THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MODIFIED QUESTIONING THE AUTHOR (MQTA) STRATEGY TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION

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Abstract

Penelitian ini bertujuan i) untuk mengetahui perbedaan prestasi membaca komprehensif antara siswa yang diajar dengan strategi Questioning the Author (QtA) dan strategi Modified Questioning the Author (MQtA), ii) untuk mengetahui aspek mmbaca yang paling meningkat nilainya setelah penerapan strategi QtA dan MQtA , dan iii) untuk mengetahui respon siswa terhadap penerapan strategi MQtA. Subjek penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas delapan SMP IT Ar Raihan Bandar Lampung. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa i) ada perbedaan yang signifikan secara statistik dalam kemampuan membaca antara siswa yang diajar dengan strategi QtA dan strategi MQtA, ii) Dari lima aspek membaca comprehensif; menentukan Main idea, Supporting details, References, Inferences dan Vocabulries, aspek membaca yang memperoleh nilai tertinggi pada group eksperimen adalah menentukan Main idea dan Inferences sedangkan pada grup kontrol adalah menentukan References, dan iii) respon siswa terhadap penerapan strategi MQtA adalah positif. Ini menunjukkan bahwa strategi MQtA lebih efektif dibandingkan dengan strategi QtA untuk meningkatkan prestasi membaca komprehensif siswa . Namun, kedua strategi dapat diterapkan pada semua kelas dengan kondisi dan latar belakang pengetahuan yang berbeda..

This study was aimed i) to find out whether there was a difference of students' reading achievement between students taught by using Questioning the Author (QtA) and those taught by using Modified Questioning the Author (MQtA), ii) to find out aspect of reading comprehension which score mostly increased after the implementation of QtA and MQtA, and iii) to find out the students' responses toward the implementation of MQtA. The subjects of this research were the eighth grade students of SMP IT Ar Raihan Bandar Lampung. The result showed that i) there was a statistically significant difference in students' reading comprehension achievement between students taught by using QtA and those taught by using MQtA, ii) from five aspects of reading comprehension; determining Main idea, Supporting details, Reference, Inferences and Vocabularies, the reading aspect which gained highest score in experimental group was in determining Main idea and Inferences, while in control group it was in determining References, and iii) the students' responses toward the implementation of MQtA was positive. It can be said that MQtA strategy is more effective to increase the students' reading comprehension achievement. However both QtA and MQtA can be implemented to every classroom with different students' situation and background knowledge.

Keywords: *Questioning the Author (QtA), Modified Questioning the Author (MQtA), Reading Comprehension Achievement*

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a complex cognitive process of decoding symbols in order to construct or derive meaning. It is a means of language acquisition, of communication, and of sharing information and ideas. Schoenbach et al. (1999) state that reading is a complex process in which if you were reading complex text about complex ideas or unfamiliar type of text, you were working to understand, you were probably trying to relate your existing knowledge and understanding. As one of receptive skills, reading is an activity in which there is interaction between reader and the author of the text. Reading can be seen as an ''interactive'' process between a reader and a text which leads to fluency (Alyousef, 2005).

According to Zare et al, (2013), reading is a cognitive activity in which the reader takes part in a conversation with the author through the text. Reading plays important role in achieving and developing learner's knowledge. Reading is also essential skill to learn since it enables learners to comprehend all new information in English printed and written text. In other words, reading is an activity to comprehend a text, in which there is interaction between the reader and the text. Indonesian learners need to have a good reading skill in order to improve their English competence as their foreign language and ability to access information. In the context of English learning, the main purpose of reading comprehends the text. Thus, teaching reading should focus on helping the students to comprehend the passages.

Ironically, reading comprehension skill is quite difficult for Indonesian EFL students to grasp. It is believed that inferred meaning contained in reading text is very problematic for Indonesian EFL readers, including junior high school students. So far, the teaching reading process is still limited around solving the task which answers are written in the text. It is essential to encourage the students to comprehend not only what the author has written but also what the author's implicit intention in writing (McNamara, 2006).

Reading comprehension is not as simple as people think. There are number of principles that must be considered if the teacher wants the students become good readers. Duke et al (2002) a good reader characterized as a reader who is active, have clear goals in their mind for reading, look over the text before they read, make prediction about what is to come. Good readers also construct, revise and question the meanings they make during their reading and they think about the authors of the text, their style, beliefs, intentions, historical milieu, and so on.

