The Effect of Read Ask Paraphrase (RAP) Strategy toward Students' Reading Comprehension and Perceptions

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Abstract:
Background: *The objectives of the research were to investigate whether there was a statistically significant difference of the students' reading comprehension achievement after the implementation of RAP strategy and also how students' perception is toward the application of RAP strategy.*
Materials and Methods: *The approach used in this research was quantitative. The subjects were 23 students of second grade majoring in business and marketing at SMKN 9 Bandar Lampung. The reading tests and questionnaire were used as the research instrument. Furthermore, the data were analyzed by using Repeated Measure t-test and the questionnaire was scored according to Likert scale.*
Results: *The resulst showed that there was a statically significant difference of students' reading comprehension with the significant level 0.05. In the pre-test, the mean score was 64.65. After giving the treatments, the mean score of the post-test was 80.74. Thus, the students' mean score of the pre-test and the post-test was improved 16.09 points. Moreover, it was found that students have positive perceptions towards the application of RAP strategy.*
Conclusion: *From the results, it is suggested that RAP strategy can facilitate students to improve their achievement in reading comprehension. In addition, students have positive perceptions toward the application of RAP strategy.*
Key Word: *RAP strategy; Reading; Reading comprehension; Students' perceptions.*

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I.   Introduction

Reading is one of important skills in the education field because it helps students to build their English vocabulary, encourages them to gain academic information and learn about grammar and punctuation. Moreover, reading can be seen as especially important because it is assumed that reading is a key means of learning new information (Grabe and Stoller, 2002).

Reading is a complex and conscious process in which reader uses such strategies to interpret and understand the meaning that the author is intended to share through the text and from the reader's background knowledge (Mikulecky, 2011). However, reading is not a simple skill to be mastered since it requires many aspects to comprehend. Reading requires students to be able in determining main idea, identifying specific information, reference, making inference and vocabulary (Nuttal, 1982).

However, students frequently face some problems in comprehending reading text. It can be caused by their lack of motivation. Since they have low motivation, they have some difficulties in reading comprehension. They cannot comprehend the content of the text well. They cannot gain the information from the text they read. It also causes them not to be able in finding main ideas of each paragraph in the text. Moreover, the students are also unfamiliar with the words used in the text as they have limited vocabularies. One factor that causes students not actively engaged in reading is due to inappropriate strategy used by the teacher (Murray, et. al., 2004).

Therefore, teachers have to apply an appropriate strategy in their teaching and learning process especially in teaching reading. The objective of applying learning strategy is to create such condition where students will easier to learn and understand the lesson. Furthermore, using a strategy in reading a text can cause the teaching learning process more effective and make students more actively engaged.

Previous research has suggested that explicit and systematic instruction in reading comprehension strategies can be an effective way to help students overcome difficulties in understanding text (L. Graham & Bellert, 2004). In this research, the writer would like to apply RAP strategy in teaching reading since it has three meaningful stages which are Read the text, Ask the main idea of the text, and Put the idea into the reader's own words.

RAP strategy was developed by Schumaker, Denton, and Deshler in 1984 (Hua et al., 2014). The strategy consists of reading, asking what readers read— the main ideas and details or supporting words in the paragraph— and paraphrasing it (Hagaman, Luschen, & Reid, 2010). The RAP strategy has several advantages compared to other interventions: it can be used with students at all levels, elementary school, junior high school, or high school (Hagaman & Reid, 2008). RAP strategy requires students to break reading passages into smaller units or "chunks" (i.e., paragraphs) and remember information from these smaller units of text (Schumaker et al., 1984). Jitendra and Gajria (2011:1) indicated that asking one's self what the main idea of a paragraph has resulted in the improvement of reading comprehension and maintenance. It is because of the strategy which require students to paraphrase material they read in their own words, thus students will actively involve in reading rather than passively approaching text (Schumaker et al., 1984).

Moreover, RAP strategy can help students to develop their ability to comprehend the text and also make students easier to grasp information from the text. Through RAP strategy, the students do not only know how to get main idea but also help the students to become more interested in the process of reading and build their critical thinking in comprehending the reading text (Hagaman, et. al., 2010). There are some previous research that have been conducted, Dahlia (2014) investigated the effect of RAP strategy on students' reading comprehension at senior high school. It was found that RAP has positive effect on students' reading comprehension. Furthermore, Fransisca (2016) conducted a research on the use of RAP strategy to slow learner middle school students. It also showed that RAP has a significant impact towards the achievement of students' reading comprehension. In addition, Ilther (2017) did a research on the use of paraphrasing strategy to improve the reading comprehension of primary school students at frustration level reading. The result of his research showed that the paraphrasing strategy training gave positive influence towards students' reading comprehension. Moreover, Kemp (2017) had a research using RAP strategy for students with learning disabilities and concomitant speech-language impairments or ADHD. It proved that RAP strategy gives a positive influence on students with learning disabilities.

