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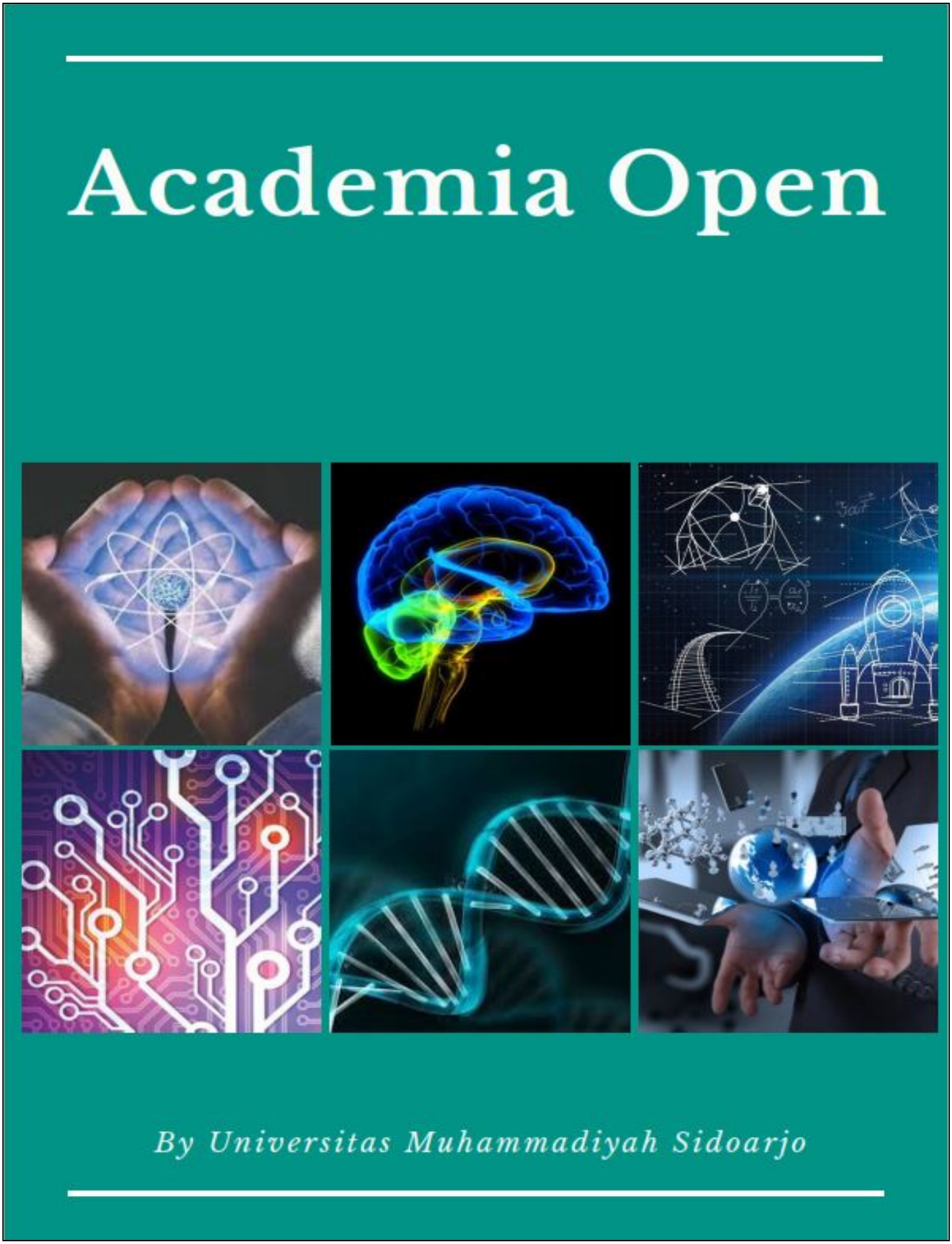

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Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review (SQ3R) Method Improves Reading Comprehension of Descriptive Texts for Tenth Grade Students

Metode Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review (SQ3R) Meningkatkan Pemahaman Membaca Teks Deskriptif untuk Siswa Kelas Sepuluh

