

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF QAR STRATEGY IN IMPROVING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to prove that the Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy is effective in improving reading comprehension of grade VIII students of SMP Negeri 3 Mepanga and to find out whether there was a significant difference between the experimental class and the control class in reading comprehension. The design of this research was quasi-experimental. The samples of this research consisted of 45 students who were selected by using cluster random sampling. The research instrument used to collect the data was a multiple-choice test which were divided into pre-test and post-test. The data were analyzed by using statistical analysis. The result of the data analysis shows that there was a significant effect on students' reading comprehension after the treatment by applying the QAR strategy. It indicated the mean score of both test results where the mean score of the experimental class significantly improved from 38.75 to 63.75. Meanwhile, the mean score of the control class is from 30.00 to 40.00. Based on the result of the data analysis, the researcher found that the value of t-counted is 7.36. By applying a degree of freedom (df) 43 ( $24 + 21 - 2$ ) and 0.05 level of significance, the researchers found that the value of the t-table is 1.68. It means that the hypothesis is accepted because the value of t-counted (7.36) is higher than the t-table (1.68). To conclude, the QAR strategy is effective in improving reading comprehension of grade VIII students of SMP Negeri 3 Mepanga.

**Keywords:** *Effectiveness; Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) Strategy; Reading Comprehension.*

## INTRODUCTION

As an international language, English is crucial and has many interrelationships with various aspects of human beings. In Indonesia, English is considered the first foreign language. English has four skills. They are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In teaching English, the students are encouraged to use it for communication and to read the books and references written in English.

Reading is one of English language skills that is crucial in helping students learn a foreign language. Reading is understanding the meaning of some words from the text. Johnson (2008) stated that reading is the process of making sense of the text. It means that when the students read a text, they need to present the main idea of the text in order to draw a conclusion or understanding from it. Then the students should also understand the other purpose of their reading text. Also, reading is a process in which readers actively search for making meaning in what they read. It is a complex process and an essential skill used to dig up meaning and information from the text to be knowledge related to other skills in its process.

In the process of reading, the students should understand the text. When the students read the book, they think by understanding every word, phrase, sentence, and paragraph. Comprehension is the goal of reading. Woolley (2011) stated that reading comprehension is creating meaning from text. He added that the purpose of reading comprehension is to understand what is explained in the text rather than to obtain meaning from isolated words or sentences. We can say that reading comprehension will occur if the readers can comprehend the meaning of the text. They cannot be successful readers if they only identify words; they should develop understanding so that he can get conclusions and restate what the writer said in the text.

Reading comprehension is essential in education since the goal must be reached in teaching English based on the Indonesian curriculum. Therefore, English teachers should consider some aspects that must be prepared for students in teaching reading comprehension, such as teaching strategies, teaching materials, student motivation, etc. The critical aspect is teaching strategy because using strategy in a learning process will make the reading activity as effective as possible. However, it seems to contrast with the students' SMP Negeri 3 Mepanga ability. Based on the observation in May 2022, the students had some problems when comprehending reading texts. It is hard to find out the meaning of the text given by the teacher, difficulty finding the main ideas in the text, difficulty making inferences, and difficulty locating references. The causes of these problems are a lack of vocabulary and the teacher still applying monotonous methods when teaching reading in the classroom, which makes the students feel bored and have difficulty understanding texts. As a result, the students got low scores in English subjects.

Related to the problem above, the researchers want to offer an appropriate strategy in the teaching-learning process to help the students comprehend the texts better. The strategy proposed in this research is Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy.

Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy was developed by Raphael in 1986. It was designed as a means for students to know the relationship between the answers and questions

directly through the question types. QAR strategy helps the students understand the type of question and answer from the text or their background knowledge. This strategy aims to elaborate students' thinking of processes. It developed their metacognitive abilities to understand different types of questioning and the relationship between question and answer. Preszler (2005) explains that this strategy could be the reading strategy that is extensively used to assist students' comprehension. It is used not only as a tool for test methods but also as a medium to monitor students' understanding. It helps the students identify different questions and recognize how the question and answer correlate.

