



EFFECTIVENESS OF QUESTION-ANSWER-RELATIONSHIP STRATEGY IN IMPROVING THE READING COMPREHENSION OF THE GRADE FOUR LEARNERS

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Abstract : This study sought to determine the effectiveness of Question-Answer-Relationship (QAR) strategy in improving the reading comprehension of Grade 5 learners of District III-B of San Carlos City Division. One-group pre-test-post-test design was employed in the study. Parallel forms of pre-test and post-test including a self-evaluation form were utilized for data collection. At the onset of the experiment, the researcher conducted a reading comprehension pre-test among the participants. Subsequently, a 10-day QAR strategy classes was employed to the participants as the intervention phase. After completing the classes, the researcher conducted a post-test on the participants' reading comprehension. A self-evaluation form was also accomplished after the post-test. Results show that a significant difference is evident between the participants' pre-test and post-test scores wherein a higher mean score was observed in the post-tests compared to participants' pre-tests. Furthermore, based on the participants' responses on the self-evaluation form, more than half of them reported that they became better and feel confident at answering comprehension questions after learning the QAR strategy. All participants also agreed that they will recommend the QAR strategy to their peers. Therefore, this study concludes that employing the QAR strategy is effective in improving the reading comprehension of the students.

Keywords: question-answer-relationship strategy; reading comprehension

INTRODUCTION

In learning any kind of languages, including English, the learners should be master these several skills: Reading, listening, speaking and writing. According to Harmer, those the four language skills in teaching English are divided into two: productive and receptive skills¹. Productive skills are skills where people have to produce language themselves. Receptive skills are how people essence meaning from the discourse they see or hear. Speaking and writing are productive skills as they are useful for producing and delivering information, reading and listening are receptive skills as they used in receiving information and. Receptive skills here does not mean passive, because to be able to receive information either from reading or listening, we need to conduct several processes to understand the information. Based on the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) as cited in Stone reading is a cognitive process which has a particular purpose in which the reader at the same time uses some knowledge about: spoken and written language, text topics, and their culture to construct meaning with text. From the statement, it can be inferred that text, reader make an effort to understand the meaning of the text. In other words, reading activity needs interaction between the reader and the text. The interaction is created when the reader involves the text and tries to make meaning the message in the text. Furthermore, to obtain new knowledge and information by reading, the readers have to comprehend what they read. William Grabe and Stoller support this, the capability to understand the information in a text and interpret it appropriately what is meant by the text is the mean of reading comprehension. Moreover, he assumed that reading without comprehension is nonsense and useless. They are related to each other and cannot be separated. In simple word, the essence of the reading process is reading comprehension, which means we

have to know the meaning of the text we read. Reading is the activity to obtain and understand the information from written resources. In various aspects of life most information comes from the books or written reports. It holds an important role to gain information and help students to build their own knowledge. According to Wallace (2004), reading is the important role in almost every course of study. In learning English, reading is one of the prominent skills from four basic skills in English, and reading should be acquired by any students who learn English to get information and knowledge. The importance of reading explained by Grabe (1991) as well that reading is most likely the major skill for second language learners in academic context. Consequently, English learner should be able to understand English text clearly to improve their learning quality.

NEED OF THE STUDY.

This study sought to determine the effectiveness of Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy in improving the reading comprehension of Grade 4 learners in District III-B of San Carlos City Division during the School Year 2021-2022.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following sub-problems:

1. What is the performance of the Grade 4 learners before exposure to the Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy?
2. What is the performance of the Grade 4 learners after exposure to the Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy?
3. Is there a significant difference between the performance of the Grade 4 learners before and after exposure to the Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy?
4. What is the level of responses of the Grade 4 learners based on their self-evaluation about the use of Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy?

3.1 Population and Sample

This pre-experimental study sought to determine the effectiveness of Question-Answer-Relationship (QAR) strategy in improving the reading comprehension of Grade 4 learners of District III-B of San Carlos City Division. One-group pre-test-post-test design was employed in the study. Parallel forms of pre-test and post-test including a self-evaluation form were utilized for data collection. At the onset of the experiment, the researcher conducted a reading comprehension pre-test among the participants. Subsequently, a 10-day QAR strategy classes was employed to the participants as the intervention phase. After completing the classes, the researcher conducted a post-test on the participants' reading comprehension. A self-evaluation form was also accomplished after the post-test. Results show that a significant difference is evident between the participants' pre-test and post-test scores wherein a higher mean score was observed in the post-tests compared to participants' pre-tests.

