Students' Reading Comprehension of Descriptive Text utilizing the SQ4R Method in Grade X at SMA Negeri 1 Batang Toru

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Abstract:

This study is prompted by the inadequate reading interest and comprehension of grade X students at SMA Negeri 1 Batang Toru regarding descriptive texts in English. The primary issues found encompass insufficient student engagement in reading, challenges in comprehending language and text content, and a restricted application of appropriate instructional tactics by the educator. The objective of this research is to evaluate the efficacy of the SQ4R method (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review, Reflect) in enhancing students' reading comprehension of descriptive texts. The study utilizes a quantitative methodology featuring a pre-test and post-test framework. The population comprises all Grade X students at SMA Negeri 1 Batang Toru for the 2024/2025 academic year, with the total number are 251 students. The researcher employed purposive sampling to pick grade X6 as the sample, which initially comprised 35 students; however, only 19 participated in the study. The primary data comprises reading comprehension test scores obtained prior to and subsequent to the application of the SQ4R approach. The data collection equipment comprised a reading test and questionnaires. The data analysis methods employed included descriptive statistical analysis and t-tests to assess the significance of differences between pre-test and post-test outcomes. The students' reading proficiency was commendable, and the study indicated an enhancement in the average reading comprehension score from 72.37 in the pre-test to 87.63 in the post-test following the implementation of the SQ4R approach, resulting in an elevation of students' reading ability to an excellent level. In conclusion, the SQ4R method demonstrated efficacy in improving students' reading comprehension of descriptive texts and is advocated as an alternate instructional strategy for reading in senior high schools.

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1. Introduction

English serves as a global lingua franca, facilitating communication across nations worldwide. As students acquire English, they enhance their capacity to communicate effectively in various contexts, both orally and in writing. As English is widely utilized in several information sources, students who learn it can access a greater wealth of

knowledge and resources. Acquiring proficiency in English enhances pupils' critical thinking and analytical abilities. This enables them to comprehend and disseminate the knowledge they discover more effectively. In the contemporary, ever-evolving landscape, adaptability is paramount. Proficiency in English not only enables students to adapt to changes but also expands their employment prospects in the global marketplace. This iteration uses more accessible language and structure to enhance comprehension while preserving the core concepts.

English is extensively utilized throughout several scientific disciplines; hence, students proficient in English have enhanced access to resources and information pertinent to the scientific domain. The significance of English as a second language for Indonesian children is paramount, as it serves as an international lingua franca utilized across various facets of life (Lestari & Wahyudin, 2020). Mastery of English does not necessarily mandate that students employ the language as a primary reference. English is acquired at every educational level in Indonesia, from elementary school to university. In proficient English, students' must acquire four essential skills: writing, speaking, listening, and reading. In Indonesia, the senior high school curriculum designates English as a crucial subject. Students must engage in the study of writing, speaking, listening, and reading in school. Reading comprehension is an essential ability for high school pupils. Students in their senior year of high school should acquire knowledge of several text genres, including descriptive, narrative, procedural, parody, analytical exposition, hortatory exposition, and recount. Reading is a crucial ability that individuals must develop, as it is a primary method of acquiring knowledge. Reading allows individuals to access many information sources, facilitating their understanding of the symbols and meanings embedded in the text.

Reading necessitates the capacity to interpret and comprehend the author's intended message (Hilaikal et al., 2023). Reading comprehension is crucial for students to learn, as it enables them to grasp content and meaning, articulate interpretations, and develop proficient reading abilities necessary for extracting information applicable in diverse contexts (Mandasari & Aminatun, 2019). Reading comprehension abilities constitute an interactive process that engages the reader, the text, and the context (Zakiya, 2023). Descriptive text is characterized by its focus on generating vivid imagery through meticulous descriptions. It mostly communicates the author's perceptions and emotions about the subject, enabling readers to experience it as if they were witnessing it directly. The writing efficiently stimulates the reader's senses by utilizing sensory details, including sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch.

