OPTIMIZING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION THROUGH AQR STRATEGY FOR THE 10TH GRADERS OF MAN 1 PRAYA

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan pengaruh sebuah strategi pembelajaran 'reading' bernama "AQR" dibandingkan dengan 'Strategi Konvensinal' dalam upaya mengoptimalkan pemahaman membaca siswa. Penelitian ini berdesain eksperimental yang dilakukan di MAN 1 Praya dengan mengambil sampel kelas X IPA 1 sebagai kelas eksperimen dan X IPA 2 sebagai kelas kontrol. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan AQR berpengaruh efektif. Hal ini bisa didapatkan dari adanya peningkatan nilai post test siswa dibandingkan dengan nilai pre test mereka. Analisis statistic dengan menggunakan bantuan SPSS 21 for windows menunjukkan bahwa nilai rata-rata untuk kelompok siswa eksperimental meningkat 18.75 poin dari nilai pre test mereka. Poin peningkatan pada kelompok eksperimen lebih tinggi dibandingkan dengan poin peningkatan pada kelompok kontrol yang 8.75 poin. Jumlah poin peningkatan yang berbeda pada kedua kelompok ini menunjukkan bahwa penerapan AQR lebih efektif dibandingkan dengan penerapan strategi konvensional. Dengan menggunakan KKM 70 sebagai dasar penghitungan terhadap efektifitas kedua strategi, ditemukan bahwa ketuntasan klasikal hanya diperoleh oleh kelompok eksperimen. Hal ini berarti bahwa diantara kedua strategi ini, AQR ternayata lebih efektif. Dengan hasil analisis di atas, maka penerapan AQR sebagai strategi pembelajaran membaca dapat dipertimbangkan efektifitasnya dalam upaya mengoptimalkan pemahaman membaca siswa.

Kata kunci: pemahaman membaca optimal, strategi AQR, strategi Konvensional, dan efektifitas strategi pembelajaran membaca.

ABSTRACT

This research is aimed at analyzing the influence of 'Asking Question Reading' (AQR) Strategy compared to 'Conventional' one in optimizing students' reading comprehension. This true experimental-research design was done at MAN 1 Praya with the samples of the 10th graders of IPA1 as the experimental group and IPA2 as the control one. The result of research shows that the application of AQR is effective. This can be learnt from the increase of students' post test scores compared to their pre test ones. Statistical analysis by using SPSS 21 for windows shows that the average scores for the experimental group increase 18.75 point from their pre test. This increase point is higher than that of the control group which is 8.75 point. This different amount of increase point indicates that the application of AQR is more effective than that of conventional strategy. By using the minimum standardized passing grade (KKM) 70 as the base of analysis toward the effectiveness of these two reading strategies, it is found that the students' classical passing is only reached by the experimental groups. This tells that between these two strategies, only AQR is effective. With the above result of analysis, the application of AQR as the strategy of reading instruction is worth considering in optimizing the students' reading comprehension.

Key words: Optimum reading comprehension, AQR strategy, conventional strategy, and the effectiveness of reading strategy.

Introduction

Reading can be understood as understanding or translating written texts or ideas. In cognitive constructivist's view, reading involves an active process (Westwood, 2001:10). As a process, reading refers to an active activity which requires 'a number of abilities' (Rubin in Westwood, 2001:10). According to Ediger (2001:154), reading belongs to individual's meaning construction by transacting language-representing symbols in a written text.

People have different reasons to read. But 'meaning, learning, and pleasure are the ultimate goals' (Klingner, et.al. 2007:2). Talebinejad, et.al. (2012: 4) stated that the most prominent aim of reading is to establish a further comprehension. This research views the significant role of reading from some background contexts: (1) academic; (2) Indonesian EFL; and (3) the students of MAN 1 Praya.

In the context of academic, 'reading is the most important skill' (Grabe in Ediger, 2001:153) because it can be an access into the other skills. L2 learners also tend to begin their language learning through reading. In the context of Indonesian EFL, reading skill is considered more essential than the other three skills. This can be seen from this skill representative of the other four skills in the national final exam. 35 questions out of the all 50 questions are about reading comprehension.

