IMPROVING STUDENTS’ READING COMPREHENSION OF RECOUNT TEXT THROUGH QUESTION ANSWER RELATIONSHIP STRATEGY

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Abstract: This research intended to improve students’ reading comprehension of recount text through Question Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy on the eighth grade students of SMP Haebat Islam Gontong Kubu Raya. The research method that used was Classroom Action Research (CAR) which consists of three cycles. To measure the students’ improvement on reading comprehension, the writer administered the evaluation test. The research finding showed that QAR strategy improved students’ reading comprehension. Based on the analysis of the students’ test result, QAR strategy made students achievement improved in every cycle. In the first cycle, the students still had difficulty in comprehending the recount text, both text explicit and text implicit information. Students’ mean score was 61.17. In the second cycle, students’ ability in identify text explicit information was better compared to the previous cycle, their ability in answer Right There questions improved. Students’ mean score was 77.5. In the third cycle, the students made significant improvement in comprehending text implicit information. It showed by students’ ability in answer the Think & Search questions improved. The students’ mean score was 83.33 which categorized as good to excellent.

Key words: reading comprehension, QAR strategy, classroom action research.


Kata kunci: pemahaman membaca, strategi QAR, penelitian tindakan kelas
Reading as a skill is important to be learned, because it enables students to add their knowledge and get information from the text. Reading is an active process which consists of recognition and comprehension skill (Bacon in Patel & Jain, 2003). Both of these two relatively separate skills underlie reading development. Word recognition (also known as word decoding) refers to the process of perceiving how written symbols correspond to one’s spoken language. Comprehension is the process of deriving meaning from connected text that enables the reader to acquire information.

In reading activity, the reader expected to get the main ideas and the detail information from the text. To get the meaning from the text, or to catch the content of the text, the reader needs comprehension. Here, the aim of reading activity is reading comprehension. Comprehension makes the reading activity meaningful. Based on the School-Based Curriculum (KTSP, 2006) for junior high school students, reading skill is one of four basic skills which should be mastered by the students. The basic competence of reading skill requires student’s ability to comprehend the text in form of descriptive, procedures, report, recount, and narrative. Considering the important of mastering the reading skill, it is essential for the student to comprehend what they read. In reality, reading comprehension becomes a common problem which the learner is facing, especially for an English language learner at school level. From the result of the observation conducted to the students at SMP Haebat Islam Gontong Kubu Raya, the writer found that the students commonly faced problem in comprehending reading English text, especially in comprehending recount text. From students' side, this low achievement in identifying the information was caused by students’ lack of vocabulary; as a result, the students only read the text without knowing the meaning of individual words they read. The other point of view is that the students do not know how apply certain techniques of reading in finding the information or content of a text accurately. From teacher's side, the students’ problem of reading comprehension might be caused by the ineffective strategy applied by the teachers in the reading instruction.

Based on the description about the problems above, English teacher found an appropriate teaching reading comprehension strategy to improve student’s achievement. Thus, the writer has conducted a classroom action research in order to find the solution to overcome the students’ problem in reading comprehension. For that reason, the writer implemented Question-Answer Relationships (QAR) strategy to improve students' reading comprehension. QAR is a comprehensive approach of teaching reading that teaches pupils three comprehension strategies: (1) locating information, (2) determining text structures and how they convey information, and (3) determining when an inference is required (Raphael, 1986).

Raphael (1986) proposed a questioning strategy to develop the students’ reading comprehension. Raphael developed a strategy that requires students to ask and respond to a variety of questions about a text—from questions with a single correct answer to ones with many possible answers which known as QAR (Question Answer Relationship). This strategy is based on the principle that students learn to be strategic readers as they search text for answer based on the type of question they’re asked.

