

The Effect of SQ3R Strategy on Students' Reading Comprehension of Narrative Text

Zahwa Aulia Arzeti¹, Fathurrahman Imran², Muhammad Muhlisin³

Mandalika University of Education, Indonesia

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Abstract

Reading comprehension is one of the essential language skills that students need to master in learning English. However, many students still experience difficulties in understanding narrative texts due to limited reading strategies and low engagement during the learning process. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the effect of the SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review) strategy on students' reading comprehension of narrative texts. This study employed a quantitative approach using a quasi-experimental research design. The population consisted of 104 eighth-grade students of SMPN 2 Lingsar, divided into four classes. The sample was selected using purposive sampling, consisting of Class VIII A as the experimental group (24 students) and Class VIII D as the control group (26 students). The research instrument was a reading comprehension test administered as a pre-test and a post-test. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics through SPSS Version 25. The findings revealed that the mean score of the experimental group increased from 36.67 in the pre-test to 74.79 in the post-test, while the control group improved from 32.31 to 56.54. The results of the Independent Samples t-test indicated that there was a significant difference between the experimental and control groups, showing that students taught using the SQ3R strategy achieved better reading comprehension than those taught using the Traditional Reading Instruction method. Therefore, it can be concluded that the SQ3R strategy has a significant positive effect on students' reading comprehension of narrative texts among the eighth-grade students of SMPN 2 Lingsar.

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Corresponding Author:

Zahwa Aulia Arzeti

Mandalika University of Education, Indonesia

Email Coresspondent: auliaarzetiz@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is one of the most important language skills in English language learning because it enables students to understand, interpret, and construct meaning from written texts. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, reading is not merely the ability to recognize words or sentences but also involves cognitive processes that require readers to connect prior knowledge with new information in order to comprehend a text effectively. Therefore, reading comprehension plays a significant role in students' academic achievement and language development. However, many junior high school students still encounter difficulties in understanding English texts, particularly narrative texts. They often struggle to identify the main idea, locate specific information, understand vocabulary in context, make inferences, and recognize the generic structure of a text. These difficulties are influenced not only by students' linguistic competence but also by the teaching strategies implemented during the learning process. Consequently, the selection of an appropriate instructional strategy becomes an important factor in improving students' reading comprehension.

Several previous studies have investigated the implementation of the SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review) strategy in improving students' reading comprehension. (Biringkanae, 2018) reported that the SQ3R strategy significantly improved students' ability to identify main ideas, understand detailed information, and interpret reading texts. Similarly, (Adila & Weganofa, 2018) found that students taught using the SQ3R strategy achieved significantly better reading comprehension than students taught using conventional teaching methods. (Cataraja, 2022) also concluded that SQ3R effectively enhanced students' reading comprehension because the strategy encouraged active participation during reading activities. More recent studies by (Dumasig & Fernandez, 2025; Gurung, 2025; Hakiki et al., 2025; Imran, 2015; Muhlisin & Imran, 2023) consistently demonstrated that SQ3R improves reading comprehension by integrating cognitive and metacognitive processes, promoting active learning, increasing students' engagement, and strengthening information retention. These findings indicate that SQ3R is an effective instructional strategy for improving students' reading comprehension across different educational contexts.

Although previous studies have consistently demonstrated the effectiveness of the SQ3R strategy, several limitations remain. Most earlier studies focused on general reading comprehension, involved different educational levels, or were conducted in schools with different learning environments. In addition, limited studies have specifically examined the implementation of the SQ3R strategy in teaching narrative texts to eighth-grade students at SMPN 2 Lingsar using a quasi-experimental design with experimental and control groups. Furthermore, previous studies have rarely measured students' reading comprehension using comprehensive indicators, including identifying the main idea, locating specific information, understanding vocabulary in context, making inferences, and recognizing the generic structure of narrative texts. Therefore, additional empirical evidence is still needed to examine the effectiveness of the SQ3R strategy in this specific educational context.

The scientific novelty of this study lies in its focus on the implementation of the SQ3R strategy for improving students' reading comprehension of narrative texts among eighth-grade students at SMPN 2 Lingsar. Unlike previous studies that generally investigated reading comprehension in broader contexts, this study specifically evaluates students' reading comprehension through five indicators, namely identifying the main idea, finding specific information, understanding vocabulary in context, making inferences, and identifying the generic structure of narrative texts. In addition, this study applies a quasi-experimental research design involving an experimental group and a control group to provide stronger empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of the SQ3R strategy in junior high school English classrooms.