Furthermore, descriptive text functions as an essential instrument in writing, allowing authors to communicate vivid pictures and engage their readers. By employing rigorous observation and exact linguistic strategies, authors can create captivating narratives that profoundly resonate with readers. This genre is of considerable significance in multiple fields, including literature, education, and daily communication. The SQ4R approach, which stands for Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review, and Reflection, is a

frequently employed reading strategy. The SQ4R technique aims to help readers discern core concepts and supporting information while improving long-term retention of the content. This approach comprises six sequential activities: text surveying, question formulation, active reading, key information recitation, content review, and material reflection.

The attributes of the SQ4R technique are:Prior to reading, examine the book title, author's name, summary, and bibliography to obtain an overview. Consider several inquiries you wish to address during your reading. These inquiries will facilitate your comprehension of the content. Commence reading the book with your inquiries in consideration to uncover the answers. Upon completion of the reading, encapsulate the insights gained in your own terminology. This facilitates the assessment of your comprehension. Review the material you have read and reiterate key themes to strengthen your memory retention. Reflection enhances comprehension and renders learning more significant.

SMA Negeri 1 Batang Toru is a senior high school situated in Tapanuli Selatan, North Sumatra. This institution is resolutely dedicated to enhancing educational quality and student learning results. The school consistently innovates its pedagogical methods and strategies to achieve these objectives. Nevertheless, despite these initiatives, obstacles in teaching reading comprehension persist, especially in the interpretation of descriptive texts. The overall enthusiasm of students in reading remains comparatively low, adversely affecting their reading comprehension abilities. When motivation for reading is deficient, students often neglect critical elements in the text, leading to a constrained comprehension of the topic.

Yusniar and Purnamalia (2024) assert that reading enthusiasm is a vital component influencing pupils' reading comprehension abilities. A primary issue encountered by students is the unfamiliarity with new language present in texts, especially in descriptive works that use intricate concepts or phrases. This frequently results in frustration and a decrease in pupils' enthusiasm in reading, particularly when faced with extensive books and tedious reading techniques. To resolve these challenges, innovative and engaging pedagogical practices are required to promote student engagement and participation in the reading process. Methods that facilitate student immersion in the topic are anticipated to improve both their motivation and understanding.

The SQ4R approach (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review) is a technique aimed at assisting students in systematically organizing material and improving their engagement while reading. This strategy is anticipated to enhance students' concentration and understanding of the text through its systematic processes. This study seeks to evaluate students' reading comprehension prior to and during the implementation of the SQ4R approach in Class X at SMA Negeri 1 Batang Toru, with a particular focus on descriptive texts. The title of this research is "Analysis of Students' Reading Comprehension of Descriptive Text Utilizing the SQ4R Method in Grade X at SMA Negeri 1 Batang Toru."

The results of this study are anticipated to enhance the formulation of successful pedagogical strategies and foster students' engagement in reading in the future.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension refers to the capacity to comprehend and interpret information presented in a text. Reading comprehension is not merely the act of reading aloud or grasping language but primarily the ability of readers to derive meaning from the text and contextualize it within a wider framework. This skill is crucial in education and daily communication, since it enables individuals to engage with information effectively and critically. For kids, this entails not merely reading words but also comprehending the meaning, essential concepts, and significant information within the text. This talent is crucial in the educational process, as it enables students to engage with diverse texts effectively and critically, fostering the cognitive abilities necessary for academic and daily life.

Reading comprehension is crucial to the learning process of kids. A comprehensive comprehension of reading will significantly aid pupils in comprehending the several types of texts presented by the teacher. Reading comprehension is a multifaceted and intricate process that encompasses the reader's prior knowledge and strategic approaches, as well as text-related variables such as interest and comprehension of the text type, resulting in numerous interactions (Tatipang et al., 2021).

Purba & Rini (2021) define reading comprehension as the capacity to navigate text, discern its purpose, integrate it with prior knowledge, and recall its content or previously read material. Reading is a method employed by readers to comprehend the intended content conveyed through written language (Parapat & Huda, 2022).

