EXPLORING EFL LEARNERS' READING COMPREHENSION THROUGH PQRST

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how reading comprehension can be enhanced through an intervention of PQRST. This study used a classroom action research design by monitoring and controlling the teaching-learning process. The subjects of the study were 30 eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 3 Tampaksiring. The data were collected through tests and questionnaires after the instruction of PQRST in 2 cycles. The study revealed that the student's comprehension of the contents of English text gradually increased as can be seen from the comparison of the pre-test which was 52.33 categorized as "insufficient" and the mean score post-test 1 was 79.56 categorized as "good", and the mean score of post-test II was 88.36 categorized as "excellent" achievement. The result of the post-test in each cycle clearly showed that there was significant improvement concerning the subjects' ability in reading comprehension. Besides, the subjects also gave positive responses to the implementation of PQRST technique in teaching reading comprehension. Therefore, through this technique, the EFL teachers can allocate the students' difficulties, stimulate students' knowledge, and provoke students' positive learning behavior.
Keywords: reading comprehension, PQRST, recount text, learning achievement

INTRODUCTION

In English language learning as a foreign language, reading is not only an exercise of eye movements but is also a thinking process. Effective reading requires a logical sequence of thinking. Pang et al (2003:6) state that reading is about understanding written texts. It is a complex activity that involves both perceptions and thought. Reading consists of two related processes: word recognition and comprehension. Word recognition refers to the process of perceiving how written symbols correspond to one's spoken language. Klingner et al. (2007:2) state that reading comprehension is the process of constructing meaning by coordinating a number of complex processes that include word reading and word knowledge and fluency. Generally, reading is about understanding written texts. Therefore, the reading material prepared by the teachers should be in the context of daily life context and the activities must be focused on extracting meaning from general and specific information.

Reading comprehension according to Pardo (2004:272) is a process to construct the

meaning which involves the combination of initial knowledge and previous experience, information about the text, and the manner the reader takes in relationship to the text. Besides it, reading ability is determined by students' reading habits, linguistic knowledge, textual knowledge, the purpose of reading, and motivation. The readers' culture affects the degree of understanding which matches the writer's culture. The motivation in reading is needed to influence the interest, purpose, and emotion of the writer with the text. Harris and Graham (2007:8) describe that reading comprehension involves much more than the reader's response to text it is a multi-component, highly complex process that involves many interactions between readers and what they bring to the text as well as variables related to the text itself (interest in text, understanding the type of the text. Brown (2004:45) argues that the most essential skill for success in all educational contexts remains a skill of paramount importance as we create assessments of general language ability. In implementing reading as the main emphasis of teaching activities every English teacher believes that the students differ in their ability to read. To attain the benefits of the highest goal, the

teacher should be able to motivate them to read with contextual language through a communicative language teaching approach (Wardana, et.al,.2022). In reading, the student must have purpose and motivation to learn. In regard to the importance of reading, foreign language students should develop reading skills in order to be able to read the materials written in English efficiently, that is by utilizing appropriate techniques and strategies for getting a good understanding

In contrast, the English teachers in SMP Negeri 3 Tampaksiring come across several problems and difficulties in directing students' attention to reading text. Students have limited vocabulary and some specific cases of grammar. Furthermore, students do not acknowledge the types of text they read which can give them initial clues about the content they are reading. The English teacher said most students have difficulties finding out the main idea of a text, specific information, word meaning, and textual references. This problem exists because when the teacher evaluates a student's ability in reading, the teacher uses multiple-choice as a teacher test, and also the student only had a limited scope of vocabulary and it makes difficult in understanding the text. The teacher has implemented question-and-

answer techniques in the learning process but it couldn't increase the student's ability to read. The students also still have a problem with the four indicators of reading and if this continues, it will affect the students' interest, motivation, and learning achievement (Wardana, et.al., (2020). This study aims to determine whether the reading comprehension skill of the eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 3 Tampaksiring in the academic year 2021/2022 can be improved through the PQRST teaching technique.

