



P-ISSN 2355-2794  
E-ISSN 2461-0275

## QAR Strategy Implementation for Reading Comprehension of Recount Texts

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### Abstract

*The objective of this research is to find out whether or not Question Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy is effective in teaching reading comprehension of recount text. This research used an experimental research design. This research took place at a junior high school in Banda Aceh. A second grade class or 8<sup>th</sup> grade was chosen as the research sample which consisted of 36 students. The research instrument used to gather the data was a set of essay tests which were divided into pre-test and post-test. The result of the research was analyzed by using paired t-test formula. The calculation result shows that the t-score value is higher than the critical value t-table ( $-5.62 > -2.03$ ). It means that the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) is accepted, and the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected. To conclude, the implementation of QAR strategy is effective in teaching reading comprehension of recount text to the students as there is an escalation toward the students' scores after the implementation of QAR.*

**Keywords:** Reading comprehension, Question Answer Relationship (QAR), recount texts, EFL students.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

English as the international language is mostly used in various situations, such as in corporation, marketing, and even in the education institutions. In Indonesia, English has not been counted as a second language, but it is used as a foreign language. Marhum (2009) gives some reasons why English has special functions in Indonesia: (1) English is a language that is used by people in all countries to communicate, (2) it is a mean of development supporter of Indonesian language to become one of the modern languages, and (3) it is a mean of science and technology transfer for national

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development. Those factors make English to be included in the national curriculum that is principally used at schools to prepare students to be ready to pursue their dreams. And for junior high school students, English is a compulsory subject (Leksono, 2009).

Based on the national policy in Content Standard 2006 (*Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan* or KTSP), English at the junior high school is focused on the four language skills. They are listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. In learning English, especially for reading skill, students are expected to be able to know explicit and implicit ideas in the texts. Based on SK/KD 11/11.3, the students have to be able to respond meaning of rhetorical feature, in essays that are used in various written language accurately, fluently, and acceptable in daily life context in recount and narrative texts. However, for many students, reading is still considered as a difficult skill to master. Based on our initial study from informal interviews from a number of students at a junior high school in Banda Aceh, they informed that the common difficulties faced in understanding reading texts are caused by lack of vocabulary, difficult to identify main idea, understanding how to refer words in the text and detail of text. These problems were also faced by students in research previously conducted by Komariah et al. (2015), Gani et al. (2016), Natsir and Anisati (2016), and Yusuf et al. (2016). They have used various techniques and methods to overcome these problems.

Among the techniques, methods and strategies that teachers can use to overcome students' reading difficulties is the Question Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy. And so, to assist the students in the school under study, the researchers proposed to implement this strategy in the classroom. QAR strategy is effective in helping increase students' reading comprehension, especially in finding the main idea, inferences, implicit and explicit information. These have been proven by studies such as those conducted by Steubing (2011), Stafford (2012), and Wahyuni (2014), among others. In consequence, the research question for this study is: Can Question Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy improves 8<sup>th</sup> grade students' reading comprehension of recount text?

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Reading Comprehension

Reading is one of the skills in learning language beside listening, writing, and speaking. People who currently use the term know that reading is language ability and should be taught in close meaningful connection with the entire of language abilities, including talking, listening, writing and thinking (Gillet & Temple, 1994). Reading is a process in which readers actively search for making meaning in what they read. It is a complex process and essential skill that is used to dig up meaning and information from the text to be knowledge which relates to other skills in its process. Krashen (2004, p. 37), as quoted in Mourtaga (2006), states "reading is the only way, the only way we become good reader, develop a good writing style, an adequate vocabulary, advanced grammar, and the only way we become good spellers".

Experts have defined reading in different definitions. Schulz (1981) explains that reading is someone's capability in extracting meaning from the text he/she reads. He, then, adds that someone does not need to understand the meaning of each word of text, but he/she should have to understand the meaning that conveys from a series of word. This definition comes to a term called extensive reading. This term emphasizes that

reading is for global comprehension, instead of intensive reading. Extensive reading is useful for general people, who do not need to understand the meaning of each word, for example, reading to get information. On the other hand, intensive reading is very important for students. It is not to just get them to understand the series of words, but to also know the meaning of every word. Students who know every word from the text may extract more meaning or information than those who do not.

Meanwhile, reading comprehension has many definitions as described by experts. Snow (2002) describes reading comprehension as the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. Furthermore, Grellet (1981), explains that reading comprehension is understanding a written text by means of extracting required information from it as efficiently as possible. By means of reading, a reader can find out the meaning, get the main idea, get the structure of the text, and reveal other information from the text.

