



Research Article

IMPLEMENTATION OF SQ3R IN DEVELOPING EFL UNIVERSITY LEVEL STUDENTS' ACADEMIC READING ABILITY

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Abstract

In higher education context, academic reading ability is crucial as it is correlated with academic success. By comprehending complex materials, students tend to become successful in their coursework. They are well-prepared to participate effectively in class discussions, complete high-quality assignments. This present study was to investigate effects of SQ3R implementation in developing undergraduate students' academic reading ability. The quasi-experimental research design was conducted using two research instruments namely 1) the 44-hour English academic reading syllabus and 2) the English academic reading ability evaluation (EARAE) task. The samples comprised 64 English majors, who enrolled to the Academic Reading Integrating English Teachers Development course in the academic year of 2022 at the faculty of Education, Pibulsongkram Rajabhat University. They were selected by purposive sampling technique. The main analysis was carried out using Mean ($\bar{X}$), and Standard deviation (SD) to analyze the sample's academic reading achievement mean score obtained from the EARAE task. The finding showed that their English academic reading achievement mean scores were at the excellent level ($\bar{X} = 4.42$, SD = 0.73) reflecting that they accomplished the academic reading abilities with the use of the interactive SQ3R method. The analysis also confirmed that the SQ3R methods could strengthen the samples' subskills; questioning ($\bar{X} = 4.89$, SD = 0.71), surveying ($\bar{X} = 4.48$, SD = 0.77), reciting ($\bar{X} = 4.47$, SD = 0.60). Therefore, they were able to develop such systematic reading strategies which they interacted with the text by setting goals, related to the important information to acquire the learnt topics or concepts. Eventually, they could benefit on these productive reading outcomes out of their reading.

Keywords: English Academic Reading, SQ3R, University Level Students

Introduction

A language deliberates thoughts and feelings, enabling individuals to connect with others and conveying their experiences. As a result, learning a language is the priority procedure for every human being. During that long and continuous process, learners try to listen, speak, read, and write a target language. They acquire language from different perspectives including social, academic, professional, and specific need. In academic context, reading skill is crucial and proceeds the other skills. In fact, it is obligatory and fundamentally unified with educational success (Scott & Saaiman, 2016). Regarding to tertiary education in universities and colleges, students are unable to achieve educational excellence in this level without satisfactory points of reading ability (Boakye, 2017). Learning a discipline means getting familiar to the subject and thinking based on the prior ideas on that subject and this is impossible without being a good academic reader (Hermida, 2009). Also, they require academic reading ability for enhancing their sense of critique (Zin et al., 2014). As a result, they need to establish a logical background that can lead them to attain leadership and formulate the socio-economic condition of their own society. Then, reading is the best way to explore the globe as they need to think globally (Chakraborty & Chowdhury, 2021). Somehow, reading is a learned process and demands more sophisticated approach during the learning period of any language in the tertiary level of education (Grabe & Kaplan, 2014). Therefore, teaching reading in university level might rather be very pragmatic and innovative, otherwise the students will never achieve reading comprehension. In fact, there is a great deal involved in the teaching. Not only do teachers need to stimulate reading in English (technique) and the love of reading in English (intrinsic motivation), but they also need to help students acquire the sort of comprehension skills that will make reading in English an effective activity – in terms of accessing useful information, various subjects, concepts and passing high stakes tests (Finch, 2009).

With English as a foreign language context, most students in the Faculty of Education, Pibulsongkram Rajabhat University have faced with the more complicated conflict upon acquiring English language as a subject. It is obvious that language is a tool when learning (Weed, 2023), not the actual subject matter. Through communicative skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, learners employed English in seeking understanding towards new facts or information. That is how English language functions in English-speaking environment (Penglia & Ritthichai, 2018). To overcome such difficulty, the English academic reading syllabus was designed for 11 sessions, integrating the implementation of SQ3R method. Aiming to develop academic reading skill, the researcher obtained several academic reading articles including 2 academic articles and 3 research articles involved “Selected Topics in English Language Learning” from various SLA journals. The 44-hour-sessions were carried out by implementing SQ3R method which students were encouraged to *survey, to question, to read, to recite and to review* (Robinson, 1941) the given reading articles collaboratively with their classmates.

