Engaging EFL Learners with Text and Building Their Comprehension by Using Question Answer Relationship Strategy

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Diajukan kepada Lembaga Penjaminan Mutu FADA UIN KH. Achmad Siddiq Jember untuk dipresentasikan dalam seminar diskusi periodik dosen

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

In the modern era, English is broadly used as a means of communication all over the world. It becomes a necessity for everyone to acquire the language. English is well established as the most useful world language (Kaufmann, 2003:5). In Indonesia, English as a foreign language has important roles in education and business. The importance of English in line with the rapid change of information is inevitable. Further, English is one of the compulsory subjects taught from the junior high school level up to the university level. In addition, it is taught as a local content subject at elementary schools. For many EFL learners, reading is by far the most important of the four skills in a second language, particularly in english as second or foreign language (Carrel, 1988:1). Reading also plays a particular important role in education (Brindley, 1994:81). Not only does our education system demand alot of reading in the process of learning, it also tends to use the capacity to read fluently as an indicator of more general intelectual ability.

The role of reading in language teaching should be emphasized because it is an important factor to get success in the target language. Harmer (1998:68) states that there are some reasons why getting EFL learners to read English texts are an important part of the instructor's job. First, many EFL learners want to be able to read texts in English either for their careers, for study purposes, or simply for pleasure. The second, reading is useful for other purposes too, any exposure to English (provide EFL learners understand it more or less) is a good thing for

language EFL learners. The third, some of the languages stick in their minds as a part of the process of language acquisition, and, if the reading text is especially interesting and engaging, acquisition is likely to be even more successful. Based on the above statements, it is clear that reading is important to be acquired because it affects our life. Therefore, the instructor should choose appropriate techniques that can improve the EFL learners' reading comprehension of texts regarding their needs. In addition, the instructor has to select interesting reading materials in order to attract the EFL learners to be actively engaged in a reading comprehension class.

Reading comprehension is one of the elements of reading skill. As what is stated by Manzo & Manzo (1990:22), they simply say that reading is the unlocking and constructing meaning from a coded message through the use of four acquired skills: symbol decoding, vocabulary, comprehension, and reflection. Another input comes from Tankersley (2003:2), she says that there are six essential threads of reading; they are readiness, phonics and decoding, fluency, vocabulary and word recognition, comprehension and high order thinking. From the description above, we clearly see that comprehension is very crucial for the EFL learners' success in reading. For that reason, we believe that the effort to improve the EFL learners' comprehension in reading, especially in English, is much needed by the EFL learners.

Most of the EFL learners were not successful in getting ideas presented in a reading text. Even, they failed in grasping the message from the text. The EFL learners only guessed the content of the text if they had to answer the questions that required implicit information. Besides, the EFL learners found difficulties in answering the questions. They often answered the questions by taking the sentences

directly from the text. There were some factors causing failure faced by the EFL learners. The EFL learners did not have adequate background knowledge of English which has different system of structure and vocabulary to the mother tongue. The EFL learners were also lack of motivation and concentration in reading English texts.

Eskey in Carrel (1988:1) says that the ability to read written language at a reasonable rate and with good comprehension has long been recognized to be as important as oral skills. For that importance, we need to build a good strategy for the EFL learners so that they will be able to comprehend the text as they read. Instructor questioning is an effective way to help EFL learners think about what they have read so that they can more fully comprehend the text (NICHD, 2007: 21). Ciardello states that the process of asking questions help EFL learners to focus and to learn content, as well as develop cognitive strategies that will help them understand new and challenging material (Richardson et.al, 2006:127). Similar to Ciardello, Durkin states that question has been found to foster increased comprehension, apparently because readers give more time to the material related to answering them (Burns et.al, 1998:297). By having questions in the class, EFL learners are encouraged to pay more attention to the text, by that they will have better comprehension about the text. Caldwell (2008:62) argues that it's important for instructor to consider question categories if they are to assess comprehension. In fact, question categories are more important than question formal because they are directly tied to content and it is comprehension of content that is the focus of assessment. Raphael has studied and applied a questioning technique called question-answer relationship (QAR). This has been found to be a practical way to

teach EFL learners how to formulate questions in different levels of cognition. QAR has also been proven to increase EFL learners' comprehension more than several other questioning strategy (Richardson et.al, 2006:129).

