

IMPROVING READING COMPREHENSION IN NARRATIVE TEXT THROUGH DIRECTED READING THINKING ACTIVITY TECHNIQUE

Rika Monika, Basturi Hasan, Feni Munifatullah

FKIP Universitas Lampung, Jl. Prof. Dr. Soemantri Brojonegoro No.1

e-mail: rikaamonik@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji: (i) peningkatan kemampuan membaca teks naratif melalui penerapan teknik *Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA)* dan (ii) aspek kemampuan membaca yang paling meningkat. Subyek penelitian ini adalah 28 siswa di kelas VIII. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa terdapat peningkatan pemahaman membaca siswa dalam sebuah teks naratif karena $t\text{-value} > t\text{-table}$ ($9.706 > 2.051$) dengan nilai signifikan 0.05. Nilai rata-rata yang diperoleh dalam *pre-test* adalah 62.49 dan nilai rata-rata yang diperoleh dalam *post-test* adalah 69.75. Nilai peningkatan diperoleh sebesar 7.26 dan aspek kemampuan membaca yang paling tinggi peningkatannya yaitu ide pokok. Ini menunjukkan bahwa pengajaran membaca menggunakan teknik DRTA lebih memudahkan dalam menentukan ide pokok.

This research was aimed at examining: (i) the students' improvement on reading narrative text after taught through Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) technique and (ii) the aspect of reading skills that improved the most. The subjects of this research were 28 students in class VIII. The result of this research showed that there was an improvement of students' reading comprehension to a narrative text since $t\text{-value} > t\text{-table}$ ($9.706 > 2.051$) with significant value was 0.05. The average score of pre-test was 62.49 and the average score of post-test was 69.75. It gained 7.26 and the most improved aspect of reading skills is main idea. This evidence proved that teaching reading using DRTA technique facilitates more in determining main idea.

Keywords: *directed reading thinking activity, reading comprehension, narrative text.*

INTRODUCTION

Reading, in particular, plays an important role as a starting point to understand and get the information of the text from every reading passage, especially in learning language skills of English. This is obvious since reading is defined as understanding written texts (Pang, 2003:6). The readers typically make use of background knowledge, vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, experience with text and other strategies to help them understand written text. In other words, the process of reading does need appropriate comprehension. When the reader, for example, does not comprehend the information in the text, of course, the reading activity is totally meaningless. In contrast, the comprehension does really occur when the reader understands fully the information and idea in the text.

However, in reality, the students frequently find difficulty to comprehend the text. Consequently, they should open a dictionary to translate word by word into Indonesian to know the content of reading text. This unfortunate condition is sometimes found indicating that many students in second grade at SMPN 22 Bandar Lampung where in which they had difficulties in understanding and comprehending the text since they did not listen to the teacher when the teacher presented the materials. It is now clear that the students' reading comprehension was still low. During the interview with the teacher, she said that the mean score of the students' reading test was under 70 the minimal standard (KKM).

Furthermore, the first previous research is conducted by Kusumawardani (2012). Her study finds that many factors that cause the students' difficulties in reading the text. The factors are the characteristic of reading which is very complex activity that involves both perceptions and thought and the students had no sufficient achievement vocabulary items. Moreover, the second is conducted by Somadayo (2013). He finds that the students have difficulty to comprehend the text and they are not interested to read English text or material. In addition, the third is conducted by Zakiyah (2015). She indicates that the students' lack of ability in identifying five aspects of reading. The students must familiar with these terms, such as main idea, specific information, references, inference, and vocabulary.

The next is conducted by Al Odwan (2012). It reveals that practices in Jordanian schools show that most students' reading abilities are not good enough to do so. All of the students get the information from materials they read and yet many of them do not read the materials. They are not interested to read English text or the materials. The last previous research is conducted by Yazdani (2015). He indicates that several problems are found, that is, many readers do not know exactly whether they are adequately comprehending the text. Then, many readers have a misconception of comprehension. Therefore, all the problems basically occur because the students do not get an effective technique so that they are

not interested in the reading activity. It makes the readers do not comprehend the information in the text, so the reading skill is totally meaningless. In order to solve the problems the study tries to seek for the most appropriate technique to use to make successful teaching-learning process of reading class.

