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The Effect of Question Answer Relationship Strategy on Iraqi EFL Intermediate Pupils' Reading Comprehension

Suzan Sabhan Mohammed*

College of Education for Woman, Tikrit University

Suzansubhan79@gmail.com

&

Dr. Madeha Saif Alden Saleh

College of Education for Woman, Tikrit University

dr.al-sumaidai@tu.edu.iq

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ABSTRACT

The Question Answer Relationship strategy is useful for teaching pupils how to understand and reply of several forms of the questions. Understanding that some questions have “Right There” solutions in the text, that others require the reader to “Think and Search,” and that others can only be answered “On My Own” helps pupils recognize the importance of thinking about the topic before finding the answer.

The aims of the current study are finding out the effect of Question Answer Relationship strategy on Iraqi EFL intermediate pupil's achievement and finding out the effect of Question Answer Relationship strategy on developing Iraqi EFL intermediate pupil's reading comprehension. The aims of the study are supposed to be achieved through verifying the following hypothesis: There are no statistically significant differences

* **Corresponding Author:** Suzan Sabhan, **Email:** Suzansubhan79@gmail.com

Affiliation: Tikrit University - Iraq

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between the mean scores of the experimental group which is taught by question answer relationship strategy and the control group who is taught by prescribed method in pupil's post achievement test . The second hypothesis states that there is no statistical significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group in pre and post reading comprehension test. The sample of the current study consists of (60) pupils from the second grade at Karam AL Rahman Intermediate School for Boys is chosen at random to be the sample of the study. The sample is split into two groups: one for the experiment and the other is for the control. Both groups are similar in terms of their age, parent's educational level and previous year's English language scores. The experiment lasted for ten weeks ,the researcher taught the two groups during the academic year 2022-2023. To analyze the obtained data, different statistical means have been used T-test, Weighted mean to measure the pupils' achievement. After the statistically treatment of the data.

Key words : the effect, Questions Answer Relationship strategy, Iraqi EFL Intermediate School pupils , Reading Comprehension .

تأثير إستراتيجية العلاقة بين الأسئلة والأجوبة (QARS) على الفهم القرائي لتلاميذ اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة اجنبية (EFL) في العراق

سوزان سبهان محمد

جامعة تكريت

و

أ. د مديحة سيف الدين صالح

جامعة تكريت

المستخلص

استراتيجية علاقة السؤال والجواب مفيدة لتعليم التلاميذ كيفية فهم أشكال متعددة من الأسئلة والرد عليها. بعض الأسئلة لها حلول "هناك حق" في النص ، وأن البعض الآخر يتطلب من القارئ "التفكير والبحث" ، وأن البعض الآخر لا يمكن الإجابة عليه إلا "بمفردتي" والذي يساعد التلاميذ على إدراك أهمية التفكير في الموضوع قبل العثور على الإجابة . تهدف الدراسة الحالية الى معرفة تأثير استراتيجية العلاقة بين الأسئلة والأجوبة على تحصيل تلاميذ الصف الثاني المتوسط في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية ومعرفة تأثير استراتيجية علاقة السؤال والجواب على تطوير فهم القراءة لتلاميذ الصفوف المتوسطة في العراق. من المفترض أن يتحقق الهدف من الدراسة من خلال

التحقق من الفرضيات التالية: لا توجد فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين متوسط درجات المجموعة التجريبية التي تم تدريسها باستخدام استراتيجية علاقة السؤال والجواب والمجموعة الضابطة التي يتم تدريسها بالطريقة المقررة في اختبار ما بعد التحصيل للتلاميذ. تنص الفرضية الثانية على عدم وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين متوسط درجات المجموعة التجريبية في اختبار الفهم القرائي قبل وبعد القراءة. تم اختيار مجموعة من 60 تلميذاً من الصف الثاني في مدرسة كرم الرحمن المتوسطة للبنين عشوائياً ليكونوا عينة الدراسة. يتم تقسيم العينة إلى مجموعتين: واحدة للتجريبية والأخرى لمجموعة الضابطة. كلا المجموعتين متشابهة من حيث العمر والمستوى التعليمي للوالدين ودرجات اللغة الإنجليزية للعام السابق.

