

## A NOVICE ENGLISH TEACHER'S EFFORTS TO ENHANCE STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION ON NARRATIVE TEXT THROUGH SQ4R METHOD, WHAT CAN WE LEARN?

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### Abstrak

Tujuan utama dari studi ini adalah untuk mengamati upaya seorang guru bahasa Inggris pemula dalam menerapkan metode SQ4R untuk meningkatkan pemahaman membaca siswa pada teks naratif di tingkat sekolah menengah pertama di daerah pedesaan Kota Serang. Untuk mencapai tujuan tersebut dipilihlah penelitian tindakan kelas model Kemmis & McTaagart sebagai desain penelitian. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga melibatkan kolaborator penelitian agar guru bahasa Inggris pemula mendapatkan masukan berharga dalam penyusunan RPP dan objektivitas dalam menilai kualitas proses pembelajaran. Selain itu, observasi kelas dan tes membaca digunakan sebagai instrumen penelitian. Penelitian ini dinyatakan berhasil pada siklus 2, dimana hasil tes membaca menunjukkan bahwa 85,71% siswa telah mencapai KKM dengan nilai rata-rata 71,54. Singkatnya, implikasi langsung dari metode SQ4R bagi siswa meliputi pengembangan keterampilan kognitif, peningkatan pemahaman membaca dan retensi, serta membangkitkan rasa percaya diri dan keterampilan berpikir kritis.

*Kata kunci: Membaca Pemahaman, SQ4R, Penelitian Tindakan Kelas, Guru Pemula.*

### Abstract

The main objective of the present study is to observe the efforts of a novice English teacher in applying the SQ4R method to enhance students' reading comprehension on narrative text at the secondary school level in a rural area of Kota Serang. To achieve this objective, the Kemmis & McTaagart model of classroom action research was chosen as a research design. In addition, this study also involved research collaborators so that the novice English teacher gained valuable inputs in the preparation of lesson plans and objectivity in assessing the quality of learning process. Besides, classroom observation and reading test were used as research instruments. This study was declared successful in cycle 2, when the result of reading test showed that 85.71% of students had achieved the minimum completeness criteria with a mean score of 71.54. In summary, the direct implication of the SQ4R method for students include the development of cognitive skills, enhancement in reading comprehension and retention, as well as generating self-confidence and critical thinking skills.

*Keywords: Reading Comprehension, SQ4R, Classroom Action Research, a Novice Teacher.*

### INTRODUCTION

Teacher is the spearhead who determine the progress of education process. Therefore, a professional teacher is currently required to have

competencies and display quality performances in accordance with his/her field of work. In the National Education Standards (2005) it was obviously explained that a teacher must have personal, pedagogical,

professional, and social competencies (Peraturan Pemerintah No 19, 2005). The performance quality indicators of the four teacher competencies can be seen from the quality of the educational processes and outcomes that have been conducted. Thus, to support the ability to organize the learning process and produce outputs that are in accordance with graduate competency standards, a teacher is required to be able to carry out various innovations in the learning process which is generally manifested in classroom action research. Classroom action research is a form of research that aims to enhance the quality of learning process, which should have been practiced and carried out by every teacher in each school.

In learning English, some EFLs encounter many obstacles when reading various English text because English is basically a foreign language in Indonesia setting (Hamra & Syatriana, 2015). This can be seen from the difficulty of EFLs in pronouncing English words or sentences correctly or understanding the meaning of an English text accurately.

In a preliminary study which carried out in several secondary schools in Kota Serang, the researchers identified several problems of EFLs in reading narrative text. They are: 1) some EFLs have difficulties to understand narrative texts because they lack vocabulary mastery; 2) some EFLs failed to grab the gist of a narrative text and moral values (coda) because they have no background knowledge related to the text; (3) some EFLs have low reading motivation, this is due to the low literacy culture and less of reading sources; (4) the process of learning to read in the classroom tends to be boring because it is still teacher-centered which makes EFLs passive; (5) the process of learning to read in the classroom only

focuses on answering questions on student worksheet, not on mastering reading strategies. Indeed, these reading problems are not much different from those that have been revealed by several previous studies (Khusniyah & Lustyantje, 2017; Kasmawati & Sakkir, 2020; Sari et al., 2018).

In academic context, reading has a pivotal role at all level of education (Marianne Celce-Murcia et al., 2014) and it has significant contribution to students' academic development, and language fluency, (Muijselaar & de Jong, 2014), means of acquiring new knowledge (Brown, 2001) as well as career success in the future (Nugroho et al., 2018; J. P. Sabatini et al., 2014). Besides, reading is also believed to be able to develop memory, improve comprehension, and enrich knowledge (Suhirman & Rinantanti, 2019).