For this purpose, applying and using effective technique to improve the students' reading ability, so that they can understand the intended message of every reading passage. Actually, there are many techniques that can be used to teach reading skills. One of them is Directed Reading Thinking Activity technique (DRTA). DRTA—a reading comprehension technique that can guide students in asking questions about a text, making predictions, and reading to confirm or refute their predictions. Thus, DRTA process encourages students to be active, thoughtful readers and to enhance their comprehension (Stauffer, 1969). Additionally, this is a comprehension technique that guides the students in making predictions and reading to confirm or refute their predictions. It means that, prediction is emphasized in DRTA technique.

More operationally, there are some activities students should do in implementing DRTA technique. First, “*direct*” which done through can be showing a title or a picture. Next, the students are asked to guess and predict what the story is about, and what happens to the story. In this regard, the teacher may ask the students questions like: “*What do you think?*” or “*Why do you think so?*”, “*What is in your mind*

when you see this picture/read this title?”. To be able to answer the questions, the students can, for example, be asked to read the text silently to verify the accuracy of their predictions. Possibly, some of their hypotheses are rejected and the others are confirmed by further reading. However, the teacher can mention this step as students “*reading*” activity. When this process is predictions, the students, then, need to re-read the text and state how they are able to verify their prediction. This completed activity is called “*thinking*” process. In this step, the students confirm or revise their predictions. Finally, the teacher needs to question the students to cite the text which causes them to confirm or change the prediction in accordance with intended message put forward in the reading text used.

In summary, DRTA technique can be more effective which can help the students to put high interest in learning reading. It could be said that DRTA technique is able to improve students' reading comprehension and their motivation. Therefore, the research was aimed at examining: (i) improvement of the students' reading comprehension after being taught through DRTA technique in narrative text and (ii) the aspects of reading improved the most.

METHODS OF THE RESEARCH

The population of this research was the second grade students of SMPN 22 Bandar Lampung and the sample was class VIII J that consisted of 28 students. The class as the sample was

taken through purposive sampling referred to as judgment sampling-sample elements judged to be typical, or representative, are chosen from the population (Ary et al, 2010:156). Choosing the sample is based on purposive sampling depends on what criteria are used. There are two criteria sample taken researcher took sample of class VIII J, such as the students' low English achievement and the lowest class in reading comprehension. For the sample of this research, the researcher took one class as the sample since this stands to reason that class VIII J was having lack of ability in identifying aspects of reading than the other classes based on interview with the teacher. The instrument of this research was reading tests consisting of pre-test and post-test. Reading tests were used to find out how far teaching reading comprehension through DRTA technique; for this purpose, the students were required to comprehend the information in the reading text.

The research design used in this research was one group pre-test and post-test since the pre-test before the treatments and the post-test after the treatments were used (Hatch and Farhady (as cited in Setiyadi 2006:132)). The variables of this research were independent variable which was concerned with DRTA technique and dependent variable which dealt with the students' reading in form of narrative text. In analyzing the data, Paired Sample T-test (SPSS 16.00 for Windows) was used in which the significance was determined by $p < 0.05$. Thus, H_1 is accepted and H_0 was rejected because the T-value was

higher than T-table based on df. In constructing the research, the research procedures went through these following steps: (1) determining research instruments, (2) try-out the instruments, (3) administering the pre-test, (4) conducting the treatments, (5) administering the post-test, and (6) analyzing the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section has two major points, are: (1) results section refers to direct answers to the research questions that generates from the data. It means that report the findings of the study based upon the methodology that applies to gather the information, while (2) discussion section is about interpreting the results. It provides the explanation and interpretation of research findings by comparing with the previous research findings. The results and discussion can be further presented as follows.