Reading Comprehension

Reading is one of four skills that must be mastered by students. Through reading the student can improve their ability to acquire knowledge and gradually increase or improve their other language skill. The students will reach all of these aims if they understand and comprehend the text they have read. Pardo (2004:272), comprehension is a process to construct the meaning which involves the combination of initial knowledge and previous experience, information about the text, and the manner the reader takes in relationship to the text. Besides it, reading ability is determined by the readers' culture, the purpose of reading, and motivation in reading (Ketut & Nengah, 2021). The

readers' culture affects the degree of understanding which matches the writer's culture. The motivation in reading is needed to influence the interest, purpose, and emotion of the writer with the text. Harris and Graham (2007:8) describe that reading comprehension involves much more than the reader's response to text it is a multi-component, highly complex process that involves many interactions between readers and what they bring to the text as well as variables related to the text itself (interest in text, understanding the type of the text.

Brown (2004:45) argues that the most essential skill for success in all educational contexts remains a skill of paramount importance as we create assessments of general language ability. In implementing reading as the main emphasis of teaching activities every English teacher believes that the students differ in their ability to read. To attain the benefits of the highest goal, the teacher should be able to motivate them to read. In reading, the student must have purpose and motivation to learn (Ketut & Putu, 2021). In regard to the importance of reading, foreign language students should develop reading skills in order to be able to read the materials written in English efficiently, that is by utilizing appropriate

techniques and strategies for getting a good understanding.

There are multiple principal goals of reading, which are determined by the end and the reader has ordained the activity to obtain. The general reading of reading is the acquisition of meaning from the ordered arrangement of symbols. For example, in an alphabet writing system, each word is a collection of symbols that expresses a term or some meanings, which taken in conjunction with other words ordered to each other in a predetermined syntax, conveys some general meaning that the author intends the reader to acquire. Therefore, when people read something, they determine the meaning by the symbol presented in the book or any other written media.

The second goal of reading is to get an understanding. A reader wishes to receive new knowledge of some discipline and a set of facts from the author. He or she usually approaches a given work with a misunderstanding, perception, or interpretation of understanding compared by coming to terms with the author of a given book and subsequently reaching an equal level of understanding. The readers also hope they can get something new and understand it when they read some texts. The last goal of reading is to get information. The reader tries to get knowledge of facts or knowledge about the author himself. If a reader is reading a book with the third goal in mind, he may not be as concerned with understanding the arguments and parts of the book and the way these parts relate to the whole. He may spend less or even no time reading a book analytically, but simply systematically inspect a book in order to get knowledge.

Teaching Reading through PQRST

PQRST was founded by Thomas F. Stanton. PQRST stands for the core activities of the preview, question, read, state/summarize test. According to Petterson (2002:242) that one of the best-known techniques for improving memory from reading is called the PQRST technique. Champion (2006:85) states that PQRST technique is aimed at helping to remember written information. The technique is very effective to apply for studies that need the remembering material. PQRST is the study technique that helps students retrieve information from reading and involves glancing at the topic, formulating the possible questions, reading related material, and answering question (Turkington, 2003:61). Steps of PQRST:

1. (P) Preview is the same as the assessment or review of the introduction. In the first step, the pages of the text it will be studied are checked, skimming the titles of a paragraph or their parts, pictures, graphs, diagrams, and maps, and reading the question or summary at the end of the chapter. The goal is to get the impression or general idea of its context.

2. (Q) Question: in the second step, the students are asked some questions before reading the whole chapter. The questions are based on materials that have been read briefly earlier.

3. (R) Read: try to find the answers to all questions posed earlier. By this stage, the mind is directed to seek information that is relevant to the focus of the problems that are formulated and trained to read carefully and in detail.

4. (S) State or summarize in this step, students create a summary, after several questions before the reading test. Each question and answer is written in a notebook.

5. (T) Test. It is the same or similar to a preview or repeat. In the fifth step, it is repeated again to remember the entire contents of an important summary of the entire chapter. Attempted to acquire a thorough mastery round and firm up the material in the test phase, the test can also be used to reflect activities that have been done from beginning to end. Based on the explanation above, PQRST includes preview, question, read, state, and test. In the action of preview, the students read the text briefly read quickly. At the stage of the question here, the students make some questions based on the material in the text. During the reading session, the student read the text in detail. At the state session, the students state the important thing about the text. In the test session here, the teachers evaluate students' abilities. PQRST technique is a development of the strategy survey, read, recite and review that can help students to understand the content of the passage and help them to concentrate longer. This way makes it easy for students to improve their reading comprehension.