The QAR strategy proposed by Raphael to assist the students to explore the text comprehensively with its four levels of questions namely Right There, Think and Search, Author and Me, and On My Own questions. Raphael (1983) developed those four levels
of questions influenced by Pearson and Johnson works about question taxonomy. Pearson and Johnson (1978) developed a simple taxonomy specifically designed to categorize questions in terms of the relationship between the question and possible sources of response information. These sources are (1) the text to which the question refers and (2) the reader's own knowledge base. The authors recognized that both sources provide information for answering question. In addition, information located in the text may be either explicitly stated or inferred from the integration of textual information. Thus, the proposed taxonomy has three categories: text explicit (information to be used for the most appropriate response is stated explicitly in the text), text implicit (response information is located in the text but requires the integration of textual material), and script implicit (response information is located in the reader's knowledge base).

Furthermore, by using QAR, the students are able to recognize possible answer locations by classifying questions by type as well as monitor their comprehension of the text. Armbruster and Osborn cited in Welberg (2003) stated that question-answering instruction encourages students to learn how to answer questions better and therefore to learn more as they read. The implementation of Question Answer Relationship (QAR) instruction strategy in teaching reading comprehension of recount text is very useful for student to identify both explicit and implicit information from the text.

A research that used QAR strategy has been conducted by Murtado (2011). In his thesis, Using Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) Strategy to Improve the Reading Comprehension of the Eight Graders of Mts Miftahul Huda Curugbitung, the finding shows that Question-Answer Relationship strategy can improve reading comprehension skills. Using the strategy in teaching reading helped the students to: (1) develop their vocabulary, (2) activate their prior knowledge, (3) apply their higher level thinking, and (4) enhance their interest and participation in the learning and teaching process. The research about improving students reading comprehension of recount text through Question Answer Relationship strategy is aimed to find out how QAR strategy improves students reading comprehension of recount text. The result of this research showed that by using QAR strategy, students’ reading comprehension of recount text improved.

Based on the description of the problem above, the writer conducted a classroom action research to find out how the Question-Answer Relationship strategy improves reading comprehension of recount text of the eighth grade students of SMP Haebat Islam Gontong Kubu Raya academic year 2015/2016.

METHOD

This research is conducted in a classroom action research which pays more attention to the teaching and learning process. Action research is a collection of problem-solving cycles for improving organizations. Action research was firstly introduced by Kurt Lewin. This term “action” captured the notion of a disciplined inquiry in the context of focusing efforts to improve the quality of an organization and its performance (Lewin, 1940, 1950 in Taylor).
Action research develops through an ongoing cyclical process. A cyclical process in conducting action research include: 1 strategic planning; 2 action, i.e. implementing the plan; 3 observation, evaluation and self-evaluation; 4 critical and self-critical reflection on the results of points 1–3 and making decisions for the next cycle of action research Zuber-Skerritt (1996a:3) as a classroom action research, this research will work with the implementation of QAR in the classroom.

Before classroom action study carry out, the writer has to prepare instructional planning. Planning includes the teacher’s preparation before the teaching learning activity such as lesson plan, teaching material, observation checklist table, table of scoring and field notes.

After planning step completed, the teacher will conduct an action. The teacher will apply the procedures of QAR (Question Answer Relationship) in teaching learning process. The teacher will conduct classroom action research based on the lesson plan prepared.

In the observing step, a collaborator will observes classroom activities while doing action in order to know the learning process. In this process, collaborator will fill the observation checklist table and field note. She/he will note down anything that occurs in teaching learning process, including the obstacle that is found as well as the probable solution to overcome. The collaborator will also concern with the teacher’s work whether she/he apply the following phases of this way or not. Finally, to get the score judgment, the teacher will combine his score with the collaborator who will get objective result.

The teacher and collaborator will analyze and reflect after the result of the action and observation found out. It is done to reveal the expected increase of the subject ability in reading comprehension after QAR implemented. The purpose of reflection is to find out the result of observation and action. The teacher and collaborator try to evaluate the strength and weakness of teaching learning process during the action. Based on the reflection, the writer and the teacher try to emphasize the use of QAR to gain the maximum teaching learning activities to solve problems. In this research, the writer takes the subject of research where the problem found. The subject is eight grade of SMP Haebat Islam Gontong Kubu Raya which consists of 17 students.

