SCRUTINIZING DIRECTED READING THINKING ACTIVITY (DRTA) STRATEGY ON STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION

Nerim
English Teacher, SMPN 1 Jonggat, Central Lombok, Indonesia

Corresponding Author Email: nerim1974@gmail.com

Article Info	Abstract
Article History *Received: February 2020* *Revised: February 2020* *Published: April 2020* **Keywords** *Reading comprehension;* *DRTA strategy;* *Teaching English;*	*The aim of this research was to examine the directed reading thinking activity (DRTA) strategy on students' reading skills. This research was classified as experimental research applying a quasi-experimental design. This study involved 60 students of second-grade students of SMPN 1 Jonggat. The students were divided into two groups, the experimental and control groups. The experimental group was subjected to DRTA strategy, while the control group was treated using the conventional learning strategy. The data were obtained by using a reading test. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The data were calculated using SPSS 19.0 for Windows. The descriptive statistic was aimed at finding out the students' mean score, mode, median, and standard deviation. Hence, the inferential statistic was used to test the research hypothesis using the independent sample t-test. The results of the research showed that the DRTA strategy in teaching reading had a more positive effect than the conventional learning strategy. It was proven that the students' mean score in the experimental class (78.80) was higher than those in the control group (73.73). In addition, the score of 2-tailed (0.032) was lower than the sig. level 0.05. Therefore, the hypothesis was accepted. It means that the directed reading thinking (DRTA) strategy had a significant effect on students' reading comprehension.*

INTRODUCTION

As a compulsory subject, in learning English, there are four language skills that should be mastered by the students, they are reading, speaking, writing and listening. The four skills should be taught in order to help the students communicate in English. Among the four language skills, reading is one of the four primary skills that students should master. Lei, Barlett, and Gorney (2010) state reading is the process of understanding of a reading text in order to obtain the information and knowledge. Students are not only expected to be able to understand a text but also to comprehend the content of the text (Haerazi & Irawan, 2020). Reading comprehension in the teaching-learning process is badly needed to be mastered by the students to gain information and knowledge in a written text. Students must know exactly what they are reading and finding the meaning from the text. In reading comprehension, students can interact with written information in order to improve and add some information. According to Sharma, Hoof, and Ramsay (2017), reading comprehension is the process of making meaning from a text.

However, to master the reading skill, students should first master reading micro-skills (Haerazi, Prayati, & Vikasari, 2019). Based on the current curriculum in Indonesia 2013, students are expected to be able to understand written texts. A text does not by itself carry meaning (Brown, 2001; Haerazi & Irawan, 2019). Understanding a text requires some skills to understand the language of the text in word level, sentence level, and whole-text level

(Haerazi et al., 2020). It is in an attempt to connect the message of the text to the knowledge of the world (Spratt *et al.*, 2005). To make the students easier in comprehending the reading text, the most important thing is the use of teachers' strategy to help the students activate their background knowledge, connect ideas, focus on the topic, and help them get and remember the general information and specific information after English reading activity (Odwan, 2012).

There are many strategies that can be applied to teaching reading. One of them is the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) strategy. The directed reading thinking activity (DRTA) was developed as a framework for teaching reading, which stresses students' abilities to read reflectively and to use prediction. This strategy leads students in active learning. Active learning indicates that the learning processes take place well and enable them to improve students' academic achievement (Vercellotti, 2017). It is in line with Burchfield and Sappington (2000) who argue that reading activates students' thinking processes and active activities.

The DRTA strategy involves the students to be active in making a prediction. The teacher can build their prior knowledge by asking them some questions related to reading text. Bos and Vaughn (2012) state that the students can get a little information related to their prior knowledge they have already had from the teacher's question. It happens in the DRTA strategy in which there are three steps of the DRTA strategy, namely the prediction step, guided silent reading step and proving step (Stauffer, 1998). In the prediction step, the teacher sets the students for reading and helps them think about what they are going to read before starting. The students learn to predict what they are going to read. Prediction deals with any speculation about the content of a reading text. According to Gillet, Hobart, and William (2012), the prediction step requires the students to relate their prior knowledge to the reading task at hand and to form expectations they will apply to the reading. It means that in prediction, the form of expectation can be right or wrong based on their knowledge.