Thus, the primary concern of this study was to investigate the effect of SQ3R Implementation in developing EFL University Level Students’ Academic Reading Ability. To pursue the study’s objective,

the researcher came up with the statement of research problem as *Does the implementation of SQ3R help develop EFL university level students' academic reading ability?*

Research Objective

The present study aimed to investigate effects of SQ3R implementation in developing academic reading ability of EFL university level Students, the faculty of Education, Pibulsongkram Rajabhat University.

Literature Review

Teaching Academic Reading to University Students

Success at the university level depends on various attributes, including certain academic skills – reading, writing, critical thinking, oral presentation, and media literacy. University students might require these relevant accomplishments, and they must receive sufficient training along with practical guidance from their professor to become successful (Barr et al., 2019). To be specific, academic reading performance directly relates to students' achievement. It has been proved to be an important component of literacy and learning from text, especially in higher education as all texts used in different subjects include linguistic features that differ from those typically used in colloquial conversations in out-of-school settings (Schleppegrell, 2004; Cummins, 2008). Expanding the set of well-studied reading comprehension components (i.e., decoding, vocabulary, background knowledge), recent empirical studies have identified the contribution of academic language, perspective taking, and reasoning skills to mid-adolescents' deep comprehension (Uccelli et al., 2015). The students do not only engage themselves in finding information from the texts, also they must interact with the text sophisticatedly by taking notes, making connection between the text and what have been learnt or experienced, and bringing up critical questions about the material being read. In other words, they make inference on the meaning of the author's discourse by applying their prior knowledge to it. But this process is only possible if they use practical strategies, some of which are specific to each academic discipline. Thus, working with a text and recreating its meaning entail both non discipline specific and specific strategies. Moreover, there is a tendency that reading English texts has become the main component since the students come across many texts regarding to their studying subject (Gersten et al., 2001; Marzuki, 2019). Also, there are EFL reading difficulties faced by EFL learners including anxiety, lack of vocabulary, test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, inability to comprehend the target language, lack of preparation before the class and limited participation in the class (Alhmadi, 2014; Alrabai, 2015; Rafada & Madini, 2017; Rafieyan & Yamanashi, 2016). This has required the teachers to maximize their efforts in aiding the students to overcome their difficulties, performing the teaching techniques in comprehending academic texts, and encouraging the students to make utmost use of their reading performance. In a nutshell, the teachers' roles become a major remedy in an academic reading classroom. It implies that the teacher must find the effective reading strategy that benefits their students most.

SQ3R method

SQ3R is a higher-level study skill to comprehend written texts. The method includes 5 steps namely survey, question, read, recite, and review (Robinson, 1941). It is considered a systematic approach that presents a detailed step-by-step outline of what readers should complete and accomplish while reading (Wright, 2003). The following figure 1 is an illustration of SQ3R method.



Figure 1 The SQ3R method

Source: SQ3R Reading Strategy and How to Apply It. Productive Fish ©2023 Retrieved online from <https://productive.fish/blog/sq3r>

Here are the details of those five-step process.

1. Survey: A reader skims a material looking for a general overview to understand the text roughly. This first process should take few minutes to allow a reader to read the introduction, to survey the headings and subheadings, to explore pictures, charts, and graphs, to read the chapter summary, and to look at the study questions at the end of the chapter.

2. Question: A reader makes use of questions to guide reading. Robinson (1941) suggested turning the first heading in the chapter into a question before reading the following paragraphs. For instance, if the heading is "Cooperative Learning", then ask "What is a Cooperative Learning?" By doing so, a purpose for reading was initiated because a reader is about to look for the answer to the question. Therefore, he or she should have in mind what he or she wants to learn and not read those sections passively line by line (Robinson, 1941).

3. Read: While looking for answers to the questions, there were some notes to be considered; (1) the first sentence of each paragraph usually states the main idea, (2) transition words such as next, for example, in contrast, in addition are helpful to follow the author's point, (3) note making in the margin is advisable, and (4) main points and ideas paraphrasing should be done. Thus, it is not a passive plowing along each line, but an active search for the answer (Robinson, 1941).