Reading comprehension includes diverse forms that enhance the understanding of literature. Lexical comprehension entails educators elucidating novel language and supplying synonyms to enhance learners' understanding of the material. Literal comprehension emphasizes grasping explicit information and principal ideas, allowing learners to discern key concepts and employ strategies such as skimming for effective information retrieval. Interactive comprehension necessitates that readers engage with the material by posing inquiries such as "what if," "why," and "how," while interpreting figurative language, mood, and the author's viewpoints. Applied comprehension links the book to real-life experiences, prompting learners to generate new ideas, assess the text's values, and articulate their own opinions.

Affective comprehension pertains to the understanding of the narrative, character functions, and emotional reactions, frequently augmented by social scripts to improve learners' comprehension of story progression. Ultimately, efficient comprehension enables learners to autonomously utilize diverse comprehension strategies, while teacher assistance enhances metacognitive awareness and cultivates proficient reading skills. Collectively, these categories exemplify a thorough framework for instructing and enhancing reading comprehension abilities.

2.2 Descriptive Text

Descriptive writing provides a clear and detailed depiction of an object, whether a person, animal, item, or location. The readers can envision the object referenced in this scenario (Mayekti et al., 2022). It fundamentally offers information regarding the subject, the facts, and their attributes. Descriptive text functions to both inform and captivate the reader's imagination, enabling them to vividly visualize the subject matter.

Descriptive text is a composition authored by a writer that provides an explanation or depiction of an object, which may be a person, object, place, or event. This description is grounded in factual or actual circumstances, allowing the writer to convey the object in a manner that enables the reader to perceive or experience it vividly (Asyfa et al., 2024). Descriptive text, or teks deskripsi, is a kind of writing that seeks to furnish a comprehensive portrayal of an object, individual, location, or occurrence. This type of work is distinguished by its capacity to captivate the reader's senses, enabling them to envision and experience the subject matter vividly.

Descriptive text serves largely as a means to articulate the features or attributes of an object, individual, or location in depth. The primary objective is to furnish a vivid depiction, enabling the reader to visualize the subject matter being presented. This entails not merely presenting data but also detailing sensory experiences—how something appears, sounds, tastes, smells, or feels. Utilizing an extensive vocabulary and figurative language, including metaphors and similes, enables writers to augment their descriptions and render them more captivating for readers.

In conclusion, descriptive text is essential in both academic and creative writing situations. It enables authors to engage readers' attention while enhancing their comprehension of the subject matter. Descriptive writing, by its organized methodology and focus on sensory details, creates an immersive experience that can linger with readers long after completion.

The researcher selects three subjects for exploration in descriptive texts, specifically three tourist destinations in North Sumatra: Pandan Beach in Sibolga, renowned for its fine white sand, crystalline blue waters, and tranquil ambiance enveloped by trees; Lake Toba, the largest volcanic lake in Indonesia, celebrated for its breathtaking natural vistas; and Aek Sijorni, which showcases the distinctive natural allure of North Sumatra. Furthermore, the author depicts the Sumatran tiger, an endangered creature that epitomizes the island's abundant fauna. Finally, the author emphasizes an individual, Jerome Pollin, recognized for offering motivation and inspiration through his life narrative and challenges. The exploration of descriptive literature is enriched and captivating by the examination of natural beauty, biodiversity, and uplifting human values.

The primary role of descriptive writing in English is to provide a detailed introduction of an object to the reader. The specified object may be either abstract or concrete. Concrete objects encompass individuals, items, animals, and other tangible

creatures, whereas abstract objects pertain to atmospheres, emotions, concepts, and similar phenomena. The purpose of descriptive prose is to delineate objects or create a clear and vivid representation of a subject, facilitating a shared understanding between the reader and the writer.