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Abstract

Background (General & Specific): Reading is an important skill in English learning that is often challenging for students, especially in understanding descriptive texts. **Knowledge Gap:** However, the effectiveness of learning strategies such as the SQ3R method in the context of secondary school students' reading comprehension remains under-researched empirically. **Aim:** This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review) method in improving reading comprehension of grade X students at SMA Negeri 1 Pajar Bulan. **Methods & Results:** Using a quasi-experimental design, two groups of students were compared: an experimental group that received instruction with the SQ3R method and a control group with the conventional method. Results showed a significant increase in the experimental group's reading comprehension score (mean 67.13) over the control group (mean 44.55), based on paired and independent t-tests. **Novelty:** This study shows that SQ3R effectively strengthens students' ability to summarize text content, find specific information, and understand vocabulary. **Implications:** The findings indicate that the integration of SQ3R strategy in reading instruction can be an effective pedagogical approach to improve students' reading comprehension in an active and structured manner.
Highlights:

- Enhances critical reading through structured stages (Survey to Review).
- Demonstrates significant improvement in students' test scores.
- Supports vocabulary and detail identification in descriptive texts.

Keywords: SQ3R Method, Reading Comprehension, Descriptive Text, English Education, Experimental Study

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Introduction

Reading comprehension is a fundamental skill in English language learning, as it underpins the development of other core language competencies such as speaking, writing, and listening. At the senior high school level, the ability to comprehend texts becomes even more critical—particularly with regard to descriptive texts, which aim to convey detailed information about people, objects, or places. However, many students continue to struggle with reading comprehension, especially in identifying main ideas, recognizing supporting details, and understanding logical connections within a text [1].

These challenges are exacerbated by the absence of effective reading strategies. In many classrooms, traditional approaches—such as reading aloud and answering comprehension questions—are applied without offering students the tools they need to engage deeply with a text. As a result, students often read passively, without strategic engagement or reflection. At SMA Negeri 1 Pajar Bulan, similar problems have been observed [2]. Based on teacher observations, students tend to lack motivation, remain uninvolved in reading sessions, and frequently skim texts without truly processing the content. These patterns contribute to consistently low reading achievement, particularly in English subjects.

This local issue is reflective of a wider national literacy concern. According to the 2022 national literacy survey conducted by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud), only 30.57% of high school students met the minimum reading literacy proficiency level, indicating a persistent gap in students' ability to comprehend written texts. This reinforces the urgency of identifying effective instructional strategies to boost reading comprehension skills [3].

One such promising method is SQ3R—Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review. This method promotes an active, metacognitive reading process by guiding learners through five structured steps: skimming the text to form a general impression, generating questions to activate prior knowledge and purpose, reading to find targeted answers, paraphrasing information aloud or in writing, and finally, reviewing to consolidate understanding. Research conducted by Putri & Mahmud [4] and Arifin [5] has shown that students taught using the SQ3R method demonstrate higher levels of engagement, comprehension accuracy, and retention compared to those taught using conventional reading strategies.

Nevertheless, most existing studies focus on general learning environments and do not explicitly address contexts where students struggle with both low reading motivation and difficulties in interpreting descriptive texts. Furthermore, little to no research has been conducted on the implementation of the SQ3R method specifically at SMA Negeri 1 Pajar Bulan. This indicates a gap in both the pedagogical literature and localized classroom practices[6].

Therefore, this study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the SQ3R method in improving the reading comprehension of tenth-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Pajar Bulan, with a particular focus on descriptive texts. The findings are expected to offer practical insights for English teachers in designing reading instruction and contribute to the broader effort of enhancing literacy through structured strategies. This research is novel because it addresses the specific intersection of low student motivation, descriptive text comprehension, and the application of SQ3R within an under-researched rural school context[7].

Method

This study applied a quantitative approach using a quasi-experimental design to examine the effectiveness of the SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review) method in enhancing students' reading comprehension, specifically in descriptive texts. The quasi-experimental design was chosen because it allowed the researcher to measure the effect of the treatment through pre-test and post-test procedures, even though the participants could not be randomly assigned to groups. This approach was appropriate for a classroom-based study, where full randomization is often impractical. According to Creswell [8], quantitative research is particularly useful for evaluating treatment effectiveness and identifying statistically measurable differences between groups.

The research participants were selected through purposive sampling from the tenth-grade cohort of SMA Negeri 1 Pajar Bulan. Out of three parallel classes, two were chosen based on comparable academic performance in previous English tests and similar demographic characteristics. Class X-2 was assigned as the experimental group, receiving instruction through the SQ3R method, while Class X-3 served as the control group, receiving conventional instruction. A total of 45 students participated in the study. This sampling

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ensured that both groups had relatively similar academic abilities at the start, which contributed to the reliability of comparison [9].

