

ENHANCING EFL STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION THROUGH SQ3R TECHNIQUE: A PRE-EXPERIMENTAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review (SQ3R) technique in improving students' reading comprehension at SMPN 7 Palopo. The study employed a quantitative approach with an experimental design, involving students as research participants. The researcher used a total sampling which consists of 30 students. The researcher used reading tests as instruments in this study. The results showed that the average score of students in the post-test was higher than the average score obtained by students in pre-test ($33.83 < 68.27$). Apart from that, the t_0 (t_{test}) value is 22.261 with a df (degrees of freedom) value of 29, while the t_t (t_{table}) value is 2.042 for a standard significance level of 0.05 at $df = 30$. It shows that the value of the t-test is higher than the value of the t-table. The researcher also found a value (p) of 0.00 and alpha (α) of 0.05, resulting in $p < \alpha$ ($0.00 < 0.05$). The results revealed that the SQ3R technique significantly improved students' reading comprehension compared to conventional methods. Students taught using this technique demonstrated better abilities in identifying main ideas, specific information, and drawing conclusions from texts.

Keyword: *EFL Learners, Narrative Text, Pre-Experimental Study, Reading Comprehension, SQ3R Technique*

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the most essential skills in learning English, especially for students learning it as a foreign language (Grabe & Stoller, 2013). It plays a vital role in academic success, as it allows learners to gain information, develop vocabulary, and improve their overall language proficiency. However, many students still face difficulties in understanding English texts due to limited vocabulary, lack of background knowledge, low motivation, and the absence of effective reading strategies (Nation, 2009; Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995). In many classroom settings, reading activities are often limited to asking students to read texts and answer questions without teaching them how to comprehend the text strategically. As a result, students tend to read passively and struggle to fully understand or remember the content. Therefore, it is necessary to implement a structured reading strategy that actively engages students in the reading process and helps them comprehend the text more effectively (Caverly, Nicholson, & Radcliffe, 2019; McDaniel, Howard, & Einstein, 2020).

One strategy that can be applied is the SQ3R technique, which stands for Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review. This method provides a systematic way for students to approach reading texts. It begins with surveying the text to get an overview, formulating questions based on the headings or subheadings, reading actively to find answers, reciting or summarizing the main points, and finally reviewing the content to reinforce understanding. This technique promotes active reading and helps students engage more deeply with the material (Robinson, 1946). Recent studies in various educational levels in Indonesia have confirmed the effectiveness of the SQ3R strategy. For instance, Mileni et al. (2024) observed significant improvements in students' reading comprehension at the junior high school level, with average scores increasing from 72 to 89 after two instructional cycles. Similarly, Khafidhoh et al. (2023) found that the SQ3R strategy helped vocational high school students achieve higher comprehension scores, with 80% scoring above the minimum competency standard.

Several studies have shown that the SQ3R technique can improve students' reading comprehension by enhancing their ability to focus, retain information, and understand the structure and main ideas of a text (Sahraeni, & Syam, 2022). These findings suggest that using structured reading strategies like SQ3R not only benefits students' comprehension but also fosters metacognitive awareness and self-directed learning (McDaniel et al., 2020). Therefore, this research aims to investigate the effectiveness of the SQ3R technique in increasing students' reading comprehension. The findings of this study are expected to provide useful insights for English teachers in applying more effective reading strategies in the classroom. In many cases, students lack motivation to read long English texts. Nabilla and Asmara (2022) noted that this issue can be addressed effectively through the SQ3R method, which fosters higher engagement and understanding. The integration of digital tools such as Beelinguapp with SQ3R, as shown by Silfani et al. (2024), provides further justification for adopting modernized reading strategies in the classroom.