In principle, reading and comprehension are a unity that cannot be separated from each other and have drawn attention of scholars and policymakers in all around the world (Poolman et al., 2017; J. Sabatini et al., 2012) because the main purpose of reading is comprehension. A good reader is one who are able to recognize words and sentences in a certain text, link both demonstrative and connotative meanings in a passage as well as determine the meaning of the words that are being presented (Fraenkel et al., 2012).

In terms of the terminology of reading comprehension, it involves three fundamental elements, namely: (1) an active constructive process; (2) though processes: before, during, and after reading; and (3) interaction between reader, text, and context (Farris et al., 2007; Kaschak et al., 2017; Melby-Lervåg & Lervåg, 2014). Thus, reading comprehension can be defined as a complex cognitive process that

requires reader to construct meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. To be able to comprehend a text, a good reader is required to decode words and identify words as well as access text integration processes in order to construct meaning and remember the keywords to be stored in their long-term memories (Willis, 2008).

In Indonesia setting, the same is the case in other countries where English is used as a second or foreign language. Students need to be fitted out with reading comprehension skills in order to assist them to understand what is being taught in the classroom and respond to the instruction that teachers may use in the course (Muijselaar et al., 2017). Fostering students to acquire reading and comprehension skills can enhance social status and enable them to succeed in their future career (J. P. Sabatini et al., 2014). Therefore, every student must be exposed to read various of English texts and equipped with adequate reading comprehension skills as well as given the opportunity to make connection between what is being taught and prior experiences that they have encountered in everyday life (Simbolon & Marbun, 2017).

SQ4R is one of the proven reading methods that can train students' reading skills. SQ4R is a prolongation of the SQ3R method which specifically designed by Francis P Robinson to comprehend the gist of the text (Francis P Robinson, 1961). SQ4R is a six-step system for reading and comprehending text (Wong, 2009.). It stands for survey, question, read, record, recite, and review. These steps need to be committed precisely to get the maximum benefit from this reading method. Because skipping one step will weaken the system. SQ4R aims to boost students' cognition by reading

text comprehensively, concentrate thoroughly, and drill students' guessing skill and critical thinking (Başar & Gürbüz, 2017). In addition, this method is also useful for maximizing the knowledge acquisition and enhancing students' reading skills (Simbolon et al., 2020).

A number of previous studies have proven that SQ4R is an effective method to improve students' reading comprehension and applicable for various levels of education from primary school level (Başar & Gürbüz, 2017; Sari et al., 2018; Simbolon et al., 2020; Simbolon & Marbun, 2017) to college level (Kasyulita, 2015; Khusniyah & Lustyantie, 2017; Nurhidayat & Suwandi, 2021; Rojabi & Jember, 2020). Moreover, several previous studies in various countries also claimed that SQ4R can boost students' motivation to read and make them enjoy in reading activities (Alzu'bi, 2020; Fernando & Bandara, 2022; Kesumaningrum et al., 2014; Mohamed Sayed Mohamed, 2020; Wang et al., 2017) But unfortunately, as far as the researchers know from these previous studies, there has not been a single study that emphasized the efforts of a novice English teacher in applying the SQ4R method to improve students' reading comprehension on narrative text at the secondary school level in a rural area. Therefore, based on the previous statement, the research question of this study is How is the efforts of a novice English teacher in applying the SQ4R method to improve students' reading comprehension on narrative text?

Finally, the researchers firmly believe that the final findings of this study will reveal some novelties, especially in terms of the theory development on teaching method of reading comprehension and teacher

professional competencies, i.e., research and academic writing.

## METHODS

The present study used classroom action research because this study aimed to help teacher to improve the quality of learning process especially in teaching reading comprehension on narrative text, contribute to the development of learning theory, as well as to increase the career and professionalism of teacher. Classroom action research is an approach to improve education by

changing individuals, the culture of the groups, institutions, and societies to which they belong and learning from the consequences of changes (Kemmis et al., 2014).

Classroom action research is essentially carried out through a self-reflective spiral which consisting of planning, acting (applying plans), observing (systematically), reflecting and then replanning further implementation, observing, and reflecting (McNiff & Whitehead, 2002).