In the experimental group, the SQ3R method was implemented over a four-week period with two 90-minute sessions per week. Each session was structured according to the five stages of the SQ3R model. In the Survey stage, students were guided to examine titles, subheadings, pictures, and bolded terms in the text, such as in a passage about *Prambanan Temple*, to activate their background knowledge. During the Question stage, students were encouraged to formulate questions based on the subheadings or text structure, such as "Why is Prambanan considered a cultural heritage site?" or "What materials were used to build the temple?" This step was designed to stimulate curiosity and set a reading purpose. In the Read stage, students read the text carefully to find answers to their self-generated questions. The teacher facilitated comprehension by pointing out key paragraphs or signal words. The Recite stage involved students summarizing what they had read, either verbally or in writing, to reinforce memory and internalization. Finally, in the Review stage, students revisited the main ideas and discussed with peers or the teacher to clarify misunderstandings and consolidate their understanding [10].

In contrast, the control group followed a more traditional reading approach. Students read aloud in turns, followed by teacher explanations of vocabulary and content. Comprehension questions were answered individually, but no structured or strategic steps like SQ3R were applied.

To ensure uniformity, both groups were taught using the same set of reading materials consisting of descriptive texts. These texts were selected from educational websites and included topics such as *Mount Bromo*, *The Eiffel Tower*, and *Tanjung Puting National Park*. The reading materials were matched in terms of length and difficulty level, and were relevant to the senior high school curriculum [11].

The main research instrument was a reading comprehension test comprising 30 multiple-choice questions, adapted and validated from various national curriculum sources. These items measured five aspects of reading comprehension: identifying main ideas, understanding supporting details, vocabulary in context, retrieving specific information, and making inferences. An example of an inference item used was: *"Based on the passage, what can be inferred about the climate around Mount Bromo?"* The correct answer required students to deduce information that was implied but not directly stated in the text.

To determine the validity and reliability of the instrument, an initial 40-item version was pilot tested. Item-total correlation analysis was conducted using SPSS version 27, and 31 items met the validity threshold ($r > 0.30$). The final test consisted of the 30 most valid and representative items. Additionally, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated to assess the reliability of the instrument, resulting in a coefficient of 0.719, which falls into the "acceptable" category of internal consistency. This indicated that the test items consistently measured the intended construct of reading comprehension [12].

Data collection was conducted through the administration of pre-tests and post-tests to both the experimental and control groups. The pre-test was given before the treatment to assess baseline comprehension levels, while the post-test was administered after the four-week intervention to evaluate progress.

Data analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 27. To assess the effect of the SQ3R method, two main statistical tests were employed. First, a paired sample t-test was used to determine whether there was a significant difference in scores within each group between the pre-test and post-test. Second, an independent sample t-test was used to compare post-test scores between the experimental and control groups to determine whether the SQ3R method led to significantly better outcomes than conventional instruction [13] [14].

Before conducting the t-tests, two statistical assumptions were tested. The Shapiro-Wilk test was used to assess the normality of data distribution, and the results showed that both groups' pre-test and post-test scores were normally distributed ($p > 0.05$). Additionally, the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was used to examine the homogeneity of variance between the groups, and the test yielded a non-significant result ($p > 0.05$), confirming that the assumption of equal variances was met. Both conditions validated the appropriateness of using parametric t-tests[15].

The independent variable in this study was the use of the SQ3R reading method, while the dependent variable was the students' reading comprehension scores. The analysis focused on whether the structured application of SQ3R significantly improved reading performance compared to traditional methods, as evidenced by changes in test scores[16].

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Results and Discussion

A. Result

1. Overview of Research Findings

This research was conducted with the primary objective of exploring the effectiveness of the SQ3R method (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review**)** in enhancing students' reading comprehension, particularly in understanding descriptive texts[17]. Reading comprehension is a critical skill in language acquisition that not only involves the ability to decode words but also to grasp meaning, make inferences, and connect ideas within and across texts. At the senior high school level, especially among tenth-grade students, reading comprehension plays a crucial role in preparing students for more complex academic texts and assessments[18] [19]. Therefore, identifying and implementing effective reading strategies such as SQ3R becomes essential in supporting students' academic development[20].

