

**IMPROVING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION ACHIEVEMENT
THROUGH "DIRECTED READING-THINKING ACTIVITY" TECHNIQUE
ON NARRATIVE TEXT AT THE SECOND SEMESTER
OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT OF UNISKA
IN THE 2011/2012 ACADEMIC YEAR**

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ABSTRACT

One of the important skills in comprehending and interpreting written language is reading. This research is aimed at describing the way DRTA technique improves students' reading comprehension achievement. This research was conducted at English Department of UNISKA Kediri using CAR. It was carried out at second semester at B-2. In applying the technique, it was preceded by preliminary study. The researcher got the data from direct observation, and also the score of students' test before in the process of treatment.

The findings showed that the researcher conducted the research in two cycles. In the first cycle, there were 5 students reached score under 75.00. From the process in the second cycle, the students score average in reading comprehension of narrative text was 80.50 and there was no students got score under 75.00. It means that the second cycle was successful.

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that DRTA technique improves students' reading comprehension on narrative.

Key words: DRTA Technique, Reading Comprehension

1. Background

Reading can be challenging, particularly when the material is unfamiliar, technical, or complex. Moreover, for some readers, comprehension is always challenging. They may understand each word separately, but linking them together into meaningful ideas often doesn't happen as it should. These readers can decode the words, but have not developed sufficient skills to comprehend the underlying, deeper meaning of the sentences, the paragraphs, and the entire text.

Teaching reading strategies are taught through direct explanation, teacher modeling, and feedback. Students are never in doubt as to what the strategy are, where and when they can be used, and how they are used. The teacher models expert behavior by reading and thinking aloud.

The students also read and think aloud in the class, and their strategy use is supported by teacher feedback (Richard, 2002). The importance of reading is also stated by Grabe (2009: 4). According to Grabe, reading is also important to recognize that many people around the world read in more than one language. Large populations of people have learned to read in second or third languages for variety of reasons, including interactions within and across heterogeneous multilingual countries, large-scale immigration movements, global transportation, advanced education opportunities, and the spread of language of wider communication.

In this research, the researcher found some problems in teaching and learning process at UNISKA English Department. The researcher teaches in Writing II at the

second semester. The result of reading comprehension preliminary test showed that many students still find difficulties in comprehending a reading text. The real fact, in preliminary of study, the students' average score was still so far from the target. This matter leads the researcher to find out an appropriate way or solution to overcome. Several solutions can be proposed in order to improve of students as stated above. However, the ways would be advantageous for the student when they are provided with the activities, which help the students improve their, ability to comprehend a text. One of the reading strategies that can be used for bringing about an improvement in the students' ability in comprehending a text is DRTA.

Grabe (2009:232) explains "DRTA stands for Directed Reading-Thinking Activities in this approach, students relate background knowledge to the text, determine goals for reading, and then engage in predicting activities at set stopping for points throughout the text. The predicting practice develops monitoring processes and the discussion of predictions promotes main-idea comprehension and text-evaluation abilities. DRTA draws on empirical research, which demonstrates the effectiveness of predicting, clarifying, monitoring, and evaluating strategies, and so it has indirect but powerful support for its instructional activities reading (Baumann et al., 1992)"

A DRTA may be used with an individual, a small group, or a whole class. This activity can be easily adapted for a variety of subjects and reading levels. This strategy helps strengthen reading and critical thinking skills. Any problems encountered by the students on reading comprehension leads the researcher attracted to help them overcome their difficulties in making a research on the Classroom Action Research through DRTA technique at Second semester of English Department of UNISKA Kediri.

Based on the background of the research above, the research problem was formulated to be "How can DRTA technique improve students' reading comprehension achievement?"

2. The Review of Related Literature

Reading is an activity with a purpose. A person may read in order to gain information or verify existing knowledge, or in order to critique a writer's ideas or writing style. A person may also read for enjoyment, or to enhance knowledge of the language being read. The purpose(s) for reading guide the reader's selection of texts.

According to Harmer (1998), there are many reasons why getting students to read English texts is an important part of the teacher's job. In the first place, many of them want to be able to read text in English either for their careers, for study purposes or simply for pleasure. Anything we can do to make reading easier for them must be a good idea. Reading is useful for the other purposes too: any exposure to English (provide students understand it more or less) is a good thing for language student. At the very least, some of the language sticks in their minds as part of the process of language acquisition, and if the reading text is especially interesting and engaging, acquisition is likely to be even more successful.

Grabe (2009:231) says that there are Multiple-strategy approaches to strategy instruction. Those are: Know-Want to know-Learned (KWL), Experience-Text-Relate (ETR), Question-Answer-Response (QAR), Directed Reading and Thinking Activities (DRTA), Reciprocal Teaching, Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR), Self-Explanation Reading Training (SERT), Direct Explanation, Questioning the Author, Transactional Strategies Instruction (TSI), and Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI)

Directed Reading-Thinking Activity (DRTA) is an instructional framework that views reading as a problem-solving

process best accomplished in a social context (Stauffer, 1969). The teacher's role is to select an instructional level text, divide the text into meaningful sections, and facilitate discussion of each section of text. Students are responsible for establishing their own purposes for reading, generating predictions, justifying those predictions, independently reading the text, and verifying or revising predictions based on evaluations of information in the text during the teacher-led discussion of each section. Stauffer recommended using DRTA with narrative or non-narrative text at all grade levels.