In the context of MAN 1 Praya, Reading comprehension is still one of students' big problems. It is indicated by their low achievements on their reading test – midterm and final tests. Based on my analysis toward students' test results for three years (midterm 2013, odd semester 2014, odd semester 2015), with the minimum standardized passing grade (KKM) of 70, most students had their scores below.

Considering changing the reading strategy to apply during the instruction is then selected as the way to cope with this problem. Miller's AQR strategy is then chosen. This strategy choice is based on my temporary research on these students' reading instruction in which most of them are found very passive. Students were less engaged in their learning. Teachers dominated the overall activity and the classroom activity seemed to be the teacher' activity rather than the students'. The students lose their opportunities to get involved in a process which should be the heart of their learning model (http://www.byui.edu/learningandteaching/).

Students' active involvement is expected from this AQR application. It is met by the features which this strategy has. Asking questions as the basic characteristics which this strategy possesses really lead the students to be more conscious about their activities. Readers ask questions (Miller, 2006:126) for many reasons such as: meaning clarification; doing speculation about the text; study the writer's intent, style, messages, or format; text component specification; locate and consider specific answer or rhetorical questions inspired in the text. By asking questions, they also set their goals to read. The significance of asking question is also used by some other strategies as SQ3R, Raphael's QAR in Chien (2013), and Hoge's, et.al. (2009) 'listen and answer mini stories technique'.

Three stages of asking questions are applied in this AQR: Pre reading, During reading, and After reading asking. As the names imply, all the three questions are done at their different stages of learning. Pre-reading question is done before the students entering their reading text. They only base their questions on the title and the first

paragraph of the text. This session of asking is meant for the students to set their goals of reading. During-reading asking is the stage on which the students find the answers to the questions they asked before. While finding the answers, they also ask other more detailed questions about the text. These questions function to monitor their reading activity. After-reading question finally means to review the all reading activity. Other than asking questions as a reflection of their comprehension toward the text, at this stage students should also summarize the ideas contained in the text. Students through the all stages of reading activate their cognitive awareness toward the text. Below is the chart for the AQR framework.

Theoretical
framework of AQR
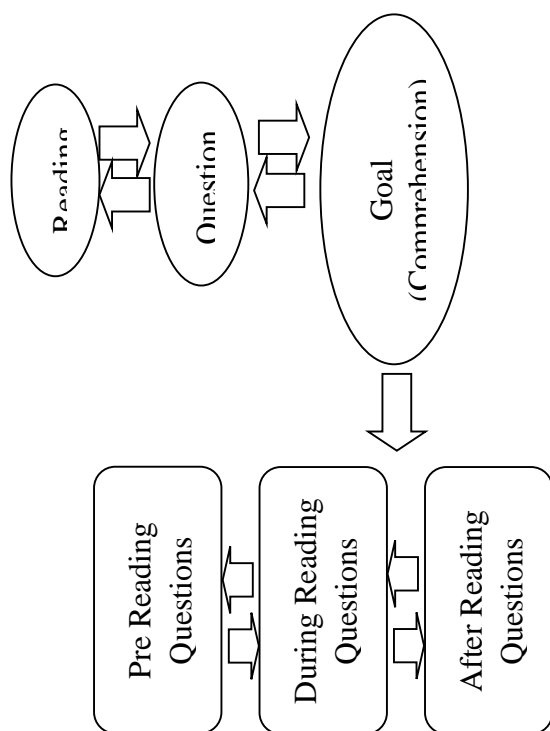
Figure: 1

Other than this AQR, Conventional strategy is applied to give a control. This

Conventional strategy in this research refers to a strategy which most English teachers at MAN 1 Praya apply. It is featured by starting the reading instruction by listing some difficult words in the text, followed by drilling them, constructing sentences with them, translating the text, grabbing the ideas or meanings possessed by the text, and finally answering some comprehension questions.