The principal function of descriptive language in English is to furnish a detailed and vivid representation of an object, whether tangible or intangible, to the reader. This comprehensive explanation fosters mutual comprehension between the writer and the reader, guaranteeing that the subject is articulated clearly and effectively.

2.3 SQ4R Method

The SQ4R method an acronym for Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Reflect, and Review is a structured reading strategy designed to enhance comprehension and retention, particularly in academic settings. According to Rafianti (2025), this method fosters active engagement by guiding learners through six deliberate stages that encourage deeper interaction with texts. The initial step, Survey, involves scanning the material to grasp its structure and main ideas. Question prompts learners to formulate inquiries based on headings or introductory content, setting a purpose for reading. The Read phase is where students seek answers to their questions, followed by recite, which requires them to verbally summarize or paraphrase key points to reinforce memory. Reflect is a critical addition that distinguishes SQ4R from earlier models like SQ3R; it encourages learners to connect new information with prior knowledge, promoting meaningful learning. Finally, Review consolidates understanding through repetition and synthesis. Empirical studies support its efficacy.

Hendrizal et al. (2025) demonstrated that SQ4R significantly improves elementary students' sight-reading skills by boosting motivation and comprehension, while Ekawati et al. (2024) found that its implementation in EFL classrooms led to measurable gains in reading performance among high school students. These findings underscore the method's adaptability across educational levels and its alignment with 21st-century learning goals.

The SQ4R approach is a reading strategy aimed at assisting readers in recognizing essential concepts and improving their comprehension of texts. SQ4R denotes Survey, Question, Read, Reflect, Recite, and Review. This method expands upon the previous technique, SQ3R, by incorporating the Reflect stage to enhance comprehension and knowledge retention. The SQ4R approach is advantageous, as the processes of surveying and questioning effectively activate prior knowledge. The act of reading aids in grasping the primary and supporting concepts, whereas the processes of recitation, reflection, and review assist students in retaining key aspects from the text and assessing their knowledge (Rojabi, 2020).

Fadilah et al. (2022) assert that the SQ4R approach is an enhancement of the SQ3R method, incorporating "reflect" as an activity to furnish examples of reading materials and envision a more pertinent real-world context. SQ4R serves as a comprehension approach to facilitate students' engagement with the text being read. SQ4R enhances pupils'

comprehension of reading material. The SQ4R approach is designed to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of reading.

3. Method

The research technique is a systematic approach to acquiring data for defined objectives and applications. Waruwu (2023) defines research methods as the procedures and frameworks employed in research. Research methodologies facilitate the execution of studies in a systematic, scientific, objective, and meaningful way. The scientific method signifies that research activities are grounded in scientific attributes, including rationality, empirical evidence, and systematic processes.

Zaluchu (2021) succinctly and clearly delineates the study design and processes in the methods portion of the paper. The method section delineates the data gathering approach as well as the techniques for processing and analysis. The technique section elucidates the methodologies employed by researchers in the execution, documentation, and analysis of their studies.

Wajdi et al. (2024) assert that the quantitative research technique emphasizes the collecting and analysis of quantitative data, namely data represented by numbers or numeric variables. This methodology seeks to quantify the correlation between variables or to elucidate phenomena by statistical analysis.

Quantitative research methods encompass various stages, including meticulous research design, selection of representative samples, data collecting utilizing structured instruments like surveys, and data analysis employing statistical tools. The primary objective is to provide facts that can be quantitatively assessed to validate or refute the study hypothesis.

Quantitative research methods are frequently contrasted with qualitative research methods in scientific literature. Quantitative methods are seen more suitable for research that seeks to find and quantify links between variables in a quantitative way. This study employs a one-group pretest-posttest research design. According to Kristiani et al. (2017), in this design, the sample undergoes a pretest prior to the therapy and a posttest following the treatment. The pretest and posttest serve as metrics in this investigation. This method was implemented in a single class, without a comparative or control class. This study employed a pre-test and post-test design. The objective was to assess students' reading comprehension skills prior to and during the implementation of the SQ4R approach on descriptive texts in grade X at SMA Negeri 1 Batang Toru. The researcher opted for a quantitative methodology to analyze the data.