3.2 Data and Sources of Data

It is hoped that the findings of this study will benefit the following:

There are four significance of this study: for English teachers, students, readers and further researcher. For English teachers, Question-Answer Relationship Strategy should be a strategy that suitable for teaching explanation text because this strategy seems to be a guidance for students to find the way to answer the explanation text. For learners, Question-Answer Relationship Strategy relevant for the students with low competencies. It really guides the students to find the way to understanding reading text. For readers, this study will provide information of the effect of using Question-Answer Relationship Strategy for students' reading comprehension explanation text. For further researchers, this study can be used as a reference in conducting research related to reading comprehension of explanation text.

3.3 Theoretical framework

As some experts had claimed, reading comprehension is a complex process of understanding the message that the writer tries to convey from the printed word. It depends on some things; the reader's idea, experiences, reading backgrounds, and learning. In reading comprehension, the readers not only have to understand the message that the writer tries to convey, but also the ideas of the text that had constructed by reader must be meaningful and integrated to the reader's concepts.

Although reading comprehension is the primary purpose of reading activity, students still have difficulties in comprehending a passage. Janet K Klinger suggests some ways to overcome student's difficulty in comprehending a passage; one of them is the teachers teach the students strategies that proved effective in improving reading comprehension. The writer assumes that Question and Answer-Relationships (QAR) Strategy is one strategy that is effective in the teaching of reading comprehension. This strategy had examined effective to teach reading comprehension. Besides effective in the teaching of reading comprehension, this strategy also believed can provides some advantages.

For the reasons above, the researcher conducted the study to prove the effectiveness of using Question-Answer Relationships (QAR) Strategy in the teaching of reading comprehension of explanation text.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this research, the researcher used quasi experimental research design. Quasi experimental design is similar to randomly experimental design in that they involve manipulation of an independent variable but differ in that subjects are not randomly. That is appropriate to this research's subject assigned to the treatment groups. Because this research's subject is in groups. So, if the researcher randomly assigns the students into the two groups, it will disrupt the classroom learning. It means that in quasi experimental research the researcher does not randomly assign the students. The researcher assigned the sample by taking randomly the class of the students, so it would not disrupt the classroom learning.

3.1 Population and Sample

Participants of the study comprised of 28 Grade 4 learners enrolled in District III-B of San Carlos City Division. The researcher executed the random sampling technique.

3.2 Data and Sources of Data

Four (4) instruments were utilized in the study: 1) pre-test; 2) post-test; 3) short response rubric and 4) self-evaluation form. All instruments were validated by three (3) Language experts. Parallel forms pre-test and post-test consist of 26 items that measure students' reading comprehension. To test the reliability of the tests, Raagas and Ramos' (2007) software for item analysis was used. Students' test scores who participated in the pilot test were utilized for item analysis. Computed values of .75 for pre-test and .81 for post-test were obtained using the Kuder Richardson Formula (KR20) which indicate that both tests are reliable.

The literary pieces for both pre-test and post-test, *The Aged Mother* by Basho and *The Soul of the Great Bell* by Lafcadio were taken from online sites. On the other hand, the short response rubric which was used to score the participants' answers on the Author and Me and On My Own questions along with the self-evaluation form were adopted from a similar study conducted by Peng, Hoon, Khoo, and Joseph (2007).

During the 10-day strategy immersion, four (4) reading selections were used to check the participants' understanding of the strategy. To assess the participants' understanding of the first category of QAR –In the Text- the researchers lifted the stories *A Boy so Young* from Menez (2009) and *The Country's Good Son* from Thein (2009). In order for the researchers to check the participants' understanding of QAR's second category –In My Head- literature pieces, *Scheherazade* and *Emperor's Seed* were used. Both literatures were taken from online sites.