Based on the consideration of previous studies, in this research, the writer applied RAP strategy to students of vocational high school or SMK. Vocational high school students are students of specific majors, in this case business and marketing major. They are adult learners who are acquiring sets of professional knowledge and skills to put into daily practice. The curriculum used is also different from senior high school or SMA, vocational high school studies English for specific purpose based on their major. Thus, students are required to apply English for their working situation since they are expected to get a job after finishing study. RAP strategy provides the stage of paraphrasing where students can use their own words to restate sentences from any texts. It can facilitate students to be creative in sharing their ideas but still related to what exist in the text provided.

Moreover, Campbell (2001) and Muhammad (2017) had done a research on students' perception and the results of their researches showed that students' perceptions were different from each other. Most of the students had positive perception toward the implementation of teaching strategies. Considering those research, the researcher will also investigate students' perception on the application of RAP strategy.

Based on the elaboration above, this researcher will apply RAP as a strategy in teaching reading for vocational high school students majoring in business and marketing. Therefore, the objectives of this research are (1) to investigate whether there is statistically significant difference of students' reading comprehension achievement after being taught by using RAP strategy, and (2) to find out students' perception after RAP strategy applied in teaching learning process.

II. Material and Methods

The approach of the research was quantitative. The design used was one group pre-test and post-test. The population of the research was students of the second grade of SMK Negeri 9 Bandar Lampung and the sample of the research was class XI BDP (Business and Marketing major) I consisting of 23 students. The activities were started from administering pre-test, doing treatment, and administering post-test and questionnaire.

The instruments used were reading comprehension tests and questionnaire of students' perception toward RAP strategy. The reading test was administered twice: the first was pre-test and the second was post-test. Pre-test was conducted to know the students' reading comprehension ability before the treatment and post-test was given to know the students' reading comprehension ability after the treatment. The reading test consisted of 30 items in multiple choice, the texts used in reading test are descriptive texts. In analyzing the data, repeated measure t-test was used to prove the hypothesis and to know whether this research was significant or not by looking at the results of pre-test and post-test. Questionnaire was distributed after the post-test. The questionnaire was scored according to Likert scale whereas the reliability of the questionnaire was measured by using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient (George and Mallery, 2003).

III. Results

In the pre-test, the total score of 23 students was 1487. The mean was 64.65. The highest score was 80 and the lowest was 44. After giving the treatments, the post test was done. Based on the results, it was found that the total score was 1857. The mean was 80.74. The highest score was 92 and the lowest score was 60. The following table shows the descriptive statistics of the pre-test and the post-test.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Pre-test and Post-test

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
pretest	23	44.00	80.00	1487.00	64.6522	11.36025
posttest	23	60.00	92.00	1857.00	80.7391	8.01259
Valid N (listwise)	23					

From table 1., it could be seen that the students' mean score of the pre-test and the post-test was improved 16.09 points after the treatments of implementing RAP strategy in teaching reading. Besides that, the highest score of the pre-test was 80 and the highest score of the post-test was improved to 92, it gains 12 points respectively. The lowest score of the pre-test was 44 and the lowest score of the post-test was 60, so the lowest score's gain was 16.

Table 2. Paired Samples Test of Pre-test and Post-test

Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences					t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
pretest - posttest	-1.60870E1	6.11193	1.27443	-18.72995	-13.44396	-12.623	22	.000

Furthermore, the scores from the pre-test and the post-test were analyzed by using repeated measure t-test. Based on table 2., the result of repeated measure t-test showed that t-value was 12.623 and t-table was 2.074 because the t-value was higher than t-table (12.623>2.036) and the significant level is lower than 0.05 (0.000<0.05), it means that H1 is accepted. It can be concluded that there was a statistically significant difference of students' reading comprehension achievement after being taught by applying RAP strategy.

On the other hand, the questionnaire was also distributed in the last meeting to the students after the RAP strategy had been given to them. The questionnaire was distributed through Google-forms and there were 23 students who had responded to the questionnaire. Below are the results of the questionnaire of students' perception about RAP strategy.