4. Results

The calculated t value is 5.39, which is subsequently compared to the t table value at a significance level of 0.05 with 18 degrees of freedom (df), derived from $N = 19$, hence df $= N\text{-}1 = 18$. The t-table value for 18 degrees of freedom at a significance level of 0.05 (two-tailed) is approximately 2.101. The computed t value (5.39) exceeds the critical t value

(2.101), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H0), indicating a statistically significant difference in the analyzed data at a 5% significance level.

The research hypothesis, stating, "There is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of students in reading descriptive text using the SQ4R method," is accepted. The assertion that "There is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of students in reading descriptive text using the SQ4R method" is dismissed.

Based on the results of the questionnaire distributed, it was obtained that students who answered Agree were 16 students (84,21%), Strongly Agree were 3 people (15,79%). While Strongly Disaggre, Disagree, and Neutral no one chooses. Thus, the most answer was Agree and Strongly Agree so it can be concluded that students understand the content of the reading better after using the SQ4R method. The results of the questionnaire distributed, students who answered Agree were 14 people (73,68%), Strongly Agree were 3 people (15,79%). While Neutral were 2 people (10,53%). Strongly Disagree, Disagree, no one chooses. Thus, the most answer was Agree, Strongly Agree and Neutral so it can be concluded that the SQ4R method helps students remember important information from the reading.

5. Discussion

The students' proficiency in reading comprehension of descriptive texts in Grade X at SMAN 1 Batang Toru markedly enhanced following the implementation of the SQ4R approach. The mean pre-test score rose from 72.37 to a mean post-test score of 87.63, demonstrating that students exhibited enhanced comprehension of descriptive texts after the use of the SQ4R approach. The data analysis indicated a substantial impact of the SQ4R approach on students' comprehension of descriptive texts. The research hypothesis, "There is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of students in reading descriptive texts using the SQ4R method," is accepted, whereas the null hypothesis, "There is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of students in reading descriptive texts using the SQ4R method," is rejected.

The improvement in students' achievement from pre-test to post-test scores was 21.09%, indicating the efficacy of the SQ4R approach in augmenting reading comprehension. The questionnaire administered to the students revealed that the majority concurred that the SQ4R method enhanced their reading comprehension. This favorable student opinion further corroborates the efficacy of the SQ4R approach as a teaching strategy. These results align with the research by Megawati and Fitriani (2020), entitled "The Effect of SQ4R Technique on Students' Reading Comprehension." Their study encompassed 40 students from the English Education program at STKIP Kusuma Negara Jakarta, segmented into an experimental group employing the SQ4R approach and a control group undergoing traditional instruction.

The experimental class attained a mean reading comprehension score of 85.70, whereas the control class recorded a score of 68.60, as assessed using a quantitative manner with SPSS 20. Statistical analyses indicated a substantial impact of the SQ4R approach on students' reading comprehension, evidenced by a t-score of 16.884 and a significance level of 0.000 (p < 0.05). This substantiates the assertion that the SQ4R technique significantly enhances pupils' reading comprehension skills. This study, together with the research of Megawati and Fitriani, presents compelling evidence that the SQ4R technique is an effective teaching tool for improving students' reading comprehension, especially in the context of descriptive texts.

6. Conclusion

The implementation of the SQ4R method in teaching descriptive texts to Grade X students at SMAN 1 Batang Toru proved to be highly effective in enhancing reading comprehension. The notable increase in average scores—from 72.37 in the pre-test to 87.63 in the post-test—reflects a substantial improvement in students' ability to process and understand textual information.

This progression underscores the method's strength in fostering active engagement, structured reading, and deeper cognitive processing. The findings affirm that SQ4R is not only a practical instructional strategy but also a transformative tool for elevating students' literacy skills, making it a valuable approach for educators seeking to improve comprehension outcomes in secondary education.

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