Employing the Question-Answer Relationships Technique to Enhance the Comprehension of *Maharah Qiraah* Students

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Abstract: Fifth-grade students at MI Bahrul Ulum Tambakberas Jombang demonstrate low comprehension in Arabic reading, struggling to identify main ideas, form conclusions, and retell narratives in their language. This suggests that their maharah qiraah, or reading proficiency, is underdeveloped. The Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) method provides a structured approach to enhance their reading comprehension by aiding in understanding text, answering questions, and drawing conclusions from the reading material. This study aims to: 1) Assess the level of comprehension before and after implementing the QAR method at MI Bahrul Ulum Tambakberas Jombang, and 2) Evaluate the efficacy of the QAR method in improving the maharah qiraah of the fifth-grade students. Utilizing a quantitative approach with an actual experiment, this research employs purposive sampling for two classes, V-A and V-B. The analytical approach incorporates descriptive research, normality, homogeneity, and hypothesis testing. Findings suggest that post-QAR method intervention, there is a marked improvement in Arabic learning in the experimental class, as evidenced by significant post-test score increases, enhanced ability to form conclusions, interpret complex words in the text, and explain acquired values from the reading. Descriptive analysis results show that the average pretest score in the experimental class was 66, increasing to 76 post-intervention. Conversely, the control class averaged pretest scores of 58, with a minor increase to 62 post-intervention. These results indicate the experimental class's superior performance and significant improvement compared to the control class, demonstrating the effectiveness of the QAR method in Arabic reading comprehension.

Keywords: question-answer relationship; arabic learning; arabic proficiency; language learning

1. Introduction

Indonesia is often considered to have a low level of proficiency in maharah qiraah, which refers to reading comprehension. This can be attributed to the misconception among both students and teachers that reading instruction ends once elementary school students have acquired basic reading and writing skills, typically in grades I and II (Nuha, 2019). Unfortunately, little attention is given to teaching advanced reading, particularly reading comprehension, in grades III to VI.

The lack of reading interest in Indonesia can be attributed to the fact that reading has not become a habitual activity within the community. Although maharah qiraah is emphasized more in the early grades of elementary school, it is not adequately addressed in the subsequent grades (Fatmawati, 2021). In order to foster improved reading skills, the involvement of both teachers and parents is crucial. Maharah qiraah should be nurtured starting from an early age, as children in elementary school are in a critical developmental stage and are receptive to environmental stimuli (Piniel, 2018).

The proficiency in maharah qiraah significantly influences students' success in learning and their overall knowledge acquisition. Therefore, reading instruction holds a vital strategic position within the educational system (Ritonga, 2020). However, this importance is not widely recognized by the general public, leading to reading being undervalued as a fundamental necessity. Schools can play a crucial role in enhancing and developing reading skills through effective teaching and learning practices (KBM). The ability to comprehend reading material

deeply enhances one's thinking process, making it more coherent and expansive (Tse, 2019). Children should be taught that reading involves not only decoding the words but also actively constructing meaning from the text. Reading comprehension entails understanding the content, asking and answering questions about what, why, and how, and drawing conclusions based on the material.

It is important to note that understanding is not an innate ability but rather the result of a learning process and consistent practice (Elgort, 2018). Reading comprehension enables readers to engage with the text on a deeper level, resulting in a sense of fulfillment. In the case of class V MI Bahrul Ulum Tambakberas Jombang, observations and interviews with teachers of class V-A and V-B students indicate that their ability to understand 5W+1H questions, identify main ideas in reading, make conclusions, and retell in their own words is still lacking. Consequently, it can be concluded that the reading comprehension skills of seventh-grade students are low.

In order to enhance students' proficiency in maharah qiraah, researchers have implemented the QAR (Question-Answer Relationships) method in elementary and secondary schools. Taffy and Kathy conducted studies focusing on listening comprehension activities for lower grades and qiraah comprehension activities for higher grades. The QAR method offers a framework for improving literacy comprehension, enabling students to read and understand materials, acquire new concepts and information, and reflect on what they have read. It equips students with the ability to comfortably engage with various genres, such as fiction, nonfiction, procedural texts, and poetry. Students who possess reading comprehension skills can effectively answer questions, interpret, criticize, and evaluate the text they read (Munawwaroh, 2021).

