

**IMPROVING STUDENT'S READING COMPREHENSION
THROUGH DRTA-STRATEGY AT SMP ST.IGNASIUS MEDAN**

Maria Friska. N
Universitas Sari Mutiara Indonesia
Email : maria.friska@yahoo.com

Abstract

This study was designed to improve students' reading comprehension ability through DRTA Strategy. The strategy was selected because it was believed to be able to stimulate or activate the students to be more involved in the reading activities and to facilitate the students to comprehend the texts, especially report texts. The research problem was formulated as follows: "How to apply DRTA strategy in order to improve students reading comprehension at SMP ST.IGNASIUS MEDAN? The study employed a collaborative classroom action research design in which the researcher and the collaborator as researcher team worked together designing the lesson plan, implementing the action, observing the action, and reflecting the action. The subjects of this research were 30 students the first semester students XI of SMP ST.IGNASIUS in the 2013/2014 academic year. The findings of this research study indicated that the DRTA strategy was successful in improving both the students' ability in comprehending report texts and the students' involvement in reading activities. Based on the students' achievement using DRTA strategy in comprehending report texts, it was suggested for the English teachers to apply DRTA strategy as one of many alternatives that can be used in teaching reading skills.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini dirancang untuk meningkatkan kemampuan membaca pemahaman siswa melalui strategi DRTA. Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk menemukan sebuah strategi belajar dan mengajar yang terjadi, khususnya, mengajar keahlian membaca. Strategi ini dipilih karena strategi ini diyakini mampu merangsang atau mengaktifkan siswa untuk lebih terlibat dalam kegiatan-kegiatan membaca dan memfasilitasi siswa untuk memahami bacaan, khususnya teks reporti. Jadi, penelitian ini diarahkan untuk memecahkan masalah praktis dalam proses belajar mengajar. Rumusan masalah dalam penelitian ini adalah (1) Bagaimana kemampuan membaca siswa SMP ST.IGNASIUS dapat ditingkatkan melalui strategi DRTA?. Penelitian ini menggunakan penelitian tindakan kelas yang merupakan kolaborasi antara peneliti dengan kolaborator sebagai sebuah tim yang bekerjasama dalam merancang rencana pembelajaran, melaksanakan tindakan, mengamati tindakan, dan merefleksikan tindakan. Subyek penelitian adalah tiga puluh siswa kelas XI B SMP ST.IGNASIUS pada tahun akademik 2013/2014. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa strategi DRTA telah berhasil dalam meningkatkan kemampuan siswa memahami teks bahasa Inggris (report texts) dan meningkatkan keterlibatan siswa dalam kegiatan pemahaman teks, disarankan kepada guru-guru Bahasa Inggris untuk menggunakan strategi DRTA sebagai salah satu alternative yang bias digunakan dalam pembelajaran kemampuan membaca.

Keywords: DRTA Strategy, Reading Comprehension, Report Texts.

1. Introduction

Reading is one of important aspects in language, since through reading a text the readers gain large information from written

words. It means that through reading, readers get much information about the world. The texts that the readers read consist of different genre which will give different

function to the readers. Gaining information from the written words is not as simple as most people think of. Many times when people asked what they have already comprehended from their reading, readers could not explain it. They just read the text without knowing what they have read.

Reading comprehension help people to develop their knowledge. In this case, reading in foreign language that is English language is very important. The students of Junior High school are expected to master the four language skills such as Reading, listening, Speaking, and writing.

However in reality, good reading comprehension is not achieved yet by the students. The lack of ability in reading comprehension is proved by the data that has been observed and showed in International Student Achievement in Reading. The reading score of Indonesian students as reported by PIRL (Progress in International Reading Literacy, 2006) is low, Indonesia got the fourth lowest ranked from 45 countries, that is indirectly reveals that Indonesian students have a problem in reading.

This lack of reading comprehensiaon also found in SMP ST IGNASIUS students . It can be seen from the result of reading test of the second year students in SMP ST IGNASIUS. The second year students in academic year of 2013/2014 consisted of three classes. The strategy used is when the teacher is teaching reading, the teacher always use the same strategy. Firstly, she gives an example to the students how to read the passage. After that, she asks some students to read it. Then, she asks whether

there are any difficult words or not. If there are, the teacher gives the translation directly. Finally, she asks the students to answer the following questions. This is not enough to fulfill students reading comprehension

Furthermore, in order to know how serious the problems are, a pre test is administrated to the students of class VIII. The test covers the sub skills in reading particularly finding main idea and word meaning. In addition, the test that used in this study had been tried out to check its validity at SMP IGNASIUS especially the students of grade 8 in academic year 2012/2013. The result of the pre-test showed that the student's comprehension in reading is poor. It can be indicated that the students in grade eight had low in reading comprehension. The students score is far from the minimum standard of the passing score grade eight. In line with the problems above, the teachers should be able in motivating the students to read.