In an article by National Behaviour Support Service, Raphael (1986) states that the QAR strategy shows students the relationship between questions and answers and could be categorized the QAR questions into two; In the Book and In My Head questions. In the Book questions consisted of Right There and Think and Search, and In My Head questions consisted of The Author and You and On My Own questions). The first level is Right There: in the text are, found the answer; usually as a phrase contained within one sentence. The second level is Think and Search: the answer is in the text, and combine pieces of text to answer the question. The third level is Author and You: the answer is not directly in the text, so the student draws on prior knowledge as the author has written to answer the question. The last level is On My Own: the students must consider what they already know as their reading and past knowledge. Therefore, Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy is designed to help the students understand the answer to a question is directly based on the type of the questions and the reading comprehension processes.

QAR strategy has some steps in applying in the classroom: Step 1, introduce the strategy showing the relationship of the questions to answers. An enlarged chart of this can be hung in the classroom where the students can refer to it; Step 2, gives a text to the students and asks them to read it by themselves; Step 3, the teacher gives a model how each level of the QAR questions can be identified and answered step by step in reading comprehension by using the text; Step 4, asks the students to work in pair in answering the following questions by determining which level of QAR (right there, think and search, author and me, on my own) the questions are belonging to. *Right there*: the information that the students will need to answer the question is right there in the text. *Think and search*: the information that the students will need to answer the question is implied in the text, but the students will have to combine the ideas in the text with the prior knowledge to form inferences. *Author and you*: these questions require students to connect information from the text to what they have already learned and may require students to consider their own experiences and opinion or extend what they have learned. *On your own*: these questions can be answered from the reader's own experience without information from the text; Step 5, after the students have answered all questions, discuss the answer together; Step 6, the teacher gives some questions to the students to check their comprehension of the text.

The implementations of Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy have some advantages. They are: (1) it helps the readers comprehend well and students come to perceive several ways to answer the questions; (2) students are guided in understanding that valuable

response to reading; (3) students are prompted to constantly tap into their knowledge through encounter new information in reading. Besides having advantages, this technique also has several disadvantages. First, QAR was 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 comes from discrete categories such as text or reader. Second, Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) logically follows the answer of the question rather than preceding it.

One of the texts the researchers concentrated on in this research was the recount text. It was suitable for the curriculum that the teacher taught for grade eight. According to Seaton (2007), recount text tells the reader about what happened, who was involved, when, and where the event took place. The purpose of a recount is to list and describe past experiences by retelling events in the order in which they happened. Generic structures of recount text consist of orientation, events, and re-orientation.

Based on the explanation above, the researchers wanted to prove the effectiveness of Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy on students' reading comprehension. The goal of this research is ultimately on students' understanding on the content of the text through the question answer itself. Thus, this strategy is a tool to measure students' understanding and a medium to monitor students' understanding.

## METHOD

The researchers used quasi-experimental design. An illustration of the research design recommended by Sugiyono (2012) as follows:

Table 1- Research Design

Class	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test
Experimental	O <sub>1</sub>	X	O <sub>2</sub>
Control	O <sub>3</sub>	-	O <sub>4</sub>

The researchers used two classes, namely an experimental class and a control class. In the experimental class, the researchers taught by applying the QAR strategy; in the control class, the researchers used conventional teaching. In this research, the researchers took two groups as samples and gave pre-test and post-test. First, the researchers gave the pre-test to know the students' basic knowledge before the treatment. Thus, the post-test was conducted to know the improvement of their skill after conducting the treatment. The population is grade eight students of SMP Negeri 3 Mepanga. The sample of this research was chosen by using cluster random sampling. The teacher recommended class VIII B and VIII D as samples because the classes are still experiencing some problems in learning and require treatment. In quasi-experimental research, the variable consists of two: the independent and dependent variables. The independent variable is the QAR strategy, and the dependent variable is reading comprehension. The instrument of this research was a reading test. The test was a multiple-choice consisted of 5 questions. It aims to measure students' reading comprehension. Data collection techniques consisted of three steps: pre-test,

treatment, and post-test. Pre-test was used for both classes, and then the researchers gave treatment for experimental class. Last, the two classes were given a post-test. After that, the data were computed by using statistical analysis formula adapted from Arikunto (2006).