4. Recite: After finish reading, a reader should look at the questions again and check the answers. If necessary, a reader can reread the appropriate sections and their notes to refine the answers. According to Cowan (2008), human's memory contains a short-term memory and a long-term memory. Any Information must be stored in a long-term memory to be available for later recalling whether for exams or on the job. Congos (2012) further explained that information must be held in ta short-term memory about 5 seconds before being moved toward a long-term memory. This is how a reader's brain works during the reciting session.

5. Review: It is extremely important to conduct an overall review within 24 hours for maximum comprehension and memory. So, a reader should review information learned as soon as possible to master the forgetting curve. A follow-up review session can further consolidate what a reader learnt from form the reading text into long-term memory. This final step will provide a reader more effective level of comprehension if he or she can reflect as many categorized topics as possible into a piece of writing or even an oral presentation (The Academic Success Center, Oregon University, 2020). There are a wide range of recent research studies that adopted this highly effective method and yielded beneficial findings. The method allowed the subjects to actively engage with the materials, significantly improve their comprehension and retention, and promote their efficient study habit (Ahmad, 2018; Biringkanae, 2018; Said & Agusalim, 2020). Therefore, the researcher would like to apply this method in pursue of systematic and purposeful reading strategy for EFL undergraduate students.

Research Methodology

Participants

The participants were 64 English majors, the faculty of Education, Pibulsongkram Rajabhat University who enrolled to Academic Reading integrated to English Teachers Development course during the 2/2022 academic semester. They were selected using purposive sampling technique.

Research Design

The researcher applied the quasi-experimental research in which the redesigned SQ3R syllabus was carried out during 11 sessions. Here is an illustration of the research design.

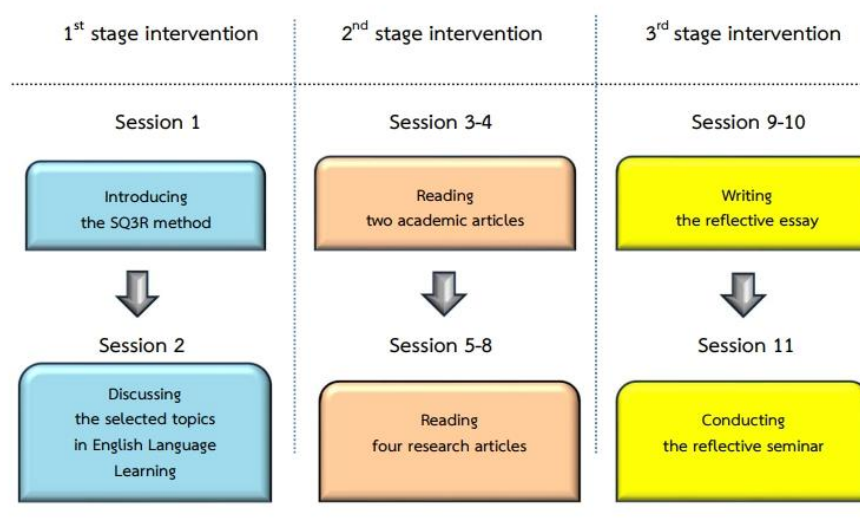


Figure 2 The quasi-experimental research design

The 1st stage intervention consists of two sessions. During the 1st session, the participants were introduced to the SQ3R method which was rather new reading strategy to them. During these 4 hours, the acronym SQ3R were clarified, so that the participants were aware of 5-step process; survey, question, read, recite, and review. Then, the 2nd session, the research brought selected topics in English language learning into the participants, so that they can discuss and select the topic that they were interested in.

The 2nd stage intervention consists of six sessions. During the 3rd and 4th sessions, two academic articles were given to the participants. Working in the group of 4 participants, the group members read the given article following the SQ3R method starting from surveying, questioning, reading, reciting, and reviewing. At the end of each session, the participants wrote their own notes with APA reference to reflect their obtained facts and comprehension. Then, the academic articles were replaced by the research articles during the 5th – 8th sessions. However, the reading strategy remained unchanged. The participants attempted to comprehend those articles using the SQ3R and wrote their notes. Additionally, the participants made use of those notes to write the reflective paragraphs towards their selected topics in EFL. At the end of this stage, the researcher started the participant's English Academic Reading ability evaluation for the first time.