Therefore the researcher would like to conduct an action research about 'Increasing Student's Reading Comprehension Through DRTA Strategy (A Classroom Action Research at SMP ST.IGNASIUS MEDAN)'. In line with the background that has been explained, the research problem could be formulated as follows: How to apply DRTA strategy in order to improve students reading comprehension at SMP ST.IGNASIUS MEDAN?

2. Review of Related Literature

Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) Strategy, which is firstly conceptualized and refined by Stauffer (1969), is an effective activity that helps students in understanding the text. This strategy guides students in asking questions about a text, making predictions, and then reading to confirm or refute their predictions. The DRTA process encourages students to be active and thoughtful readers, enhancing their comprehension. The hyphen in Directed Reading-Thinking Activity is intended to symbolize the interdependence of the two terms, "Reading" and "Thinking," because in order to be a good reader, one must also think. Unfortunately, the link between the two has been lost for some students as evidence in their replies to teachers' questions about what they have read.

The Directed Reading-Thinking Activity (Stauffer, 1969) engages students in a step-by step process that guides them through informational text. It is designed to move students through the process of reading text. Questions are asked and answered, and predictions are made and tested throughout the reading. Additionally, new questions and predictions are formulated as the student progresses through the text.

While the teacher guides the process, students determine the purpose of reading. To introduce the strategy, the teacher gives examples of how to make predictions. A preview of the section to be read is given by having the students read the title and making predictions. Independent

thinking is encouraged as knowledge from previous lessons is incorporated into the predictions. All students' predictions should be recorded by the teacher, even those that will later prove to be inaccurate. Misconceptions are clarified by the reader through interaction with the text and in post-reading discussions. After reading small selections, the teacher prompts the students with questions about specific information. It is important for the teacher not to interrupt too often. The amount of reading is adjusted depending on the purpose and the difficulty of the text. The reading is divided into small sections, giving the students time to think and process information. The teacher makes sure students can identify and understand important vocabulary.

Brassell (2008:18) inserts that reading comprehension is the ability to take the information from written text and do something with it in a way that demonstrates knowledge or understanding of that information. In other words comprehension occurs when readers are able to respond or transform the written words in ways that demonstrate understanding. For example, when readers are able to discuss the contents of the text with others, the readers is demonstrate the comprehension with others.

According to Dutcher (1990), Reading Comprehension is an active and complex process. The process is constructing meaning. The construction is done through dynamic interaction of three components: the reader's background knowledge, the information inferred by the written language, and the reading situation context. These three components are related

each other to effectively the reading comprehension.

3. Method

The design of this study is Classroom Action Research (CAR). Carr and Kemmis (1986:8) describe that action research is a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants (teachers, students), in social situation in order to improve the rationality and justice of (1) their own social or educational practices, (2) their understanding of these practices, and (3) the situations in which these practices are carried out.

The Classroom Action Research, which is taken as the strategy is Direct Reading-Thinking Activity (DR-TA) strategy. The researcher and her collaborative classroom teacher directly conduct it. Since it deals with the classroom setting, this study is directed to develop the teaching of reading. The researcher will apply DR-TA strategy during the learning process. In this study, the researcher will act as the practitioner who teaches students with the proposed strategy, that is DR-TA strategy.

With the above consideration this research tries to study and reflect critically and collaboratively the implementation of lesson plans that have been designed. The study is focused on performance teachers and students performance in a natural classroom situation with aim to develop the professionalism of teachers in improving the quality of teaching in Junior High School.

To realize these expectations then, action research is designed using the four

activities, namely: plan, action, observation and reflection. Thus research will be done in one big cycle, if the result of first cycle is not satisfactory, it will be continued to the second cycle only. If the second cycle also fails then the researchers will observe the critical components in this study such as: the researcher, the object of research, research materials and others. The fourth phase of a cycle of action research is to adapt the model described by Kemmis and Taggart, as in the picture.

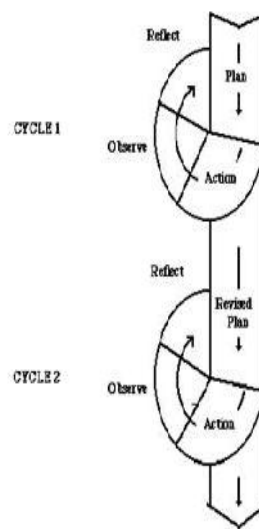


Figure 1: Kemmis and Taggart Models

According to Kemmis and Taggart (1998) stated that an action based research is a cyclonic of process of planning, action, observation, and reflection. This study consisted of two cycles. A pre-test was administered to the students before the cycle I was conducted.