A lot of students have trouble comprehending difficult materials, particularly students discovered certain reading difficulties, according to what the researcher found in SMPN 7 Palopo during the Teaching Practice Program. Initially, the students did not participate in the reading process because they felt awkward when the teacher asked them to share their thoughts. Secondly, a few vocabulary terms in the book were unclear to the students. Third, there was a lack of text comprehension among the students. Fourth, they had trouble pronouncing certain of the text's words. Students' reading comprehension of the text might be impacted by their reading pace and level of concentration. The challenges students face in reading comprehension include understanding difficult vocabulary, difficulty identifying important information, and maintaining concentration. Students also often struggle to connect new information with prior knowledge, as well as a lack of motivation and interest in the text being read.

To solve the mentioned problems above, the researcher tried to apply SQ3R techniques. The SQ3R technique is one of the many teaching strategies that have been created to address this issue (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review). Educational research has given the SQ3R approach a lot of attention when it comes to teaching reading

comprehension. "The technique approach known as SQ3R—Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review—is intended to enhance information retention and reading comprehension" (Caverly, Nicholson, & Radcliffe, 2019). By encouraging active interaction with the text, this method turns reading passively into a collaborative experience. There are several advantages to teaching reading comprehension with the SQ3R method. First of all, this method facilitates better information organization and absorption among students. Second, SQ3R promotes active learning in which students interact with the book directly by posing queries and reciting passages aloud. Thirdly, by using this method, students' metacognitive abilities are improved, assisting (McDaniel, Daniel, & Einstein, 2020).

The reason why this research is interesting to do is that based on the interview with the teacher, she said that students are lazy to learning reading because they do not understand the information in the text especially when the text is too long, which can make students lazy (Husnaini, 2021). The teacher's issues in pedagogy were the teacher had difficulties managing the category and to style or modify the question to interact students' interest in teaching reading comprehension.

Based on the background of the study described above, the researcher formulates the following research question: *Does the use of the SQ3R technique significantly improve the reading comprehension of Grade IX students at SMPN 7 Palopo?* This question aims to investigate whether the implementation of the SQ3R reading strategy can bring a measurable improvement in students' ability to understand English texts. In relation to the research question, the objective of this study is to find out whether the use of the SQ3R technique significantly enhances the reading comprehension skills of Grade IX students at SMPN 7 Palopo. Through this research, the researcher aims to provide empirical evidence on the effectiveness of the SQ3R method as a strategic approach to teaching reading comprehension in an EFL classroom setting.

METHODS

This research applies a quantitative approach using a pre-experimental design with a one-group pretest-posttest model. This design is chosen to measure the effectiveness of the SQ3R technique in improving students' reading comprehension. In this design, the students are given a pre-test to determine their initial reading ability, followed by treatment using the SQ3R strategy, and finally a post-test to assess any improvement after the treatment.

The population of this study included all ninth-grade students at SMPN 7 Palopo in the 2024/2025 academic year. The sample was selected through purposive sampling, taking into account the suitability of the class and the students' English proficiency level. One class was selected as the research sample, consisting of 30 students.

The main instrument used in this study is a reading comprehension test consisting of multiple-choice questions based on texts that are appropriate for the students' level. This test is administered both before and after the treatment to evaluate changes in reading comprehension.

The data collection process involves three main stages. First, a pre-test is given to the students to measure their reading comprehension before the treatment. Second, the

treatment is conducted over several meetings where the SQ3R technique—Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review—is taught and applied in reading sessions. Finally, a post-test is administered to determine the effectiveness of the technique by comparing it to the pre-test results. To analyze the data, both descriptive and inferential statistics are used. The descriptive analysis involves calculating the mean and standard deviation of the students' scores, while the inferential analysis uses a paired sample t-test to examine whether the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores is statistically significant. The analysis is carried out using the SPSS program.

RESULTS

SQ3R, a reading technique consisting of five steps: Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review. This technique is used to improve students' reading comprehension, which is their ability to understand the content, main ideas, and infer information from the text. This research also highlights the effectiveness of a teaching method, by comparing students' learning outcomes before and after using SQ3R through pre-test and post-test. In addition, terms such as teaching technique, students, and experimental or quasi-experimental approach are also often found in this research as they relate to the research design and the subjects studied.