At the onset of the study, the researcher conducted a reading comprehension pre-test among the participants wherein an hour was allotted to answer the test.

After the pre-test, the ten (10) day QAR immersion commenced. Day 1 was spent giving a brief introduction of QAR Strategy, distribution of handout to the participants, discussion of the Right There strand, framework modeling using the short fable *Belling the Cat* by Aesop which was then followed by a ten (10) item multiple-choice test. In Day 2, the researchers distributed the participants' results in the Right There test. A short review of the Right There strand was done. The researchers entertained QAR-related questions from the participants to tie any loose ends from the first strand. Day 3 started with a brief review of the Right There strand and was immediately followed by an introduction and discussion of the Think and Search strand. The researchers used the same fable *Belling the Cat* for framework modeling and gave the participants another set of ten (10) item multiple-choice test. In day 4, the researchers distributed to the participants the results of their test from the previous day. A short review of the Think and Search strand was done. The researchers entertained queries regarding the second strand. And that ended the immersion for the In the Text category of the QAR strategy. For the next category, the researchers decided to add a day per strand to ensure understanding on the part of the participants. Hence, three (3) days were allotted for each strand in the In my Head category. For day 5, the researchers gave the participants a brief recap on QAR Strategy and Think and Search strand. It was followed by an introduction and discussion of the Author and Me strand. Aesop's fable *Belling the Cat* was once again used for framework modeling. Day 6 was spent on reviewing Author and Me strand and giving the participants a test where they are asked to give a short response to the five (5) questions or tasks given to them. The participants' answers were graded using a standardized rubric where a maximum of two (2) points and a minimum of zero (0) point is given to each item depending on how effective the participants answered the question or task. Day 7 was when the researchers distributed the participants' results in the Author and Me test. A short review of the Author and Me strand happened, followed by exchange of questions and answers among the researchers and the participants. For the day 8 of the immersion, the participants were given a recap of the Author and Me strand. It was followed by an introduction and discussion of the On my Own strand. For framework modeling, Aesop's *Belling the Cat* was used. In day 9, the researchers briefly discuss the On my Own strand followed by a short-response test. Just like all the tests given throughout the treatment, the participants were given thirty (30) minutes to answer. The final (10th) day of the immersion was when the researchers distributed to the participants the results of their On my Own test followed by an exchange of questions and answers. An overall recap on the QAR Strategy and its strands was also accomplished to prepare the participants for the post-test. After the ten-day immersion in the strategy, the participants were given a twenty-six (26) item post-test on reading comprehension to be answered for an hour. Afterwards, a self-evaluation form was accomplished.

A letter of request was forwarded to the office of the Schools Division Superintendent with the recommendation of the respective public elementary principals, upon approval, the researcher personally distributed and retrieved the questionnaire upon completion of the said tool, which was collated and tabulated later and ready for statistical treatment.

3.3 Theoretical framework

The study is supported by the following underlying learning principles and theories: Experiential and Situated Learning, Reflective Learning, Constructivism, Cooperative Learning and Discovery and Inquiry-based Learning. Experiential Learning, as proposed by David Kolb, emphasizes the importance of learning through direct experiences in everyday life. According to Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, knowledge is created through the process of reflecting on and transforming experiences. This theory highlights the significance of both grasping the experience and then actively transforming it into knowledge.

On the other hand, Situated Learning, developed by Lave and Wenger, focuses on learning within the specific context where concepts and theories are put into practice. This approach underscores the relationship between learning and the social environment in which it takes place. Situated Learning recognizes the influence of the surrounding social situation on the learning process and emphasizes the importance of context in shaping understanding. By immersing learners in real-world situations, Situated Learning aims to enhance the application of knowledge and skills in authentic settings.