At the 3rd stage intervention, the participants started writing their reflective essay using the notes they have wrote down since the 2nd stage as the supporting details. During the 9th and 10th sessions, they could be able to write and to revise their own essay with the help of their classmates and the researcher as a peer review. So, comments and idea sharing have been done during these two sessions. At the final session of the 3rd stage, the researcher and the participants attended the seminar in selected topics in EFL. During the seminar, the researcher encouraged all the participants to exchange their view towards the pros and cons of the SQ3R method. Also, they came up with the conclusion of how to apply the SQ3R in practice in the future. Somehow, the major discussion focused on their selected topics involving the EFL. The participants

went through the topics together, shared what they have learned and gave their reflective presentation using information and illustrations from their essay. Eventually, the final stage ended when the researcher finalized the English Academic Reading ability evaluation.

Research Instruments

There were two research instruments including 1) an English Academic Reading syllabus entitled “Selected Topics in English Language Learning” and 2) an English Academic Reading Ability Evaluating (EARAE) Task.

(1) An English academic reading syllabus entitled “Selected Topics in English Language Learning” includes 6 English Language articles. The researcher selected two English language academic articles and four research articles as the reading materials during 11 sessions (44 hours). The syllabus was carried out using the SQ3R method. To ensure content and construct validity, the researcher has asked three scholars to review the syllabus. Then, the evaluation of Index of item-objective congruence (IOC) indicated that the syllabus had its content and construct validity. The following table 1 illustrates the detailed syllabus and the IOC evaluation.

Table 1 The English academic reading syllabus entitled “Selected Topics in English Language Learning.”

Sessions	Hours	IOC
Session 1 Introducing the SQ3R method	4	1
Session 2 Selected Topics in English Language Learning	4	1
Session 3 Article #1 Academic article	4	1
Session 4 Article #2 Academic article	4	0.67
Session 5 Article #3 Research article	4	1
Session 6 Article #4 Research article	4	1
Session 7 Article #5 Research article	4	0.67
Session 8 Article #6 Research article	4	0.67
Session 9 Writing an independent study	4	1
Session 10 Revising an independent study	4	1
Session 11 Having a reflexive seminar	4	1

(2) Another research instrument applied in measuring and evaluating the participants’ the academic reading ability was an English Academic Reading Ability Evaluation (EARAE) Task for University Level Students. The EARAE task was applied the 5-point Likert scale and its interval level (Likert,1932) as shown in the Table 2 as following.

Table 2 The EARA task's five-point scales, scale-intervals, and interpretations

5-point Scale	Scale Descriptions
5	Always
4	Normally
3	Sometimes
2	Occasionally
1	Hardly
Scale-Intervals	Interpretations
	"Excellent"
4.21 - 5.00	A reader can perform the excellent level of Academic Reading Ability using the SQ3R method in comprehending an academic article, reciting comprehended information, presenting into categorized topics, and delivering a reflexive discussion in various form i.e., an essay, an audio-visual presentation.
	"High"
3.41 - 4.20	A reader can perform the high level of Academic Reading Ability using the SQ3R method in comprehending an academic article being read, reciting comprehended information, and presenting into categorized topics with illustrations i.e., charts, mind mapping
	"Fair"
2.61 - 3.40	A reader can perform Academic Reading Ability using the SQ3R method in comprehending a reading text read, and summarizing comprehended information, and presenting few topics with a use of a notepad or a list.
	"Poor"
1.81 - 2.60	A reader can perform Academic Reading Ability using the SQ3R method in comprehending an academic article being read and summarizing few topics from a reading text.
	"Unsure"
1.00 - 1.80	A reader can perform Academic Reading Ability using the SQ3R method in comprehending an academic article being read but may or may not be able to summarize any topic from a reading text.

To ensure validity, the task was analyzed its Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC). Finally, only 14 items that had their IOC above .80 were selected and applied in the task. To ensure reliability, Cronbach's alpha coefficient (1951) was applied, and the task was confirmed its .083 reliability.

Data Analysis

To answer the research question: *what is the effectiveness of SQ3R method Implementation in developing EFL University Level Students' Academic Reading Ability?* Mean ($\bar{X}$), and Standard deviation (SD) were used to analyze the participant's achievement mean score obtained from the EARE task.

