Enhancing The Eighth Grade Students Reading Comprehension Achievement by Using Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) Strategy

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Abstract
This research was aimed at improving the eighth-grade students' reading achievement and their participation during teaching-learning process using the Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) Strategy. This research applied Classroom Action Research (CAR) design with grade eight students of secondary school at junior high school as the research participants. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to know the improvement of the students' reading comprehension achievement and the students' participation after being taught reading using QAR strategy. This research was conducted in 1 cycle consisted of five meetings. The result of this research showed that the use of QAR Strategy could improve the students' reading comprehension achievement and the students' participation during the teaching and learning of reading.

Keyword: Reading Comprehension, Teaching strategy, QAR strategy.

INTRODUCTION

English is one of the main subjects in Indonesia from junior high school to college. Most Indonesian students have difficulty when reading the English text. According to Syatriana (2010), the ability of Indonesian students in reading English texts was very low. She revealed that most students (84.61%) stated that the English learning difficulties were due to the insufficient knowledge of English grammar, English vocabulary, texts, reading skills, and reading strategies. Reading is one of the language skills that plays an important role in the learning process because it can enlarge vocabulary knowledge, information, and idea to be applied in speaking and writing. In fact, the ability to read texts has been considered as one of the most important skills for EFL students, especially in Indonesia.

Reading comprehension is the ability to read text, process it and understand its meaning. However, asking questions from the printed text is also considered as a reading activity. In most reading comprehension activities, questioning technique is usually used by teachers as a way to measure student's comprehension of a text. It means that the goals

of questioning are to examine the student's ability in understanding a text and in answering it correctly. In order to make it successful, students should understand what the question is about. On the other hand, students must know whether the answer to the question is in the text (explicit) or beyond the text (implicit). According to Pikulski and Templeton (2004), reading comprehension is increasingly required for reading informational and content area text.

Reading is not only about reading the words but also understanding what we read (Oakhil, Cain & Elbro, 2015). It means that the students should comprehend words, sentences, paragraphs, and the whole text to catch the idea of the text. In brief, reading comprehension is not only understanding the word meaning but also understanding the whole text to get information or message of the text. To achieve this, the use of reading strategy and appropriate reading material is needed.

In this research, based on the interview which was done by the researcher with the English teacher of SMPN 2 Jember Class VIII D, the researcher found that students still have difficulties in reading. Most students still faced difficulties in comprehending words, sentences, paragraphs, and the whole text. They considered that reading in English is difficult to learn before eventually trying to learn it. Besides, the students faced difficulties while answering the question such as explicit and implicit questions. They also lacked of vocabularies that made them feel difficult in comprehending the text.

To solve the student's problem in reading comprehension while reading and answering the questions based on the text, the students must have a strategy. The researcher selects the appropriate strategy and it is found that QAR strategy is one of the strategies that can help the students' reading comprehension problem. QAR is a strategy that emphasizes on the relationship between question and answer. It means that in QAR strategy, while answering the literal, inferential and evaluative questions, the readers should understand the question based on the text. Then, it will be easier for them to determine what the answer is. QAR focuses on the processes of generating answers to questions and on the relationship between questions and answers. It means that students are encouraged to think of sources for answering questions (Roe et al, 1995).

Raphael (1986) divided the source of answering questions into two sections namely

"In the Text" and "In My Head." These sections are broken down into four types that are "Right There" (the answer is found in the text), "Think and Search" (the answer is in the text but using different sentences), "Author and Me" (the answer is found by relating the text with students' prior knowledge), "On My Own" (the answer comes purely from students' prior knowledge).

Raphael (1986) classified QAR into two categories that are "In the Book" and "In My Head". From these categories, there are types of questions based on the category. The first main category "In the Book" consist of "Right There" and "Think & Search". The second category "In My Head" is divided into "Author & Me" and "On My Own" (Raphael et al, 2006). "In the Book" is used to describe questions with the answers in the text. Furthermore, "In My Head" is used to describe a question that needs prior knowledge of the learners.

"Right There" question is a question with explicit answer in which the answer can be found in the text. Mostly, the answer is located within a single sentence in the text and easy to find.

"Think and Search" question is question with implicit answer. The answers are not stated in the text. The answers are gathered from some parts of the text and put together to produce meaning, so the information for answering the question is got from different place in the text.