The descriptive statistic are presented in the following table:

Table 1. Descriptive Statistic Students Pre-test and Post-test

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-test	30	25	60	39.83	9.567
Post-test	30	45	90	68.27	13.149
Valid N (listwise)	30				

From table 1, it is found that the lowest score of students (minimum) in the pre-test is 25 and the highest score of students (maximum) is 60. The mean value in the pre-test is 39.83 with a standard deviation value of 9.567. Meanwhile, in the post-test, the student's lowest score (minimum) is 45 and the student's highest score (maximum) is 90. The mean value in the post-test was 68.27 with a standard deviation of 13.149. So it can be concluded that the use of SQ3R technique in learning can improve students' reading comprehension.

The researcher used a test and calculated the data using SPSS version 27. The explanation is as follows:

Table 2. The Paired Sample Statistic of Students Pre-test and Post-test

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. error mean
Pair 1 Pre-test	39.83	30	9.567	1.747

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. error mean
Post-test	68.27	30	13.149	2.401

Table 2 shows the difference in students' mean scores between pre-test and post-test. The mean score obtained by students in the post-test 68.27 (Average) is higher than the mean score obtained by students at the time of the pre-test 39.50 (Poor). The standard deviation in the pre-test was 8,939 and the post-test was 13,149, which shows that there is a difference in the learning outcomes obtained by students before and after being given treatment.

The correlation between the pre-test and post-test is presented in the following table:

Table 3. The Paired Sample Correlation of Students Pre-test and Post-test

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Pre-test & Post test	30	0.856	0.001

Table 3 shows that the correlation value between pre-test and post-test is 0.856 with a significant value of 0.001. Since the significant value is $0.001 > 0.05$ probability value, this means that the correlation between the pre-test and the post-test is negative which indicates that the two-linear relationship between the two variables is considered weak. For more detailed results, at test is needed to see the validity of the data obtained.

The experimental groups were shown in table 4.8 before and after the treatment, respectively.

Table 4. The Paired Sample Test of Students Pre-test and Post-test

Paired Samples Test									
		Paired Differences					T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre-test - Post-test	-28.433	6.996	1.277	-31.046	-25.821	-22.261	29	<.001

Based on the results of the analysis in the table above, the researcher concluded that there was a significant difference between pre-test and post-test. The results of the data analysis showed that the T-test score = 22.261 with degrees of freedom (df) = 29. Based on the value of T-Table = 2.042 which is a significance standard of 0.05 with 30 degrees of freedom. showed that the t-test value was greater than the t-table value ($22.261 > 2.042$).

DISCUSSION

This research was conducted at SMPN 7 Palopo, especially in class IX.A. The researcher took samples using total sampling, which was used as an experimental class where pre-test, treatment, and post-test were given. The data collected was used to determine the students' reading comprehension skills had increased while using the quiz website as seen from the results obtained by students in the pre-test score and post-test score.

During the use of the SQ3R technique in junior high school classrooms, the classroom situation tends to be more structured and interactive. Students are invited to first scan the text (Survey), looking for important information, before asking questions (Question) about what they expect to understand from the text. This process is followed by reading the text in depth (Read) to find answers to the questions that have been asked, then summarizing the information (Recite) by expressing it back orally or in writing, and finally reviewing the material that has been learned. The researcher provided guidance in each stage, directing students to stay focused on the purpose of reading and encouraging group discussions so that students could share their understanding. While there was an increase in active engagement, there were sometimes challenges in maintaining students' attention, especially if the texts used were uninteresting or difficult to understand. However, with the right text selection and good guidance, the SQ3R technique can create a more dynamic learning atmosphere and improve students' reading comprehension.

Based on the data calculation carried out by the researcher after carrying out the research using spss version 27, it was found that the 2-tailed significance was obtained at 0.001 which is smaller than the standard significance level, namely 0.005 ($0.001 < 0.005$). The results of this calculation state that the researcher's (H_1) was accepted and (H_0) was rejected. With this, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference in improving students' reading comprehension.