The researcher conducted several interviews with the English teacher and some grade VIII students of SMPN 1 Jonggat on reading instruction in the school. The findings suggested that the students remained to have difficulties in understanding English texts. They lacked the vocabulary and grammatical knowledge important to comprehend the texts. They also tended to translate every single word instead of using reading strategies such as guessing meaning from the context to understand such texts. Those problems make reading frustrating which in turn may make the students discouraged.

There are several previous studies related to the issue. For instance, Odwan (2012) informs that the directed reading thinking activity using collaborative learning has a positive effect on learners' reading comprehension. Also, Riley (2006) investigated the effect of directed reading thinking activity on reading achievement of first-grade learners. The result shows that there was the possibility of correcting most of the mistakes made by the students when they used the directed reading-thinking activity. A little bit different from the two previous studies, Stahl (2008) informs that the DR-TA has a positive effect on students' reading comprehension if the students are provided with the other two instructional methods of comprehension, picture walks (PW) and know-want-learn (KWL). Yazdani and Mehdi (2015) argue that the directed reading thinking activity (DRTA) and guided reading (GR) indicate a positive influence on reading comprehension. There were two results of this study. Firstly, learning strategies could improve reading comprehension skills. Second, both strategies could improve the learners' reading comprehension skill however the directed reading thinking activity had a more significant positive effect than guided reading.

Based on the overview of the importance of reading comprehension for the students' successful English mastery, it is necessary to overcome the aforementioned problems. Those problems indicate the need for an appropriate teaching strategy cannot only help students

improve the students' comprehension but it can make them actively participate in the reading class as well. In this case, the researcher suggests the use of directed reading-thinking activity (DR-TA). DR-TA is expected to help students comprehend texts by activating their background knowledge related to the texts and promote the use of reading strategies.

In addition, the students' comprehension progress *before*, *while* and *after* reading is monitored during the discussion so as to prevent the students from misunderstanding the texts. Also, DR-TA uses media and activities that can help the students to understand the text and make them actively involved in the teaching and learning process. It is expected that DR-TA will be an effective way to teach students reading to improve their comprehension.

Review of literature
Reading Comprehension

There are some definitions regarding reading comprehension, particularly, for secondary school students. Reading is regarded as one of the English skills that need relatively mechanical skills and thinking processes (Melby-Lervag et al., 2012; Sasanguie et al., 2013). Also, Vanbecelaere et al. (2019) assumed that reading is viewed as not merely taking written information on the printed matter but also attributing a meaning-extracting process as the essence of the act of reading. It means that reading is not only to get the information from the text passively but also to process it mind to understand the meaning. That assumption is in line with Norlund (2019) who states reading includes an active process in which readers shift between sources of information, elaborate meaning and strategies, monitor their comprehension, and use the social context to reflect their response.

Furthermore, Sari, Drajati, and Rochsantiningsih (2019) argue that in the attempts to comprehend text readers construct meaning from the text as they read it by absorbing new information found in the text and comparing it to the one in their pre-existing knowledge. So, as they read a certain text, their understanding of the information related to the topic of the text increases gradually and sometimes changes to fit the information presented in the text (Gultom, 2018). This idea is similar to the concept of accommodation and assimilation suggested by Piaget as explained in Cameron (2001) that learners will either absorb new information without any changes made on their schemata (*assimilation*) or adjust their schemata to fit the new information they receive (*accommodation*). Richards and Schmidt (2002) add that comprehension is the identification of the intended meaning of written or spoken communication. Contemporary theories of comprehension emphasize that it is an active process drawing both on information contained in the message Therefore, comprehension involves active processes. It does not only result from the information contained in the text but also from the interaction with the background knowledge that readers bring to the text.

Directed Reading Thinking Activity

Directed Reading-Thinking Activity (DR-TA) is a strategy to guide language learners to improve their reading comprehension. DR-TA is used in each of the three stages of reading, i.e. pre-reading, during reading, and post-reading (Stauffer, 1969). It can be implemented both in small groups and individually. In DR-TA, predictions play an important role to provide students with reading purposes. Readers should have purposes to read. It is line with Celik (2019) who argues that reading should have aims to guide readers' intelligence. In doing so, a "teacher should provide questions for students to activate their prior knowledge and use clues such as the title and pictures from the text so as to stimulate the students to make an accurate prediction" (Januarty & Azizah, 2019). In addition, the teacher should also pre-teach vocabulary considered important to support them making an accurate prediction of the text.