Results

To analyze the effectiveness of SQ3R method Implementation in developing academic reading ability among the participants, the achievement mean score retrieved from the EARE task were analyzed using Mean ($\bar{X}$) and Standard deviation (SD). The results were illustrated into the following figures.

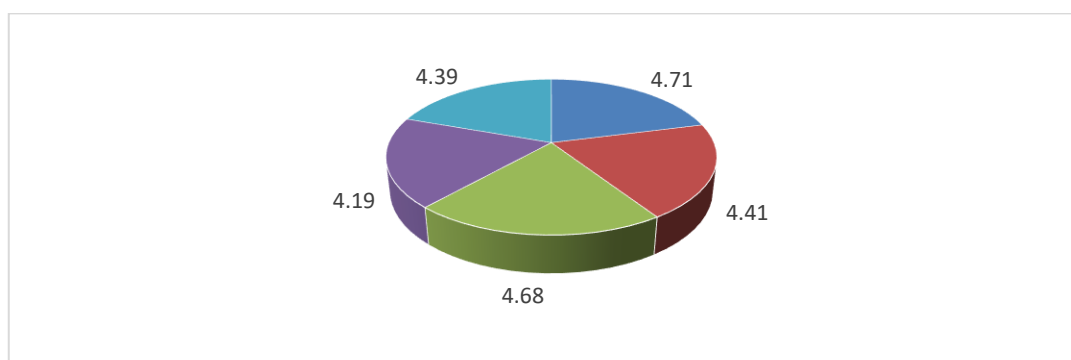


Figure 3 The survey subskills' mean score analysis

According to the figure 3, the samples' mean score in surveying was at excellent level ($\bar{X}$ = 4.48, SD = 0.77). While skimming the given texts, they could look for the title, the author's objectives and the abstract ($\bar{x}$ = 4.71, S.D. = 0.62). Also, they could explore keywords, and other academic collocations ($\bar{X}$ = 4.68, SD = 0.66). These subskills could allow them to grasp a general overview to understand the texts thoroughly.

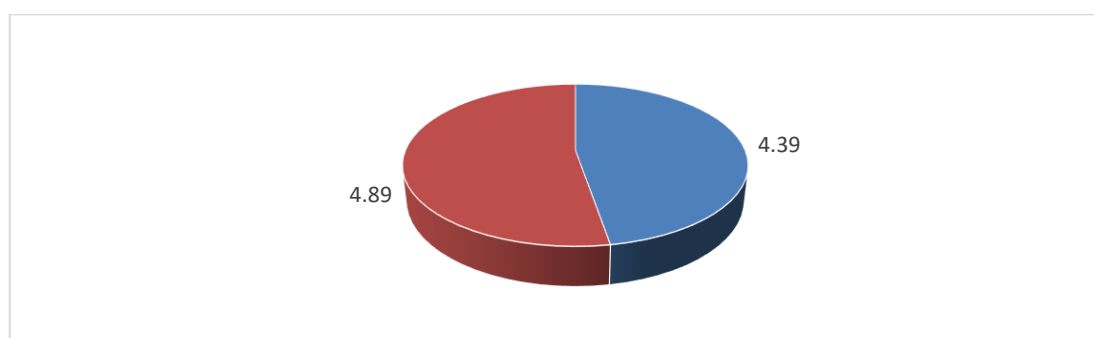


Figure 4 The question subskill's mean score analysis

The mean score analysis from the figure above indicated that the participants could accomplished the question subskill at excellent level ($\bar{X}$ = 4.58, SD = 0.89). It showed that they could predict or guess relevant

topics/subtopics related to the title ($\bar{X} = 4.28$, $SD = 0.76$). Also, they could raise the relevant questions which were later turned into their goals in reading ($\bar{X} = 4.89$, $SD = 0.71$).