Results

This research was aimed to answer the questions whether there was an improvement of the students' reading comprehension after being taught by DRTA technique and which aspect of reading comprehension that improved the most. In order to find out the answer, several research procedures had been done which consisted of establishing the research instruments for pre-test, treatments, until conducting post-test. The data were taken from every procedure had been computed and analyzed to draw the answer.

The total of pre-test score was 1749.91, mean score was 62.49, the highest score was 80, and the lowest score was 43.33. Furthermore, the highest score of aspects in pre-test was main idea with the score 125 and the lowest score of aspects in pre-test was inference with the score 82. After conducting pre-test and treatments, the researcher administered the post-test. This post-test was administered to measure the students' reading comprehension improvement by using DRTA technique.

From the results of the post-test score, it was found that the total of post-test score was 1953.25, mean score was 69.75, the highest score was 86.66, and the lowest score was 53.33. In addition, the most improved aspects of reading comprehension was main idea with the improvement from pre-test score was 15. In this research, Paired Sample T-test was used to test the hypothesis, in which the significance was determined by $0.00 < 0.05$. The significant level was lower than 0.05. It meant that H_1 was accepted and H_0 was rejected. It proved that the T-value is higher than T-table based on df (9.706 > 2.051). Thus, it can be concluded that there was an improvement of the students' reading comprehension after being taught through DRTA technique for the second grade students of SMPN 22 Bandar Lampung. In other words, the hypothesis was accepted.

Furthermore, DRTA technique can improve students' reading comprehension in all aspects of reading skills. The highest improvement was main idea with the

increase amounting to 1.78 points. Then, vocabulary improved amounting to 1.55 points, specific information improved amounting to 1.43 points, reference improved amounting to 1.43 points, and the lowest improvement was inference with the increase up to 1.07 points. It is now obvious that the technique applied in this research, DRTA technique, is evidently effective to improve the students' reading comprehension, specifically reading narrative text. As can be noted, the aspect improves the most significant is main idea, then followed by vocabulary, specific information, reference, and the last one is inference.

Discussion of the Findings

From the data analysis, it can be said that after being taught by DRTA technique, the students could improve their ability of reading comprehension and the aspects of reading skills regarding to the results of pre-test to post-test. The results indicate that the improvement of students' reading scores in experimental class after the treatments are given. As mentioned before, there was an improvement of the students' reading comprehension after being taught through DRTA technique. This was supported Kusumawardani (2012) and Zakiyah (2015) who also found an improvement in students' reading comprehension after the treatments of DRTA technique. It proved that after getting the treatments the students' scores were higher and the increase of students' average score in pre-test and post-test.

Based on the results, the findings did not only examine the improvement of the students' reading comprehension, but also the improvement of each aspect of reading skills. The major improvement, as can be noted, was on main idea aspect. The improvement of the students' score is caused the directing or predicting of DRTA technique. The students which were asked to predict the story was the same with the students who were asked the main idea implicitly. It is line with Brown (2001:176) who states that the students can take the main idea because prediction is able to active the schemata or background knowledge of the students. Moreover, the questions that came from the researcher also improved their aspects of reading implicitly. For example: "*Why the monkey climb up to the top of a tree?*", "*Who is he?*" and *so on*.

Furthermore, the tasks such as filling the blank paragraph. In this activity, the students had to guess the answer related to the questions which was not noticed in the text. The researcher gave a paragraph and let the students read. Then, they answered the questions in line with the text that had been read. The students used their mind logically, because they did not get the answer directly from the text. The researcher gave a paragraph and from the paragraph the researcher gave the questions. In other words, as the students were taught by using DRTA technique, it would be easier for them to comprehend the text and guess or predict the main idea of a particular paragraph. While, the finding is different from the previous study

Zakiyah (2015) who confirmed the aspect mostly increased was reference.

