



Questioning Answer Relationship Strategy (QARS) for Reading Narrative Text: Does It Impact the Students' Reading Comprehension?

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ABSTRACT

Reading comprehension plays a crucial role in academic success, yet it remains a major challenge for many students, particularly when dealing with narrative texts in a foreign language. This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of the Questioning Answer Relationship Strategy (QARS) integrated with Matching Cards in improving the reading comprehension of eleventh-grade students. Using a quasi-experimental design, two groups were involved: an experimental group using QARS and Matching Cards, and a control group using conventional methods. The results revealed that students in the experimental group significantly outperformed those in the control group in terms of comprehension skills, critical thinking, and engagement with the text. This finding supports the integration of strategy-based and interactive learning tools in teaching reading.

Keywords: QARS, Matching Cards, Reading Comprehension, Narrative Text, Student Engagement

Introduction

Reading comprehension is one of the most crucial skills in language education because it enables learners to decode, interpret, and evaluate information from a written text (Grabe & Stoller, 2011). In the Indonesian context, challenges in reading comprehension have persisted for years, with PISA results placing Indonesian students consistently below the global average in reading literacy (OECD, 2018). This reflects limited abilities to identify key information, draw inferences, and evaluate narrative texts effectively.

Narrative texts require students to understand story elements such as characters, settings, plots, and themes (Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2020). However, the traditional teaching of reading comprehension in Indonesia often centers around translation and multiple-choice assessments, offering little support for the development of higher-order thinking skills (Mokhtari, Reichard, & Gardner, 2020). These methods are typically teacher-centered and may not sufficiently motivate or challenge learners.

The Questioning Answer Relationship Strategy (QARS), first introduced by Raphael (1986), was designed to encourage learners to identify different types of questions ("Right There," "Think and Search," "Author and You," and "On Your Own") and determine where to find the answers. This method develops metacognitive awareness and critical thinking (Hasibuan, Adnan, & Hasanah, 2023), and has been proven effective in numerous studies (Ibrahim, Noryati, & Rosli, 2019; Arifin, Rahmawati, & Anisa, 2021).

Matching Cards, when used as a supplementary visual and interactive tool, allow learners to actively engage with the material. This kind of tactile media supports vocabulary development, improves memory retention, and makes learning more enjoyable (Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986; Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001). Combining QARS with Matching Cards introduces a dual-modality learning experience that blends cognitive and kinesthetic activities, resulting in more engaged learning.

Thus, this study explores whether the integration of QARS and Matching Cards can improve students' comprehension of narrative texts more effectively than traditional teaching methods.

Methods

This study used a quantitative, quasi-experimental design involving two groups of eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Mranggen. One group served as the experimental group, receiving instruction using QARS integrated with Matching Cards, while the control group was taught using traditional methods.

The research instrument was a reading comprehension test administered as both pre-test and post-test. The test consisted of multiple-choice items designed to assess students' understanding of narrative texts. Each class received the same texts and test items, ensuring consistency in content delivery. Teaching was conducted over several

- meetings, during which the experimental group engaged with QARS-based questioning and Matching Card games that linked questions to relevant text sections.

Data were analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics were used to compare pre-test and post-test scores, while paired sample t-tests and correlation analyses were used to determine the significance and strength of changes in reading comprehension performance.

Findings and Discussion

The findings of the study revealed a notable improvement in the reading comprehension scores of the experimental group compared to the control group. Students taught with QARS and Matching Cards demonstrated a deeper understanding of narrative structure, were better able to identify explicit and implicit information, and showed greater interest in reading activities.

In addition to test scores, classroom observations showed that students in the experimental group were more engaged during lessons. They actively discussed questions with peers, made connections between different parts of the text, and demonstrated critical thinking by justifying their answers. Matching Cards served as an effective visual aid that helped students categorize information and remember it better.

These findings align with previous research by Ibrahim et al. (2019) and Arifin et al. (2021), which confirmed that QARS improves student interaction and comprehension. However, this study advances the existing research by integrating Matching Cards, which introduced a game-like element that appealed to students' curiosity and learning preferences.

While students in the control group showed some improvement, their progress was less consistent, and their engagement levels were lower. This supports the argument that conventional methods may not be sufficient to address comprehension challenges, especially in second language learning contexts.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistic Table

Group	Test	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Control	Pretest	32	72.34	8.031	1.420
Control	Posttest	32	78.28	7.140	1.262
Experimental	Pretest	32	75.16	6.658	1.177
Experimental	Posttest	32	87.81	4.388	0.776

The implementation of QARS integrated with Matching Cards in the experimental group created a more active and collaborative classroom environment. Students were more motivated and involved in reading activities compared to those in the control group. These findings align with studies by Alamsyah et al. (2022) and Hidayah et al. (2022), who emphasized the positive impact of QARS on students' attitudes and reading motivation.

- In line with Putri et al. (2022), this study found that students using QARS demonstrated enhanced critical thinking skills. The Matching Cards further supported comprehension by visually linking textual elements with their associated questions, reinforcing both recognition and analytical understanding.

The experimental group also showed stronger metacognitive strategies, consistent with the findings of Hasibuan et al. (2023), who highlighted the role of QARS in fostering self-regulated learning. By engaging with both question types and answers actively, students were able to reflect on their reading strategies and adjust them accordingly.

Furthermore, the tactile nature of Matching Cards offered learners a break from conventional, passive reading. As supported by Duke and Pearson (2002), meaningful comprehension occurs when students are actively involved with texts, not when they simply read for answers. The combined use of questioning strategies and hands-on matching activities not only made the process more interactive but also more meaningful and memorable.

Compared to the study by Nuraini and Hasyim (2021), which analyzed long-term effects of QARS, this research focused on short-term classroom outcomes but yielded similar findings in terms of comprehension improvement. The structured integration of QARS with Matching Cards showed potential for scalability in other reading contexts.

Conclusion

This study concluded that the Questioning Answer Relationship Strategy (QARS) integrated with Matching Cards was effective in improving students' reading comprehension of narrative texts. The interactive nature of the strategy not only enhanced students' understanding of the material but also increased their motivation and classroom participation.

This strategy can be considered a practical and enjoyable alternative to traditional teaching approaches, especially for teachers seeking to improve reading skills in narrative contexts. The use of visual tools such as Matching Cards, combined with a structured questioning approach like QARS, proved to be a powerful combination for engaging learners and promoting higher-order thinking skills.

Future research may explore the long-term effects of this integrated method or its application to other genres of texts beyond narratives.

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