Based on pre-research, recent condition of most students, however, lack of vocabulary mastery and they are reluctant to optimize the use of dictionaries. Every time the students discuss certain text led by teacher, they always ask the meaning of the unfamiliar word to the teacher. The process to be autonomous students is unseen. Advisably, English teachers in modern school are required to teach the lesson in almost fully English. This situation triggers problem of understanding for the students who come from low level of elementary school backgrounds. Other problem, several students were lack of motivation and confidence to follow the lesson seriously. One of the reasons was because of the strategy used in teaching reading; the text chosen for study was not interesting, the

level of difficulty of the text was high, and the way the discussion about the text was not creative. These problems lead the students to feel low motivation in learning English especially learning reading.

To improve the EFL students' reading comprehension, teachers implement various comprehension strategies, such as Questioning the Author or QtA. Questioning the Author (QtA) is a strategy developed by Beck et al. According to them, Questioning the Author is one of the instructional approach to comprehension which focus is to have students struggle with and reflect on what author trying to say in order to build understanding (Beck, et al, 1996). Primarily used with nonfiction text, QtA lets students critique the author's work and in doing so engage with the text to create a deeper meaning.

In relation to the use of Questioning the Author (QtA) strategy, a study by other researcher, Nunan (2003) as quoted by Rahayu (2014) states that QtA is an outstanding strategy for engaging students in meaningful cognitive and metacognitive interactions with text and for assisting students in the process of constructing meaning from text. In this technique, students learn to engage with meaning and develop ideas rather than retrieve information from the text. He suggests this technique as an appropriate activity in a reading classroom, rather than having students read a text and giving some questions to test their reading comprehension. Baleghizadeh (2011) suggests that engaging learners in meaningful interaction with authentic texts through generating their own questions is a more effective way of facilitating reading comprehension than exposing them to simplified texts. Davoudi (2015) recommends that essential role of teacher and student questioning improves students' reading comprehension. While Png (2016) proves that QtA contributes positive outcomes on students in the non-western part of the world where students are seemingly quieter and less responsive that in the west.

Meanwhile, Alqahtani (2015) viewed that vocabulary knowledge is a critical tool for second language learners because a limited vocabulary in a second language hinder successful reading. Research has shown that second language readers rely heavily on vocabulary knowledge and the lack of that knowledge is the main and the largest obstacle for L2 readers to overcome (Huckin, 1995 in Alqahtani, 2015).

To help the students' vocabulary mastery while reading, involving dictionary is promising. Fraser (1999) stated that consulting a dictionary has important and positive roles for learners to use to verify inference in reading activity. Paper dictionary use during reading facilitates reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition for reading a second language (Hamilton, 2012).

Furthermore, lack of students' confidence in reading is possibly overcome by Small group discussion. Small group discussion is one of the ways to balance low and high confident students. Kendal and Khoun (2006) stated that one of small-group strategy instruction for English language learners valuable for low-anxiety environment. Having a small group enabled teachers to recognize struggling readers and attend to their needs (Wilson et al, 2012).

Due to the problems experienced by the students, in this study, the researcher modified the Questioning the Author (QtA) strategy by adding learning procedures such as setting small group

discussion and consulting dictionaries while reading comprehension activities. The modification is based on the fact that the students are lack of vocabularies and reading motivation which affect their reading comprehension achievement. Interactive approach was accommodated inside the modification. These adjustments of Questioning the Author procedure were intended to improve the students comprehension achievement and next this strategy is called Modified Questioning the Author (MQtA).

METHOD

Recent research used quantitative approach. The design of this research was true experimental design since this research had two groups; experimental and control groups (Creswell, 2012). The independent variables were the strategies i.e. Questioning the Author and Modified Questioning the Author. The population of this research was the eighth grade students of SMP IT Ar raihan Bandar Lampung. The research used two classes at this school as the samples. They were 8A and 8B. For the data collection instruments, reading test containing 50 multiple choices items was conducted and closed questionnaire containing 20 items of students' responses questionnaire was administered.

Independent sample t-test was applied to answer the first research question regarding the significant difference of students' reading achievement between experimental and control groups. Meanwhile, to answer the second research question, the researcher compared Gain score of five aspects of reading comprehension by conducting paired sample t-test. Independent and paired sample t-test was accomplished by using SPSS 17 program for Windows 7. To answer the third research question about

the students' responses toward the implementation of MQtA, the questionnaire scores was counted and analyzed using Ms. Excel program.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Independent sample t-test on SPSS version 17 was used to analyze the difference in students' reading comprehension achievement between students who were taught using MQtA as the modified strategy and QtA as the original strategy.

According to data analysis it was found that mean of achievement score of experimental group is 54.09 while in control group the score is 27.59. It is found the difference of Gain score is 26.5.