The research design of this study will be illustrated in the figure 1 as follows:

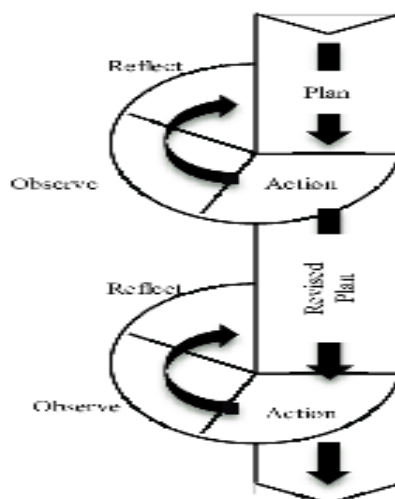


Figure 1. Spiral Model of Kemmis & McTaggart

In practice, this study used classroom action research with collaborative model. This means that this study involves several parties, both teacher and lecturers/researchers simultaneously. The relationship between teacher and researchers is a partnership. This means that they sit together in harmony to (1) identify and formulate problems; (2) analyze the problem; (3) formulate action hypothesis; (4) create an action plan; (5) carry out the action and observe it; (6) analyze and interpret the data; and (7) report the results of action (Burns, 2009).

As many as 35 students form a secondary school in rural areas of Kota Serang were involved in a study which conducted by a novice English teacher. The data were gathered carefully by using two main research instruments, viz. classroom observation and reading test.

The success of this study is determined by two main indicators, namely the learning process and learning outcomes. On one hand, the learning is claimed successful if what has been planned in the lesson plan is implemented 75% – 100% in each cycle. On the other hand, the

implementation of action is declared successful if the average student learning outcomes have increased and the minimum completeness criteria reach predetermined target of 75% or obtained a score of  $\geq 70$  (Baumfield et al., 2011).

Finally, from the prior indicators the action hypothesis of this study is “If learning process of reading comprehension on narrative text is carried out by using the SQ4R method, then the learning process will take place effectively and the mean score of students can reach the minimum completeness criteria, which is 70.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Results

In this subchapter, the stages of implementing classroom action research will be described thoroughly. Zea (pseudonym) is a novice English teacher who recently graduated from English Language Education Program at a university in Banten. When

teaching reading, she often encountered many obstacles, especially in improving students’ reading comprehension. To overcome these obstacles, Zea met with several of her lecturers to consult and involve them as research collaborators.

At the initial stage in cycle 1, that is planning. The teacher and research collaborators designed lesson plans, select the materials to be taught, made students worksheets, compiled activity observation guide sheets, set indicators for the achievement of student learning outcomes, for example, at least 75% of students are able to obtain a score of 70 in accordance with minimum completeness criteria.

The action and observation stages are carried out simultaneously. The teacher implemented all learning scenarios and the research collaborators observed and recorded the entire learning process. the learning process of reading on narrative text by using SQ4R method can be transcribed verbatim in table 1 as follows:

Table 1. Classroom Observation in Cycle 1

SQ4R	Activities	Process	
		Teacher’s Instruction	Students Response
Survey	Teacher asked students to survey a narrative	Look at title, picture, caption	Most students were confused
	Teacher asked students to survey every paragraph	Please, read every paragraph at glance for 5 minutes	Some students read aloud every paragraph and the classroom was getting noisy
	Teacher asked students to find keywords or difficult words in a narrative text	Please, find the keywords or difficult words in the story of Little Red Riding Hood	Most students were unfamiliar with the vocabularies in the story of Little Red Riding Hood
Question	Teacher asked students to make questions related to text being read	Please make question related to the text	Most students had difficulty when making questions in English
Read	Teacher asked students to read the text carefully and find the answers from the questions they have made	Please read the text carefully and find the answers	Students read the text carefully and try to find the answers to questions they have made
Record	Teacher asked students to record the important information they found in the text in a simple note	Please record important information that you find in the text in a simple	Most student have not been able to make a simple note. They are still copying sentence by sentence
Recite	Teacher asked students to find main idea in each	Please, find the mind idea and write it on your	Most students just copy-paste sentence by sentence at the

SQ4R	Activities		Process
		Teacher's Instruction	Students Response
	paragraph	worksheet	beginning of each paragraph without paraphrasing
	Teacher asked students to draw moral values from the text	Please draw moral values from the text	Only a small number of students can draw moral values correctly from text they have read
	Teacher asked students to retell the story of Little Red Riding Hood	Please retell the story of Little Red Riding Hood by using your own words	Many students were not confident when retelling story that have been read. They frequently used Bahasa Indonesia when retelling the story of Little Red Riding Hood
Review	Teacher asked students to recall the main points of the text as well as the supporting details	Please remember the main points and the supporting details from the text	Some students strove to remember the main points and the supporting details from the text. But, the rest were confused about what to do?
	Teacher asked students to make a summary of the text	Please make a summary in your worksheet (spider web/graphic organizer)	Students gradually make a summary on spider web/graphic organizer according to the teacher's instructions.