Table 3. The Results of Students' Perception Questionnaire

No.	Statements	Percentage of Students' Response				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	I often acquire valuable information through this strategy	52.2 %	43.5%	0%	4.3%	0%
2.	I can get the ideas easier through the 'Ask' stage	43.5%	52.2%	4.3%	0%	0%
3.	I often engage in critical thinking in paraphrasing the statements from the text	52.2%	30.4%	17.4%	0%	0%
4.	I often share information and ideas with other students to see whether my paraphrasing words are correct	52.2%	39.1%	0%	4.3%	4.3%
5.	I often listen to the thoughts and opinions of my classmates	34.8%	65.2%	0%	0%	0%

6.	I get a chance to see how ideas can be applied to working situations through this strategy	39.1%	52.2%	8.7%	0%	0%
7.	I often practice skills of reading, sharing and giving encouragement to classmates through this strategy	34.8%	56.5%	4.3%	4.3%	0%
8.	I can review information, check on my level of understanding, and get help if necessary through this strategy	69.6%	30.4%	0%	0%	0%
9.	I look forward to these activities	43.5%	56.5%	0%	0%	0%
10.	I feel actively involved in these activities	30.4%	60.9%	8.7%	0%	0%
11.	I get difficulty in 'Paraphrasing' stage	13%	17.4%	17.4%	30.4%	21.7%
12.	I get confused when using RAP strategy	8.7%	0%	26.1%	39.1%	26.1%
13.	I feel intellectually challenged in these activities	30.4%	52.2%	13%	4.3%	0%
14.	I feel closer to my classmates in these activities	30.4%	47.8%	21.7%	0%	0%

Statements number 1 and number 2 represented students' perceptions on the Ask stage in which the statements are *I often acquire valuable information through this strategy* and *I can get the ideas easier through the 'Ask' stage.* There were 52.2% of students who strongly agree, 43.5% agree, and only 4.3% of students who disagree with statement number 1. While in statement number 2, there were 43.5% of students who strongly agree, 52.2% agree and 4.3% neutral to the statement. Most students chose strongly agree and agree in both statements related to the Ask stage.

Statements number 3, 4, and 5 showed students' perceptions on Paraphrase stage. The statements are *I often engage in critical thinking in paraphrasing the statements from the text, I often share information and ideas with other students to see whether my paraphrasing words are correct,* and *I often listen to the thoughts and opinions of my classmates.* There were 52.2% of students who strongly agree, 30.4% who agree, and 17.4% were neutral to statement number 3. In responding to statement number 4, there were 52.2% of students who strongly agree, 39.1% who agree, 4.3% who disagree, and 4.3% who strongly disagree. For statement number 5, there were 34.8% of students who strongly agree, 65.2% who agree, no students chose neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. Positive perceptions on Paraphrase stage can be seen from the number of percentage in which most students were mostly strongly agree with the statements.

Statements number 6, 7, 8, and 14 investigated students' perceptions on how RAP can facilitate for working situation and cooperation with other students. The statements are *I get a chance to see how ideas can be applied to working situations through this strategy, I often practice skills of reading, sharing and giving encouragement to classmates through this strategy, I can review information, check on my level of understanding, and get help if necessary through this strategy,* and *I feel closer to my classmates in these activities.* It can be seen from the table that there were 39.1% of students who strongly agree, 52.2% chose agree, 8.7% of students were neutral, and no students were disagree or strongly disagree with statement number 6. Students' responses to statement number 7 showed that there were 34.8% of students who strongly agree, 56.5% who agree, 4.3% neutral, and only 4.3% chose disagree. While for statement number 8, there were 69.6% of students who strongly agree, 30.4% who agree, and the rest options were not chosen. Then, there were 30.4% of students who strongly agree, 47.8% who agree, and 21.7% were neutral to statement number 14.

On the other hand, statement number 11 until 13 represented students' difficulties or challenge when using RAP strategy. The statements are *I get difficulty in 'Paraphrasing' stage, I get confused when using RAP strategy* and *I feel intellectually challenged in these activities.* The perceptions on statement number 11 were the most variative, 13% of students were strongly agree, 17.4% agree, 17.4% chose neutral, 30.4% were disagree, and 21.7% were strongly disagree. While for statement number 12, only 8.7% of students were strongly agree, 26.1% were neutral, 39.1% were disagree, and 26.1% were strongly disagree. In responding to statement number 13, there were 30.4% of students who strongly agree, 52.2% who agree, 13% were neutral, and 4.3% were disagree. Thus, some students still got difficulties in the treatments of RAP strategy especially in Paraphrase stage which cause them intellectually challenged in finding correct words to paraphrase the sentences from text given.

Lastly, statement number 9 and 10 showed students' perceptions whether they were motivated and became enthusiast in the learning activities using RAP strategy. The statements are *I look forward to these activities* and *I feel actively involved in these activities.* The responses to statement number 9 showed that there were 43.5% students who strongly agree, 56.5% who agree and no one chose rest options. While for statement number 10, there were 30.4% of students who strongly agree, 60.9% who agree, 8.7% who chose neutral, and no students chose agree or disagree. It means that students felt motivated in learning using RAP strategy.

IV. Discussion

The result of the research showed that RAP strategy significantly had positive effects on the improvement of students' reading comprehension of descriptive texts. There was a statistically significant difference of students' mean score after being taught by using RAP strategy. The students' mean score of the pre-test was 64.65. Meanwhile, their mean score of the post-test after being taught by using RAP strategy was 80.74, in which students' gain score was 16.09.