In 1982, Raphael and Pearson taught EFL learners three types of Question-answer relationship. Then it is modified by Raphael in 1986 into four types of questions, those are right there, think and search, on my own, and author and me. Raphael argues that QAR instruction encourages EFL learners to consider both information in the text and their own background knowledge when answering questions (Burns et.al:304). Reading is not just about the text but also about the context, so having a background knowledge about the text is absolutely helpful in comprehending a text.

Being aware of the importance of the EFL learners' achievement in reading comprehension, QAR strategy can be used by the instructor to improve the EFL learners' reading comprehension achievement. Therefore, a periodical discussion entitled " Engaging EFL Learners with Text and Building Their Comprehension by Using Question Answer Relationship Strategy" is conducted.

1.2 Research Problem

Based on the background of the study, the problems of the research are formulated as follow:

a. What is the nature of reading comprehension?

b. What is Question and Answer Relationship strategy?

c. How to implement Question and Answer Relationship strategy in Classroom context?

d. What are the Benefits of Question and Answer Relationship strategy for reading comprehension?

1.3 Research Objective

Based on the problem of the research, the objectives of the research are formulated as follow:

a. To describe the nature of reading comprehension

b. To describe Question and Answer Relationship strategy

c. To give explanation on how to implement Question and Answer Relationship strategy in Classroom context

d. To describe the benefits of Question and Answer Relationship strategy for reading comprehension?

1.4 The significances of the Research

The result of the research is expected to be useful as an input for English instructor to apply QAR strategy in teaching reading in order to enable the EFL learners to find the information or messages from the reading text easily as well as to improve the EFL learners' reading comprehension achievement.

CHAPTER II

CONTENT

2.1. The Process of Reading

According to Manzo & Manzo (1990:13-15), reading is comprehending, interpreting, and applying textual material. It means that the act of reading is the combination of many skills. It also means that reading involves more than, and extends further than, the printed page. Moreover, Goodman in Carrel (1988:13) states that reading is a receptive language process where meaning decodes from the author's thinking. There is an essential interaction between language and thought while someone is reading a text. In short, the EFL learners are expected to do more than just read the text. They have to recognize the printed materials and gain the meaning in order to identify the message of the author expressed in the written text. Grellet (1981: 7) states that reading is a constant process of guessing, and what one brings to the text is often more important than what one finds it. This is why the beginning, the EFL learners should be taught to use what they know to understand unknown elements, whether there are ideas or simple words. Furthermore, structuralists state that readers are expected to create meaning from texts by understanding how the author expects them to use their imaginations and by filling in the author's gaps and his/her analogies (McNeil, 1992:6). This means that reader not only have to be able to understand what the author mean but also have to be able to make a connection between his own background knowledge and the text.

National Institute and Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) (2007:19) states that good readers are purposeful, strategic, and critical readers who understand the content presented in various types of text. Then, they explain those

characteristics in more detail explanation. First, purposeful reader is a reader set up a purpose for reading. It means that a successful reader establish different purposes for reading different kinds of text. Second, strategic reader is reader who is mentally active. It means that good readers make sense of what they read by drawing on knowledge and experiences that are relevant to the information and ideas in the text. Third, critical reader is reader analyze how writers, illustrator, and others involved represent people and their ideas. It means that to be fully literate, readers must develop a critical awareness of how all texts position them as readers and must consider such factors as how the authors' backgrounds and cultures influence their writing. Those are the basic characteristics and also the basic requirements to be a good reader.

2.2 Levels of Reading Comprehension

According to Fairbairn and Winch (1996:14-16), there are three levels of comprehension. The first is literal comprehension. It is the ability of the readers to interpret the explicit meaning. The second is inferential comprehension. It is the ability of the readers to grasp the implied meaning through what is literally stated in text. The third is evaluative comprehension. It is the ability of the readers to evaluate or criticize what they are reading. Before the readers evaluate or criticize the text, they must be sure that they have understood what the author is trying to say.