Moreover, to measure students' reading comprehension on narrative text, the teacher gave a multiple-choice

test. The result of reading test can be seen in Table 2 as follows:

Table 2. The Result of Reading Test in Cycle 1

Score	Frequency
56	5
63	5
66	5
70	13
73	4
76	2
80	1
n: 35	
$\Sigma$ : 2359	
$\bar{X}$ : 67.4	

After completing the action and observation stages, the last stage in cycle 1 is reflection. At this stage, the teacher and research collaborators simultaneously observe, examine, and analyze in depth and thoroughly the actions that have been carried out based on both qualitative and quantitative data that have been collected at the observation stage.

Based on the results of classroom observation, the teacher actually has taught according to the steps of the SQ4R method. However, at

each of these steps, most students were still unable to practice properly the instructions from the teacher.

In addition, based on the result of reading test. The mean score was only 67.4 and there were still 15 students whose score were below the minimum completeness criteria. This indicates that the level of achievement is only 57.14% and is still far from the predetermined target of 75%. In short, this study should be continued to the second cycle.

In cycle 2, at the planning stage, the teacher and research collaborators re-designed the lesson plan by revising the shortcomings of the previous lesson plan. Besides, the teaching materials were also made more interesting by using more visual teaching media. In addition, the stories chosen were also derived from traditional folklore, viz. the legend of Tangkuban Perahu. The selection of folklore originating from

Indonesia is intended to make it easier for students to understand and enjoy the storyline.

The same as cycle 1, the action and observation stages were carried out at the same time. Teacher taught students and research collaborators observed and noted each learning process. the result of classroom observation notes in cycle 2 can be seen in table 3 as follows:

Table 3. Classroom Observation in Cycle 2

SQ4R	Activities	Process	
		Teacher's Instruction	Students Response
Survey	Teacher asked students to survey a narrative	Look at title, picture, caption	Most students were still confused
		Please, write down on your book, the title, pay attention to picture and caption	Some passive students began to carry out the teacher's instructions
	Teacher asked students to survey every paragraph	Please, read every paragraph at glance for 5 minutes Please, read silently	Some students read aloud every paragraph and the classroom was getting noisy Student read silently and the classroom became conducive
Question	Teacher asked students to find keywords or difficult words in a narrative text	Please, find the keywords or difficult words in the Legend of Tangkuban Perahu	Students felt that the vocabulary in the legend of Tangkuban Perahu was very familiar and the storyline was easier to understand
		Now, please open your dictionary and find the meaning of difficult words	Students found the meaning of difficult words and write them down in the text
Read	Teacher asked students to make questions related to text being read	Please make question related to the text	Most students still had difficulty when making questions in English
	Teacher gave example of making question by using 5W+1H	Please pay attention how to make questions by using 5W+1H	Students practiced to make questions by using 5W+1H
Record	Teacher asked students to record the important information they found in the text in a simple note	Please read the text carefully and find the answers from the questions they have made	Students read the text carefully and try to find the answers to questions they have made
Recite	Teacher asked students to find main idea in each paragraph	Please record important information that you find in the text in a simple	Most student have not been able to make a simple note. They are still copying sentence by sentence
	Teacher taught students to find main idea by	Please pay attention how to make a simple note by using Mind Mapping	Students practiced to make a simple note by Mind Mapping
	Teacher asked students to find main idea in each paragraph	Please, find the mind idea and write it on your worksheet	Most students just copy-paste sentence by sentence at the beginning of each paragraph without paraphrasing
	Teacher taught students to find main idea by	Please, pay attention to how paraphrase the main idea	Although most students were still confused but they were willing to

SQ4R	Activities		Process	
		Teacher's Instruction		Students Response
	paraphrasing gradually and slowly			try to practice paraphrasing
	Teacher asked students to draw moral values from the text	Please draw moral values from the text	Some students have been able to draw moral values properly from the text they have read	
	Teacher asked students to retell the legend of Tangkuban Perahu	Please retell the the legend of Tangkuban Perahu by using your own words	There were five students who can retell the legend of Tangkuban Perahu well and confidently.	
	Teacher provided important vocabularies related to the story that students have read	Please use and remember some important vocabularies	Students memorized and used the important vocabularies when retelling story	
Review	Teacher asked students to recall the main points of the text as well as the supporting details	Please remember the main points and the supporting details from the text	Students strove to remember the main points and the supporting details from the text	
	Teacher asked students to make a summary of the text	Please make a summary in your worksheet (spider web/graphic organizer)	Most students were getting used to doing summary on spider web/graphic organizer	