Recount Text

A recount text is a text which retells events or experiences in the past. Its purpose is either to inform or to entertain the audience. There is no complication among the participants and that differentiates from

the narrative. Recount text presents the past experiences in order of time or place; what happened on Sunday, then on Monday, then on Tuesday. Roison et al (2004:45) explain that"The text organization of recount text is orientation and followed by a series of events. Sometimes a recount text has evaluation or re-orientation at the end of the text". In a simple way, recount text describes a series of events in detail. It does not expose the struggle on how to make them happen. The event happened smoothly.

RESEARCH METHODS

The subject of the study was the eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 3 Tampaksiring. In this study, the researcher took class VIII for the academic year 2021/2022 which consisted of 30 students as research subjects 13 male and 17 female. Class VIII was selected as research subject based on an interview with an English teacher in SMP Negeri 3 Tampaksiring. In addition, the result showed that most of the VIII class had faced problems in reading comprehension, especially in finding the main idea, specific information, word meaning, and textual references in the text. The quantity of students in the VIII class who could achieve KKM is the lowest compared with other classes. Therefore, further research was conducted by applying PQRST as a teaching technique to improve students' reading comprehension.

This study aimed to improve the ability of the tenth-grade students of SMP Negeri 3 Tampaksiring in comprehending reading text through PQRST. The researcher has used a classroom action research design. According to Ary et al. (2010:513), action research is a process to improve education by incorporating change and involves education that can be applied to such areas as curriculum development, teaching strategies, and school reform. Classroom action research has been applied around the world in education, especially in improving teaching and learning. Elliot (2002:1) states that action research is the process through which teachers collaborate in evaluating their practice jointly, raise awareness of their personal theory, articulate a shared conception of values, try out new strategies to render the values expressed in their practice more consistent with the educational values they espouse, record their work in a form which is readily available to, and understandable by other teachers. Those are developing a shared theory of teaching by researching practice.

In classroom action research, the first thing to do was to know the initial reflection of the subject of the study during the preliminary observation by administering a pre-test and inquiring with the teacher about the circumstances of the students. Some lessons were conducted by the researcher on classroom action research procedures to see the improvement of reading comprehension of the subject. The cycle consists of four interconnected activities. These are namely planning, action, observation, and the last is initial reflection.

Research Instrument

The selection and use of appropriate, valid, and reliable research instruments are important steps in scientific research. This is because only valid and reliable research instruments can be used to collect the required valid and reliable data for the research conducted. That is used by the researcher as a vehicle to stimulate, elicit and encourage the students to give their opinion, responses, and answer to obtain validity and reliability requirements for the research. Two types of instruments were used in collecting and evaluating data of this study, such as tests and questionnaires as follows:

There were two kinds of tests that had been constructed for the students in this study. They were pre-test and post-test. In the preliminary stage, the researcher used a pre-test. The pre-test was used to administer in order to know the pre-existing ability of the students in reading and their problems before the technique was implemented. If the problem exists, the research can be conducted in the classroom with the technique chosen. The test particularly consisted of pre-test and post-test. Moreover, the post-test aimed to know students' reading ability after the technique was applied, in this case through PQRST. The tests administered are in the form of a short answer task and consisting of fifth teen items and was collected in the last session of every cycle. It was to know if there was any progress improvement that was significantly made by the subjects after the use of the PQRST teaching technique was implemented. The answer to the pre-test and post-test was analyzed by using the score rubric.

The questionnaire is used to know the students' responses on the application of the PQRST technique in order to help them to improve their reading comprehension. The questionnaire contained some items and it was distributed to all students at the end of

the last cycle. The form of the questionnaire was multiple choices and consisted of ten items. The answers to the questionnaire were scored using a scale of 5 - 1 with SA (Strongly Agree) and a scale of 5, A (Agree) and a scale were 4, U (Undecided) and the scale were 3, D (Disagree) and a scale of was 2, and SD (Strongly Disagree) and the scale was 1.

Data Collection

The researcher used some kinds of research instruments to collect the data for the present study such as pre-test, post-test, and questionnaires. Therefore, there are three kinds of raw scores obtained for the study. The pre-test was given to find the existing subjects' ability in reading comprehension. The researcher gave a pre-test to the student in order to know their ability. This test was used in initial reflection to find the problem faced by students.

1. A post-test was given at the end of each cycle after teaching reading to the subjects through PQRST to improve the ability of the eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 3 Tampaksiring in reading comprehension. Post-test scores indicate the subjects' improvement in

reading comprehension and to know the result of the action.

2. The questionnaire was applied to know the response towards learning English, especially reading comprehension through PQRST. It was given after the data of the post-test was finished.