الكلمات الدالة: اثر ، استراتيجية علاقة الأسئلة والأجوبة (QAR) ، طلاب المرحلة المتوسطة العراقيين ، الفهم القرائي .

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the problem

Reading is a challenging language skill, especially for pupil's who attempt to comprehend the subject matter in a particular reading material. They can correctly comprehend the words, but they are unable to understand the main ideas. Reading comprehension requires more than simply understanding the meaning of each word. The relationships between the words in a text determine its true meaning. A good reader actively participates in the content by reflecting on, debating, and evaluating it (Milan, 1987).

Question_ Answer Relationship strategy is a reading comprehension strategy developed to clarify how pupils approach the tasks of reading texts and answering questions. It encourages pupils to be active readers of texts. Question_ Answer Relationship outlines where information can be found "In the Text" or "In My Head."

The Question_ Answer Relationship strategy is useful for teaching pupils how to understand and reply on several forms of the questions. Understanding that some questions have "Right There" solutions in the text, that others require the reader to "Think and Search," and that others can only be answered "On My Own" which helps pupils recognise the importance of thinking about the topic before finding the answer (Raphael,1986).

Even though, there are a lot of pupils and they can be challenging to handle. The teacher in Question_ Answer Relationship is not the focal point of learning. The Question_ Answer Relationship strategy greatly increases interaction's effectiveness and availability.

Lapp (2004) asserts that a number of reading issues might be caused by the pupils, the material, or the reading technique itself. The problem stems from the pupil's comprehension level. which includes queries about the meaning of words and sentences, an inability to link ideas in a text, the omission of details, difficulty distinguishing between important details and incidental information, and a lack of concentration when reading.

According to Lehr et al. (2005), the Question-Answer Relationship strategy is one of numerous strategies that can improve reading comprehension.

Iraqi pupils face many difficulties in the process of learning EFL. There are several reasons :

First, some pupils are unable on reply to questions. They believe they are unable to understand the text because they are unsure of where the information is located. They feel that it is challenging to glean information from the text, thus they are unsure of how to respond to the questions. Due to the teacher's continued use of traditional methods and the pupil's boredom with the assigned reading material.

Second, a lack of vocabulary among pupils contributes to their poor reading skills. It makes it challenging to understand the text's information. The majority of pupils simply utilize their dictionaries to look for the definitions of new terms. The pupil's find it difficult to remember some vocabulary since there are so many strange words; this is one reason why they find it difficult to comprehend the book.

Third, pupils lack the desire to learn how to correctly interpret English words. This is because the methods still being utilized are ones that the pupils are not interested in, therefore they have little interest in learning how to correct their reading of the English language. Only repetitive lessons are taught, and each week the same teaching strategy is used. Pupils are less able to understand the text because they are less prepared to pay attention to what the teacher is doing.

Finally, the pupil is not interested in reading the materials. The teacher provides difficult materials that make the pupil is lazy to read, and often the materials provided are not attractive at each lesson. The teacher also does not provide pupils with breaks like games.

Pretorius and Naude (2002) claim that there is a direct link between reading proficiency and academic success, from elementary school through graduate school. They continue by saying that pupils who comprehend their lessons are more likely to achieve high marks.

1.2 Aims of the Study

This study aims at :

Finding out the effect of Question _Answer Relationship strategy on developing Iraqi EFL intermediate pupil's reading comprehension.

1.3 The Hypothesis

The study hypothesizes that :

There is no statistical significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group in pre and post reading comprehension test.

1.4 The limits of the study

The current study is limited to the following

- 1_ The second intermediate EFL pupil's at Salah Al Din Governorate, Karam Al Rahman Intermediate School for Boys, who are studying English during the academic year 2022_2023.
- 2_ The use of QARS in teaching units two, three and four of English for Iraq text book in the first semester of the study
- 3_ The model of the study is Raphael's (2005) model.