Furthermore, Burns et.al (1996:255) gives a different kind of reading comprehension. They state reading comprehension in two levels. The first level of comprehension is literal, this is the most basic type. The second level of comprehension is higher-order comprehension which includes interpretative,

critical and creative comprehension. To read between lines is interpretative reading comprehension, to read for evaluation is critical reading comprehension, and to read beyond the lines is creative reading comprehension. While according to King in McNamara (2007:267), reading comprehension is divided into two categories, shallow and deep comprehension. Shallow comprehension reflects a minimally coherent mental representation, while deep comprehension is indicated by a highly coherent, richly integrated, plausible representation.

Dealing with reading comprehension, Manzo & Manzo (1990:28) states three levels of reading comprehension: (a) reading the lines, by which EFL learners obtain information explicitly stated; (b) reading between the lines, by which EFL learners discover the implicit meaning of the text; and (c) reading beyond the lines, whereby EFL learners interpret text in terms of their own personal values. In addition, Block et.al (2004:1-3) argued that the reading comprehension levels are literal, inferential, and metacognitive comprehension. In their view, literal comprehension is defined as extracting the details of the text and recognizing the author's purpose. Inferential comprehension is creating meaning from the text and move beyond the author's purpose by combining the textual information with their own thoughts. Metacognitive comprehension is thinking about one's thinking or controlling one's learning. According to Caldwell (2008:48) educators should choose a limited number of components to describe the nature of comprehension itself. It means that we as a teacher should limit our target in teaching comprehension to EFL learners.

2.3 The Nature of Question-Answer Relationships (QAR) Strategy

Question-Answer Relationships (QAR) strategy is a strategy developed by

Raphael and pearson to help learners to know what information sources are available for seeking answers to different types of text questions. There are three types of question-answer relationship (QAR) that they proposed; right there, think & search, and on my own. Then Raphael modified the QAR instruction to include four categories, clustered under two headings. In the modified scheme, the "In My Head" category is divided into questions that involve both the text information and the reader's background of experiences (Author and you) and those that can be answered from the reader's experience without information from the story (On My Own) (Burns et.al, 1996:305). Raphael state that QAR is a strategy that designed to bridge the gap from teacher to student control of the questioning process (Lapp & Fisher, 2009:319). The language of QAR and the accessibility of the concepts underlying it provide teachers with a way to meet the rising expectations for higher level of thinking. In line with this, Manzo & Manzo (1995:329) state that EFL learners can be taught to use QAR as an effective strategy for answering comprehension questions.. The major goal is to get EFL learners to become more aware of the thought processes required by questions. In learning QAR, the readers should progress from shorter to longer texts, from group to independent activities, and from the easier task of recognizing an answer to the more difficult task of creating a response from more than one source of information (McNeil, 1992:63). Based on the statements above, it can be concluded that QAR encourages EFL learners to be strategic about their search for answers based on an awareness of what different types of questions look for, even more important is understanding where they will come from.

Jenkins and Lawler in Richardson (2009:129) argued that QAR has been

proven to increase student's comprehension questions more that several other strategies. In QAR the focus is on analyzing the relationships between questions and answers. Readers learn how different questions require different types of information; some answers may come from the readers' prior knowledge or may be found in the text. Evaluating questions and their relationships to the text and the reader can improve reading comprehension. Furthermore, Harvey and Goudvis suggest that EFL learners question-asking and search for answers indicate that they are monitoring both comprehension as well as interacting with the text to construct meaning (Raphael et.al, 2002:10). Based on the statements, it is clear that QAR is a comprehension strategy that provides a common way of thinking and talking about sources of information for answering questions. QAR is effective not only in increasing EFL learners' ability to answer questions but also to improve their comprehension.

The use of QAR as a framework for comprehension across the grades and school subjects may be particularly helpful in school serving many EFL learners of diverse background (Lapp et.al, 2004:19). Knowing that it is quite hard to improve EFL learners' comprehension skill in reading, Often, under the pressure to raise the test scores, teachers in these schools implement highly structured programs focusing on lower level reading skill. Teachers usually report that they see gains in lower level skills, such as word recognition, but not in comprehension and higher level thinking. QAR provides a means for teachers to gain or regain a focus on instruction in comprehension strategies in their classrooms. In addition, QAR is a program designed to demystify the questioning process, providing teachers and EFL learners with a common vocabulary to discuss different types of questions and

sources of information for answering these questions, both of which are fundamental to EFL learners' eventual generation of questions (Lapp & Fisher, 2009:319).

