on the text and asked the students to underline the important information while reading the text. It was expected that the students would be easier to answer the questions after reading the text and they were able to understand of the content of the text.

Cycle II

The actions of cycle II were also done in two meetings. The stages of activities did in cycle II were the same as that in cycle I, namely: the planning of the action, the implementation of the action, observation, and reflection of the action.

The implementation of action in cycle II was based on the revised lesson plan used in cycle I. In cycle II, the researcher asked the students to underline the important information in the text while reading the text and allocating more time to comprehend and reread the text. It was expected that students would be easier to answer the teacher's questions after reading the text. In addition, the teacher gave more "Think and Search" questions and "Author and Me" questions, because most of students were not able to answer these kind of questions. So, the students were able to get better understanding of the content of the text. Thus, the students could improve their reading comprehension achievement through QAR-TIRE strategy.

In cycle II, the students showed their interest and improvement in the teaching learning process of reading by using QAR-TIRRE strategy. It could be seen from the results of observation, the number of students who paid attention the lesson increased from 33 students or 86.84% in meeting 4 to 38 students or 100% in meeting 5. By underlining the important information in the text, the number of students who answered the questions was increased from 22 students or 57.89% in meeting 4 to 28 students or 73.68% in meeting 5.

Range of Score	TEST 1		TEST 2	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
0 - 20	0	0	0	0
21 - 40	0	0	0	0

41 - 60	5	13	4	10
61 - 80	30	79	31	82
81 - 100	3	8	3	8
TOTAL	38	100	38	100

Table 2. Improvement of the Students' Achievement in Reading Comprehension in Cycle II

There was an improvement of the students' mean score from the test 1 to the test 2. The mean score of test in cycle I was 68.29, while the mean score of the reading comprehension test in cycle II was 71.84. It means that the actions of teaching reading comprehension through QAR-TIRE strategy in cycle II had achieved the criteria set before the research was considered to be successful if 70% of the students achieved the standard score requirement 70 (>70). Thus, the action was stopped.

The result of observation in cycle II showed a big improvement on the students' participant in joining reading comprehension. Most of the students were actively involved in teaching learning process of reading by using QAR-TIRE strategy. There were some factors that influenced the results. They were as follows:

1. Most of students could comprehend the literal and inferential meaning. It was proven in cycle I, the result of literal meaning was 31.32% and the result of inferential meaning was 36.97%. In cycle II, the result of literal meaning was 36.68% and the result of inferential meaning was 35.16%. It could be seen from the result of reading comprehension achievement test that increased from 68.29% in cycle into 71.84% in cycle II.
2. The way of the students read the text in cycle 1 had changed. In cycle II, the students underlined the important information from the text. This way could help the students to answer the questions that required both literal and inferential meaning. Moreover, the researcher gave more "Think and Search" questions and "Author and Me" questions in order to help the students who had problem in answering the questions. Therefore, the students were able to understand of the content of the text.

Conclusion

The result of classroom observation and reading comprehension test by using QAR-TIRRE strategy that was done in cycle I and cycle II showed that the use of QAR-TIRRE strategy in two cycles could improve the eighth students' reading comprehension achievement at SMPN 4 Jember the 2014/2015 academic year. The result of the reading comprehension achievement test done in cycle I, it was found that there were 50% or 19 students of 38 students who got score ≥ 70 . It means that the research target that 70% of the students got 70 had not been fulfilled. In cycle II, there were 71.05% or 27 students who got score ≥ 70 . This means that the research target that was 70% of the students were actively involved in the teaching learning process had already achieved.

It can be concluded that the use of QAR-TIRRE strategy successfully improved the eighth year students' reading comprehension achievement at SMPN 4 Jember in the 2014/2015 academic year. Related to the application of QAR-TIRRE strategy in the teaching learning process of reading, it could be seen that teaching reading by using

QAR-TIRRE strategy was able to motivate the students' involvement in the teaching learning process of reading. The observation results in shown that the students' active involvement in the second cycle was higher than in the first cycle.

The researcher hopes that the result of the research could give another positive evidence that using QAR-TIRRE strategy in teaching reading could improve students' reading comprehension achievement as well as their motivation. Furthermore, the researcher hopes that there will be more teacher use QAR-TIRRE strategy to increase their students' motivation and achievement in reading class.

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Appendix
Recapitulation of the Students' Reading Comprehension

Student	Score on Cycle I	Score on Cycle II
1	80	85
2	45	60
3	65	80
4	65	65
5	65	70
6	55	60
7	65	75
8	70	70
9	65	70
10	70	80
11	60	65
12	65	65
13	80	80
14	40	55
15	65	70
16	75	80
17	65	65
18	40	50
19	70	70
20	65	65
21	80	80
22	65	75
23	65	65
24	65	70
25	80	80
26	70	75
27	80	80
28	70	70
29	85	85
30	80	75
31	65	70
32	65	65
33	70	75
34	75	70
35	70	80
36	85	75
37	70	75
38	85	85
TOTAL	2595	2730
MEAN	68.29	71.84