1.5 The Value of the Study

The current study could be valuable and greatly beneficial to EFL intermediate grade pupils and teachers of English as well, the following points are supposed to be met after completing this study:

- A_ It offers English language teachers the chance to experiment with new methods of instruction in a distinctive and unconventional interactive setting.
- B_ Creating positive learning situations for international school pupils which will raise their achievement in English.
- C_ It highlights the advantages of the Questions Answer Relationship strategy in the area of interactive teaching.

1.6 Definitions of the Basic Terms

1.6.1 Effect

Effect means "something produced in action or cause which is usually produced more or less immediately" (Patric, 1971).

It refers to a "change that is caused in a person or thing by another person or thing" (Collins, 1987).

Operational definition: it means the result of adopting the Question Answer Relationship strategy on pupils' reading comprehension.

1.6.2 QARS

Question Answer Relationship strategy is a strategy in reading developed by Raphael in 1986. According to Raphael ,Question Answer Relationship is a reading comprehension strategy developed to clarify how pupils understand the tasks of reading texts and answering questions. It encourages pupils to be active readers of texts. Question Answer Relationship outlines where information can be found "In the Text" or "In My Head." (Raphael,1986)

Operational definition: It is a collection of methods and exercises designed to improve pupils' reading comprehension abilities. Essentially, by reactivating the link between a question and its answer.

1.6.3 Reading Comprehension

Nunan (2003) asserts that reading is a fluid process in which readers construct meaning by fusing information from a text with their own prior knowledge. As a result, reading's

goal is comprehension. To arrive at the intended meaning, readers must combine information from a book with their own prior knowledge (Mart 2015).

Operational definition: By employing the QAR reading comprehension will be improved and evaluated.

1.7 The Procedures of the study

The following procedures will be followed throughout the study:

A. Selecting a sample of second intermediate grade in Karam Al Rahman Intermediate School for Boys in Salah Al Din governorate..

B. Dividing the sample into two equal groups, one for the experiment and the other for the control.

C. Two groups of pupils are taught by the teacher. The Question_ Answer Relationship strategy will be used to teach the experimental group, while the prescribed method will be used to teach the control group.

D. Constructing post_ achievement test.

E. Collecting the required data and analyzing them statistically .

2.LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Concept of Question_ Answer Relationship Strategy

One of the strategies originated by Raphael (1986) to “clarify how pupils approach the duties of reading texts and answering questions” is the Question Answer Relationship strategy. It motivates pupils to read materials actively and purposefully. Where information may be obtained “in the text” or “in my mind” is described in Questions_ Answer Relationship . The real question-answer connections are then divided into four categories: right there, think and search, author and me, and on my own. The Question_ Answer Relationship strategy demonstrates how to search for information in a text in accordance with various question types and the relationship between questions and replies. Pupils may examine, understand, and respond to textual concepts with the use of Question_ Answer Relationship. The strategy helps the learner dispel the widespread belief that the book contains all the answers. The Question Answer Relationship suggests that the solution may be gleaned from the text source or from pupils prior knowledge and experience. The Question_ Answer Relationship aids pupils in comprehending the links between questions and responses as well as various levels of questioning. Frequently, pupils give literal answers to queries or claim that something is not in the text as their response. To show how the question relates to the book, Question_ Answer Relationship offers four levels of questions: right there, think and seek, you and the author, and on your own. Pupils can learn about their own thought processes and enhance their metacognitive skills by using this strategy. According to Raphael (1986), Question_ Answer Relationship is a useful tool for teaching pupils how to approach questions based on a text. Pupils frequently believe that, if they only look hard enough, the text will reveal the answer to every question. As a result, many pupils waste an excessive amount of time searching for solutions that are not “right there,” and their irritation level rises.

The first QARS is built on the Pearson and Johnson (1978) question taxonomy. The taxonomy’s creators argue against identifying questions in isolation but rather in relation to the reading content and the reader’s existing knowledge. Pearson and Johnson’s three categories of text explicit, text implicit, and script implicit are change to right there, think

and search, and on my own for pupils (see Raphael, 1982, for a detailed explanation of the taxonomy and question categories).