Reflective Learning is a type of learning that is enhanced by reflective thinking, which goes beyond simply encountering real-life situations. It involves learners being able to reflect on their experiences, process them, and derive meaning from them. This type of learning emphasizes that knowledge is gained through experiences and can be continuously updated by recording and reflecting on those experiences. Reflective learning has gained attention in the field of education as it encourages students to think critically about what they have read, done, or learned, and to connect the lesson to their own lives. It is about making sense of the material rather than just memorizing facts, formulas, or dates. This approach allows learners to deepen their understanding and apply their knowledge in a more meaningful way. Constructivism is a theory that posits that knowledge is not passively received, but actively built by the learner through connecting new information to their existing experiences and ideas. According to Bruner, learning is a

dynamic process where individuals create new concepts by building upon their past knowledge. The learner plays an active role in selecting, transforming, and organizing information, forming hypotheses, and making decisions based on their cognitive framework. Bruner emphasizes that effective instruction should consider the learner's predisposition towards learning, the organization of knowledge to enhance understanding, the optimal sequence for presenting material, and the appropriate use of rewards and punishments. By structuring knowledge effectively, it can lead to simplification, the generation of new ideas, and improved information processing.

The formalization of the theory of constructivism is commonly credited to Jean Piaget, a renowned psychologist. Piaget proposed that learners internalize knowledge through a series of processes known as accommodation and assimilation. Accommodation involves adjusting one's existing mental structures to incorporate new information, while assimilation entails fitting new experiences into pre-existing cognitive frameworks without altering them. This theory emphasizes the active role of the individual in constructing their understanding of the world, highlighting the importance of firsthand experiences in the learning process. Jean Piaget's work has had a significant impact on educational practices and continues to influence our understanding of cognitive development.

Cooperative Learning emphasizes the importance of active learning through collaboration with peers to accomplish a common goal. In the realm of mathematics education, students are encouraged to ask pertinent questions and explore novel concepts. Both Discovery Learning and Inquiry-based Learning emphasize that students are more likely to grasp new knowledge when they can relate it to their own experiences. This type of learning typically occurs in problem-solving scenarios where learners rely on their past encounters and existing knowledge to uncover new information and connections. Students are actively involved in their learning process by interacting with the world around them, whether through hands-on exploration, engaging in debates, or conducting experiments. Advocates of Discovery Learning argue that it fosters active participation, boosts motivation, nurtures independence and responsibility, fosters creativity, enhances problem-solving abilities, and customizes learning experiences to suit individual needs.

According to Ausubel, individual learning is heavily influenced by the individual's existing knowledge, which he refers to as cognitive structure or a mental map of knowledge. Meaningful learning is the core concept in Ausubel's theory, suggesting that new information can be better retained and understood when it is connected to existing knowledge. Ausubel advocates for pretesting to assess a student's current knowledge before introducing new information, ensuring that the new knowledge can be effectively integrated into the learner's cognitive structure. He also emphasizes the use of various techniques such as elaborate multiple choice questions, visuals, pictures, sequencing, grouping, and sorting activities to help organize and strengthen the learner's cognitive structure. By focusing on meaningful learning and building upon existing knowledge, Ausubel's approach aims to enhance the overall learning experience and knowledge retention for students.

3.4 Statistical tools and econometric models

To derive valid and accurate results, appropriate statistical tools were employed. This study utilized both descriptive and inferential statistics. While the participants' pre-test and post-test scores along with their responses on the self-evaluation form were presented using frequency and percentage count, mean, mode, and standard deviation, significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores were determined using the paired sample t-test. A level of significance of 0.01 was used to determine if significant difference exists between the participants' pre-test and post-test scores.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter deals with the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data gathered relative to sub-problems in the study.

Reflected on Table 1 is the frequency and percentage distribution of the participants' pre-test scores in reading comprehension test. One (3.6%) out of 28 students had the lowest score of 14 while 2 (7.1%) students had the highest score of 23. Furthermore, 6 (21.4%) students had scores of 20 and another 6 (21.4%) students with scores of 21. The test given prior to the 10-day QAR strategy established the participants' baseline in their reading comprehension. This data served as basis to test the effectiveness of the intervention by comparing it with the participants' post-test scores.

Table 1. Participants' Pre-test Scores in Reading Comprehension Test

Raw Score	Frequency	Percent
14	1	3.6
15	1	3.6
16	2	7.1
17	3	10.7
18	2	7.1
19	3	10.7
20	6	21.4
21	6	21.4
22	2	7.1
23	2	7.1
Total	28	100

Table 2 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the participants' post-test scores in reading comprehension test. One (3.6%) out of 28 students had the lowest score of 15 while 1 (3.6%) student also got a perfect score of 26. Results further show that 6 (21.4%) students had scores of 24. This indicates a movement in the participants' post-test scores as compared to their pre-test scores.