Choosing strategy as the important determinant for comprehension is based on a belief that optimum learning goal is not only about 'what' but also about 'how'. McNamara (2009:36) said that the essentiality of strategy is not only related to successful comprehension but also to solving the reading problem toward a better reader and comprehender. Yigiter, K. et.al (2005:125) studied the effect of a strategy to enhance students' reading comprehension. They concluded that the absence of pre reading strategy has made their research subjects fail to brainstorm the ideas about the meaning of the title and to do discussion. The application of this strategy is finally expected to meet the goals of this research as follows:

1. To find out whether or not the AQR Strategy is effective in optimizing students' reading comprehension.
2. To find out whether or not the AQR Strategy is more effective than conventional one in optimizing students' reading comprehension.

Methodology

The fitness for the purposes must govern research design (Cohen,et.al. 2005:73). Based on its purpose to study the effect of certain treatment toward subjects, this research is designed to be a true experimental one with pre test-post test design. The approach used belongs to a quantitative research featured by the

use of quantity (Kothari, 2004:3). According to Crawford in Singh (2006:3), 'a quantitative research' is meant to a research which does not only seek to know 'what' but also 'how'.

Test, as it is claimed to be the appropriate tool to collect data in a quantitative research approach (Lodico, et al. 2006:7), is used. The data comprising pre test and post test results are then analyzed through statistical analysis.

This research took the 10th graders of MAN 1 Praya as population. Eighty students were chosen as the samples. Forty of them were from X IPA1 and served as the 'experimental group' and the other forty from X IPA2 served as 'the control group'. The two different groups were treated with different reading strategies. Experimental group was treated with the AQR and the control one was treated with the Conventional strategy.

Research was begun by giving the samples the same pre test. This pre test was then followed by two times of the strategies application. Finally, this research was ended by giving the samples 'post test.' The data of pre test, on one hand, was used as the starting point to see where to start. While the data of post test, on the other hand, was used to study the degree of influence that each strategy gave.

The result of these two kinds of test was then analyzed statistically through Kolmogorov-Smirnov's (KS) test of distribution and Levene's test of normality. Once the data were normally distributed and homogenous, t-tests (one sample t-test and independent t-test) were established. These t-tests function to analyze the difference/change (Sugiono, 2013:76 and Creswell, 2012:178) among data. One sample t-test is for the data from one sample, e.g. comparing data of pre test and post test

of the experimental group or control group. When the comparison is made on the data from two or more different samples, e.g. comparing the pre test data of experimental and control group or their post test data, the independent t-test is then selected.

Findings and Discussion

The results of the students' pre test and post test can be seen in the following table.

Description	Experimental group		Control group	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Average	57.25	76	57	65.75
Varian	281.98 72	204.10 26	195.89 74	209.67 95
Passing Description	Fail	Pass	Fail	Fail

Figure: 2

- **Data analysis**

Analyses of data go to both pre test and post test results. Pre test data analysis is to test the mean value possessed by both experimental and control groups. Post test data analysis is to compare the degree of effectiveness between the AQR and Conventional.

- Pre test data analysis

To compare the two data of pre test, an independent t-test was established. The test was done after the test of normality and homogeneity had been done. By using KS's and Levene's tests, the result indicated that the pre test data for experimental and control groups was ($\alpha > .05$). The data reached their normality and homogeneity. The next test was the independent sample t-test

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used to compare mean values between two groups intended to study the presence of difference between mean values of the two groups. Below are the results of the tests.