To see the significant difference of the students' reading comprehension achievement between MQtA and QtA, the independent t-test of N-Gain score was conducted by analyzing the data in SPSS version 17.

Table 1. The difference of the students' reading comprehension achievement

Variable	N-Gain %	Difference	t-ratio	Sig. (2-Tailed)	T-table (df=48)		Conclusion
Experiment	54.0998	26.5007	5.995	0.00	0.05	0.01	Significant (Hi1
Control	27.5991				2.011	2.682	is accepted

Source: Data Analysis

Table 1 show that the mean of the students' achievement in experimental group is 54.09 and the mean of control group is 27.59 with the difference 26.5. We can see that t-ratio is 5.995 while the critical value for t-table (df=48) is 2.011 at the level of significance 0.05 and 2.682 for 0.01. Thus, t-ratio is higher than t-table, that is, 2.011< 5.995 >2.682. The students' scores significantly differ between control group and experimental

group. Thus, there is a significant difference of students' reading achievement between control and experimental group.

The second research question was regarding the aspect of reading comprehension mostly improved after the implementation of MQtA and QtA. To determine it, the researcher conducted paired sample t-test and counted the N-Gain percent score.

Based on the result of paired sample t-test, all the aspects of reading comprehension in both groups were statistically increased significantly. Tables below shows the details of paired sample t-test result in experimental and control groups.

Table 2. Result of paired sample t-test in experimental group.

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre Main Idea - Post Main Idea	-3.600	2.517	.503	-4.639	-2.561	-7.152	24	.000
Pair 2	Pre Supporting Details - Post Supporting Details	-3.200	2.944	.589	-4.415	-1.985	-5.435	24	.000
Pair 3	Pre Reference - Post Reference	-5.520	2.960	.592	-6.742	-4.298	-9.325	24	.000
Pair 4	Pre Inference - Post Inference	-2.800	1.826	.365	-3.554	-2.046	-7.668	24	.000
Pair 5	Pre Vocabulary - Post Vocabulary	-3.200	2.769	.554	-4.343	-2.057	-5.779	24	.000

Table 3. Result of paired sample t-test in control group.

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre Main Idea - Post Main Idea	-2.800	2.082	.416	-3.659	-1.941	-6.725	24	.000
Pair 2	Pre Supporting Details - Post Supporting Details	-1.600	2.236	.447	-2.523	-.677	-3.578	24	.002
Pair 3	Pre Reference - Post Reference	-2.400	2.000	.400	-3.226	-1.574	-6.000	24	.000
Pair 4	Pre Inference - Post Inference	-1.360	1.604	.321	-2.022	-.698	-4.239	24	.000
Pair 5	Pre Vocabulary - Post Vocabulary	-2.160	2.075	.415	-3.017	-1.303	-5.204	24	.000

The first aspect is determining main idea of the text. The result of pre-test and post-test of determining main idea in experimental group shows that the minimum score in pre-test is 8 and

maximum score is 18 while possible maximum score was 20. Mean score was 14.96. While post-test result shows that minimum score was 16, maximum score was 20, Mean score was 18.56, the increase score was 3.60, and N Gain score was 0.69 or 69.13%.

While the result of pre-test and post-test of determining main idea in control group shows that the minimum score in pre-test is 8 and maximum score is 12 while possible maximum score was 20. Mean score was 12.80. While post-test result shows that minimum score was 18, maximum score was 18, Mean score was 15.60, the increase score was 2.80, and N Gain score was 0.36 or 36.33%.

The second aspect is determining supporting detail of the text. The result of pre-test and post-test of determining supporting details in experimental group shows that the minimum score in pre-test is 6 and maximum score is 18 while possible maximum score was 20. Mean score was 13.12. While post-test result shows that minimum score was 12, maximum score was 20, Mean score was 16.32, the increase score was 3.20, and N Gain score was 0.42 or 42.05%.

While the result of pre-test and post-test of determining supporting details in control group shows that the minimum score in pre-test is 8 and maximum score is 12 while possible maximum score was 20. Mean score was 12.80. While post-test result shows that minimum score was 18, maximum score was 18, Mean score was 15.60, the increase score was 2.80, and N Gain score was 0.36 or 36.33%.

The third aspect is determining references of the text. The result of pre-test and post-test of determining references in experimental group shows that the minimum score in pre-test is 8 and

maximum score is 22 while possible maximum score was 20. Mean score was 15.12. While post-test result shows that minimum score was 16, maximum score was 24, Mean score was 20.64, the increase score was 5.52, and N Gain score was 0.51 or 50.65%.