To measure the impact of the SQ3R method, the study employed a quasi-experimental design involving two distinct groups: an experimental group and a control group[21]. The experimental group was taught using the SQ3R method, which follows a systematic five-step approach—surveying the text to get an overview, generating questions to guide reading, reading the content thoroughly, reciting key ideas to reinforce memory, and reviewing the text to deepen understanding[22]. On the other hand, the control group received reading instruction through conventional methods, which typically involved reading aloud, teacher explanations, and answering comprehension questions without a structured strategy[23].

Data were collected using a pre-test and post-test design, administered to both groups before and after the treatment period[24]. The pre-test served to assess the baseline reading comprehension ability of each student, allowing for a fair comparison between the two groups. The post-test was used to measure any improvement or change in performance after the intervention[25]. The reading tests were designed to evaluate various components of reading comprehension, including identifying main ideas, understanding specific information, interpreting vocabulary, making inferences, and recognizing supporting details.

Initial observations from the pre-test results revealed that most students in both groups were struggling with reading comprehension. A significant number of them fell into the "Fail" and "Poor" categories, indicating limited ability to understand and analyze descriptive texts. This highlighted the urgent need for an effective intervention strategy. Following the implementation of the SQ3R method in the experimental group, the post-test results showed a marked improvement. Students in the experimental group demonstrated greater ability to comprehend texts, answer questions accurately, and engage more actively in reading activities[26]. Notably, many of them moved up to the "Good" and even "Very Good" categories.

In contrast, the control group, which did not receive the SQ3R intervention, showed only modest gains. Some students improved slightly, but overall, the progression was minimal, and a large proportion remained in the lower performance categories. This disparity in performance between the two groups provides strong evidence supporting the positive effect of the SQ3R method on students' reading comprehension skills. Furthermore, the improvement in the experimental group was not only quantitative but also qualitative, as students exhibited better reading behavior, increased motivation, and more structured thinking when approaching reading tasks[27].

Statistical analysis using paired sample t-tests and independent sample t-**tests** reinforced these observations. The experimental group showed statistically significant gains across all measured aspects of reading comprehension, while the control group's improvements were statistically insignificant in most areas. This confirms that the SQ3R method was effective in addressing the reading comprehension challenges faced by tenth-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Pajar Bulan.

In conclusion, the findings from this study underline the value of implementing structured and research-based reading strategies in classroom instruction. The SQ3R method, with its interactive and student-centered approach, not only improves comprehension outcomes but also fosters independent learning habits. These results advocate for the broader adoption of the SQ3R strategy as part of the English curriculum, especially in contexts where students struggle with reading motivation and comprehension.

2. Descriptive Statistics of Reading Comprehension Levels

Before treatment, the majority of students in both groups scored in the “Fail” and “Poor” categories. After the treatment, the experimental group showed a significant shift towards the “Good” and “Very Good” categories.

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In contrast, the control group demonstrated minimal changes. Table 1 presents the frequency and mean of reading comprehension levels before and after the treatment.

Comprehension Level	Experimental Pre-Test	Experimental Post-Test	Control Pre-Test	Control Post-Test
Very Good	0 (0%)	2 (8.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Good	1 (4.2%)	9 (39.1%)	0 (0%)	2 (8.7%)
Enough	2 (8.7%)	9 (39.1%)	4 (18.4%)	3 (13.0%)
Poor	4 (17.4%)	3 (13.0%)	6 (27.3%)	6 (27.4%)
Fail	16 (69.6%)	0 (0%)	12 (54.3%)	11 (50.0%)
Total Mean	34.48	67.13	39.64	44.55

Table 1. Frequency and Mean of Reading Comprehension Scores

3. Improvement in Reading Comprehension Aspects

The reading comprehension test assessed five core aspects: determining inference, identifying specific information, vocabulary knowledge, main idea, and supporting details. Paired sample t-tests were conducted to compare students' pre- and post-test scores.