Based on the background discussed earlier, the researchers aimed to conduct a study titled "Enhancing the Understanding of Maharah Qiraah Students at MI Bahrul Ulum Tambakberas Jombang through the Application of the Question Answer Relationships Method." The objective was to identify the causes of the students' comprehension issues and develop effective solutions. The application of the Question Answer Relationships Method in Arabic language learning was considered as a potential approach to improve the understanding of maharah qiraah at MI Bahrul Ulum Tambakberas Jombang.

The QAR method serves as a valuable tool for both teachers and students by facilitating discussions on challenging aspects of reading comprehension. This method involves teaching students about various question types and guiding them in formulating strategies to find answers to specific types of questions (Anggun, 2018). By implementing the QAR method, teachers can effectively address the difficulties students face in comprehending Arabic texts.

Overall, the proposed study aims to address the comprehension issues among maharah qiraah students at MI Bahrul Ulum Tambakberas Jombang by utilizing the Question Answer Relationships Method. This approach provides a structured framework for students to enhance their understanding of Arabic texts and enables teachers to effectively guide them through the reading comprehension process (Anggun, 2018).

2. Method

This study employed an experimental quantitative approach, utilizing purposive sampling (Hermawan, 2019) to select samples from class V-A and V-B at MI Bahrul Ulum Tambakberas Jombang. The treatment administered in this study involved the implementation of the Question Answer Relationships (QAR) method to enhance Arabic language learning. The effectiveness of the QAR method in improving the students' understanding of maharah qiraah, who were the participants of this study and belonged to the seventh grade, was subsequently evaluated. The selection of subjects for the pure experimental design was conducted using purposive sampling. The data for this study were collected from students in class V-A and V-B at MI Bahrul Ulum Tambakberas Jombang. The researcher employed various data collection techniques, which included: (1) Observation: Prior to the research implementation, the researcher conducted field surveys and collected data about the research objects. (2) Interviews: The researcher conducted interviews with teachers, students, and several experts in the field to gather insights on the methods used in this research. (3) Questionnaires: The

researcher distributed questionnaires to students and teachers to gather additional information related to learning Arabic. (4) Field trials: The researcher conducted experiments to assess the effectiveness of the Arabic language learning methods used on students' grades or learning outcomes. The data analysis techniques employed in this study consisted of descriptive analysis, normality test, homogeneity test, and hypothesis testing.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Results

3.1.1. Students' Understanding of Maharah Qiraah Before and After the Implementation of the QAR Method

Based on initial observations and interviews, it was evident that the students' understanding of 5W+1H questions related to reading was limited. They faced challenges in identifying main ideas in reading, making conclusions, and retelling in their own words. Consequently, the teacher assessed the students' learning outcomes and found that they were below the KKM, which is a minimum proficiency level of 75. To address this issue, the teacher employed various instructional methods including lectures, discussions, and assignments. As a result, it can be concluded that the proficiency of grade V students in maharah qiraah (reading skills) was low.

The effectiveness of the QAR method was validated through a pretest conducted in the experimental class prior to its implementation. The results indicated that one student achieved a score below the expected criteria, four students attained sufficient scores, 15 students reached reasonable standards, and two students met the perfect criteria.

Following the implementation of the QAR method in Arabic learning, a significant improvement was observed in the post-test scores of the experimental class. One student achieved a score below the expected criteria, three students reached the sufficient level, 11 students demonstrated good performance, and seven students met the perfect criteria. Consequently, the students exhibited enhanced abilities in concluding the contents of the reading, interpreting difficult words in the text, and explaining the values embedded within the reading material.