Mather and Jaffe (2002:1) explains that the purpose of the Directed Reading-Thinking Activity (DRTA) is to improve reading comprehension by promoting critical thinking in the reading process. Students are expected to learn to set a purpose for reading, read to prove or disprove a hypothesis, and evaluate the accuracy of their hypotheses based on the textual information. Students' active involvement in the reading process improves comprehension and retention of information. Other expected outcomes include increased ability to make logical predictions and support decisions based on given information.

Mather and Jaffe (2002) explain that in procedures of DRTA, there are some steps that can be taken. Those are direct the students to the title of the selection and introductory picture (if there is one) and ask the following questions, such as: based on the title (and picture), what do you think this story will be about? What do you think might happen in this story? Why? Lead a discussion wherein students state and give reasons for their predictions. Each student's prediction forms the basis for further reading, direct the students to read to a predetermined point for the purpose of verifying or disproving their predictions. Have the students close their books and ask questions to help them evaluate their predictions, such as: Were you correct? (Partially correct? Incorrect?) What will

happen now? The following is requiring students to provide support from the text (e.g., state events from the text, read relevant sentences) in discussing the accuracy of their previous predictions. The last is encouraging the students to use evidence given by other students to make or refine their subsequent predictions. As students repeat the cycle (predict, read, evaluate) their diverse hypotheses should converge.

According to Anderson-Anderson (2002: 3) the narrative text type tells a story, in doing so, entertains the audience, and makes the audience think about an issue, teaches them a lesson, or excite their emotions. In other words, it can be said that a narrative text is retelling a story that is told by the doer or other person's point of view. If the narrator is one of the characters in the story, the story is said to be told in the first person. If the person outside the story is the narrator, then the story is being told in the third person. He also gives an example of narrative texts which includes: myths, fairytales, science fiction, and romance novels.

Graesser, et.al (1996) note that narrative discourse has a special status in research and theories of discourse, language use, and literacy in general. People acquire a knowledge of story structure prior to school while the structure of expository text requires explicit instruction and training. Further, narrative are read more quickly than expository text, and scores on recall and comprehension texts are generally higher for narrative text than for expository text.

In short, narrative text is very suitable to be applied in the class room. Because the purpose of a narrative is to amuse, entertain and deal with actual or vicarious experience in different ways. Narrative deals with problematic events which lead to a crisis or turning point of some kind, which in turn finds a resolution.

3. Research Design

Research design used in this study is classified as classroom action research. "Action research is a process designed to empower all participants in the educational process (students, instructors and other parties) with the means to improve the practices conducted within the educational experience" (Hopkins, 1993). All participants are known as the active members of the research process. Currently, this kind of research is called classroom action research.

In this case, the research was done together with the collaborator. The reading lecture was taken to solve the reading skill problem in the class. Furthermore, the researcher conducts the action in a cyclical process. The procedure is done based on the cycles consisting of certain actions which covers the planning of the action, the implementation of the action, the observation, and the reflection.

4. The research procedure:

The research procedure can be described as follow:

a. Planning.

In this phase, researcher should do such kinds of steps, they are; preparation of the strategy, preparation of lesson plan (including the media), instrument, and criteria of success: (1)The teacher and collaborator make the teaching planning, (2)The teacher and collaborator also implement the plan well, (3)The teacher and collaborator can organize the class well, (4)The collaborator follows the stages of the reading process, and (5)The students-teacher/researcher, and collaborator interact well.

b. The Implementation of the Action

Action is the phase where the researcher implements what had been planned in general planning. In doing the action, the researcher did the one cycle first. It needed three meetings. In each meeting the researcher and collaborator gave the text in narrative

and the researcher started by asking the students' thinking about the title of the text, the picture related with the text. Students predicted what happened in the text. The researcher opened or showed the first paragraph and asked them to read, think, predict, give, ask, and answer the questions from the researcher about what was the next paragraph telling about. During the meeting, collaborator helped the researcher to give or repeat the instructions, he asked them to read, think, and predict the story. He also helped to write every questions and predictions. He sometimes took pictures during the implementation or action. The last, the questions were given to the students.

c. Observing

The observation was conducted by using some instruments. They are the interview, field notes, questionnaire or self-observation checklist, and final work scoring rubric. The interview is done to get more information about the students' progress during teaching and learning process. Field note is used during the teaching and learning process collaborator noted any findings that occur. The finding range from situation (atmosphere) of the class to unexpected things that may happen during the implementation. This observation checklist is handed out to students and they must observe themselves, their frequency of prediction, and their discussion participation etc. during the lesson. Final work scoring rubric was given in the last time after giving the material or doing the cycle. It was used to know the students final score, so it can be included in quantitative data because it can be counted.

d. Reflecting

In this part the researcher analyzes the data collected during the observation section. When the mean score of students reading narrative text was

above 75, the percentage of the classical success is 80%, the research was successful and the cycle could be finished.