Question_ Answer Relationship education is beneficial because it clarifies how pupils should approach the process of reading texts and responding to questions, claims a study (Raphael, 1984). It helps pupils understand the need to consider both the information in the text and information from their own past knowledge. Without Question_ Answer Relationship instruction, pupils typically acted clumsily when reading and answering questions. They usually relied too heavily either on earlier information while dismissing the significance of the material they had just finished or vice versa, relying heavily on the text while neglecting the wealth of knowledge they had gained from their countless experiences. It shouldn't come as a surprise that the study on Question Answer Relationship education has demonstrated that kids of different ages benefit from different amounts and types of learning. Before entering the second grade, for instance, pupils seem to respond best when initially introduced to the idea of the difference between the reader's prior knowledge and the book or story they just finished. Middle school pupils are taught the three categories in a single lesson, while the category system may be utilised more frequently, such as a framework for considering text structures.

The concept of Question_ Answer Relationship simplifies the learning process in the classroom by giving pupils the ability to read for extended periods of time and apply linguistic functions and forms as they read. These exercises help pupils understand the language. By putting what they have studied into practice, they are no longer troubled by the idea of grammar. Pupils have multiple chances to use the language they have learned when reading in the target language. Common Question_ Answer Relationship exercises include "describing and drawing," "finding differences, reading and listening." The Question_ Answer Relationship strategy can help the teacher improve the pupils' reading skills since it is effective in the classroom. The pupils are comfortable reading of anything. They get the opportunity to more freely develop their knowledge when it is their time.

Also, they must be driven to succeed in order to successfully learn a foreign language. Pupils in reading lessons would be inert and disinterested in engaging in class if they lacked this passion. Bernard (2010) asserts that motivation is crucial for language learning. It enhances language learners' self-confidence. Also, it inspires people to enjoy the process of learning and to focus on acquiring the desired language.

2.2 The Role of Question Answer Relationship to Developing Reading Comprehension

A research by Raphael and Pearson (1985) highlights the importance of students using their own knowledge and information from texts when answering comprehension questions. Question Answer Relationship instruction helps develop a greater understanding of task requirements, with sixth-grade students performing better than those who did not. Raphael and McKinney's (1983) study found that Question Answer Relationship instruction was more effective with pupils of ordinary to low ability, particularly for implicit queries. Raphael and Wonnacott's (1985) study showed that Question Answer Relationship education improved fourth-grade students' ability to answer comprehension questions, but found that they needed more coaching to

effectively use the method. Ezell and Kohler's (1992) study found that Question Answer Relationship can be successfully used with students as young as third graders.

Researchers have also investigated the use of photographs in the Question Answer Relationship strategy, with Cortese (2003) finding that pupils who use Question Answer Relationship use "lookbacks" more frequently than non-users. Question Answer Relationship education raises pupils' understanding of labor expectations, but more instruction and direction are needed to effectively use it. Question Answer Relationship promotes question-asking and teaches students about various sources for the best responses. It improves reading comprehension and literacy by establishing a common vocabulary in classrooms, organizing questioning exercises, and preparing students for tests. Question Answer Relationship is beneficial for all students, especially those with average to low ability. It can be used as a school-wide initiative to improve comprehension across different grade levels and topic. Question Answer Relationships are developed to address the issue of apathy and ineffectiveness in classroom discussions among students. The Question Answer Relationship comprehension approach considers multiple sources of information and aims to meet the demands of higher levels of thinking in diverse schools. Question-answer exchanges divided into four groups: "Right There," "Think and Search," "Author and Me," and "On My Own." By assessing the Question Answer Relationship using various types of questions, students can practise analyzing common questions after reading a book. The Question Answer Relationship strategy helps English Language Learners (ELLs) better categorize and understand questions, enabling more effective responses. Question Answering Relationship strategy offers two benefits: it helps teachers think through questions and information sources, and helps monitor their own questioning practices. It encourages and allows pupils to self-question before and after reading. Question Answer Relationship addresses four troubling concerns, particularly for students from diverse backgrounds who often receive inadequate literacy instruction. It addresses the lack of a shared language between instructors and pupils, establishes a framework for comprehension education, and serves as a focal point for comprehensive school reform. It also prepares students for high-stakes exams in various subject areas and grade levels without compromising excellent instruction. Implementing the Question Answer Relationship framework can benefit schools, teachers, and pupils, as it combines grade levels for reading comprehension instruction and improves instruction in reading comprehension and discussion-based exercises.