In collecting the data, researcher will use observation and measurement technique. In this research, the researcher will be the collaborator who observes the students’ improvement. In observation, the teacher and the collaborator will pay attention to the students’ activity carefully in order to notice things that have connection to the research focus. The observation will be done by using observation checklist table and the field notes as a guidance to notice students’ improvement by QAR. Meanwhile, measurement technique will be used in order to know the students’ progress in every cycle.

The tools of data collecting are by using written assessment, observation checklist table, and field notes. Written assessment will be used to measure students’ reading comprehension of recount text. Observation checklist is used to observe the atmosphere in the classroom during teaching learning activities. Field notes is used to write notes during teaching learning process, from pre activity, whilst activity, and post activity.
RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result
This research conducted on the eighth grade of SMP Haebat Islam Gontong Kubu Raya. The writer takes the subject of research where the problem found. As a classroom action research, the aim of this research is to find out how QAR strategy improves students’ reading comprehension of recount text. The subject is the eighth grade students of SMP Haebat Islam Gontong Kubu Raya in academic year 2015/2016 which consist of 17 students. The research result discussed based on the analysis of observation checklist, field note and evaluation test.

Before the writer conducted the research, the writer helped by the English teacher prepared some important things to support the research. Firstly, the writer taught the teacher about how to use QAR strategy in teaching reading comprehension of recount text. Then, both the teacher and writer divided their job in this research. The teacher acted as the teacher and the writer acted as the observer. There was collaboration between the teacher and the writer. The writer prepared a lesson plan as a guideline for doing the classroom activity. Besides that, the writer also prepared the observation checklist and field note.

The writer and the teacher prepared evaluation test in every cycle. The evaluation test consists of 10 multiple choice test items which arranged based on the aspects of reading comprehension. The test aimed to see students’ reading comprehension of recount text. The result of evaluation test showed the improvement of students’ ability in comprehending reading in every cycle. It also showed how well QAR strategy improved students’ reading comprehension of recount text.

The first cycle of this research held on Thursday, 17th March 2016. In the acting stage, the teacher applied QAR strategy in her teaching process. The teacher did those kinds of activity in whilst activity of the research: (1) Teacher asked the students to read the recount text. (2) Teacher asked the students about what the text is about and identified some unfamiliar words that they found during reading. (3) After identified the unfamiliar words, the teacher helped the students to translate them by giving clue, or guessing from context. (4) Teachers gave explanation about the generic structure of recount and showed the generic structure of the text they read. (5) Teacher explained the language features of recount and gave example from the text they read. (6) Teacher modeled the implementation of QAR strategy in answered the comprehension question of the recount text. The teacher started by explaining the two types of questions based on the source of answer; they are the right there question and the think and search question. Then, the teacher answered the seven comprehension question one by one. While answering the comprehension questions, the teacher led the students to find the main idea and supporting details of the text. Besides that, the teacher also explained about pronoun referent and how to identify it. (7) Teacher asked the students to do group exercise in group. The students had to read a recount text and answer six multiple choice questions related to the text. During the class discussion, students needed to justify their answer to the question and their choice of a QAR. When students finished the exercise, the teacher and the students discussed the result of the group exercise.

In post activity of the first cycle, the writer gave evaluation to the students to see the achievement of their reading comprehension through QAR strategy. The mean score of students’ achievement of the first cycle was 61.17 point which is categorized as
poor to average. Based on the result of students’ evaluation, the writer and the teacher found students’ mistake in answer both the Right There and the Think & Search questions, it showed that the students still had difficulty in comprehending the recount text, both text explicit and text implicit information. Students’ mistake mostly found in answer the Think & Search questions. It indicated that the students mostly had difficulty in identify text implicit information. Besides that, the students also had difficulty in answering the questions about vocabulary.