Aspect	Mean Pre-Test	Mean Post-Test	Mean Difference	Sig. (2-tailed)
Reading Total Score	34.20	67.79	33.58	0.000
Determining Inference	5.60	15.57	9.97	0.000
Specific Information	5.75	12.71	6.96	0.000
Vocabulary	8.92	15.29	6.36	0.000
Main Idea	8.62	14.43	5.81	0.000
Details	5.03	9.48	4.17	0.000

Table 2. Paired Sample T-Test Results in Experimental Group

Aspect	Mean Pre-Test	Mean Post-Test	Mean Difference	Sig. (2-tailed)
Reading Total Score	39.38	44.22	4.84	0.007
Vocabulary	9.78	11.60	1.82	0.052
Specific Information	6.91	8.12	1.20	0.148
Main Idea	8.56	9.47	0.91	0.205
Determining Inference	6.96	7.51	0.60	0.333
Details	7.20	7.50	0.30	0.724

Table 3. Paired Sample T-Test Results in Control Group

These results demonstrate that the experimental group showed highly significant improvements across all aspects, especially in determining inference and vocabulary. In contrast, the control group only showed minor, statistically insignificant improvements.

4. Independent Sample T-Test Analysis

To examine the effectiveness of the SQ3R method in comparison with the conventional method, an independent sample t-test was conducted on the post-test results.

Variable	Mean (Exp)	Mean (Ctrl)	Mean Difference	t-obtained	Sig.	t-table	Conclusion
Reading Comprehension	67.13	44.55	22.58	6.574	0.000	1.684	Significant Effect

Table 4. Independent Sample T-Test Results

The result indicates a statistically significant difference in reading comprehension scores between the two groups, validating the effectiveness of the SQ3R method.

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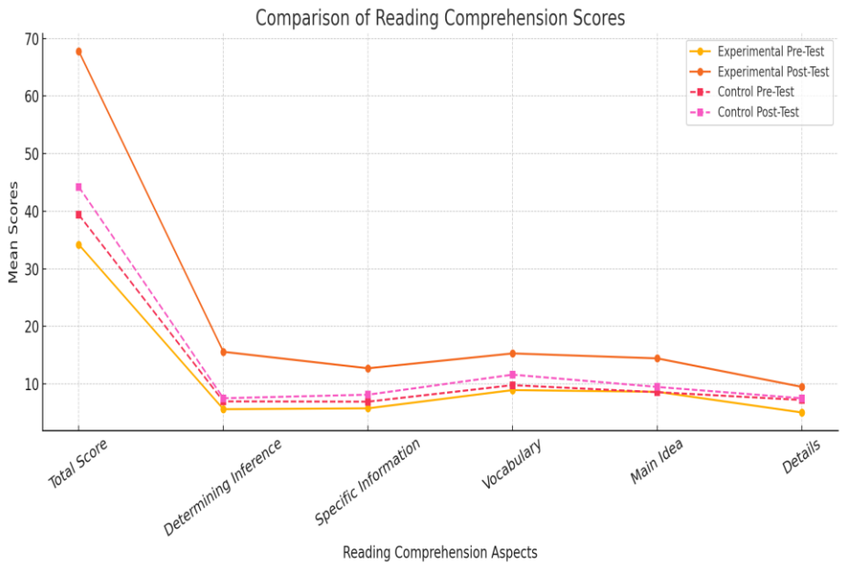
5. Visualization

The following graph visualizes the improvement in various reading comprehension aspects between experimental and control groups.



B. Discussion

The findings of this study clearly indicate that the SQ3R method had a significant and positive impact on students' reading comprehension, particularly in two critical areas: [28] drawing inferences and understanding vocabulary. Students taught using SQ3R demonstrated substantial gains not only in their total test scores but also in their ability to interpret implicit meanings and retain new vocabulary in the context of descriptive texts[29]. These improvements point to the method's effectiveness in fostering deeper cognitive engagement, as opposed to surface-level reading—a vital aspect of second language acquisition at the senior high school level.

This result is consistent with prior research in English language education. Studies by Aziz [30] and Setiawan [31] concluded that the SQ3R method significantly enhances students' critical thinking, reading engagement, and long-term information retention. The structured and reflective nature of SQ3R encourages learners to interact with texts actively, transforming them from passive recipients into critical readers. The present study reinforces these findings and contributes new empirical evidence in the context of rural Indonesian senior high schools, particularly in dealing with descriptive texts—a genre that requires both detail orientation and organizational awareness.

In contrast, students in the control group, who were exposed to conventional reading instruction (e.g., reading aloud, teacher explanation, and answering questions), showed minimal progress in both quantitative and qualitative aspects. Their gains were statistically modest, and in most reading aspects—such as inference and supporting details—improvements were not significant. This suggests that traditional, teacher-centered methods [32], while familiar, may not provide the cognitive scaffolding necessary for students to deeply comprehend complex texts.