The finding of the study showed that the use of SQ3R technique improves students' reading comprehension. It can be seen through the improvement of all reading aspects or indicators, namely the ability of finding main idea, detail information of the text, understanding the meaning of unfamiliar words, identifying the use of reference, and the ability of finding implied information of the text. The students' ability in comprehending such text improve because they were taught with effective ways, namely SQ3R technique. In fact, they did know how to comprehend such text and also they had many difficulties in comprehending text, but actually, they could implement SQ3R technique to comprehend such text effectively in post-test. Besides, they could minimize the mistakes they had before.

The improvement of reading comprehension increased due to the SQ3R technique. SQ3R contributes as a technique to help the teacher deliver the material easily and make it easier for students to receive the material. SQ3R is a useful technique to fully absorb written information. This technique helps students to create a good outline of a good subject, where the reader can subject, where the reader can include the facts correctly. The SQ3R technique helps students to set learning objectives. The technique also encourages students to use reviewing techniques that will help fix the information in their minds (Biringkanae, 2019). SQ3R technique is the first reading strategies, survey reading to get a general idea of what

will be read. Then, asking questions of yourself the expected answer is contained in the text would be easy to understand the reading. Furthermore, trying to express the words own specifics importance. This is done in order to master and remember it longer (Klingner,2023).

By using SQ3R technique especially in the first step of this technique, survey, the students are asked to glance through the topic heading and try to get an overview of the reading to get an idea of where the chapter is going. This step will help the students' mind prepare. For the subject at hand, and it also lets the students know what the text will be about, as we know that the title is not reliable indicators of content. But it is reasonable starting point in helping the readers to locate information or predict what the text contains. The improvement in students' engagement and performance in this study aligns with the results of Daulay and Amin (2024), who demonstrated the superiority of SQ3R over conventional methods in senior high school settings.

Moreover, in this step the students can also identify the use of reference in a text. When the students cannot infer the use of references in the text, the students should look them up and be sure to reread not only the sentence in which the reference appears but also the sentence which precedes it to ensure the students understand it. So, they can identify or understand to whom the pronoun refers to. Klingner, states that as the reader progresses through individual sentences, he or she is processing more than the individual meaning units within sentences (Alyousef, 2022). He or she is also actively making connections across sentences. This process of understanding and inferring the relationship among clauses are referred to as integrative processing. Also, affirmed that when the students confronted with an unfamiliar word, they should look into the familiar word and spelling patterns, then use context to understand what is the word refers to (Falenti, 2020).

SQ3R method is the solution to enhance the students' mastery of vocabulary: The lack of vocabulary led students in to a situation in which they often get stuck to continue their reading (.¹ In the third step of SQ3R method, Reading, the students are asked to infer the unknown word from the context and do not skip this unfamiliar word in the text. If the students cannot infer unfamiliar word meanings from context, SQ3R method asks the students to look them up and be sure to reread the sentence in which each new word appears to ensure the students understand it.

In this study, there were difficulties when conducting the research, one of the main challenges was the variation in reading ability among students which could affect the effectiveness of the SQ3R technique. In addition, the limited time to implement this technique in classroom teaching and learning activities is also an obstacle, so not all students can master the SQ3R steps well. In addition, external factors such as students' lack of motivation or attention also affected the results of the study. Nevertheless, this study also showed some advantages. The application of the SQ3R technique was proven to significantly improve students' reading comprehension, especially in helping them organize the information they read and improve their memory of the material. This technique also teaches students to be more active and critical in reading, thus improving their analytical

thinking skills. The success of this technique in improving students' comprehension makes a positive contribution to the development of reading skill-based learning methods in schools.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result of this research, it can be concluded that the use or application of the SQ3R technique can improve students' reading comprehension. It can be seen from the result of test this technique helps students to find the main idea and detailed information from the text, understand the meaning of unfamiliar words, identify the use of references, and find implied information in the text. The results of this study clearly show that improving reading comprehension with the SQ3R technique can help increase students' engagement and greatly improve their reading comprehension ability. In conclusion, the author suggests other researchers who plan to use the SQ3R technique to use it to improve other students' abilities such as speaking, listening, and writing to overcome the problems that students experience.

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