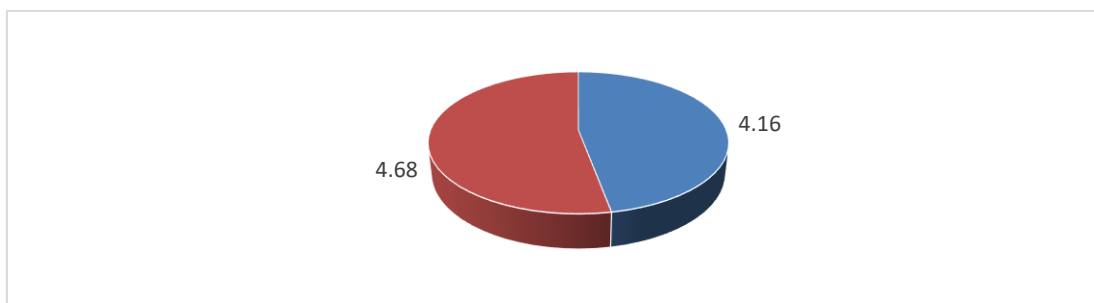


Figure 5 The read subskills' mean score analysis

Based on the mean score analysis from the figure 5, the participants' read subskills remained at excellent level ($\bar{X} = 4.42$, $SD = 0.70$). They could underline the important keywords ($\bar{X} = 4.68$, $SD = 0.66$), also scan the specific lines and/or paragraphs to find answer to the questions raised earlier ($\bar{X} = 4.16$, $SD = 0.74$).

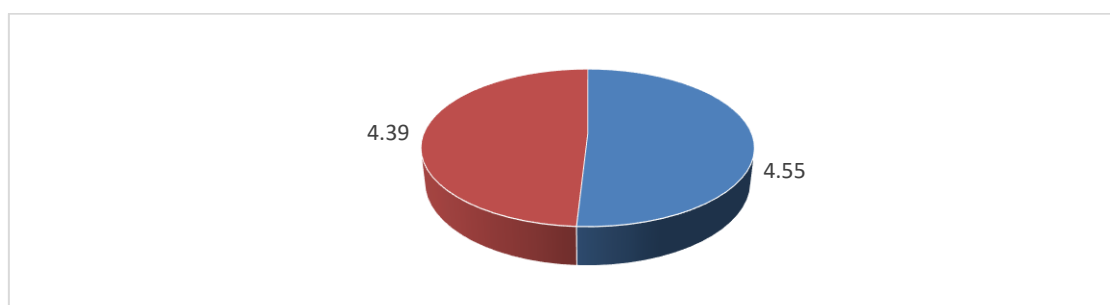


Figure 6 The recite subskills' mean score analysis

Regarding to the mean score analysis from the figure 6, the participants' recite subskills remained at excellent level ($\bar{X} = 4.47$, $SD = 0.60$). They could write their own notes ($\bar{X} = 4.55$, $SD = 0.51$) and then summarized the identified answers ($\bar{X} = 4.39$, $SD = 0.68$).

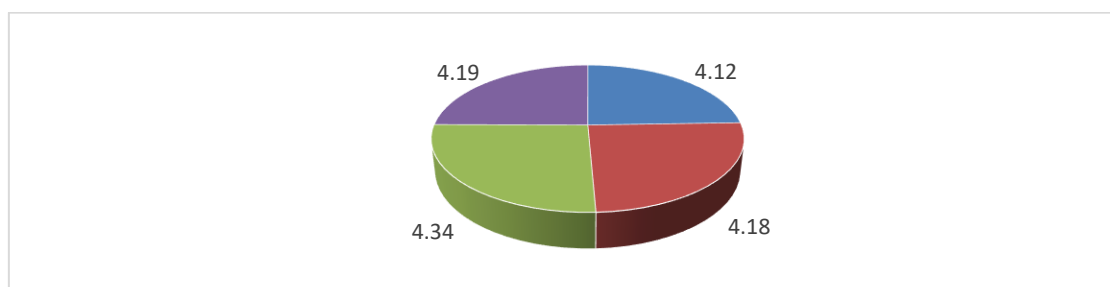


Figure 7 The review subskills' mean score analysis

From the mean score analysis in the figure 7, the participants accomplished the review subskills at excellent level ($\bar{X} = 4.21$, $SD = 0.76$). They could paraphrase the identified answers ($\bar{X} = 4.12$, $SD = 0.62$), make connections the paraphrased answers to the concepts or theories previously learnt ($\bar{X} = 4.18$, $SD = 0.77$), give a presentation applying visual illustrations i.e., charts, pictures, mind mapping to review the topics learnt from a reading text ($\bar{X} = 4.34$, $SD = 0.68$), and finally compose a reflexive essay to present the several topics learnt from a reading text ($\bar{X} = 4.19$, $SD = 0.97$).