Comprehension has three elements that are linked together and cannot be separated. The first element is the readers who are trying to understand texts. At this point, someone's ability and background knowledge have an effect to the reading. Second, the text that is the object to be comprehended by the readers. That text may be in the form of printed books or electronic books that are used to read. The third element is the reading activity. This activity includes the purposes, processes, and consequences that are related to the reading activity (Snow, 2002).

## 2.2 Question Answer Relationship Strategy

Question Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy is a kind of strategy in reading developed by Raphael (1986). According to Raphael and Au (2005), QAR 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 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 procedure of QAR strategy includes four steps (Bos & Vaughn, 2002). According to Bos and Vaughn (2002), the first step is to explain to the students that there are four types of questions they will encounter. The teacher is to define each type of question and give an example. The four types of questions that are examined in QAR are

- (a) Right There Questions: literal questions whose answers can be found in the text. Often the words used in the question are the same words found in the text.
- (b) Think and Search Questions: answers are gathered from several parts of the text and put together to make meaning.
- (c) Author and You Questions: these questions are based on information provided in the text but the students are required to relate it to their own experiences.
- (d) On My Own Questions: these questions do not require the students to have read the passage but they must use their background knowledge to answer the question.

Second, Bos and Vaughn (2002) explain that the teacher read a short passage aloud to the students. Third, the teacher has predetermined questions she or he will ask after stopping reading. When the teacher has finished reading, she or he reads the questions aloud to the students and models how to decide which type of question she or

he have asked to answer. Finally, the teacher shows the students how to find information to answer the question.

### **3. METHODS**

In this research, the researchers considered an experimental design which belongs to the pre-experimental design. [Arikunto \(2009\)](#) states that quantitative research is a kind of research required the use of numbers, ranging from data collection, data interpretation and the appearance of the result. The writer implemented one-group pre-test and post-test design as the design for this experiment.

A second grade class or 8th grade students of MTsN Model, Banda Aceh, was chosen as the research sample. The class consisted of 36 students. The research instrument used to gather the data was a set of essay tests which were divided into pre-test and post-test.

Test is a method that can be used to measure the individuals' skills, intelligence of knowledge, and aptitudes ([Arikunto, 2010](#)). The test should be valid and reliable in order to get accurate data. The data was collected quantitatively which was acquired from a pre-test and a post-test on students' reading comprehension. The tests were adapted from the English text book used by the school. Pre-test was given to see the students' reading comprehension before QAR strategy was applied. Meanwhile, the post-test was given to measure the progress of the students' reading comprehension after the strategy was applied.

The tests focused on recount texts; this text type is as required by the school syllabus for 8<sup>th</sup> grade students of Indonesian junior high schools. The function of recount text is to inform the reader or listener about past events in chronological order. The generic structures of the text are: orientation, events, and re-orientation. Language features of recount text are: 1) use of nouns and pronouns to identify people, animals or thing involved, 2) use of past action verbs to refer the events, 3) use of past tense to locate events in relation to the speaker's or researcher's time, and 4) use of conjunctions and time connectives to sequence the event.

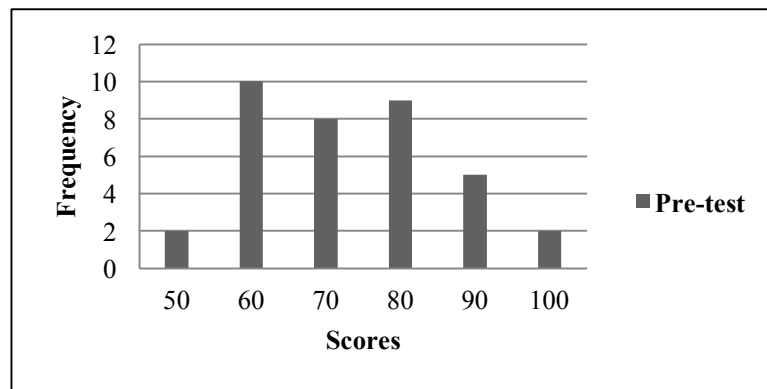
For data analysis, the researchers detected the significance of data between the pre-test and post-test scores based on the students' achievement before and after three treatments (i.e. three meetings) of QAR strategy were conducted in the classroom. Moreover, in order to analyse the test result, some formulas were used. First, to evaluate the reading comprehension tests, the writer used a scoring system. The next step was the calculation of the students' correct answers for each question in score percentage. In order to find out the significance between the pre-test and post-test, data were analysed by using statistical formulas by [Hatch and Lazaraton \(1991\)](#).