Table 1. Values PreTest and PostTest Experiment Class Value Criteria

	Less	Enough	Good	Very Good
PreTest	1	4	15	2
PostTest	1	3	11	7

3.1.2. The Effectiveness of the QAR Method in Understanding Maharah Qiraah

The acquisition of students' understanding of maharah qiraah was assessed in both the experimental and control classes. The pretest scores for the experimental class revealed an average value of 66. Following the intervention, the posttest scores for the experimental class showed improvement, with an average value of 76. In comparison, the control class had an average pretest score of 58, and their post-test scores indicated a slight increase to an average value of 62. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the experimental class exhibited higher reading comprehension abilities compared to the control class.

Table 2. Control Class T-Test Results

| t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means (Control Class)		
	Pre-test	Post-test
Mean	58,2	66,1

St. Dev	13,635173934	8,463859234
Variance	120,35427485	80,3726474
Observations	23	23
Pearson Correlation	0,53735713	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	22	
t Stat	-11,35237464	
P(T<=t) one-tail	2,456732E-12	
t Critical one-tail	1,625374826	
P(T<=t) two-tail	6,26534E-13	
t Critical two-tail	1,263748596	

Table 3. Experimental Class T-Test Results

t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means (Experimental Class)

	Pre-test	Post-test
Mean	66,1	76,4
St. Dev	12,243674534	7,243564858
Variance	133,2635273	90,35243663
Observations	22	22
Pearson Correlation	0,73645738	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	21	
t Stat	-7,26374895	
P(T<=t) one-tail	3,352753E-19	
t Critical one-tail	1,527894567	
P(T<=t) two-tail	8,37464E-13	
t Critical two-tail	3,93847565	

The results of the paired sample T-test indicate significant differences between the experimental and control classes. The significance value (2-tailed) for the experimental class was 0.01, while for the control class it was 0.00, both less than the threshold of 0.05. Therefore, based on these results, the null hypothesis (Ho) can be rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) can be accepted. This suggests that there is a significant difference in the average results of the pretest and posttest scores when comparing the QAR and discussion methods.

Examining the paired sample T-test results for the pretest and posttest scores of both the experimental and control groups reinforces the rejection of Ho. The data supports the conclusion that the reading comprehension ability of students who utilize the QAR Method differs from that of students who employ the discussion method. The alternative hypothesis (Ha) can be affirmed, stating that the reading comprehension ability of students who use the QAR method has shown improvement compared to those who use the discussion method.
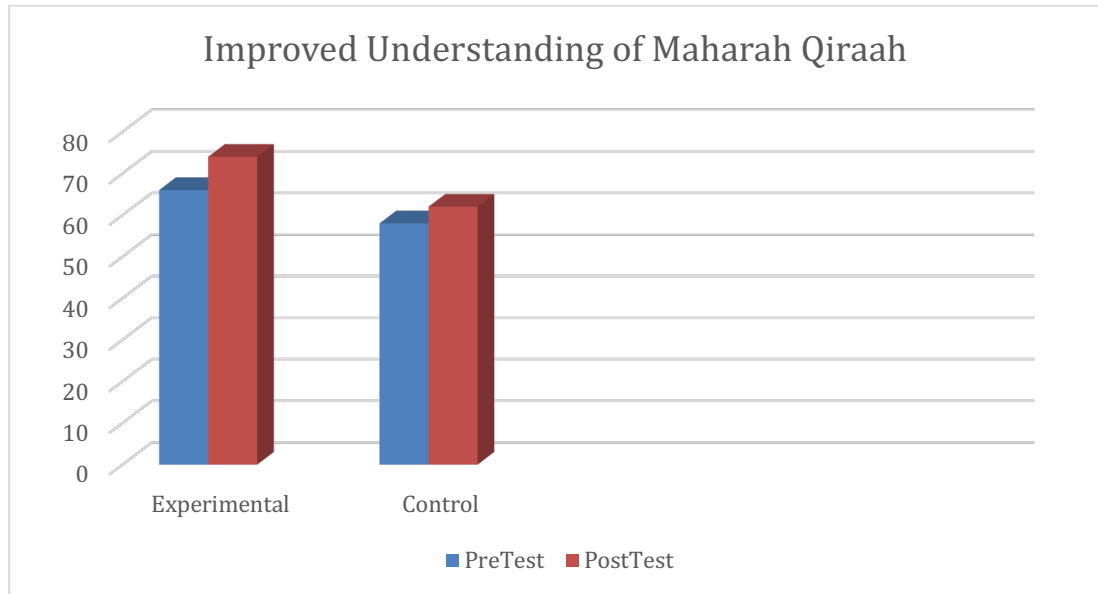
Figure 1. The Degree of Improved Understanding of Maharah Qiraah