"Author & Me" question is a question that has answers got from the combination of information in the text and background knowledge or the questions based on information provided in the text but the students should relate it to their own experiences. This means the readers have to be able to combine what they read based on what they know.

"On My Own" questions is a question that the answer is not in the text. The questions that can be answered largely from the students' background knowledge. Those questions do not require the students to read the passage but they have to use their background knowledge to answer the question. This means the students can answer the question without reading the text.

RESEARCH METHOD

This classroom action research was conducted in cycles. The class as the research

subject was given intervention by teaching them reading comprehension using the QAR strategy. After doing intervention the researcher was conducted a reading comprehension post- test to know the improvement of the students' reading comprehension mean score.

The research participants of this research are students in VIII D class at SMP Negeri 2 Jember. There are 32 students, 14 male students and 18 female students in the academic year of 2020/2021. There are six classes of grade VIII. One class was selected as the research participant. This class was suggested by the English teacher based on the English subject score and pretest about reading skill that has been given by the researcher. The reading comprehension achievement of the students in this classroom still needed to be improved. From 32 students in the VIII D, there were 16 students who could not achieve the passing grade and there are only 16 students who could achieve the passing grade. The students who achieved passing grade were 50%. Half of them still could not answer the question correctly. It was because they did not comprehend the text well.

To know the percentage of students reading comprehension achievement. The data from the students' reading comprehension achievement test was analyzed quantitatively as well. The formula was as follows:

$$E = n/N \times 100\%$$

(Taken from Sugiyono, 2012)

E= the number of students who achieve standard score (for participation, the total number who are active)

n = the total number of students who get score

75 or more (for participation, the total number of students who are active)

N = the total number of students

RESEARCH RESULT

The result of this research showed that the mean score of the students reading comprehension test was 82.5. It was higher than the mean score that students achieved in the Preliminary Study that was 76.5. In addition, the result of student's reading comprehension test reported that there were 29 students (90.63%) who got a reading

comprehension score of at least 75 (≥75). However, there were 3 students (9.38%) who got the score below the standard score (≤75). It means that the action of teaching reading comprehension through QAR strategy was successful. More than 75% of students achieved the standard score requirement at least 75 (≥75). Furthermore, this action was categorized as successful because the results of the students' mean score in the Reading post-test showed an improvement. Therefore, it could be concluded that the action given could successfully help students improve their participation and then reading comprehension achievement.

In this research, observation was carried out during the teaching and learning process of reading comprehension using the QAR strategy to evaluate the participation of students. This observation was done to record the students' involvement in the learning activities.

Based on observations in Meeting 1, it was known that there were 10 students (31.25%) who could not complete writing10 questions about the text. But, 22 students (68.75%) could finish writing 10 questions about the text. During the reading activity for second and third indicators, the teacher asked some questions to students and only 5 students (15.63%) could answer the oral questions given by the teacher, and 27 students (84.38%) did not answer these questions. On the other hand, 17 students (53.13%) could answer all questions made by friends even though the questions were less than 10. For the last indicator, 32 students or 100% students did the exercise given by the teacher individually. This exercise was done by answering 10 matching questions. Based on the exercises given by the teacher it was found that the mean score of the students' reading comprehension achievement in Meeting 1 was 82.5 and 87,5% of the total students achieved the standard score requirement which was at least 75 (≤75). The number of students who were active in Meeting 1 was 14 students (43.75%).

The observation in Meeting 2. There was an improvement in which 32 students (100%) wrote a question about the text. During the reading activity, the teacher asked some questions to all students and there were 17 students (53.13%) who could answer oral questions given by the teacher and 15 students (46.88%) did not answer these questions. Moreover, there were 16 students (50%) who could answer all questions made by their

friends. Then, 32students (100%) did the exercises given by the teacher by answering 10 questions in the form of WH question. Based on the exercises given by the teacher it was found that the mean score of the students' reading comprehension achievement in Meeting 2 was 85 and (87.5%) students achieved the standard score requirement of at least 75 (≥75). In meeting 2 there were 19 students (59.37%) who were active.