The finding of this research was also consistent with the previous research conducted by Fransisca (2016). The research proved that RAP strategy was effective to improve reading comprehension achievement of slow learners in middle school. In addition, Ilter (2017) also conducted a research using paraphrasing strategy to improve reading comprehension of primary-school students at frustration level of reading, the result showed that there was a positive effect on students' reading comprehension through paraphrasing strategy training given to the students with frustration level in reading. Moreover, the improvement of the students' score was due to meaningful stages of RAP strategy. It made the students asking about main idea of each paragraph then they have to express that idea into the sentence using their own words. As Boyle and Scanlon (2010: 207) stated that the purpose of RAP strategy is to help students actively engaged in reading through searching for main ideas and details in paragraph and then transforming that information through paraphrasing to make it personally meaningful.

In relation to elaboration of some previous research which also used RAP strategy, it can be said that RAP strategy was likely successful to improve the students' reading comprehension. RAP strategy facilitates students with 'Ask' and 'Paraphrase' stages which make them easier to understand main ideas from the text. Thus, RAP strategy gave positive effects on students' reading comprehension.

Furthermore, in order to answer the second research question the researcher also analyzed the response to the questionnaire of students' perception on RAP strategy. There are 14 statements which represent the perceptions on 'Ask' stage, 'Paraphrase' stage, the advantages of using RAP strategy in working situation, difficulties when using RAP strategy, and also the interest of using RAP strategy in the future.

'Ask' stage

Most students were strongly agree and agree in both statements related to the Ask stage. They could acquire valuable information and get ideas easier through the Ask stage. Based on Hua, et.al., (2014), RAP strategy is considered more advantageous as it focuses on teaching cognitive strategies to compensate for their cognitive deficits. Students often cannot decide what they should find in the text, so the Ask stage made students focus on what they have to figure out from the text. This stage requires students to identify main ideas and supporting details from the text.

'Paraphrase' stage

RAP strategy provides a stage where students should paraphrase the main point of sentences. The students were accustomed to make different words from some sentences provided in the text. They could freely share their idea through the paraphrasing sentences. Schumaker et al. (1984) stated that the strategy requires students to paraphrase material they read in their own words, so it makes students actively involved in reading rather than passively approaching text. 52.2% of students were strongly agree that they often engaged in critical thinking in paraphrasing the statements from the text, meaning that students were engaged well through the strategy since it makes them actively looked for correct words to paraphrase by sharing the ideas with friends and listen to other students' thoughts whether the paraphrasing sentences are already correct.

Working situation and cooperation with other students

From the questionnaire, students were mostly agree that RAP strategy facilitates them to get a chance in sharing ideas with their own words, since the subject of this research is vocational high school students majoring in business and marketing where they have to promote a thing later in the working situation. They also agree that they practice skills of reading, sharing and giving encouragement to classmates through RAP strategy which will be useful in working situation. Cooperation is considered important in the working environment and RAP strategy can make them to review information from the text, check on their level of understanding of the text, and get help from classmates if necessary. Students were agree that they feel closer to my classmates in the learning activities using RAP strategy.

Difficulties

Since students have to indicate main idea and details from the text, they have to struggle in finding correct words to make their paraphrasing sentence still related with the idea of the text. It is in line with 3 statements in the questionnaire that some students agree if they still got difficulty in 'Paraphrasing' stage, also

got confused when using RAP strategy since they have to go through some stages in order to get the purpose of RAP strategy, and some of them agree that RAP strategy makes them feeling intellectually challenged.
Enthusiasm in using RAP strategy

Looking at the results of the questionnaire, most students agree with the statement of I look forward to these activities and I feel actively involved in these activities. Thus, students are motivated in learning reading through RAP strategy. They feel enthusiast in learning with the strategy since it provides meaningful stages. Boyle and Scanlon (2010: 207) stated that RAP strategy aims to help students become actively engaged in reading through searching for main ideas and details in paragraph and then transforming that information through paraphrasing to make it personally meaningful.

V. Conclusion

In line with the data analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that Read-Ask-Paraphrase strategy has positive effects on students' reading comprehension achievement. There is a statistically significant difference of students' reading comprehension achievement between pre-test and post-test which was conducted after the implementation of Read-Ask-Paraphrase strategy. RAP strategy makes the students paraphrasing the sentence into their own words, thus they will comprehend the text easier.

Moreover, it was found that students have positive perceptions towards the application of RAP strategy in relation with the 'Ask' stage, 'Paraphrase' stage, working situation, cooperation, and students' enthusiasm. On the other hand, 52.1% of students still got problems in the process of learning using RAP strategy especially in the stage of paraphrasing since they were asked to find correct words to make the paraphrasing sentence is still in line with the context from the text.

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