Table 2- Score Categories

No	Score	Category
1	80 - 100	Very Good
2	70 – 79	Good
3	60 – 69	Enough
4	50 – 59	Poor
5	0 – 49	Very Poor

(Source: Sudjana, 2015)

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### FINDINGS

This research's results were computed using a statistical analysis formula adapted from Arikunto (2006). In presenting data, this research analyzed the data taken from the pre-test and post-test that have been given to the two classes, the experimental and control classes. The data were gained to determine the significant improvement of students' reading comprehension after being taught by applying the Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy to grade eight students of SMP Negeri 3 Mepanga. Further, the researchers elaborate on the pre-test and post-test results of the experimental and control classes on the following table.

Table 3- The Result of Pre-test and Post-test in the Experimental Class

		Mean	N	Mean Deviation	Square Deviation	Significance
(Experimental Class)	Pre-test	38.75	24	25.00	708.33	0.05
	Post-test	63.75	24			

The researchers gave a pre-test for the experimental and control classes to determine students' prior knowledge of reading comprehension. Based on the table above, the researchers got a mean pre-test score of pre-tests in the experimental class of 38.75 from 24 students. While the means score of post-tests was 63.75. By looking at the data, it can be concluded that comparing the pre-test and post-test results in the experimental class is quite improving.

**(Students' scores of pre-test)**

No	Initials	Row Score	Max Score	Students' Score
		(X)	(N)	(Σ)
1	ADP	4	10	40
2	ADM	4	10	40
3	DW	6	10	60
4	DA	2	10	20
5	DNA	4	10	40
6	DR	4	10	40
7	EAA	8	10	80
8	FES	2	10	20
9	GA	2	10	20
10	HO	2	10	20
11	MMPW	4	10	40
12	MHT	4	10	40
13	NDD	4	10	40
14	RA	2	10	20
15	RR	6	10	60
16	SA	6	10	60
17	SYF	6	10	60
18	SM	4	10	40
19	SAR	4	10	40
20	SU	4	10	40
21	TAS	1	10	10
22	UM	4	10	40
23	VH	4	10	40
24	WT	2	10	20
<b>Total</b>				<b>930</b>
<b>Mean Score</b>				<b>38.75</b>

**(Students' scores of post-test)**

No	Initials	Row Score	Max Score	Students' Score
		(X)	(N)	(Σ)
1	ADP	6	10	60
2	ADM	6	10	60
3	DW	8	10	80
4	DA	6	10	60
5	DNA	6	10	60
6	DR	6	10	60
7	EAA	9	10	90
8	FES	6	10	60
9	GA	6	10	60
10	HO	6	10	60
11	MMPW	6	10	60
12	MHT	6	10	60
13	NDD	6	10	60
14	RA	6	10	60
15	RR	8	10	80
16	SA	8	10	80
17	SYF	8	10	80
18	SM	6	10	60
19	SAR	6	10	60
20	SU	6	10	60
21	TAS	4	10	40
22	UM	6	10	60
23	VH	6	10	60
24	WT	6	10	60
<b>Total</b>				<b>1530</b>
<b>Mean Score</b>				<b>63.75</b>

**Table 4. The Result of Pre-test and Post-test in the Control Class**

	Mean	N	Mean Deviation	Square Deviation	Significance

(Control Class)	Pre-test	30.00	21	10.00	100.00	0.05
	Post-test	40.00	21			

The table above shows that the mean score of the pre-test in the control class was 30.00 from 21 students. While the post-test mean score of the control class was 40.00. It can be concluded that the score of the control class, both the pre-test, and post-test, was slightly improved. In other words, the experimental class significantly improved more than the control class.