Discussion

The participants' academic reading performance was assessed at the end of the 2nd stage intervention using the EARAE task. The achievement means scores in the table 4 above, revealed 5 important scenarios on how the treatment improved the participants' academic reading abilities.

The first scenario focused on *surveying* which the participants were able to skim the selected academic article looking for a title, the author's objectives and an abstract and to scan for keywords and other academic collocations. This survey process prepared them towards better understating of main idea. It also helped them to organize what they were reading. This notion indicated that they were able to start their reading coherently. Making a conscious effort to glance at the headings and then estimate what the whole text is all about are considered worthwhile to start with (Robinson, 1941).

The second scenario was *questioning* which the participants were showing their excellent level in raising the critical questions. In fact, this questioning process is to pinpoint the wanted-to-know information, concept or theories related to a current topic. The participants found the worthwhile outcome out of turning headings into questions. Robinson (1941) asserted that questioning will arouse curiosity and increase comprehension. Asiri and Momani (2017) further agreed that questioning deepens students' curiosity as they extract main points. Making a question needs sensible attempt on the part from students, even though they can convert a heading into a question very easily. Therefore, this notion indicated that they were able to start their reading purposively. By bringing up the certain questions, the participants could be able to unlock the closed doors, lead them to the insight comprehension towards the reading text and effectively study what is considered important in a reading text.

The third scenario involved *reading* which the participants attempted to find the answers to the questions they have made in the preceding session. They went through each section or paragraph highlighting/underlining the specific explanations or answers. Reading could be described as *an active search for the answer* (Robinson, 1941). It allowed the participants to note, to underline and to highlight the new words. Also, they could make use of dictionaries for blocking terms. It reflected that they had the purpose of reading in their minds as they read each section rather running their eyes passively on each line (Asiri & Momani, 2017).

The fourth scenario concentrated on *reciting* which the participants started writing their own notes on the identified answers after finishing the Reading session. It enables them to answer the reflective questions

precisely (Feldt & Hensley, 2009; Baier, 2011; Carlston, 2011; AlGhazo, 2015). Upon reciting the answer, the participants were about to check whether they comprehended the material as Robinson (1941) explained that recitation consisted of mentally reviewing the answer and writing it out. It forced the participants to verbalize the answer before fixing it in memory. Writing own answers, the participants performed visual and kinesthetic cues as well as verbal imagery in reciting the answer. This self-recitation became useful and crucial for the more sensory channels used in learning, the more effective it is (Robinson, 1941).

The fifth scenario related to *reviewing* which the participants attempted to recall the important information and eventually fix them into a long-term memory. In this last process of the SQ3R, the participants recalled the main topics/subtopics, reconnected them to the previous concepts or theories and presented them into their own written expressions including oral presentation and reflective essay. the Reviewing provided the participants retention and long impression about the text (Bakhtiar et al., 2019)

Conclusions

The implementation of the SQ3R in English academic reading enabled the learners to strategize their own reading effectively and systematically. Also, they have benefited in terms of speed of reading, prediction of quiz questions and note-taking ability. During the surveying, their reading speed became faster. They replaced the typical reading behavior with the skimming and scanning over the academic collocations e.g., the author's objectives, abstract. By glancing over the headings of each section, they might accelerate the reading speed for they were able to read purposefully. Refer to the improvement upon the ability of predicting quiz questions, they made use of the questioning by turning the headings into the questions. Eventually, those predicted questions became quiz questions they found later in their examination. Due to the notetaking, it helped the learners to organize their thinking on the section they had been reading about. It appeared to be much more practical if the notetaking was done from their working memory. In summary, the SQ3R was considered the beneficial reading strategy especially to the Higher Education students who intentionally acquire their academic reading.

Based on the conclusion above, the researcher put some suggestions for a further study in which a revised SQ6R method should be implemented in teaching academic reading to EFL university level students. The additional Reflect and Reshape stages of SQ6R might encourage learners become more interactive and innovative. It might allow them to actively participate in reading sessions and significantly create innovative trait which eventually contribute to success in academic pursuits and in life.

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