Obviously, it was also found that DRTA technique motivated the students to show their ability and ask the teacher when they have difficulties in the class. They to be active in the learning activity and understand the intended message of every reading passage. Besides that, it can guide the students in making predictions and reading to confirm or refute their predictions. As a result, the students gained much improvement after the implementation of DRTA technique in reading comprehension. This was supported Somadayo (2013), Al Odwan (2012), Yazdani (2015) that DRTA technique could help the students comprehend or understand the text or story more easily. It can make the students to explore their idea by own language. It seemed that the students felt motivated and enjoyed every step of DRTA technique.

This is also supported by Stauffer (1969) that DRTA can encourage the students to be active, thoughtful readers and to enhance their comprehension. Additionally, this is a comprehension technique that guides students in making predictions and reading to confirm or refute their predictions. It means that, prediction is emphasized in DRTA technique. It is now obvious that the improvement of the students' score, is caused the directing or predicting of DRTA technique. In making prediction the students use their background knowledge. Each prediction will be different because students think as their own mind, and the teacher must

accept all of the students' prediction. After that the students are given reading material. Having read and comprehended the reading text they can prove whether their prediction is true or not. In this case, they became more active and curious in every meeting. They said reading activity became more fun and interesting by using DRTA technique.

DRTA technique subconsciously forced the students to understand fully the information and idea in the whole text. It also contributes the improvement on students' reading comprehension through a student-centered. It grows the students' responsibility to comprehend the text in order to have a good cooperation with their friends so that they will be easy in comprehending the text. This technique makes the students to understand the text in a cooperative learning style by giving every member of the group an essential part to play in the whilst-activity. It means that using DRTA technique gave the students an opportunity to be more active through a group discussion and a group sharing section through cooperative learning.

In the predicting process, DRTA technique motivates the students to become engaged in the learning activity. It could be seen from their positive behavior during the discussion in a group discussion and a group sharing section. When this process is predictions, the students, then, need to re-read the text and state how they are able to verify their prediction. In this case, they confirm or revise their predictions. It can make them to be active so that they can explore their

idea by own language. They can cite the text which causes them to confirm or change the prediction in accordance with intended message put forward in the reading text used. This is line with Larsen-Freeman (2000) who argues that cooperative learning means that learners learn from each other in the groups. In cooperative learning, the teachers teach students collaborative or social skills so that they can work together more effectively. Therefore, it can be assumed that DRTA technique is a part of cooperative learning, an element which needs a good proportion between the technique, the teacher and the students as well.

Finally, it can be stated that DRTA technique not only was able to improve students' reading comprehension, but also the aspects of reading. The aspects were main idea, specific information, inference, reference, and vocabulary. Clearly, it can be approved that DRTA technique was an effective technique for teaching reading at the second grade students of SMPN 22 Bandar Lampung.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

On the whole, there is an improvement of students' reading comprehension after being taught through DRTA technique. It can be seen from the computation which showed that the value of two-tailed significance is 0.000. It means that H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted since $0.00 < 0.05$. It was proved by the increase of the students' mean score in the post-test which was higher than in the pre-test.

Students' mean scores in the pre-test was 62.49 and post-test was 69.75, with the score gain was 7.26 points. Furthermore, DRTA is effective to develop students' reading comprehension, in terms all aspects of reading ranging from the highest to the lowest achievements in: (1) main idea aspect, (2) followed by vocabulary, (3) specific information, (4) reference, and (5) the last one was inference.

Regarding the several conclusions above, the researcher would like to propose some suggestions. Firstly, for the English teachers, who is on the teaching and learning process since there were aspects of reading which were not sufficiently achieved, namely; (1) inference, and (2) reference. The teacher thereby should pay more attention in those aspects. Secondly, for further researchers, there are a few studies of DRTA technique and its implementation in reading monologue text. Thus, the further researchers can apply DRTA technique in other monologue text based on the syllabus. For example, recount text dealing with the text which tells events or experiences in the past. Furthermore, this research was conducted by using DRTA technique in junior high school. So the further researchers can conduct this technique for different levels of students such as senior high school students, or even university level.

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