DR-TA has several purposes. According to Androveda (2015), the DRTA is a strategy to build independent readers because the readers are equipped with the abilities to set reading purposes, examining reading material based on these reading purposes, and making decisions based on the information from the text. Moreover, Jennings (2006) argues the DRTA helps students to become aware of the reading strategies, understand the reading process, and develop prediction skills. It is in keeping with Fitriana (2019) who argues that students during reading activities try to predict any word that they hesitate the exact meaning of it.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that DR-TA aims to have students employ reading strategies, to elicit their prior knowledge related to the topic of the text, to set a purpose for reading and to encourage them to monitor their comprehension while they are reading. These steps later can make students an independent reader. In relation to the procedure of DR-TA, Lain (2019) argues that comprehension activities during reading students should be able to make predictions prior and to prove or to modify the predictions made about the story events.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This research conducted a quasi-experimental design with a non-equivalent control group design, intended to examine whether or not there was an effect of using Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) strategy on the tenth-grade students' reading comprehension achievement at SMP N 1 Jonggat. There were two groups that were investigated in this research, namely the experimental group and the control group. Fraenkle and Wallen (2012) state that quasi-experimental research is a research design that does not include the use of random assignment. In this research, the experimental group was taught reading by using the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DR-TA) strategy while the control group was taught reading by using the conventional technique commonly used by the teacher that is the scientific approach.

In this study, there were two groups namely the experimental group and the control group. The experimental group was students at class VIII A of SMP N 1 Jonggat which consisted of 30 students who were given the DRTA method. The control group was students VIII C at the second class of SMPN I Jonggat which consisted of 30 students who were given conventional teaching methods. The two classes received the material on reading comprehension on narrative text with the same time allocation. The material provided in accordance with that specified in the curriculum. The data in this study were obtained by giving questionnaires on student's reading interest before the class began and by giving the final test in each of the students either in the experimental group or in the control group. The frequency of meetings in this study was six times a meeting (three weeks). Five meetings were to give the subject matter related to recount text and once to give the final test. The meeting was conducted twice a week for 80 minutes, 40 minutes per meeting. Both classes received the same lesson that was "recount text" with the same time allocation.

Population and Sample

The target population in this study was a second grade or 8th grade of students of SMPN 1 Jonggat. It consisted of 6 parallel classes in which each class consisted of 30 students. Due to the time limitation, the scope population was grade 8 students of SMP N 1 Jonggat in the academic year 2019/2020.

The sample of this study was determined by a cluster random sampling technique with equal characteristics and probability. Creswell (2012) states that in this random sampling technique, research subject in the population are mixed so that all subject are considered equal and every member of selected groups have similar characteristics and probability. Thus, the sample of this study was distributed into two classes of grade eight students (class 8) of

SMPN 1 Jonggat. One class as an experimental class comprised of 30 students, and the other class as a controlled class comprised of 30 students as well.

The technique of Data Collection

The data collection technique used in this study was an experimental design used in terms of the dependent variable and two independent variables in this study. The dependent variable is reading comprehension and independent variables are teaching methods and different reading interests. The technique of collecting data was used test and non-test technique. The test was used to obtain the result of students' reading comprehension, while non-test in this case questionnaire was used to gain information about students' reading interest.

Research Instrument information needed in this study involved data of different reading interests and reading comprehension. Reading interest data were obtained through questionnaires while reading comprehension instrument was obtained through a test. The questionnaires on students' reading interest were developed on a five-point Likert. The five responses used in the Likert scale include: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U) Disagree (D) Strongly Disagree (SD). In addition, for reading comprehension instrument tests used to gain information related to reading comprehension in multiple-choice questions. The number of items is 30 numbers in multiple choice in order to be easier in administering and investigating students' reading comprehension scores.