In the reflecting stage, the writer and the teacher found some problems related to the material, the process of teaching learning that had to be corrected. The teacher modeling, there was no vocabulary test item, but in students’ group exercise and students’ evaluation there was. In modeling the QAR strategy in reading especially in answering the think and search questions, the teacher did not give detail explanation to the students about how to identify the main idea and pronoun referent. Based on the writer and teacher’s reflection, the first cycle was not satisfying and needed to be revised to get the improvement from the first cycle.

For the next cycle, the writer helped by the teacher arranging a new lesson plan. Vocabulary test item was added in teaching modeling and also in the students’ group exercise. In the previous cycle, the writer and the researcher found that the students’ mistakes mostly in answer the Think & Search questions about finding the main idea and identify referent. It indicated that the students mostly had difficulty in identify text implicit information, so the teacher planned to explain more about how to identify the main idea, pronoun referent and also identify the unfamiliar words in the second cycle.

The second cycle held on Thursday, 7th April 2016. In this cycle, the teacher did not model the implementation of QAR strategy in reading anymore, because she has done it in the first cycle. In this cycle, the teacher with the students directly practiced the QAR strategy to answer the comprehension question. While practicing QAR in answering the comprehension question test item about main idea, the teacher guided the students to find idea of the text by asking what was discussed in the text, or what the text mainly about. The teacher also guided the students to identify the pronoun referent. Before the teacher practiced answers the question about pronoun referent, she explained to the students if the pronoun which replaces the noun must agree within number, gender, and person. The mean score of the students’ achievement in the second cycle was 77.5 which categorized as average to good. There was improvement compared to the previous cycle.

Based on the findings in the second cycle, students’ ability in identifying text explicit information improved when compared to the previous cycle. The students made improvement in answering the right there questions, but they still had difficulty in answering the think and search questions. Most of the students could not answer the test item about the main idea, referent and vocabulary. So, the writer and teacher conducted the third cycle on Thursday, 5th May 2016. Here, the teacher focused more in guiding the students to answer the questions about main idea, referent and vocabulary. Based on the field notes in the two previous cycles, most of the students did not bring dictionary. Based on the field notes in the two previous cycles, most of the students did not bring dictionary. Based on the field notes in the two previous cycles, most of the students did not bring dictionary. So, in this cycle, the writer and teacher provided unfamiliar words list and the definition for every recount text discussed in learning activity. Before the students answered the questions about main idea, the teacher explain to the students if the main idea could be identify from the title of the text, or the first paragraph of the text. The teacher taught the
students how to use a title to help them figured out the main idea of a reading passage. When the teacher asked the students about the main idea of the text they read, most of the students could identify it. When answering the question about vocabulary, the teacher asked the students to guess from the context and also checked the unfamiliar words list. Before guided the students to answer questions about pronoun referent, the teacher explained that referent is the noun or pronoun for which another pronoun stands and to which it refers. Then, the teacher reviewed the rules of pronoun referent, she told the students about how a pronoun must agree with its antecedent in number, gender, and person. The teacher explained if the referent of a pronoun is singular, a singular pronoun is required. The teacher also explained that plural pronoun required if the referent of a pronoun are plural. The teacher also repeated her explanation about how to identify the main idea, the referent and vocabulary in students’ group during the group practice. Student’s achievement was increased in the third cycle. The mean score of the students in this cycle was 83.33 which categorizes as good to excellent. It was found that the students made significant improvement in comprehending text implicit information, it showed by their ability in answer the Think & Search questions improved. The writer concluded that the result of the third cycle was satisfied.

The result of students’ evaluation test of every cycle showed that students’ Mean score improved from the first cycle to the third cycle. The significant improvement achieved by the students after the first cycle. In the third cycle, students’ Mean score increase to more than 70. It showed that the implementation of Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy improves the students’ reading comprehension of recount text.

Discussion

This research conducted from 17th March 2016 to 5th May 2016 on the eighth grade students of SMP Haebat Islam Gontong Kubu Raya. In order to find how QAR strategy improves students’ reading comprehension of recount text, the QAR strategy applied in teaching learning process.