Based on the research gap identified from previous studies, the research problem of this study is formulated as follows: Does the implementation of the SQ3R strategy significantly affect students' reading comprehension of narrative texts among the eighth-grade students of SMPN 2 Lingsar? Accordingly, the objective of this study is to investigate the effect of the SQ3R strategy on students' reading comprehension of narrative texts among the eighth-grade students of SMPN 2 Lingsar.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach using a quasi-experimental research design with a pre-test and post-test control group design. This design was selected because the researcher intended to investigate the effect of the SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review) strategy on students' reading comprehension of narrative texts by comparing the achievement of students taught through the SQ3R strategy with those taught through Traditional Reading Instruction. Quasi-experimental research is appropriate when

intact classroom groups are used without random assignment while still allowing researchers to examine the causal relationship between variables.

The population of this study consisted of 104 eighth-grade students of SMPN 2 Lingsar in the academic year 2025/2026, distributed into four classes (VIII A, VIII B, VIII C, and VIII D). The sample was selected using purposive sampling because the researcher considered the similarity of students' academic characteristics and the recommendation of the English teacher. Class VIII A, consisting of 24 students, was assigned as the experimental group, while Class VIII D, consisting of 26 students, served as the control group.

The independent variable of this study was the SQ3R Strategy, whereas the dependent variable was students' reading comprehension of narrative texts. Reading comprehension was measured through students' ability to identify the main idea, locate specific information, understand vocabulary in context, make inferences, and recognize the generic structure of narrative texts. The variables investigated in this study are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The Scheme of Research

Group	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test
Experimental	O ₁	X (SQ3R Strategy)	O ₂
Control	O ₃	- Traditional Reading Instruction	O ₄

The research instrument was a reading comprehension test consisting of 20 multiple-choice questions. The instrument was administered twice, namely as a pre-test before the treatment and as a post-test after the treatment. The test measured five reading comprehension indicators, including identifying the main idea, finding specific information, understanding vocabulary in context, making inferences, and identifying the generic structure of narrative texts. Each correct answer was scored one point, while incorrect answers received zero points. Students' scores were then converted into percentages.

The research procedure consisted of four main stages. First, the researcher administered a pre-test to both the experimental and control groups to determine students' initial reading comprehension ability. Second, the experimental group received instruction using the SQ3R strategy, while the control group was taught using Traditional Reading Instruction. Third, after the treatment had been completed, both groups were administered a post-test using a reading comprehension test with equivalent difficulty. Finally, the collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and an Independent Samples t-test through SPSS Version 25 to determine whether there was a significant difference between the two groups.



Figure 1. Research Procedure

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including the mean score and standard deviation, to describe students' reading comprehension achievement before and after the treatment. Furthermore, inferential statistics were employed through the Independent Samples t-test to determine whether the difference between the experimental and control groups was statistically significant at the 0.05 significance level. Prior to hypothesis testing, the data fulfilled the assumptions of normality and homogeneity.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Research Results

The purpose of this study was to determine whether the implementation of the SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review) strategy significantly affected students' reading comprehension of narrative texts. The research involved an experimental group taught using the SQ3R strategy and a control group taught using Traditional Reading Instruction. Students in both groups completed a pre-test before the treatment and a post-test after the treatment. The descriptive statistics of students' reading comprehension scores are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Reading Comprehension Scores

Group	N	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Improvement
Experimental (SQ3R)	24	36.67	74.79	38.12
Control (Traditional Reading Instruction)	26	32.31	56.54	24.23

Table 2 shows that both groups improved after the learning process. However, the experimental group achieved a greater improvement than the control group. Students taught using the SQ3R strategy improved by 38.12 points, whereas those taught using the Traditional Reading Instruction method improved by 24.23 points.

The comparison of students' mean scores before and after the treatment is illustrated in Figure 2.