Taking all into considerations, teachers are expected to apply QAR strategy for improving EFL learners' reading comprehension achievement regarding the concept of QAR strategy that uses different sources of information to answer different types of questions.

2.4 The Classification of QAR Strategy

Raphael classified QAR strategy into four categories, clustered under two headings (Burns et.al, 1996:305). The first heading is "In the Book" consisting of "Right There" and "Think & Search". The second heading is "In My Head" that is divided into "Author & Me" and "On My Own".

2.4.1 In the Book

In the Book is the label used to describe questions that invite information right from the text (Lapp & Fisher, 2009:319). These questions may be either explicit or implicit. In the Book questions are contrasted to convey the difference between successfully answering a question by simply going to one place in a text and finding all necessary information and looking across a text to answer the question. In the Book category consists of Right There and Think & Search (Burns et.al, 1996:305).

a. Right There

Right There questions are those to which the answers are explicitly found in the text (Grant & Fisher, 2010:20). These questions are straight-forward and can be

answered by going to a single place in the text (Boke, 2004:77). The answers can be found in the text because they are explicitly stated. The EFL learners looked for the words in the question and read the sentence containing those words to locate the answer (Burns et.al, 1996:304). The answer may be complex, but will be found as clearly defined unit of information (Boke, 2004:77). The purpose of EFL learners to create or respond to Right There questions is to make them aware of the important details that support key ideas in the text. Right There questions can be applied for fiction and nonfiction texts. For both fiction and nonfiction texts, this may include answering questions using information explicitly stated in a text source (magazine, textbook, web page, chart, or graph) to define a term and provide facts or supporting details. For fiction, it may include identifying information about characters or setting, or determining a sequence of events found in one place in the text.

b. Think & Search

The relationship for questions with an answer in the story that required information from multiple sentences or paragraphs was called "Think & Search" questions (Burns et.al, 1996:305). Furthermore, Lapp & Fisher (2009:319) say that the information to answer the question is in the text, but one must "think about how the information relates and "search" across the text for relevant information. What they mean is that the answers are not explicitly stated in the text, so the relevant information for answering the questions may be got from different places in the text. In line with Lapp & Fisher, Boke (2004:77) argues that answering such question (Think and search) requires the reader to pull together information from several parts of the reading. Asking for comparison between disparate topics, or a summary of a process that is discussed for several pages are good examples of such

questions. "Think and search" is familiar to the EFL learners, yet a bit more challenging than "Right there" questions. These questions may invite comparisons/contrasts across characters, sequencing key story events, detailing an explanation for how the event has occurred, and so forth (Raphael et.al, 2002:7). Furthermore, the answer to "think and search" questions is in the text, but the reader has to pull it together from different parts of the text. Therefore, readers must be able to identify important information, understand how text is organized, and integrate the information in a meaningful way.

2.4.2 In My Head

In My Head is used to describe questions which involve both the text information and the reader's background of experiences (Burns et.al, 1996:305). But this kind of question is more appropriately answered with information from the reader's knowledge base (Lapp & Fisher, 2009:319). This question is classified as "Author & Me" and "On My Own" questions.

a. Author & Me

Author & Me questions are require the learners to combine his or her own background knowledge with information from the text (Raphael et.al, 2002:7). It means that the readers have to be able to integrate what they read with what they know. Implicit information found in the text and the reader's own prior knowledge and experiences, that is, the answer must be generated from a synthesis of information from the text and the reader's prior knowledge and experiences (NICHD, 2007:21). An Author & Me question cannot be answered and be difficult to answer unless you have read the text. EFL learners need to think about what they

already know, what the author tells in the text, and how it fits together. They learn to make inferences, which involve reading between the lines of the text and using their own experience to determine information that is not stated. Author & Me questions require EFL learners to be able to distinguish fact from opinion, make both simple and complex inferences from the information that has been presented, make judgments about how they would respond the situations faced by characters in the stories they read, visualize setting and events from text information presented in a picture, and make predictions about what may happen next.