2.3 Steps Of Teaching QARS

A. Use a graphic to illustrate the four types and the two major categories of information sources—in the text and in your head—as you explain the QAR idea to the pupils.

B. Have pupils read a number of brief passages. One question from each of the four QAR categories should be asked after each reading. Compare and contrast the variations in question and response formats.

C. Provide pupils brief texts along with questions, answers, and QAR that are clearly marked. Talk about the reasons a question and answer pair is one QAR but not the other.

Then give the pupils texts with questions and have them choose the QAR. Give pupils texts that include questions, and then let them choose which QAR approach to take in order to obtain the solutions.

D. Give pupils a longer passage with up to six questions (at least one from each category). Pupils can work In groups to decide the QAR category and answer each question.

E. As an extension pupils can write their own questions for reading passages using the Question Answer Relationship strategies.

2.4 The Previous Related Studies

2.4.1 Yahya& Kareem (2021)

The study which is entitled , “Developing EFL Students’ Metacognition by Utilizing Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) Method,” aims at :

- A. The investigating level of development of the students’ metacognitive skills in relation to their linguistic repertoire.
- B. investigating how much EFL students have improved their metacognitive abilities by employing question-answer relationships in reading comprehension (QAR).

A sample of 50 pupils from Al Dour Preparatory School for Boys’ fifth preparatory grade was randomly chosen .

In order to assess and evaluate the students’ performance on the dependent variable of the study, the researcher developed and employed an accomplishment exam.

The reading comprehension accomplishment post test results show that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the EG and that of the CG, i.e., the scores of the students in the EG are substantially higher on average than those of the students in the CG.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 The Experimental Design

Best and Khan (2006) say that the process outline helps the researcher test hypotheses by drawing important conclusions about the relationship between independent and dependent variables. The researcher used a non-randomized pre _post test Design is used So, two groups are used one as a control group and the other as an experimental group.

Easterling (2005) states that experimental design is one of the most common ways to measure cause-and-effect relationships between variables in quantitative study. Experiments are done with a lot of control and manipulation over the test environment and variables. This means that any change in the outcome measure can be attributed to the method or the variance of an independent variable

, as shown in table (3.1):

Table (3.1)
The Experimental Designs

| <i>Groups</i> | <i>Pre_test</i> | <i>Independent variable</i> | <i>Dependent variable</i> | <i>Post _test</i> |
|---------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>EG</i> | Pupils' Achievement | QAR strategy | Pupils' Achievement | Pupils' post Achievement test |
| <i>CG</i> | Pupils' Achievement | Proscribed method | Pupils' Achievement | Pupils' post Achievement test |

3.2 Population and Sample of the Study

3.2.1 The Population

Best and Kahn (2006) say that population is a group of People with at least one thing in common that sets them apart from other people.

Creswell (2012) asserts that a population is a group of people who have the same feature. A target community is a group of people who share some characteristics that the researcher can use to find and study.

Lehman and Mehrens (1971) consider that population shows the group in general and the number of people in it in particular. Also, The whole population of the present study includes 320 second Intermediate grade pupils at Al Dour center , as shown below(3.2)

Table (3.2)

| NO | INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL | PUPILS' NUMBER |
|----|---|----------------|
| 1 | Mohammed Aldri Intermediate School for Boys | 85 |
| 2 | Karam Al Rahman Intermediate School for Boys | 75 |
| 3 | Asul AL din Intermediate School for Boys | 72 |
| 4 | Al-Dour for Boys Intermediate School for Boys | 88 |

Total.