**(Students' score of pre-test)**

No	Initials	Row Score (X)	Max Sore (N)	Students' Score (Σ)
1	AMA	4	10	40
2	AK	4	10	40
3	AN	1	10	10
4	BS	3	10	30
5	DS	3	10	30
6	FA	3	10	30
7	FSP	2	10	20
8	FI	2	10	20
9	IAM	3	10	30
10	JK	2	10	20
11	NR	3	10	30
12	NA	2	10	20
13	RI	2	10	20
14	SE	3	10	30
15	SA	5	10	50
16	SFK	3	10	30
17	SN	3	10	30
18	SK	4	10	40
19	VR	4	10	40
20	WAS	4	10	40
21	SP	3	10	30
<b>Total</b>				<b>630</b>
<b>Mean Score</b>				<b>30</b>

**(Students' score of post-test)**

No	Initials	Row Score (X)	Max Sore (N)	Students' Score (Σ)
1	AMA	5	10	50
2	AK	5	10	50
3	AN	2	10	20
4	BS	4	10	40
5	DS	4	10	40
6	FA	4	10	40
7	FSP	3	10	30
8	FI	3	10	30
9	IAM	4	10	40
10	JK	3	10	30
11	NR	4	10	40
12	NA	3	10	30
13	RI	3	10	30
14	SE	4	10	40
15	SA	6	10	60
16	SFK	4	10	40
17	SN	4	10	40
18	SK	5	10	50
19	VR	5	10	50
20	WAS	5	10	50
21	SP	4	10	40
<b>Total</b>				<b>840</b>
<b>Mean Score</b>				<b>40</b>

In proving the hypothesis, two procedures were done. First, the researchers counted the mean score of the pre-test and post-test. Second, the mean score was substituted into the t-test formula which resulted in choosing one of the two hypotheses provided. From the formula recommended by Arikunto (2006), it was found that  $t_{counted}$  is 7.36.

After that, the researchers proved the testing hypothesis used to know whether the hypothesis is accepted or rejected. In other words, to find out whether the effectiveness of the Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy in improving students' reading comprehension. If the  $t_{\text{counted}}$  is higher than the  $t_{\text{table}}$ , the hypothesis is accepted. Nonetheless, if the  $t_{\text{counted}}$  is lower than the  $t_{\text{table}}$ , it means that the hypothesis of this research is rejected. The researchers tested the  $t_{\text{counted}}$  with the  $t_{\text{table}}$  using the significance level 0.05. The degree of freedom (df) of the table is 43. Unfortunately, there is no value 43 in the  $t_{\text{table}}$  list of critical of the students' distribution, the researchers applied the formula suggested by Gujarati (2003), and the value of the  $t_{\text{table}}$  is 1.68.

From the result of the data analysis, the  $t_{\text{counted}}$  is 7.36. It must be compared with  $t_{\text{table}}$  (1.68). Thus, the  $t_{\text{counted}}$  is higher than  $t_{\text{table}}$  ( $7.36 > 1.68$ ). Meanwhile, the value of the  $t_{\text{counted}}$  is 7.36. It means that the hypothesis of this research is accepted because the value of the  $t_{\text{counted}}$  is higher than the  $t_{\text{table}}$ . So, it can be concluded that the Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy is effective in improving the reading comprehension of grade VIII students of SMP Negeri 3 Mepanga.