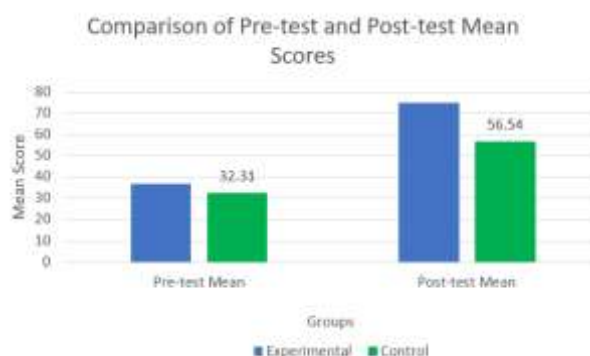


Figure 2. Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Mean Scores

The figure demonstrates that both groups experienced improvement after the learning process. Nevertheless, the increase in the experimental group's mean score was considerably higher than that of the control group, indicating that the SQ3R strategy contributed more effectively to students' reading comprehension achievement.

To determine whether the difference between the two groups was statistically significant, an Independent Samples *t*-test was conducted using SPSS Version 25. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Independent Samples *t*-test

Variable	Group	Mean $\pm$ SD	t	df	p-value
Reading Comprehension	Experimental	74.79 $\pm$ 5.74	12.159	50	<0.001
	Control	56.54 $\pm$ 10.21			

To examine whether there was a significant difference in students' reading comprehension between the experimental and control groups, an Independent Samples t-test was performed. Prior to the analysis, Levene's Test indicated that the assumption of homogeneity of variance was met ($F = 3.639$, $p = 0.061$); therefore, the Equal Variances Assumed results were interpreted. The analysis revealed that the experimental group obtained a significantly higher post-test mean score ($M = 74.79$, $SD = 5.74$) than the control group ($M = 56.54$, $SD = 10.21$), $t(50) = 12.159$, $p < 0.001$. These findings indicate that the SQ3R strategy had a significant positive effect on students' reading comprehension of narrative texts.

3.2. Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the SQ3R strategy had a significant positive effect on students' reading comprehension. Students who learned through the SQ3R strategy achieved higher post-test scores than those who learned through the Traditional Reading Instruction method. The improvement can be attributed to the systematic stages of SQ3R, which encourage students to become active readers by previewing the text, generating questions, reading purposefully, restating important information, and reviewing their understanding. These learning activities help students identify the main idea, locate specific information, understand vocabulary in context, make inferences, and recognize the generic structure of narrative texts more effectively.

The results of this study are consistent with previous research. (Biringkanae, 2018; Fajria Novari, 2023; Fani Prastikawati & Muis, 2023; Imran et al., 2019) reported that the SQ3R strategy significantly improved students' reading comprehension, particularly in identifying main ideas and understanding detailed information. Similarly, (Adila & Weganofa, 2018; Firda Wulan Sudarsono & Astutik, 2024; Imran & Kamarudin, 2024; Imran & Muhlisin, 2025; Muhlisin & Imran, 2025) found that students taught using SQ3R achieved significantly better reading comprehension than those taught through conventional methods. (Cataraja, 2022; Heriyanto & Sarosa, 2021) also concluded that SQ3R effectively enhanced students' reading achievement because it promoted active participation during reading activities. More recent studies conducted by (Dumasig & Fernandez, 2025; Gurung, 2025; Hakiki et al., 2025; Intan et al., 2021) further confirmed that SQ3R facilitates cognitive and metacognitive processes, increases students' engagement, and strengthens comprehension and retention.

Compared with the Traditional Reading Instruction method, the SQ3R strategy provides more structured learning procedures that enable students to interact actively with the text rather than relying solely on the teacher's explanation. Consequently, students become more independent readers and demonstrate better reading comprehension achievement.

Overall, the findings indicate that the SQ3R strategy is an effective instructional strategy for teaching narrative texts in English language classrooms. Therefore, the implementation of SQ3R can be recommended as an alternative teaching strategy for improving students' reading comprehension, particularly at the junior high school level.

4. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate the effect of the SQ3R strategy on students' reading comprehension of narrative texts among the eighth-grade students of SMPN 2 Lingsar. The findings indicate that the implementation of the SQ3R strategy significantly improved students' reading comprehension compared to the Traditional Reading Instruction method. The structured stages of SQ3R encouraged students to become more active readers by helping them activate prior knowledge, formulate questions, identify important information, summarize ideas, and review their understanding during the reading process. Consequently, students demonstrated better comprehension of narrative texts, particularly in identifying main ideas, locating specific information, understanding vocabulary in context, making inferences, and recognizing the generic structure of the texts. Therefore, the research hypothesis was accepted, confirming that the SQ3R strategy is an effective instructional strategy for improving students' reading comprehension and can be recommended as an alternative approach for teaching reading in junior high school English classrooms.

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