Data Analysis

The data analysis method used in this research was the Independent sample t-test formula to analyze the results of the students' scores of the reading post-test. The analysis intended to know whether or not there was a difference between the mean of the two groups (the experimental group and the control group). Based on SPSS data output, there were two stages of analysis in the Independent Sample t-test, which were the test of Equality of Variances (F-test) and the test of Equality of Mean Score. There were two kinds of data collection methods used in this research, namely primary data and supporting data. The primary data were obtained from the reading post-test, while the supporting data were obtained from the interview with the English teacher and the documentation. The researcher also conducted the tryout reading test to a class that did not belong to the experimental group and the control group. The try out was done to know the reliability of the test items, the index difficulty of the test items, whether the time allotted was enough or not and whether the instruction of the test items was clear or not to understand.

The data were obtained from tests. The data were presented in the form of students' reading comprehension scores. To analyze them, the researcher employed descriptive statistics and inferential statistics to examine any improvement in relation to students' reading comprehension ability or not. Also, the researcher used measures of central tendency represented by the means of students' reading-comprehension test scores obtained from the pre-test and the post-test. Then, inferential statistics in the form of *paired-samples t-test* was employed to assign meaning to the difference in those means using SPSS 22.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Research Findings

Dependent sample t-test counted by SPSS software, the output of the analysis could be seen in Table 1 below. The table is about students' reading achievement that gave information related to the number of the students in each group (N), the mean score of each class, standard deviation, and standard error mean.

Table 1. Students' Reading Achievement

Class	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental Group	30	78.80	9.463	1.728
Control Group	30	73.73	8.317	1.518

Table 1 shows that the total number for both groups was 60, consisting of 30 students in the experimental group and 30 students in the control group. The mean score of the control group was 73.73 and the mean score of the experimental group was 78.80 the standard deviation of the control group was 8.317 and the standard deviation of the experimental group was 9.463. The standard error mean for the control group was 1.518 and the control group was 1.518. The result of students' post-test can be seen in Table 2 as follows.

Table 2. Post-Test Result of Analysis

	Lavenes' test for equality variances		T-test for Equality Means						
								95% confident interval of the Difference	
	f	Sig.	t	dt	Sig (2 tailed)	Mean Df.	Std. Error Df.	Lower	Upper
Score Equal Variance Assumed	.588	.588	.588	2.203	.58	. 2.300	..463	.463	9.671
Equal Variance not Assumed			2.203	57.50	.032	5.067	2.300	.461	9.672

Table 2 shows that the analysis result of the primary data taken from the post-test by using an independent sample t-test to know the significant effect of using Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) strategy on the students' reading comprehension achievement. To read the table above, the first step was analyzing two variances whether they were equal or not (F-test). The second step was analyzing two groups whether the mean scores were the same or not (T-test). The first column on the table above showed that the F value was 0.558 with the sig. Value 0.446. Because of the sig. the value was higher than 0.05, the variances of the two group (experimental group and control group) were the same. The equal variances assumed should be read because the two classes were equal in the score of their reading test. In the second column, it was shown that the sig.value was 0.03 which lower than 0.05 (sig < 0.05). It means that the scores of the two groups were different.

Discussion

The result of the analysis on the students' reading showed that the experimental group which was given a treatment that was directed reading thinking activity (DR-TA) showed better performance during the test than the Control group. It could be seen from table 2 that the significant value was 0.03 < 0.05. It means that the mean scores of the two groups were different. Table 1 showed that the mean score of the experimental group was 78.80 and 73.73 for the control group. It proved that there was a significant mean difference between the experimental group and the control groups. Therefore, the research alternative hypothesis

saying that "There is a significant effect of using directed reading thinking activity (DRTA) strategy on the tenth-grade students' reading comprehension achievement at SMPN 1 Jonggat in the 2019/2020 academic year" was accepted.

The present research result is relevant to the theory suggested by Stauffer (1999) who states that the use of the directed reading thinking activity (DR-TA) strategy is a kind of general reading strategy to guide the students having critical thinking processes while reading through the reading text. The students' critical thinking skill was expressed when the students try to judge their own prediction. DRTA also helped the students of the experimental group to have a better understanding of the process of comprehending a text. It was proven that the DRTA strategy was able to make the students become active readers (Odwan, 2012). For instance, the phase of reading purpose leads students to express their aims to read, what they want to get from the reading texts. Some students express their wills to acquire much more English vocabulary. It is in line with Novita (2018) who argues that the more students read, the more they acquire vocabularies.