Table 2. Participants' Post-test Scores in Reading Comprehension Test

Raw Score	Frequency	Percent
15	1	3.6
16	2	7.1
17	4	14.3
18	3	10.7
19	1	3.6
20	2	7.1
21	0	0
22	3	10.7
23	2	7.1
24	6	21.4
25	3	10.7
26	1	3.6
Total	28	100

Table 3 shows the difference between the participants' pre-test and post-test mean scores and standard deviation. Based from the results, it can be observed that the mean score of the participants' pre-tests prior to the 10-day QAR strategy immersion is 19.32 with a standard deviation of 2.36. On the other hand, the participants' post-test mean score after the intervention is 20.89 but with a standard deviation of 3.45. This implies that while participants' post-test scores improved due to the difference of mean scores from their pre-test, this also means that their post-test scores are more dispersed compared to their pre-test scores. In addition, the computed value of 0.008 which is less than the 0.01 level of significance indicates a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores. Therefore, it can be concluded that the QAR strategy is effective in improving the reading comprehension of learners.

Based from the present findings, it is evident that the use of QAR strategy significantly improved the students' reading comprehension. In fact, results of this study give credence to similar studies which reported that students who were taught the QAR strategy had improvements in their reading comprehension compared to the ones who were not immersed in the strategy (Cummins, Streiff & Ceprano, 2012; Hosseini Faard & Rimani Nikou, 2014; Par, 2011; Peng, Hoon, Khoo, & Joseph (2007). However, present finding also disproves previous claims that QAR strategy had negative or no significant effect on students' reading comprehension (Johnson, 2014; Kucera, 2009; Stafford, 2012).

Table 3. Difference between Participants' Pre-test and Post-test Scores in Reading Comprehension Test

	Pre-test Scores	Post-test Scores
Mean	19.32	20.89
Standard Deviation	2.36	3.45
Sig. (2-tailed)	.008**	

**-.significant at 0.01 level

Table 4 shows the participants' responses on the self-evaluation form given by the researchers after the 10-day intervention. It is evident that more than half of the learners strongly agree that they became better and feel confident at answering comprehension questions after learning the QAR strategy. Same finding was also observed in a previous study where more than half of the learners who were taught the QAR strategy felt more confident about answering comprehension questions after learning the strategy (Peng, Hoon, Khoo, & Joseph, 2007). Results of this study further revealed that majority of the students strongly agree that they find the QAR strategy for answering comprehension questions helpful (71.4%) and will continue to use the QAR strategy when answering comprehension questions (78.65). Lastly, the table shows that all (100%) students mentioned that they will recommend the QAR strategy to their peers. Indeed, QAR strategy can improve students' reading comprehension. Significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores was further proven by the result of the self-evaluation form given to the participants.

Table 4. Participants' Responses on the Self Evaluation Form

Statement	SA (1)	A (2)	D (3)	SD (4)	Mode	Des.
I know how to use the QAR strategy to answer comprehension questions	12 (42.9)	15 (53.6)	1 (3.6)	0	2	Agree
I was good at answering comprehension questions prior to learning the QAR strategy	8 (28.6)	17 (60.7)	3 (10.7)	0	2	Agree
I became better at answering comprehension questions after learning the QAR strategy.	18 (64.3)	10 (35.7)	0	0	1	Strongly Agree

I feel confident answering comprehension questions after learning the QAR strategy.	14 (50.0)	13 (46.6)	1 (3.6)	0	1	Strongly Agree
I find the QAR strategy for answering comprehension questions helpful.	20 (71.4)	6 (21.4)	0	0	1	Strongly Agree
I will continue to use the QAR strategy when answering comprehension questions.	22 (78.6)	6 (21.4)	0	0	1	Strongly Agree
Statement	Yes (1)		No (2)		Mode	Des.
I will recommend the QAR strategy to my peers	28 (100.0)		0		1	Yes

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-The Researcher

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