Data Analysis

The most valuable data required to answer the research understudy is to collect data from giving pre-test and post-test, and some additional questionnaire data. The questionnaire is additional data gathering to the subject under study which was eighth-grade students SMP Negeri 3 Tampaksiring. In this study, two types of data were gathered. They are qualitative and quantitative data. The data obtained for the present classroom action study was descriptively analyzed to reveal the extent of the subject's progress or increasing ability in reading comprehension.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This present study was conducted to solve the students' matter in learning English, especially reading. The evidence that was found during the interview with the English teacher and the result of the subjects' pre-test

showed that their achievement in reading comprehension was still low. This situation needs action immediately. Hence, to improve the subjects' reading comprehension, classroom action research was designed to implement PQRST technique. By applying the technique, the subjects' reading comprehension achievement was expected to be improved. Therefore, this present study was focused on reading personal recount text, particularly in finding out general information, specific information, textual meaning, and textual reference.

Cycle I

To gather the data needed for the present study, the post-test was administered every cycle in each session. Cycle 1 consisted of 2 post-test and each post-test consisted of 15 questions and total in cycle 1 Post-test sessions 1 and session 2 consisted of 30 questions and the subjects were asked to answer items of short-answer tasks in 45 minutes. Based on the tabulated data presented in table 4.1, the total score of post-test 1 which was followed by 30 subjects was 2387. It was calculated to find the mean score of the cycle I that was obtained by the subjects by using the formula as follows:

Mean Score of Post-test I $= \sum x = \dfrac{2387}{30} = 79.56$

The analysis of post-test 1 in cycle I above showed that there was an improvement in the mean score from pre-cycle I. The mean score of post-test I was 79.56. From this result, it could be seen that there was an improvement that was achieved by the subjects. It also showed that there was an improvement in the subjects' mean scores compared to the pre-cycle I. The data of post-test I showed that 24 subjects out of 30 achieved the minimum passing grade. Furthermore, the success indicator had not yet been achieved in the first cycle which was intended to get a better improvement in reading comprehension.

Cycle II

In the cycle, II was conducted to achieve the success indicator of the present study. Reviewing the weakness of cycle I, cycle II was carried out in a revised version. This revision was made based on the results of the post-test. As in cycle I, cycle II was divided into two sessions namely session 3 and session 4. Four interconnected activities were done namely: planning action, observation, and reflection. This cycle was conducted to improve the subjects' reading comprehension to achieve the success indicator. The result of the learning process was figured out by administering the test.

Based on the data tabulation which was presented in table 4.1, the total score of post-test 2 which was followed by 30 subjects was 2651. It was calculated to find the mean score of cycle II obtained by the eighth-grade subjects of SMP Negeri 3 Tampaksiring. It can be formulated by using the following formula:

Mean Score of Post-test II $= \sum x = \dfrac{2651}{30} = 88.36$

Based on the data resulting in the post-test 2 cycle II. It showed a significant improvement in the subjects. The mean score of post-test II was 88.36. There were 30 subjects that could achieve the minimum passing grade of the eight-grade subjects of

SMP Negeri 3 Tampaksiring in the academic year 2021/2022. The subjects were more active in class, especially in asking a question during the teaching and learning process. Therefore, the present study achieved the success indicator that had been determined. Then this classroom action research could be ended as the success indicator had been achieved. The result of the data analysis of the pre-test, post-test 1+2 in cycle 1, and post-test 3+4 in cycle 2 showed that there was an improvement for the students after being taught through PQRST technique. The comparative mean of the eighth-grade students can be presented in figure 1
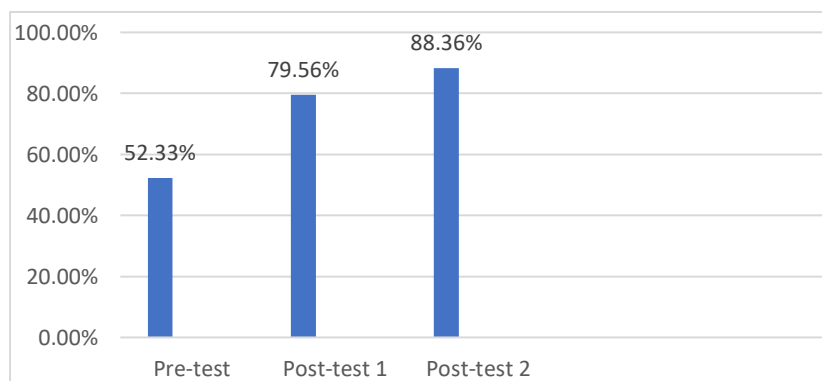