Thus, based on table 4.4 it is obvious that there is improvement in determining references in experimental group after being taught using Modified Questioning the Author (MQtA) strategy.

In determining the significance of improvement in determining references after the implementation of MQtA, paired sample t-test was conducted in experimental group.

The result of pre-test and post-test of determining references in control group shows that the minimum score in pre-test is 6 and maximum score is 24 while possible maximum score was 24. Mean score was 14.16. While post-test result shows that minimum score was 12, maximum score was 24, Mean score was 16.56, the increase score was 2.40, and N Gain score was 0.41 or 40.85%.

Thus, based on table 4.4 it is obvious that there is improvement in determining references in control group after being taught using Questioning the Author (QtA) strategy.

The forth aspect is determining inferences of the text. The result of pre-test and post-test of determining inferences in experimental group shows that the minimum score in pre-test is 8 and maximum score is 16 while possible maximum score was 18. Mean score was 13.44. While post-test result shows that minimum score was 12 maximum score was 18, Mean score was 16.24, the increase score was 2.80, and N Gain score was 0.65 or 65.27%.

While the result of pre-test and post-test of determining inferences in control group shows that the minimum score in pre-test is 10 and maximum score is 16 while possible maximum score was 18. Mean score was 13.76. While post-test result shows that minimum score was 12, maximum score was 18, Mean score was 15.12, the increase score was 1.36, and N Gain score was 0.19 or 19.33%.

The forth aspect is determining vocabularies of the text. The result of pre-test and post-test of determining vocabularies in experimental group shows that the minimum score in pre-test is 4 and maximum score is 16 while possible maximum score was 14. Mean score was 10.48. While post-test result shows that minimum score was 8 maximum score was 16, Mean score was 13.68, the increase score was 3.20, and N Gain score was 0.50 or 50.33%.

While the result of pre-test and post-test of determining vocabularies in control group shows that the minimum score in pre-test is 6 and maximum score is 16 while possible maximum score was 16. Mean score was 12.00. While post-test result shows that minimum score was 10 maximum score was 16, Mean score was 14.16, the increase score was 2.16, and N Gain score was 0.24 or 24.34%.
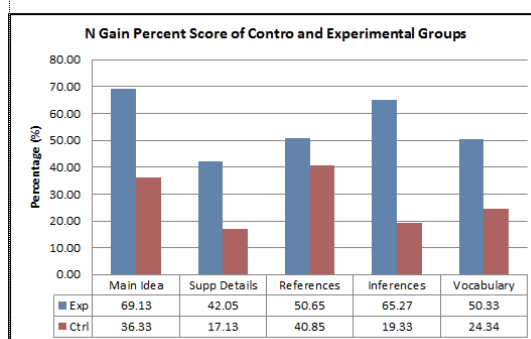
Graph 1. N-Gain Percent Score of Reading Comprehension Aspects

Based on Graph 1 the highest Gain score in experimental group was in determining main idea and determining inferences. The lowest gain score was in determining supporting details. While in control group the highest gain score was in determining inferences and the lowest score was in determining supporting details.

The result of the third research question deals with whether the student's' response is positive or negative toward the implementation of MQtA. Students' responses toward the implementation of MQtA were gained by delivering questionnaire and conducting interview in experimental group. The questionnaire contained 20 closed-questions in which the participants were given the options between 1, 2, 3 or 4 according to their opinion about the learning process, their achievement in reading comprehension and the increase of their motivation.

Since the twenty-item questionnaire was divided into three categories, there are three tables reveals the students' responses. They are students' responses toward classroom activities, learning motivation and response toward reading aspects.

Students' Responses toward Classroom Activities

The summary of data collection about students' responses toward the classroom activities is presented by the table below.

Table 4. Students' Responses toward Classroom Activities

No	Item Number	Total	Maximum Score	Percentage (%)
1.	1	90	100	90%
2.	3	79	100	79%
3.	4	82	100	82%
4.	5	82	100	82%
5.	6	88	100	88%
6.	10	83	100	83%
Total Score		504	600	84%

Based on table 4, total score gained from students' responses toward the classroom activities was 504, the maximum score was 600 and the percentage of students' answers was 84%. According to the categories given, the students' response was highly positive.

Students' Responses toward Learning Motivation

The summary of data collection about students' responses toward the Learning Motivation is presented by the table below.