5. Summary of the Finding

In the previous study, the researcher has explained that narrative text is a text that is used by the students to improve their skill in reading comprehension. DRTA technique can make students interested and happy in learning. As stated by Sukasih (2009) that DRTA learning model could develop students' achievement from the learning aspect and content, and the percentage of students' learning mastery. Besides that, Mather, N., & Jaffe, L. (2002:1) also explains that the purpose of the Directed Reading-Thinking Activity (DRTA) is to improve reading comprehension by promoting critical thinking in the reading process.

Based on the result of reading test and checklist, the lecturer assumed the first cycle implementation was not applied optimally. Most of students did not give more attention. They did not participate actively, they just kept silent because they were afraid to get the mistake in predicting or asking something, they spoke with their friends during the process. So, only the clever students gave attention, they were very active and did what the lecturer asked.

When the first test was given, they felt difficult and confused, because they did not understand the instructions, they did not follow the process of applying the strategy. The action in the first cycle was not success yet, so the second cycle had to be continued by revising the teaching technique, the materials, classroom management, and strategy that were more

applicable and effective to improve students' reading comprehension achievement.

In the second cycle lecturer reminded the rule of the strategy, he asked to the students to bring dictionary, so if they felt difficult to understand the unfamiliar words they could open the dictionary, ask their friends or lecturer. Students wrote every question that they made or their lecturer gave, so, they could participate in the action. Synonym and antonym of the words that students needed were given, during the prediction, when every paragraph of the story was showed, students predicted well, they shared with their friends and lecturer, the situation were very crowded but focused in prediction of the text.

By observing the students' reading skill from preliminary study, it can be known that there was any improvement in their reading skill both on the first and the second cycle. They get significance improvement in the students' reading achievement. In preliminary study, there is only 8 students are successful. There are 12 students get the score under the criteria of success,

Then in the first cycle, there are 15 students successful, and there are 5 students are failed, it is still not successful, because their score is under the criteria of success. Then, the researcher does the second or the last cycle that shows no students get the score under the passing grade.

The development of students' achievement from preliminary study, cycle 1, and cycle 2 can be seen in table below.

Table 1

		Preliminary Study	The 1st Cycle	The 2nd Cycle
N	Valid	20	20	20
	Missing	0	0	0
Mean		66.00	75.00	80.50
Median		65,00	72.00	80.00
Minimum		60,00	65,00	75.00
Maximum		80,00	90,00	95.00

From the table above, the numbers of students are 20. Students' mean, median, minimum score and maximum score improved, students' reading comprehension achievement of narrative text through Directed Reading Thinking Activities is successful. Mean in preliminary study is 66, median is 65, minimum score is 60, and maximum score is 80, they are really under the criteria of success, and then, in cycle 1 after applying the strategy, the students' score is getting better, mean is 75.00, median is 72, minimum score is 65 and maximum score is 90. They are still under the criteria of success, so the lecturer as the researcher does the cycle 2, he gets the score of students improved, mean is 80.50, median is 80.00, minimum score is 75 and maximum score is 95.00. So, the researcher stops the research in the second cycle, because it reaches success.

It means that by applying DRTA technique, it will be able to help students to create their own minds, ideas and share related to the text faced. By predicting and analyzing the text, these will make students enforced to understand the text. Automatically, their comprehension will be increased and improved.

6. Conclusion and Suggestion

Based on the research held, the researcher stated that the students' reading comprehension achievement of the tenth grade students at the second semester of

English Department of UNISKA Kediri 2012-2013., after being taught by applying Directed Reading Thinking Activities technique, had significant result improvement. Based on this, the researcher suggests and recommends as follow:

It is suggested for the lecturer to consider the Directed Reading Thinking Activities technique used in this study to be applied in teaching learning process to improve students' reading comprehension achievement. Second, before teaching, the lecturer needs to formulate instructional objectives to be achieved by the students through lesson plan, select material or topics which are interesting and useful for the students, prepares the instructional media, and designs instructional procedure of assessment.

The researcher presents some suggestions for the students. They are: the students should have motivation and intention. If the students do not have high motivation and intention in the learning process, the learning process will not be effective. Second, the students should be active in learning process, especially during the response delivery cycle. By doing it, the students will get a lot of improvements in their achievement, not only in reading but also in grammatical, vocabulary, and self-confidence, because those aspects are also required in reading improvement.

It is suggested to other researchers to follow up the study by conducting action

researchers on improving the students' reading achievement. It can be conducted not only in UNISKA but also at other university and also for different level, such

as junior high school, elementary school, or senior high school using DRTA or combined using other techniques.

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