Having conducted learning process, the teacher gave another reading test to students. The result of

reading test can be seen in table 4 as follows:

Table 4. The Result of Reading Test in Cycle 2

Score	Frequency
63	2
66	3
70	5
73	12
76	8
80	2
83	2
86	1
N: 35	
$\Sigma$ : 2504	
$\bar{X}$ : 71.54	

Based on the previous data, it can be seen that there is a significant improvement in the learning process. In addition, based on the result of reading test, it also shows that 85.71% of students have achieved the minimum completeness criteria with a mean score of 71.54. This indicates that this study has been declares successful because it has accomplished the predetermined target.

## B. Discussion

Reading is basically a set of skills that involves a thought process to be able to understand and derive meaning from printed words (Peregoy et al., 2013). However, to able to construct meaning from an English text is not an easy work for EFLs because they must have background knowledge, linguistic knowledge of the target



language, and a reading strategy to be able to tackle the text.

The selection of effective strategies in the process of teaching reading has a huge impact on students' reading comprehension. SQ4R is designed to help students improve memory and understanding of written information (Shahri., et al., 2015). In addition, this method is believed to help students to learn effectively and understand the meaning of various types of text that they often encounter at school.

As a matter of fact, implementing the SQ4R method required a long process and time for EFLs to get used to learning to read by utilizing this method. This is reflected in cycle 1 where most students encountered some obstacles in every stage of the SQ4R method.

At the survey stage, most students still looked confused and passive. Then they did not master most of the vocabulary in a narrative text (little red riding hood). This makes it difficult for students to recognize words, understand sentences, and construct meaning.

At the question stage, most students have not been able to make English questions correctly. Meanwhile, at reading stage, most students still read aloud. This becomes an obstacle for students to concentrate and understand the meaning of the text being read.

At the record stage, most students still have not made effective notes. Based on the findings from their worksheets, they just copy-paste sentence by sentence without being paraphrased. In meantime, at the recite stage, most students were still not confident to retell the stories they have read and students were more dominant in using Bahasa Indonesia. Finally, at

the review stage. Although some students were still not used to making a summary by using a graphic organizer (spider web). However, based on monitoring of research collaborators, they seemed enthusiastic and tried hard to complete the task.

As a consequence, various efforts must be made by teacher to improve the shortcomings of leaning process in cycle 1. The improvements include rearranging the learning scenarios which written in lesson plan, selecting Indonesia folklore that is more familiar for students, using dictionaries and visual teaching media to help students understand, the preparation of student worksheets that are more interesting, as well as a more organized style of delivery of material so that students can easily understand the instructions from the teacher.

These improvements have positive implications for students and can be seen at every stage of SQ4R method. At the survey and question stage, most students seemed to focus, they started to be able to activate background knowledge, they looked more confident and able to predict some difficult vocabularies or phrases. At the reading and recording stage, they began to be able to construct the meaning of sentences in each paragraph, they were able to find main idea and supporting details, as well as sorted important and unimportant information. Finally, at the reciting and reviewing stages, they were able to draw moral values in a story, retold it by using their own language, remembered the key points of the text, as well as wrote a summary in a graphic organizer (spider web) properly.

This study is declared successful when the result of reading test showed that 85.71% of students had achieved the minimum completeness criteria with a mean score of 71.54. To sum up, this

study once again proves that SQ4R method can improve students' reading comprehension. However different from previous studies (Başar & Gürbüz, 2017; Sari et al., 2018; Simbolon et al., 2020; Simbolon & Marbun, 2017; Kasyulita, 2015; Khusniyah & Lustyantje, 2017; Nurhidayat & Suwandi, 2021; Rojabi & Jember, 2020), this study has revealed various efforts which made by a novice English teacher in implementing SQ4R method which have positive implications for students' reading comprehension on narrative texts.

## CONCLUSION

Reading is one of the language competencies that must be mastered by EFLs because reading is the gateway to gaining knowledge. Reading is one of the language competencies that must be mastered by EFLs because reading is the gateway to gaining knowledge. One of the ways to improve students' reading comprehension is through the selection of appropriate learning methods. The SQ4R method is a well-established reading method that is applicable to all level of education. This study proves that the SQ4R method can develop students' cognitive skills, enhance understanding, train memory, increase self-confidence and critical thinking skills.

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