Figure 1. the Improvement of reading Comprehension

The data required for the classroom action study were also collected by administering the questionnaire to the subjects under study at the end of cycle II. The researcher conducted the questionnaire to know the subjects' responses toward

PQRST technique in teaching reading comprehension. The questionnaire consisted of ten questions in a table and was addressed in Indonesia to avoid misunderstanding among the subjects. The answer to the questionnaire was scored using a scale of 5-1

which were option *SA* (Strongly Agree) were 825, *A* (Agree) were 544 *U* (Undecided) were 57, *D* (Disagree) was 2, and *SD* (Strongly Disagree) was 0. The computation of the comparative percentages for the score of the item of the questionnaire showed the total responses from respective of the item SA, A, U, D, and SD which were shown as the following:

In other to know the subjects' responses on the implementation of PQRST strategy, the researcher administered the questionnaire at the end of the last cycle. In addition, the result of the analysis of the questionnaire score also showed the positive responses of the subjects toward the PQRST technique. These findings supported the effectiveness of PQRST in this classroom

action study. The obtained comparative percentages of the item of the questionnaire showed the subjects' positive responses in teaching reading comprehension through PQRST technique, the result of the questionnaire showed that there were 73.40% of the responses SA (Strongly Agree); 24.74% of the responses A (Agree); 1.72% of the responses U (Undecided); 0.14% of the responses D (Disagree); 0.00% of the responses, and SD (Strongly Disagree) none of the subjects strongly disagreed on the PQRST. Based on those findings, the eight-grade subjects of SMP Negeri 3 Tampaksiring gave positive responses toward the implementation of PQRST technique as presented in Figure 2
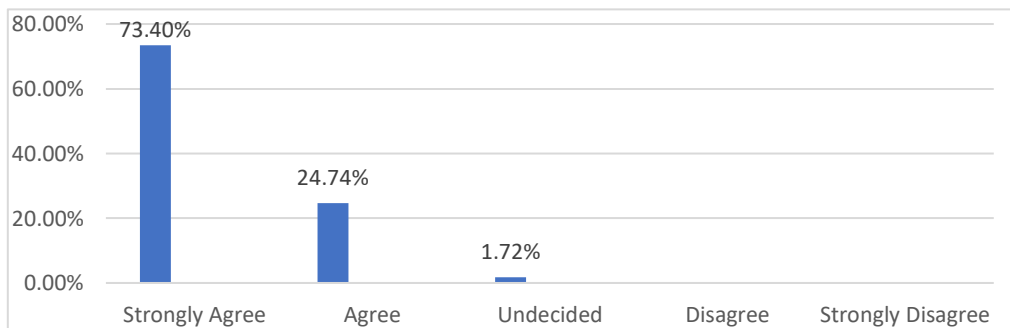

Figure 2. Subjects' Responses toward the   Implementation of PQRST

Based on the findings above, the present study could be ended since the study had achieved the success indicator. In addition, the results of the test and

questionnaire in the present study were used as a measurement of whether the subjects could achieve a minimum passing grade or not and responses to the technique. The

present study showed that the ability of the eight-grade subjects of SMP Negeri 3 Tampaksiring in reading comprehension improved from the session and surely this classroom action study could be ended. There was a significant improvement in the subjects' reading comprehension which was indicated by the improvements of the mean score from the pre-test, post-test 1, and post-test 2. As additional supporting data, the questionnaire was also administered to the subjects to find out their responses towards the implementation of PQRST technique in the teaching and learning process to improve their reading comprehension. All of the findings of the present classroom action research were discussed in the following discussion.

In the present study, the researcher conducted research to find out the results of the implementation of PQRST technique in the eighth-grade subjects of SMP Negeri 3 Tampaksiring in the academic year 2021/2022 especially to improve reading comprehension. The design of this study was classroom action research. The cyclical process was started by pre-cycle at the very beginning of the present classroom action research. The next process is to conduct the cyclical process. Two cycles were done in

this classroom action research; cycle I and cycle II. To reveal the findings of the present study, a discussion was needed to gain a deeper understanding of the research findings. The data of the present study were gathered by using research instruments that have already been mentioned and provided; tests and questionnaires.