### **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **4.1 Results**

The pre-test, which was given to the students in the first meeting before the implementation of Question Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy, was conducted to

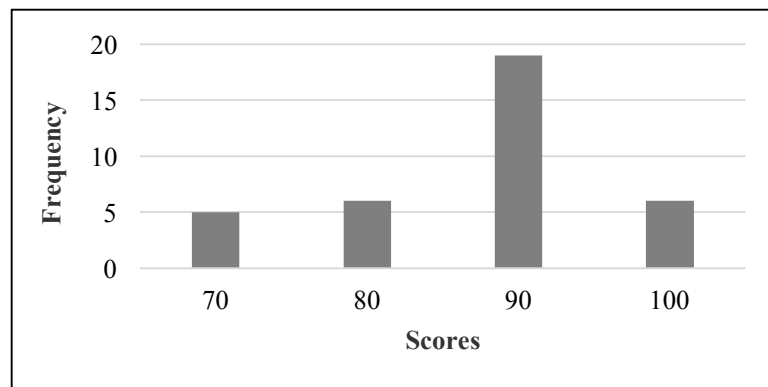
find out the students' initial ability in reading comprehension. Figure 1 illustrates the scores from this pre-test.



**Figure 1.** The students' pre-test scores.

The result of pre-test showed that most students got low scores in reading comprehension. It happened because students did not comprehend the text well. They were also still unfamiliar with some questions stated in the pre-test. During the pre-test, some students seemed confused and frequently asked their friends or teacher about the questions.

The post-test, which was given to the students after the treatments were given, was done to measure students' ability in reading comprehension to see the improvement after QAR strategy was implemented. Figure 2 illustrates the scores of the post-test.

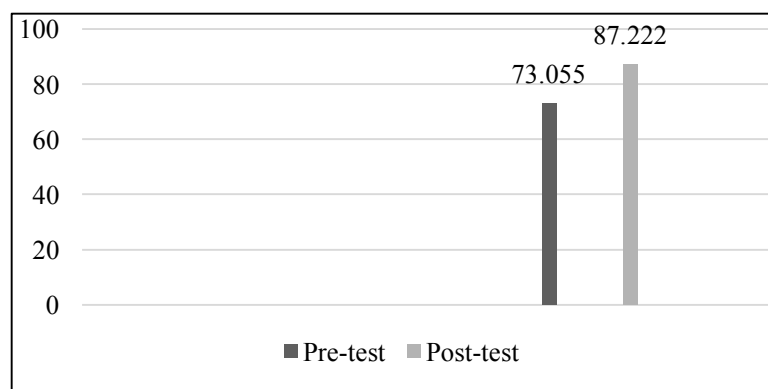


**Figure 2.** The students' post-test scores.

Figure 2 shows that the students' scores from the pre-test to post-test had increased, in which the lowest score in the pre-test was 50, but in the post-test, the lowest score was 70. This means that students who previously had scores below the standard minimum score set by the school (i.e. 70), yet after learning reading comprehension with QAR strategy, they could reach the score demanded by their school.

Furthermore, from the pre-test and post-test scores, the mean score of these tests were calculated. The different score of pre-test and post-test became the priority value in the formula to find the mean score. After finding the mean score, the standard

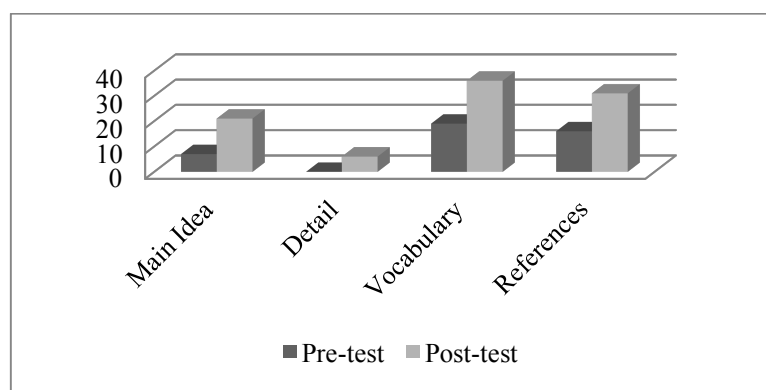
deviation of the pre-test and post-test were defined. Finally, the t-formula was calculated. Figure 3 shows the the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test.