Based on the analysis of the findings of the research, QAR strategy was considered improved reading comprehension of recount text of the eighth grade students of SMP Haebat Islam Gontong Kubu Raya. Students’ ability in comprehending reading recount text improved in every cycle. In the first cycle, the writer and the teacher found that the students’ ability in answering the right there and the think and search questions still low. It indicated that the students had difficulty in comprehending reading recount text both explicit and implicit information of the text. In the second cycle the students made improvement in answering the right there questions, although their ability in answering the think and search questions still low. Students’ improvement in answering the right there questions indicated that their ability in comprehending text explicit information improved in this cycle. The significant improvement made by the students in the third cycle. Their reading comprehension of think and search questions improved. It showed that QAR improved students’ ability in comprehending text implicit information.

Using QAR strategy, the students were able to differentiate the types of questions based on the source of answer, whether the source of answer stated on the text, or scripted on the text. As research done by Sulistyto, (2010, p.65), it was found that the advantage of applying the QAR strategy in reading instruction is that the students are able
to identify the levels of questions and the relationship between question and answer to determine the content of the text.

From the findings, it was evident that the use of the QAR strategy helped the students improve their reading comprehension of ‘Think & Search’. QAR helped raised pupils’ awareness of the need to look across sentences for answers which helped them to be comprehensive in answering ‘Think & Search’ questions. They could determine when an inference was required. Based on Raphael (1986) QAR teaches pupils three comprehension strategies: (a) locating information, (b) determining text structures and how they convey information, and (c) determining when an inference is required.

Using QAR, students will be able to recognize possible answer locations by classifying questions by type as well as monitor their comprehension of the text. Extending the use of QAR to frame comprehension strategy instruction can help pupils see the ‘relationships among the strategies they are learning and the task demands represented by different questions’ (Raphael & Au, 2005). It is believed that providing students a systematic way of analyzing task demands of different question probes can improve reading comprehension.

However, the researcher found some problems during applying the strategy in the class. For example, in the first time this strategy was applied, the students some students got confused to understand differentiate between Right There and Think and search question. The students also found difficulty in searching implied information from the text to answer the Think and Search questions. Most of students had lack of vocabulary; they needed teacher’s help to translate unfamiliar words. QAR strategy could not overcome the entire students’ problem in reading, but through QAR strategy, the students can differentiate the types of questions based on the source of information of the answer. The students also know how to find the implied information. This strategy is considered as a better technique rather than just lecturing technique.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion
Based on the research conducted on students’ reading comprehension, there are some results to be pointed in this chapter. The results of the research indicated that QAR strategy improves the reading comprehension of the eighth grade students of SMP Haebat Islam Gontong Kubu Raya. Students showed their improvement in every cycle. It can be seen from the data in three cycles. In the first cycle, the students’ ability in answering the right there and the think and search questions still low. The students had difficulty in comprehending reading recount text both explicit and implicit information of the text. In the second cycle the students made improvement in answering the right there questions, although their ability in answering the think and search questions still low. The significant improvement made by the students in the third cycle. Their reading comprehension of think and search questions improved. It showed that QAR improved students’ ability in comprehending recount text both explicit and implicit information.

QAR strategy also made students achievement improved in every cycle. In the first cycle, the mean score was 61.17. In the second cycle, students mean score was 77.5. In the last cycle, students mean score was 83.33. Finally, this research turns to a conclusion that the reading comprehension of the eighth grade students of SMP
Haebat islam Gontong Kubu Raya improved through Question Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy. Students’ reading comprehension of recount text improved from the first cycle to the last cycle.

**Suggestions**

Based on the research result and discussion, there are some suggestions that the researcher would like to propose, they are: (1) the use of QAR strategy should be recommended to the English teacher, especially to teach Junior High School students. (2) for further research, it is recommended to apply QAR strategy at Senior High School level. (3) for the next researcher, it also recommended to apply QAR strategy in teaching reading comprehension with others text genre such as report, descriptive, and narrative.

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