## DISCUSSION

The pre-test, given to the students in the first meeting before implementing the Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy, was conducted to know the students' initial ability in reading comprehension. The pre-test result showed that most students get low scores in reading comprehension. It happened because of a lack of vocabulary and unfamiliar words, and the teacher still applied monotonous methods when teaching reading in the class. The students seemed confused during the pre-test and frequently asked their friends or teachers about the questions. According to Langan and Winstanley (2002), if readers lack vocabulary, it will make it difficult to understand the text's contents. In addition, Fitri and Rifaat (2021) stated that to have a good mastery of reading comprehension, the students should have a good mastery of vocabulary. It is supported by Hirsch (2003) that at least 90 percent of the words enable the reader to get the main idea from the reading and guess correctly what many of the unfamiliar words mean. It means the more vocabulary students have, the better their reading comprehension.

The post-test gave to the students in the last meeting after implementing the Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy during three-time treatments to measure students' ability in reading comprehension. The result showed that the student's score on the post-test was higher than the student's score on the pre-test. So, there was a significant improvement after the treatment by applying the Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy in teaching reading comprehension. In other words, the Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy is effective in improving the ability of grade VIII students of SMP Negeri 3 Mepanga in reading recount text, and the result of this research has answered the research question and also directly proportional to the hypothesis. This finding aligns with the result of research done by Erdiana, Kasim, and Juwita (2017), who also used the Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy to improve the reading comprehension of 8th-grade of MTsN Model Banda Aceh. They state that implementing the Question-Answer Relationship (QAR)

strategy is effective in reading comprehension of recount text to the students as there is an escalation in the student's scores after implementing the Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy. Furthermore, another previous study conducted by Wahyuni (2014) also obtained similar findings. She states that there was a significant difference in her students' reading comprehension ability after they were taught using the Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy.

After applying the Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy in teaching reading comprehension, there were some reasons why the students got better scores in their post-test. First, the QAR strategy is a new thing for the students and not a monotonous method. The students feel interested in discussing the topic of a recount text because this strategy can guide the students to find the answer on the text using the question related to the text. In line with Hasanah, Sudarsono, and Riyanti (2018), who state that using QAR strategy in teaching reading comprehension made the students work cooperatively, think aloud, and think creatively. The students consider the information from the text and their knowledge. Second, the QAR strategy stimulated the students to understand the content of the text through intensive reading. This reason is in line with the statement of Raphael and Au (2005), who state that the QAR strategy is appropriate for teaching the students to focus on the meaning of the text. Last, the students can identify fact and opinion sentences in the text. Using the questioning groups of the QAR: "Right There" and Think and Search," the students could understand the reading text explicitly and include identification facts and opinions sentences. "Author and You" and "On My Own," the students could get the information in the text merged with the students' knowledge or experiences.

In addition, the students also get better critical thinking in reading comprehension by making relationship between questions and answer. In making the relationship between questions and answer, the students were asked to locate the answer of the questions in the text. When students are consciously aware of the different sources of information available to answer questions, they become active in their reading and thinking, and their critical thinking will be improved. QAR strategy is an instructional strategy that can increase students' critical thinking by asking them to analyze the different sources of information they can use to answer the questions. It means that QAR strategy is confirmed to have great value in increasing students' critical thinking and reading comprehension because it provides easy ways to answer the question by using the types its categories, and it also makes students more active in answering the questions.

## CONCLUSION

Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy significantly improved students' reading comprehension in recount text on the grade eight students of SMP Negeri 3 Mepanga. There was a significant difference between students' reading comprehension who were taught using Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy and those who were not. The students in the experimental class could improve their reading comprehension. Their better achievement in reading comprehension can be seen based on the post-test scores, which were higher than pre-test scores. In addition, based

on the data analysis, the researchers found that  $t_{\text{counted}}$  7.36 was higher than  $t_{\text{table}}$  1.68. So, the hypothesis is accepted. It means that there was a significant difference in students' reading comprehension achievement who were taught using Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy and those who were not. It can be concluded that the Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy effectively improves the reading comprehension of grade VIII students of SMP Negeri 3 Mepanga.

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