b. On My Own

Raphael and Pearson state that the relationship for questions for which answers had to come from the reader's own knowledge are called as "On My Own" questions (Burns et.al, 1996:305). The answer can be provided from the reader's own background knowledge, without even reading the text (Lapp & Fisher, 2009:319). It requires student's prior knowledge and experiences alone; that is, the student does not have to read the text to answer the question, but reading the text will inform the answer (NICHD, 2007:21). When they answer the questions, the EFL learners identify relevant background knowledge (about genre, experiences, authors, etc.) and share their knowledge one another. It is important for the EFL learners to think about what they already know before they read.

The example of QAR questions and the answers in a reading text as follows:

Why Are Some Days Cloudy?

In one place, a boy goes outside and looks up at the dark sky. He says, "It looks snowy today." Not too far away, a girl looks up at the sun. She says, "It is going to be a fair day today. There are no clouds in the sky." And in a place not too far from the girl, a man

goes out of his house. He feels drops of water on his face and hair. He says, "I will need a hat today to keep my hair dry."

How can the same day be snowy, fair, and rainy in three places? Why does a sunny day sometimes become cloudy? Why does a cloudy day sometimes become snowy or rainy? Air is a gas that can't be seen. It is all around us. As it moves, it takes in drops of water. When the air has little water in it, the sky is fair and we can feel the sun. When the air takes in too much water, rain or snow will begin to fall.

1. Why does the man need a hat?

Answer: To keep his hair dry

QAR   : Right There

2. Why does a sunny day become cloudy?

Answer: Water goes into the air

QAR   : Think & Search

3. What will you do if you are the boy?

Answer: I will wear jacket

QAR   : Author & Me

4. How do you feel on a sunny day?

Answer: I feel happy

QAR   : On My Own

2.5 QAR Strategy In Classroom Teaching And Learning

There are two ways of teaching using questioning strategy, including QAR. First is direct explanation and modeling, the second is guided practice (Lapp & Fisher, 2009:318). Roechler & Duffy (1991) and Winograd & Hare (1988) in Lapp & Fisher (2009:318) explain that in direct explanation and modeling, the teacher

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has a responsibility for explaining the questioning strategy. First, the teacher provides EFL learners with a direct explanation of the strategy including (1) a definition of what QAR is, (2) a reason why they are learning the strategy, (3) the steps in how to use the strategy, (4) the appropriate times when the skill is useful, and (5) ways to decide how well they use the strategy and its effectiveness in enhancing their comprehension. Teacher modeling is given after the teacher having given EFL learners a direct explanation. The teacher then performs the task while thinking aloud, thereby making the mental process visible to the EFL learners.

In conducting a guided practice, the teacher asks EFL learners to take responsibility for more of the steps until they are in control of the entire procedure. Applebee & Langler (1983) in Lapp & Fisher (2009:318) state that during this time, teachers provide EFL learners with some type of support or instructional scaffolding. This support, in this case QAR, helps EFL learners follow the steps in the strategy even though they could not perform the task independently. Guided practice also provides opportunities for EFL learners to receive corrective feedback to improve their use of the strategy. Therefore, student' independent use of strategy is the result of sufficient guided practice. Once control of the strategy has shifted from teacher to EFL learners, it becomes important for teacher to monitor EFL learners' performance.

After modeling, a period of explicit instruction in the elements of QAR is important. These elements include (1) the text being read and questioned, (2) the questions generated to promote comprehension, (3) the answers to the questions, (4) the question-answer relationship, and (5) the justification or explanation for selecting a given QAR. Initially the teacher provides all five elements: asking EFL

learners to read the text, asking question, providing an appropriate answer, identifying QAR, and explaining why (Lapp & Fisher, 2009:319).

Raphael discuss the use of QAR categorization to plan questioning strategies, she states that Questions asked prior to reading are usually own my own QARs. They are designed to help EFL learners think about what they already know and how it relates to the upcoming story or content text. In creating guided reading questions, it is important to balance text-based and inference questions. For these, think and search QARs should dominate, since they require integration of information and should build to the asking of author and me QARs. Finally, for extension activities, teachers will want to create primarily on my own or author and you QARs, focusing again on EFL learners' background information as its pertains to the text" (Burns et.al, 1996:305).