Interestingly, while the majority of students in the experimental group improved significantly, a small number of students remained in the "Poor" category after treatment [34]. This contra-finding indicates that even with an effective method like SQ3R, there are still learners who face persistent barriers. These may include limited vocabulary background, lack of intrinsic motivation, or learning difficulties that are not addressed by strategy instruction alone. This highlights the need for differentiated support and possibly supplementary interventions for students with special learning needs[35].

Beyond learning outcomes, this study found that the SQ3R process also positively influenced students' learning behaviors[36]. The five steps—surveying, questioning, reading, reciting, and reviewing—encouraged students to approach reading tasks with purpose, structure, and curiosity. This shift from passive to active learning was evident in classroom observations, where students asked more questions, participated more willingly, and demonstrated more ownership of their learning. Such a transformation is essential in building self-regulated learners, a skill set that extends beyond the English classroom[37].

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However, implementing the SQ3R method in actual classroom settings is not without challenges. One major issue is time constraints; following all five steps thoroughly requires more time than typical reading lessons allow. Teachers may find it difficult to complete the cycle within a single session, especially when teaching large classes [38]. Another challenge is teacher preparedness—not all educators are familiar with structured reading frameworks like SQ3R, and effective implementation requires training and continuous support. Without proper scaffolding, the method may be applied inconsistently, reducing its potential impact.

In conclusion, the integration of the SQ3R method into English reading instruction provides dual benefits: it enhances students' reading comprehension—particularly for inference and vocabulary—and encourages more reflective and independent learning habits [39]. In the context of descriptive texts, SQ3R has proven to be a pedagogically sound and practically impactful strategy. Its broader adoption, especially in schools facing persistent literacy challenges, could contribute significantly to national efforts to improve reading proficiency.

Nevertheless, this study acknowledges several limitations. The intervention lasted only four weeks, which may not fully capture the long-term effects of SQ3R on reading comprehension and learning habits. Additionally, the sample size was limited to two classes in a single school, which may constrain the generalizability of findings. Future studies could address these gaps by conducting longitudinal research across multiple schools with diverse student populations. Moreover, combining qualitative methods, such as interviews or reflective journals, could offer richer insights into how students experience and internalize each stage of the SQ3R process [40].

Conclusion

Based on the findings and data analysis, it can be concluded that the implementation of the SQ3R method (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review) significantly improved the reading comprehension skills of tenth-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Pajar Bulan, particularly in understanding descriptive texts. The structured five-step approach of SQ3R proved effective in transforming students' engagement with reading materials from passive reception to active, strategic learning.

This improvement was statistically verified through both paired sample t-test and independent sample t-test analyses. The t-obtained value (6.574) exceeded the critical t-table value (1.684), with a significance level of 0.000, well below the 0.05 threshold. These results confirm a significant difference in reading performance between the experimental group taught using SQ3R and the control group taught using conventional methods. Notably, the largest gains were observed in students' ability to draw inferences, identify specific information, and understand vocabulary—skills essential for comprehension of detail-rich texts.

Beyond statistical gains, the use of SQ3R also fostered positive shifts in reading behavior, as students became more reflective, motivated, and self-regulated in their reading practices. This demonstrates that SQ3R is not only a pedagogical tool but also a catalyst for building critical thinking and learning autonomy in language classrooms.

In terms of practical implications, English teachers are encouraged to adopt the SQ3R method as part of their instructional repertoire, especially when teaching genres that require close reading and textual interpretation. For curriculum developers, these findings support the integration of strategy-based reading models into national reading programs and teacher training modules. Providing professional development opportunities for educators on how to implement SQ3R effectively will help ensure its sustainability and scalability.

To expand the impact of this approach, future research could explore the application of SQ3R across different text genres—such as narrative, expository, or argumentative texts—or among diverse learner groups, including junior high school students, vocational school learners, or low-achieving readers. In addition, investigating the use of SQ3R in digital or hybrid learning environments (e.g., through online modules or educational apps) could reveal its adaptability to 21st-century classrooms.

Finally, the promising outcomes of this study suggest that the SQ3R method holds strong potential for scaling up. Replication in lower grade levels (such as junior high school) or in different regional contexts would help validate its broader applicability. With the right support, SQ3R can be a cornerstone in national efforts to improve students' reading comprehension and cultivate a culture of thoughtful, independent learners across educational stages.

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