**Figure 3.** The mean scores of pre-test and post-test.

The two calculations in Figure 3 show the different results of the mean values. The mean value of the post-test (87.22) is higher than the mean value of the pre-test (73.05). As a result, a temporary conclusion is drawn, which is QAR strategy had worked effectively in improving the students' reading comprehension. However, to prove if the technique has given a significant effect on students' reading comprehension, a t-test must be calculated.

There are many aspects in reading comprehension, but here, the researchers only focused on four reading comprehension skills to be observed in this research, which are main idea, detail, vocabulary and reference. Figure 4 presents the result of each reading comprehension skill of the students' pre-test and post-test.



**Figure 4.** Students' average scores of reading comprehension skills.

The scores of pre-test and post-test are evidences of the students' improvement. The mean score of pre-test was 73.05 and the mean score of post-test was 87.22. It means that the score of post-test was higher than score of pre-test. In addition, there was a significant improvement for mean score of each reading comprehension skill. In the pre-test, the score for each aspect were: main idea (7), detail (0), vocabulary (19), and reference (16). Meanwhile, in the post-test the score were; main idea (21), detail (6), vocabulary (36), and reference (31).

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, it was found that the t-score is 5.62. The hypothesis was analyzed by using the t-score formula. It was referred to the t-table at the level significant of 0.05. The testing criteria used for the result of hypothesis is: if  $t < t_t$  (the result of t-score is lower than t-table), it means that the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected. The researchers used the degree of freedom failure in a particular significant ( $\alpha$ ), which is 0.05. The degree of freedom (df) here is 35 (2.03). It was obtained by using the formula  $(n-1)$ , which is  $36-1=35$ . From the result of study, the t-test calculated is -5.62. It must be compared with t-table score (-2.03). Thus, the t-score value is higher than the critical value t-table ( $-5.62 > -2.03$ ). It means that the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) was accepted while the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected. So, the data indicates that the implementation of Question Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy can affect students' ability in reading comprehension. It can be concluded that there is an escalation toward the students' scores after the implementation of QAR.

## 4.2 Discussion

After collecting and processing the data taken from the tests, it was found that the scores of students increased after the implementation of QAR strategy. The score of the pre-test and post-test could be an evidence of students' improvement. The mean score of pre-test was 73.05 and the mean score of post-test was 87.22. It means that the score of post-test was higher than the score of pre-test. This finding is in line with the result of study done by Murtado (2011) who also used QAR strategy to improve the reading comprehension of 8<sup>th</sup> graders in one of the junior high schools in Curugbitung. He finds that by using QAR strategy, his students could develop their vocabulary, activate their prior knowledge, apply their higher-level of thinking, and enhance their interest and participation in the learning and teaching process. Furthermore, another previous study conducted by Wahyuni (2014) also obtained similar findings. She states that there was a significant difference of her students' ability in reading comprehension after they were taught by using QAR strategy.

In addition, there was a significant improvement for the mean score of each reading comprehension skill. In the pre-test, the score for each aspect are: main idea (7), detail (0), vocabulary (19), and reference (16). Meanwhile, in the post-test the score were; main idea (21), detail (6), vocabulary (36), and reference (31). These increasing points indicate that the strategy was effective to be used in teaching the aspects of reading comprehension.

Moreover, there were numbers of reasons why students got better scores in their post-test. First, QAR strategy had stimulated the students to be able 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 QAR strategy is good to teach students to focus on the meaning of the text. Second, the students were able to identify fact and opinion sentences in the text. Using the questioning groups of QAR: "Right There" and "Think and Search", students could understand the reading text explicitly and include identification fact and opinion sentences in the text. Third, the students could find the information as a discussion material. Meanwhile, in the last questioning groups of QAR, "Author and You" and "On Your Own", students could get the information in the text that merged with the students' knowledge or experiences. Last but not least, the success in increasing students' reading comprehension ability could be achieved

through QAR strategy since students have made and considered reading as important to get the whole information in the text to deeply understand it.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Based on the previous discussion, it can be concluded that Question Answer Relationship is one of the potential strategies to be used in teaching reading comprehension. By using QAR strategy, students can activate their prior knowledge, apply their higher-level of thinking, and enhance their interest and participation in the learning and teaching process. The findings of this study indicate that QAR strategy is successful in improving students reading comprehension of the recount text. Therefore, the researchers recommend both teachers and students to apply this strategy in the teaching and learning of English reading comprehension.

Of course, this study was conducted not without weaknesses. It employed only one class from one school to conduct the experiment. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to other students from other schools or educational levels. To cover these limitations, therefore research with larger samples and more schools in different educational levels are recommended for future research in this topic.

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[Received 28 June 2017; revised 27 August 2017; accepted 31 August 2017]

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