1. Test of normality

Experimental group

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		VAR00001
N		40
Normal Parameters[a,b]	Mean	57.2500
	Std. Deviation	16.79247
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.135
	Positive	.135
	Negative	-.115
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		.854
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.460

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.   *Figure: 3*

Control group

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		VAR00001
N		40
Normal Parameters[a,b]	Mean	57.0000
	Std. Deviation	13.99634
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.190
	Positive	.190
	Negative	-.185
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		1.203
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.111

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.   *Figure: 4*

2. Test of homogeneity

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances[a]

Dependent Variable: nilai

F	df1	df2	Sig.
1.955	1	78	.166

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

a.   Design: Intercept + kelas   *Figure: 5*

3. independent t-test for experimental and control pre test results

		t-test for Equality of Means					
		T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper
nilai	Equal variances assumed	.072	78	.943	.25000	3.45646	-6.63128	7.13128
	Equal variances not assumed	.072	75.548	.943	.25000	3.45646	-6.63480	7.13480

Figure: 6

It is clear from the result of t-test that the two data of pre test had the same value of significance. So, there is no difference between X IPA1 and X IPA2 level of comprehension before the treatment was applied which made these two groups worth comparing and analyzing.

- Post test data analysis

Post test was given after two times treatments with the AQR and Conventional strategy. The results of this test, as it can be seen in figure 1, increased for both groups even though with different point. Some statistical tests were applied to these two

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groups' post test results. Tests of normality and homogeneity by using KS and Levene showed that both groups' post test data were normally distributed and homogenous. One sample t-test to find out the effectiveness of the AQR (the answer to research question 1) was also applied for these post tests data.

This one sample t-test was done by comparing the results of pre test and post test for each group of student. It is done by using the KKM standard 70 as the basic value of analysis. The use of one sample test is to study the degree of increase that each group of student achieved after being treated with the strategies. Below are the results of the tests for both groups:

a. The experimental group scores (under AQR Strategy Application)

One-Sample Test

					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
VAR00001	2.656	39	.011	6.00000	1.4310	10.5690

Test Value = 70

Figure: 7

b. The control group scores (under Conventional Strategy Application)

One-Sample Test

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
VAR00001	-1.856	39	.071	-4.25000	-8.8810	.3810

Test Value = 70

Figure: 8

Based on the result of the above test, it is found that for the experimental group of students, $\alpha < .05$ which means that the application of AQR is effective in optimizing students' reading comprehension. This result of analysis is different from that of the control group which is $\alpha > .05$. This result means that the students' post test scores compared to their pre test scores are not significantly increased. It is then concluded that the application of Conventional Strategy is not effective. With this conclusion, the null hypothesis – Ho – for the research question no 1 is rejected, then the alternative one – Ha – is accepted.

A further test analysis to answer the research question no 2, that is the degree of the AQR strategy effectiveness in comparison with the Conventional one – is intended. This is done by applying independent t-test. This test needs to be set with the requirement that the data values being compared are equivalent. It implies the range of the data being compared is not too far. As the values of the post test data possessed by the two sample groups, however, are not

equivalent, a further test analysis is no more needed. It is clear that the application of AQR Strategy is more effective than that of Conventional one in optimizing students' reading comprehension.

The effectiveness of the AQR application is beneficently empowered by the characteristics of this strategy application. Questioning throughout the reading activity really makes the students more motivated, more focused, more concerned, more active, and even more creative with their reading. These powerful benefits have contributed a lot of strengths to this strategy for the students to adopt.

Conclusion

The result of this research showed the effectiveness of AQR application in optimizing students' reading comprehension for the 10th graders of MAN 1 Praya in academic year 2015/2016. The effectiveness of this strategy is supported by some good points such as motivation, awareness toward the goals, repetition, and creativity and activeness which this strategy possesses. These all can enhance students to get their better comprehension toward their text. Asking questions as the essence of this AQR strategy really drives the students to set themselves with certain and clear goals of their reading. This has become one of the strengths of this strategy because it can assist the students to get their better comprehension. Asking question to answer also made them more focused and concerned in doing their reading. This also significantly leads them to get a better reading achievement.

The effectiveness of this strategy can be seen from the students' post test results which, based on statistical analysis, were much higher than their pre test. This showed the significant influence of this strategy application. Compared to Conventional Strategy, this AQR application was more effective. Statistical analysis to test the degree of these two strategies application quality showed that students who were treated with the AQR had higher mean value than those who were treated with the Conventional one. With this result of analysis, it is concluded that the AQR application is more effective than the Conventional one.

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