4. Discussion

Based on the observation of two cycles and the students' score on reading comprehension test, it is known that the DRTA strategy can increase students' reading comprehension.

According to Stauffer (1969), DRTA strategy is an effective activity that helps students in understanding the text. This strategy guides students in asking questions about a text, making predictions, and then reading to confirm or refute their predictions. The DRTA process encourages students to be active and thoughtful readers, enhancing their comprehension. The hyphen in Directed Reading-Thinking Activity is intended to symbolize the interdependence of the two terms, "Reading" and "Thinking," because in order to be a good reader, one must also think. The research findings show that the students' score increased from the pre test to the second cycle and the students also more enjoyable and the condition was better from cycle 1 to cycle 2.

In the first cycle, the teacher didn't follow the phase of DRTA strategy systematically. The teacher didn't clarify all the ideas, so some students didn't feel well in following the lesson. It happened because the strategy hadn't been followed well. As the result, the students' score was not achieved above the minimum standard. Dupuis, Lee, Badiali, & Askov(1989:252) in McIntosh, M., & Bear, D. (1993) state that "the rationale for using the DRTA is to foster the student's independence when reading. It engages students in an active process where they must use their reasoning abilities and their own ideas". In this cycle,

the students' had lack motivated in learning reading. The students thought that learning English was so difficult. So when they wanted to make the prediction they felt lazy because thought that it was really difficult.

In cycle 2, the phase of DRTA strategy was applied in the class better than the first cycle so that the students could be more active and enjoy the learning process of new material. The lack in the first cycle had been reflected better. The teacher motivated the students by giving extrinsic motivation. The teacher will give points that will be added to their formative score. This reward made the students more comfortable and enjoyable in following the lesson.

In conclusion, The DRTA strategy processed encourages students to be active and thoughtful readers, enhancing their comprehension, engages students in a step-by step process that guides them through informational text. It is designed to move students through the process of reading text. Questions are asked and answered, and predictions are made and tested throughout the reading. Additionally, new questions and predictions are formulated as the student progresses through the text. As the result, the students' score increased each cycle and students' condition had been better before doing the research.

5. Conclusion and Suggestion

5.1 Conclusion

To improve students' achievement in reading comprehension the researcher applied DRTA strategy and based on DRTA strategy there were 11 stages to do in teaching and learning process of reading

comprehension. They were: 1) the teacher create a classroom climate in which students are free to state their ideas and share their thinking. 2) Introduce the purpose of the DRTA. 3) The students divided into groups and then the researcher gives the copies of the text to the students. 4) Determine the text to be used and pre-select points for students to pause during the reading process, and provide examples of how to make predictions. 5) Then the researcher clarified presented the prior knowledge to the students that related to the content of the topic by applying DRTA strategy. 6) The teacher asked the groups to make a list of the different features that supply clues about the text. 7) The teacher helped the class understand that the features will help them predict what they are going to read, which in turn will help them understand the material. 8) The teacher gave each student one index card on which you have written a different phrase or sentence from the textbook passage the students are about to read. 9) The teacher asked the students to circulate around the room and read their cards to as many of their classmates as possible but not to discuss them. 10) After five minutes the students returned to their home group and jointly write a prediction about what they think the passage will discuss. 11) The teacher called on each group to read its prediction and explain the group's reasoning.

5.2 Suggestion

Based on the conclusion above the suggestions were formulated as the following:

1. To the English Teacher, they are suggested to apply the stages in DRTA strategy in teaching reading comprehension because this strategy helps the student easily in understanding and processing the text. The teachers are also suggested to apply the stages of DRTA strategy because it makes the students more active and enjoy the teaching learning process, especially in reading comprehension.

2. To the students, they are suggested to follow the stages in DRTA strategy; they are used to be active and enthusiastic in predicting the text which will make them understand the text easily. The students become critical readers. In this case, DRTA give a freedom to the readers to examine their own thinking to raise questions and seeks answer diligently and boldly. Allows the active reader who uses what has already known and the text to construct meaning with the guidance of the teacher. The stages of DRTA strategy help the student who has difficulty in justifying his answers with information from the text since this strategy requires the reader to do so. Students enjoy making predictions and then finding out whether or not their predictions were correct. DRTA is also a very flexible strategy in that it can be used individually, with a small group, or with an entire class.

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