3.2. Discussion

QAR, a language-based method and framework developed by Taffy Raphael in 1986, aimed to enhance students' speaking ability and their comprehension question answering skills. Raphael classified question-and-answer relationships into a taxonomy that constructed comprehension questions based on the location of their answers (Arsyad et al., 2022). According to this taxonomy, there are four categories: "Right There," "Think and Search," "Author and Me," and "On My Own." "Right There" and "Think and Search" questions could be answered directly within the text, either in one location or scattered throughout. "Author and Me" and "On My Own" questions required more thoughtful analysis, as readers had to make inferences or apply their own understanding of the text (Nasrullah, 2020).

Supporting the above statement, Sari et al. emphasized the purpose of QAR. First, the goal of QAR was to define the answer's form rather than solely focusing on determining the correct answer. Therefore, students should not be explicitly informed of the question types or how to answer them without prior comprehension. Second, QAR served as a tool to track readers' opinions about their answers (Sari & Emelia, 2022). According to Septiani et al., the QAR structure was selected for a professional development initiative because it is common practice for students to answer questions based on the text. QAR provides a framework for students to reflect on the problem at hand and equips them with the necessary tools and language to understand the relationship between the text and the question. This approach directs classroom learning and enhances students' metacognitive abilities in reading (Septiani & Juliana, 2020).

Reading comprehension involves understanding the content of a text and encompasses questions about what, why, how, and drawing conclusions based on the reading (Fiantika et al., 2018). It is not an innate ability but rather a skill developed through learning and diligent practice. Reading comprehension delves

into the depth of thoughts, offering readers a sense of satisfaction after completing a text.

Through reading comprehension learning, students can appropriately respond to the information they encounter. Additionally, reading acts as a key to unlock knowledge, enabling students to explore various disciplines and maximize their learning objectives. The teacher plays a crucial role in developing students' reading skills by creating experiences that introduce, maintain, or expand their ability to understand textual content (Khotiah, 2020). This requires teachers to engage in direct instruction, modeling, improvement support, and facilitating student engagement in the learning process.

Reading comprehension is a vital skill that needs to be cultivated to keep pace with constantly evolving knowledge and information. The purpose of reading comprehension is to extract meaning from the text, and according to Septiani, it brings pleasure, increases knowledge on a specific topic, connects new information with existing knowledge, provides data for oral and written reports, confirms or refutes predictions, and answers questions (Septiani & Juliana, 2020).

3.2.1. Students' Understanding of Maharah Qiraah Before and After the Implementation of the QAR Method

Before the implementation of the QAR method, students' abilities in understanding reading-related questions were low. They struggled to identify the main ideas in the reading passages and had difficulty drawing conclusions. Additionally, they faced challenges in retelling information from the texts. This was evident from the pretest results of the experimental class, where several students scored poorly.

However, after introducing the QAR method in the experimental Arabic learning class, significant improvements were observed in the post-test scores. Students showed enhanced abilities in drawing conclusions from the reading material, interpreting difficult words within the texts, and explaining the underlying values presented in the readings.

During the implementation of the QAR method, students were placed at the center of the learning process. They read the texts in their student books, analyzed the types of questions, and made attempts to answer them. Due to varying reading abilities among students, this process took a considerable amount of time. Special attention was given to students who faced difficulties in reading fluently, ensuring their active participation in the learning activities. To maintain focus, the teacher administered quizzes based on the reading texts.