After students enact their reading purposes, they are asked to examine the reading materials based on their reading purposes. In doing so, the students are divided into two or three small groups with the same reading purposes. They are involved in a group discussion. Some students phrase their opinions based on the reading content that they understand. Other students do some notes of vocabulary. The learning processes are designed in order that students utilize their thinking to have the meaning of the reading text. It happens in a dynamic discussion. It is in accordance with Tawali (2018); Haerazi and Irawan (2019) who state that students should be involved in thinking activities to read because with good critical reading they can remember their vocabularies that they acquire during reading activities. At the result of these activities, students can make decisions based on the information from the text

This study shows that the implementation of the DRTA strategy was more effective than the traditional one. It was reinforced with some studies using the DRTA strategy to improve students' achievements in reading comprehension. For example, experimental research by Androveda (2015) showed that the sig. value 0.02 was lower than 0.05. It proved that there was a significant effect of using the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DR-TA) strategy on the tenth-grade students' reading comprehension achievement. Furthermore, Novita (2010) also used experimental research in a different sample. She chose Junior High School as the sample. Her study proved that the use of the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DR-TA) strategy gave a significant effect on the students' reading comprehension achievement. In addition, Erliana (2011) conducted experimental research entitled Improving Reading through Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) Strategy. It was found out that DRTA was an effective and suitable strategy in improving reading in terms of providing the students with the opportunity to utilize reading strategy, to enhance self-confidence, and to produce independent learners.

In this study compared with the previous studies, the researcher emphasized on the schematic structures and linguistic structure. Such an activity made the students not interested in participating in the class. Then, the teacher gave them some minutes to do exercise and discuss the students'answers. The teacher also gives the chance to the students to analyze the text by using the appropriate method. By using Directed Reading-Thinking Activity strategy, the students from the experimental class can comprehend the texts by activating their background knowledge related to the texts, providing them with reading purposes, making them employ reading strategies, and monitoring their comprehension. It is in keeping with Novita (2014) who states the DRTA strategy can improve students' reading comprehension ability.

Based on the calculation of t-test, the results shows that t $_{account}$(4.784) > t-table (2.00) and sig (2-tailed) (0.000) < 0.05 with degree of freedom 41. The mean of the pretest was

25.85 for 8A and 17.34 for 8C. The mean of the post-test of 8A is 26.85 and 8C is 23.13. It means that there was an improvement score of 8A as the treatment group for reading comprehension. It was in line with Daeli et al. (2020) inform that students can improve their reading skills if teachers give a big chance for them to read. Reading activities can equip the students with the abilities to determine purposes for reading, extract, comprehend, and assimilate information, examine reading material based on the purposes for reading, suspend judgments, and make a decision based on the information of the reading text. It can be drawn to the conclusion that teaching reading skills at second-grade students by using Directed Reading Thinking activity are more effective than the conventional method.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis result, hypothesis verification and discussion in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that there was a significant effect of using Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) Strategy towards the eight grade students' reading comprehension achievement at SMP N 1 Jonggat in the 2019/2020 academic year. It means that the experimental group who was taught reading comprehension by using Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) got better reading comprehension achievement than the control group taught by using conventional strategy.

The result of the study showed that the application of Directed Reading-Thinking Activity was able to improve the students' reading skills.The improvement of reading skills can be seen from the result of the test. The mean of a pre-test for treatment class (8A) was 25.85 and the mean of the post-test was 26.85. The improvement was 1.00. The mean of a pre-test for the control group (8C) is17.00 and the mean of the post-test is 23.13. The improvement was 6.13. The result of the t-test shows that there is a significant difference between 8A and 8C for pre-test results. Those mean that the data are a significant difference between treatment class (8A) and control class (8C). So, it can be concluded that Directed Reading-Thinking Activity influences the reading skill of 8A. The result of the test can be concluded that there is a significant difference between students having low motivation and students have high motivation. Furthermore, the results of the study show that there is a correlation between reading and DRTA strategy. Generally, it can be concluded that DR-TA is suggested to be used in teaching reading skills. The teachers have to facilitate the students with the most suitable and feasible strategy of reading because of it in fluencies the students' achievement. Reading skill has a relation with the students' motivation, so the motivation must be improved.

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