The observation in Meeting 3. There were 32 students (100%) wrote a question about the text. During the reading activity, the teacher asked questions to the students and there were 10 students (31.25%) who could answer the questions given by the teacher and 23 students (71.88%) who could answer the questions given by their friends. The activity in Meeting 3 was question and answer session among students. The entire activities in Meeting 3 were the students created questions and gave them to their friends to be answered directly. Therefore, answering questions session with the teacher only consisted of quick/short questions. In meeting 3 there were 25 students (78.12%) active.

The observation in Meeting 4. There were 32 students (100%) wrote questions about the text. During the reading activity, the teacher asked questions to the students and there were 16 students (50%) who could answer the questions given by the teacher and 27 students (84.38%) who could answer the questions given by friends. The activity in Meeting 4 was question and answer session among students. Students worked in pairs to ask questions and give them to other pairs to be answered directly. Therefore, answering questions session with the teacher only consisted of 15 quick questions. Then, 32 students (100%) did the exercise given by the teacher individually. This exercise was done

by answering 10 matching questions. Based on the exercises given by the teacher it was found that the mean score of the student's reading comprehension achievement in Meeting 4 was 85 and there were (90.63%) students who achieved the standard score requirement of at least 75. In meeting 4 there were 29 students (90.63%) active.

DISCUSSION

The results in the first meeting showed that the percentage of students who actively participated was 43.75% and it improved to be 90.62% in the last meeting. In Meeting 1, students still had difficulty in creating questions while reading activities and it seemed too difficult to formulate their idea, because they were not used to it and this was due to the lack of students' vocabulary, and students' low confidence in answering the questions given by the teacher. Thus, the researcher has guided students in making the questions and gestures from the researcher to help them get ideas from the text, and then students could apply them. The application of the QAR strategy as an alternative strategy in this study helped the students to learn better in reading comprehension. However, in answering "Right There" questions students could do it well since the first meeting.

Further, in Meeting 2 students were capable of making the questions, because before the question-making activity

students were given exercises in the form of WH questions and matching questions. In this term finally, the students could understand the structure of the questions with the QAR type (Right There, Think &Search, On My Own, Author & Me). Moreover, in creating the question, students worked in groups and paired from the 2nd meeting to the 4th meeting. This situation made them easier to write questions because they worked together with friends. Besides, the students got a chance to share ideas when they discussed the answer of the task. In creating questions, the researcher did not put the focus too much on grammar. QAR strategy improved reading comprehension of recount text of the eighth- grade students. The students' ability in comprehending reading recount text improved in every meeting. In meeting 1the students' ability answering Think &Search questions was still low. It indicated that the students had difficulty in comprehending reading recount text for implicit information of the text. Most students had a lack of vocabulary; they

needed teacher's help to translate an unfamiliar word. In Meeting 2, it was found that students did not find difficulty in answering Right There questions. It indicated that their ability in comprehending explicit information of the text was good. The significant improvement was made by the students in Meeting 3 and 4. Their reading comprehension of Think & Search questions improved when they work in a group. By working in group, they could share and discuss ideas. It showed that QAR improved students' ability in comprehending implicit information of the text.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the results of data analysis and discussion, it could be concluded that teaching reading through QAR strategy could improve the students' reading achievement and their active participation in the teaching and learning.

The improvement of the students' reading comprehension achievement test could be seen from the students' reading mean score and 90.63% or 29 total students achieved the standard score requirement which was at least 75 (≤75). While from the observation, it was found that the use of QAR strategy in the teaching and learning process of reading could improve the students' active participation. The average number of students who were active increased in each meeting from 43.75% in Meeting1 to 90.62% in Meeting 4. The result of observation showed that the students involved more actively during the teaching learning process of reading comprehension. It means that the teaching reading comprehension through QAR was useful and good to improve the students' reading comprehension achievement and to make the students involve actively during the teaching learning process of reading comprehension.

By considering the results of the implementation of QAR strategy in teaching reading that could improve the students' reading achievement and the students' active participation, some suggestions are proposed to the following people. comprehension of recount text through QAR strategy, the students made significant improvements in comprehending implicit and explicit information of the text. It was shown by the students' ability to answer the Think & Search and Right There questions. On the other hand, the students could answer On My own, Right There, and Author & Me question appropriately.

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