320

3.2.2 The Sample

The sample is a subset of the target population that the researcher wants to study in order to make generalizations' about the target population.

The focus of this study is on the second grade at Karam AL Rahman Intermediate School for Boys in Al-dour center. The sample of the study consists of (60) pupils. There are (30) pupils in section (A), and there are (30) pupils in Section (B). (30) pupils from section (A) will be the experimental group, and (30) pupils from Section (B) will be the control group.

So, the total number of the sample is (60)pupils as shown in table (3.3).

Table (3.3)

The Sample

| Group | Section | Number |
|--------------|---------|--------|
| Experimental | A | 30 |
| Control | B | 30 |
| Total | | 60 |

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Comparison between Experimental Group in the Pre-Post Test .

It is found that the mean score of the difference between the pupils' achievement of the experimental group in the post-test is (75.66) with a standard deviation of (16.19). Whereas that of the pre-test is (56.26) with a standard deviation (17.08). The calculated t-value is (4.776), which is found to be higher than the tabulated t-value which is (2.045) at (0.05) level of significance when the degree of freedom is (29). The obtained results indicate that there are statistically significant differences between the means scores of pupils reading comprehension in the pre_ post test for experimental group in favour of post reading comprehension test , as shown in table (4.2)

Table (4.2)

The T-test Value of paired samples, the Experimental Group Performance in the Pre-Test and Post-Test

| Group | No. of students | Mean | SD. | T-Value | | DF | Level of Significance |
|----------|-----------------|-------|-------|------------|-----------|----|-----------------------|
| | | | | Calculated | Tabulated | | |
| Posttest | 30 | 75.66 | 16.19 | 4.776 | 2.045 | 29 | 0.05 |
| Pretest | 30 | 56.26 | 17.08 | | | | |

4.2 Discussion of the Results

The results of this study show that pupils who are taught by using the Question Answer Relationship strategy achieved better than those who are taught by using the traditional method (control group). This means that the Question Answer Relationship strategy is a better strategy to teach English reading comprehension than the prescribed method.

The researcher identifies the following causes for the pupils' development in reading comprehension by using the Question Answer Relationship strategy:

- 1- It gets pupils excited because it encourages interaction between the teacher and the pupils and between the pupils themselves. Also, when a pupil uses questions from the Question Answer Relationship subcategories "think and search" and "author and me," to remember and connect past experiences to current topics, pupils goes through some unique mental processes.
- 2- The Question Answer Relationship strategy is simple for teachers to use and produces exciting results when implemented by pupils.
- 3- There is a big change in how pupils thought and think about what they are analysing. This change is most noticeable in the result they produced. Post-test questions at the production level shed light on cognitive processes like remembering, analysing, and recalling specific terms. While the other questions focus on metacognitive processes, which are most effective when a pupil thinks and rethinks his final opinion to describe a new idea or to reflect his previous knowledge.
- 4- Pupils can also talk about their ideas, and learn from each other. When they try out new words and ideas that are very different from the usual way to improve reading.
- 5- It helps the pupil' reading comprehension by giving response of what they read.
- 6- Question_ Answer Relationship strategy helps pupils to learn and practise in class and solve their problem personally.
- 7- Using Question Answer Relationship strategy in the teaching-learning process keeps pupils engaged, monitors, and self-evaluators for their their learning by allowing them to share ideas with others.
- 8- Pupils gain confidence when they try new words and ideas that are not taught in the traditional strategy.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The major conclusions based on the results are:

- A. Pupils' reading comprehension greatly improved after implementing the QAR approach.
- B. The QAR strategy helps change prescribed method of teaching reading comprehension. Because of this, English teachers now have a new way to teach.
- C. Pupils' trust is enhanced by QAR cards, which give good feedback during lessons and even exams.
- D. Reading comprehension is better taught with the QAR strategy than the traditional method because of the open and interactive environment it provides for knowledge sharing, problem solving, and idea exchange between the teacher and students.
- E. Pupils also got better at reading, understanding, and summarising what they read.

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