Table 5. Students' Responses toward Learning Motivation

No	Item Number	Total	Maximum Score	Percentage (%)
1.	2	82	100	82%
2.	7	77	100	77%
3.	8	88	100	88%
4.	9	81	100	81%
5.	17	76	100	76%
Total Score		404	500	80.80%

Based on Table 5, total score gained from students' responses toward the learning motivation was 404, the maximum score was 500 and the percentage of students' answers was 80.80%. According to the categories given, the students' response was highly positive.

Students' Responses toward Understanding of Reading Aspects

The summary of data collection about students' responses toward the understanding of reading aspects is presented by the table as follows:

Table 6. Students' responses score toward understanding of reading aspects

No	Item Number	Total	Maximum Score	Percentage (%)
1.	11	81	100	81%
2.	12	80	100	80%
3.	13	82	100	82%
4.	14	83	100	83%
5.	15	90	100	90%
6.	16	84	100	84%
7.	18	85	100	85%
8.	19	76	100	76%
9.	20	78	100	78%
	Total Score	739	900	82.11%

Based on Table 4, total score gained from students' responses toward the learning motivation was 404, the maximum score was 500 and the percentage of students' answers was 81%. According to the categories given, the students' response was highly positive.

Total of students' responses score toward the implementation of MQtA strategy in teaching reading comprehension.

Table 7. Students' Responses score toward the Implementation of MQtA

No	Item Categories	Total	Maximum Score	Percentage (%)
1.	Students' responses toward classroom activities	504	600	84.00%
2.	Students' responses toward learning motivation	404	500	80.80%
3.	Students' responses toward understanding of reading comprehension aspects	739	900	82.11%
	Total Score	739	900	82.35%

From table 5 above, it seems that the students responses toward the implementation of Modified Questioning the Author used by the teacher in their reading group was 82.35% or highly positive. Thus, according to the questionnaire result, MQtA gave positive contribution in reading comprehension achievement.

Previous researches also showed that students, reading comprehension achievement mostly increased after the implementation of QtA. This is supported by Baleghizadeh (2011) reported a positive effect for the role of on reading comprehension with text simplification.

They perceived that the QtA questions were more difficult to answer than the traditional ones, yet they did better when answering them. She also reported that the students' reading achievement who had been trained in QtA were significantly higher than the scores of their peers in the other three groups. This indicates the value of training students in generating their own comprehension questions.

Small group discussion is believed to contribute to increase students' skill in reading comprehension. Small group discussion technique is suitable and effective to improve students' reading comprehension and resolve the difficulties on comprehending a text (Sari 2016; Rahmat 2017).

Meanwhile, the students were also asked to explore their dictionary to master the vocabularies when they found difficulty to understand the words of the text or to express their idea in answering the questions. Vocabulary mastery is positively support the students' understanding toward the text.

All these things are supported by Alqahtani (2015) who stated that vocabulary learning is an essential part in foreign language learning as the meanings of new words are very often emphasized, whether in books or in classrooms.

CONCLUSIONS

Regarding the significant improvement of students' achievement in comprehending story text in both experimental and control classes, it is concluded that modified and original version of Questioning the Author strategies re relevant to be implemented in teaching reading comprehension in Indonesia with some conditions. For the group of students with special English

ability, the original MQtA would be appropriate to implement. While for the groups of students with average and low English ability the ideal strategy is the modified version.

Concerning with the significant difference between QtA and MQtA in students' reading comprehension, it is found that there is a significant difference of students' reading comprehension achievement after being taught by using QtA and MQtA. The significant difference can be seen on the result of students' achievement. The reason why there is a significant difference achievement because the students have sufficient schemata to reactivate their prior knowledge before reading. Modified Questioning the Author (MQtA) is effective for students in order to improve students reading achievement. It can be one activity that helps students to improve their reading comprehension achievement. It is caused by two reasons; first, the stage which provide a lot of chance for students to read and discuss the queries in a group. Second, consulting the dictionaries is important to help students arrange the statements or answers related to unstated information or making inferences.

Based on the N-Gain score of each aspects of reading in both QtA and MQtA, finding main idea and determining inference are the most influenced on the students' reading comprehension. It is assumed that there are some factors happen in the treatments. First, triggering the students with HOTS-typed questions eased them to think beyond the factual information stated in the text. HOTS questions which usually started by utterance '*Why*' or '*How*' stimulated the groups to discuss and solve the problem, then it became habit. Small groups gained suggestions and ideas from different group members

and contributes the concepts become easily clear.

From the questionnaire of students' responses, it is revealed that the students' reaction toward the implementation of MQtA is positive.

Since this is new technique for them, at the same time the process of teaching and learning ran in small group discussion, so they enjoyed the process and felt confident.

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