2.6 The Advantages of QAR Strategy

Jenkins and Lauler states that QAR has been proven to increase EFL learners' comprehension more than several other questioning strategies (Richardson et.al, 2006:129). QAR questioning level can help readers to think at a critical level. QAR levels help the reader to know where to find the answer to questions. This questioning also helps readers to think answers out on their own and to use their own experiences to help them understand what they read (Hearn, 2007:254-255). In addition, Raphael and Au (2004:25) state that QAR addresses four troubling problems of practice today, those are:

1. QAR can help address the lack of shared language among teachers and EFL learners for improving questioning practices, whether in the day-to-day life of the classroom, in EFL learners' activities outside of school, or in high-stakes

testing simulation.

2. QAR can bring coherence to literacy instruction across grade levels by providing a framework for a developmental progression for comprehension instruction. As a framework, QAR provides a means for organizing comprehension strategy instruction.

3. QAR provides a focal point to begin sustained efforts for whole-school reform aimed at higher standard for literacy learning and teaching.

4. QAR provides a responsible approach to preparing EFL learners for high-stakes test tests at s at different grade levels and in a variety levels and in a variety of subject areas, without detracting from the high-quality instruction that leads to high levels of literacy.

Furthermore, Raphael (1982,1986) as quoted by Lapp & Fisher (2009:319) states that teachers and EFL learners will understand the relationships among the questions, the text to which it refers, and the background knowledge and information of the readers. Another input comes from McIntosh and Draper (1995) as quoted by Hsieh and Dwyer (2009:38), they found that QAR strategy helped EFL learners read, answer questions, and learn from texts. In line with the statement above, QAR requires the EFL learners to integrate their background knowledge and information stated in the text. Moreover, QAR enhances EFL learners' ability to comprehend texts by teaching them how to find information for answering questions.

Based on the explanation above, the teacher can apply QAR strategy as a technique to facilitate EFL learners' reading comprehension. One of its benefits to reading process is QAR strategy encourages critical thinking in which the EFL

learners have to recognize and understand the content of the text and see how the author's ideas are organized and developed. In addition, QAR strategy requires the EFL learners to integrate the information in the text and their background knowledge.

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

3.1 Conclusion

Applying QAR strategy is beneficial for EFL learners since it helps them to connect ideas in the text with their background knowledge. In other words, it helps them to engage actively with the text and become critical readers. It means that Question-Answer Relationship strategy could take the EFL learners' attention and bring them to be active EFL learners. The improvement was caused by the way of the EFL learners did QAR strategy in their learning from reading the text, making their own questions related to the text based on QAR, and then answering the questions given by underlining the important information while reading the text. It made the EFL learners to be easier to integrate the information and grasp the ideas presented in the text.

Therefore, it can be concluded that Question-Answer Relationship strategy is very worth and useful to be applied in increasing the EFL learners' reading comprehension.

3.2 Suggestion

It is suggested that the English teacher apply QAR strategy for teaching reading comprehension because it can improve both the EFL learners' reading comprehension achievement (including literal and inferential comprehension) and the EFL learners' participation in the teaching learning process. The EFL learners are suggested to follow the Question-Answer Relationship strategy very well, and

they must be able to adapt with the strategy perfectly, so that they can read a text

comprehensively and answering the questions related to the text accurately.

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SERTIFIKAT
NOMOR: B.3177/Un.22/6/PP.00.9/11/2022

DIBERIKAN KEPADA

Taufik Hidayah, S.Pd, M.TESOL

Sebagai PEMATERI

dalam Diskusi Periodik Dosen Fakultas Dakwah dengan Judul:
**"Engaging EFL Learners with Text and Building Their Comprehension
by Using Question Answer Relationship Strategy"**

yang diselenggarakan oleh Fakultas Dakwah Universitas Islam Negeri Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq Jember
Pada Tanggal 9 November 2022

Mengetahui,
Dekan Fakultas Dakwah

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