Following the completion of the treatment activities, there was a notable increase in post-test scores. Students became accustomed to various question types and developed a better understanding of how to approach them. They also became skilled in drawing conclusions from the readings and comprehending the values embedded within the texts.

The QAR method, in theory, facilitates students in connecting their existing knowledge with their understanding of the texts they read. In this study, the QAR method was implemented with fifth-grade students at the concrete operational stage of cognitive development. At this stage, students require more critical thinking to comprehend abstract concepts. Their thinking is limited to the concrete, accurate, definite, and precise realm. According to Piaget (Pratiwi, 2022), students in the concrete operational stage acquire additional abilities referred to as the system of operations, which enables them to coordinate their thoughts and ideas with specific events in their studies. Therefore, the QAR method was applied to enhance the reading comprehension skills of fifth-grade students, taking into account their cognitive development.

3.2.2. The Effectiveness of the QAR Method in Understanding Maharah Qiraah

The results of the paired sample T-test revealed significant differences in the understanding of maharah qiraah between students in the experimental and control classes. In the experimental pretest class, the average score was 66, while the average score in the post-test using the QAR method increased to 76. Conversely, in the control class, the average score was 58 during the pretest, and it increased to 62 in the post-test using the discussion method. These findings indicate that students in the experimental class achieved higher reading comprehension results compared to those in the control class.

The research results demonstrate that the implementation of the QAR method significantly improved the average score compared to the discussion method. In the experimental class, students were exposed to Arabic qiraah instruction using the QAR method. They were trained to read, analyze different question types, and provide relevant answers, which had a significant impact on their understanding of maharah qiraah. On the other hand, the control class learned Arabic qiraah without employing the QAR method. Instead, the discussion method was used, where the teacher played a central role in facilitating learning and stimulating students to express their understanding of the reading texts in their books. The differences in outcomes between the QAR method and the discussion method are presented in detail in the following table:

Table 1. Differences in Discussion Methods and QAR Methods

Discussion Method	QAR Method
Teacher learning center	Student learning center
Students who are good at speaking who often think	All students are active in opinion
Conversations sometimes deviate from the subject of discussion	Focusing students' attention on the subject of discussion

Based on this explanation, other studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of the Question Answer Relationship (QAR) method in teaching reading comprehension to primary and secondary school students, as evidenced by Anggun's research (2018). In a study conducted by an elementary and middle school teacher, QAR was implemented in the classroom, yielding positive results in terms of improving students' understanding and laying a solid foundation for qiraah comprehension.

The teacher's role in developing students' reading skills includes creating experiences that introduce, maintain, or enhance their ability to comprehend textual content, as discussed

by Arsyad et al. (2022). Furthermore, Widyantari and Ismail (2022), drawing on Raphael's perspective, argue that the QAR method explicitly elucidates the relationship between questions and answers, categorizes different question levels and types, and assists students in analyzing, understanding, and responding to reading concepts. By employing the QAR method, students can grasp the connection between the text and the questions, leading to enhanced learning outcomes and improved understanding of qiraah.

The aforementioned explanation is supported by empirical evidence, demonstrating significant results. Specifically, the experimental class utilizing the QAR method achieved higher scores compared to the control class that employed the discussion method.

4. Conclusion

Before the implementation of the QAR method, students' reading comprehension abilities were significantly low, as indicated by the results of the pretest conducted in the experimental class. Some students scored within the standard criteria. However, after the practical application of the QAR method in Arabic learning, there was a remarkable improvement in the post-test scores. Students demonstrated enhanced skills in summarizing the reading content, interpreting challenging vocabulary within the text, and explaining the underlying values conveyed in the reading material.

Based on the findings of the research and the ensuing discussions on the effectiveness of employing the QAR method in Arabic learning, it can be concluded that the descriptive analysis of the experimental class revealed an average pretest score of 66. Following the practical class, the average posttest score increased to 76. In comparison, the control class obtained an average pretest score of 58, with a posttest average of 62. Consequently, it can be inferred that the experimental group outperformed the control class, displaying a significant improvement in their performance.

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