Firstly, in the pre-cycle, the researcher interviewed the English teacher of SMP Negeri 3 Tampaksiring, observed the situation in the classroom, and administered the pre-test to the subjects in the form of a short-answer task. The interview aimed to know the subject's condition in reading comprehension before doing the research. The subjects' mean score was 52.33 and there were no subjects who could pass the minimum passing grade. It was appropriate with the result of the interview which said that the subjects' reading comprehension was low. The results of the subjects' pre-test showed that they had difficulties in identifying information, specific information, textual meaning, and textual reference of the text. In addition, none of the subjects could obtain a minimum passing grade. As a result, the researcher decided to conduct cycle I to give a better teaching-learning process to the subjects, especially in

reading comprehension. In cycle I, the researcher applied PQRST technique to the subjects.

Secondly, in cycle I, the researcher could apply the PQRST technique. In the first session, there were only a few subjects that were active in the WhatsApp application, they asked about the material and answered the questions in the comments in the application. However, some subjects still have no comment on the application WhatsApp application. In the second session, the subjects' mean score was 79.56 and there were only 24 subjects who could pass the minimum passing grade there were significant improvements in subjects after the implementation of PQRST technique. The mean score in the pre-test to the post-test has been improved. It was far away if it was compared with the mean score the technique was implemented. There was a good improvement which was achieved in post-test 2 in cycle II. The mean score of post-test 2 was 88.36. It was much better than the researcher's expectation, there were 30 subjects that could pass the minimum passing grade. The mean score of the post-test in cycle really showed that PQRST technique was very effective in increasing the subjects' reading comprehension. In terms of general

information, specific information, textual meaning, and textual reference. In addition, all the subjects achieved the minimum passing grade of SMP Negeri 3 Tampaksiring. The subjects' mean score increased significantly from the pre-test 1. At the end of cycle II, the subjects could answer the questions correctly and grammatically. In addition, the subjects were also more confident in developing and comprehending the material.

To determine the learning achievement of the subject after being taught to comprehend a text in reading using PQRST technique it can be stated that the scores that were said to increase from each cycle can be proven by the presence of data from the scores of pre-test, post-test 1, and post-test 2. Each school that used to do research of course has a different way to give score categories to the students. This research was successful to increase students' ability in reading comprehension in the classroom because it can be seen from the score obtained by students. At SMP Negeri 3 Tampaksiring has a scoring category in the teaching and learning process. The scores can be categorized as follows get excellent, the score obtained by the students is 87-100. Meanwhile, to be in a safe position, the

subject is recommended to get a score of 85-91, which is good. In addition, the scores that are classified as fair and very fair are 76-83 and 1-75.

From this discussion, it can be said that the findings of the study revealed the effectiveness of the PQRST technique and it could improve the subjects' reading comprehension. Furthermore, concerning the research problem of the present study, it could be stated that reading comprehension of the eighth-grade subjects' of SMP Negeri 3 Tampaksiring in the academic year 2021/2022 could be improved through the PQRST technique.

CONCLUSION

The present study was conducted to help the student improve their reading comprehension especially in finding the main idea, specific information, word meaning, and textual references of recount text. It was held for the eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 3 Tampaksiring. In reference to the study, it showed the problem in reading comprehension, especially in finding the main idea, specific information, word meaning, and textual references of recount text. Hence, the researcher used the PQRST technique to solve the problem faced by the

students to improve their reading comprehension. As has been stated previously, the subjects' mean score in the pre-test was 52.33. The mean score of post-test 1 was 79.56. Moreover, the mean score of the post-test 2 was 88.36. Thus, the finding of the present study was exactly proved and showed that the problem of reading comprehension faced by the eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 3 Tampaksiring in the academic year 2021/2022 could be solved through the PQRST technique. The technique greatly changed the students' achievement in the learning process. On the other hand, they could explore their knowledge directly by implementing the technique. The students' motivation, attitudes, interest, and enjoyment of the eighth-grade students on SMP Negeri 3 Tampaksiring in the academic year 2021/2022 was also improved by the PQRST technique as was shown by the result of the observation. English teachers of SMP Negeri 3 Tampaskiring are suggested to be more innovative. The teachers are suggested to use the PQRST technique as one alternative in teaching reading comprehension since it can build up the subjects' interest and motivation in reading comprehension.

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