

DEVELOPING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION OF NARRATIVE TEXT BY USING DIRECT READING -THINKING ACTIVITY STRATEGY

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Abstract

The aim of this research was to investigate the effectiveness of the use of DR-TA strategy to develop the students' reading comprehension of narrative texts. This research was conducted at SMP Haruniyah Pontianak. The subject of this research was 35 students of the eighth grade. In completing the research, the writer provided the observation checklist and field note to get the data from classroom activities. Besides, this research also used test (objectives test) to measure the students' reading comprehension achievement in every cycle of treatment. To conduct this research the writer applied two cycles; cycle 1 and 2. There were only 59% of students who achieve the minimum level achievement (MLA) 70 (seventy) in cycle 1. In this case, the use of DR-TA strategy was focused on the students' way to predict and to think what the students read before concluding the text. As a result, the students' reading comprehension achievement of narrative text has indicated the increase from the average scores of reading comprehension in two cycles (cycle 1 and cycle 2). The students' average scores who achieved minimum level achievement (MLA) 59% in cycle 1 and 85.7% in cycle 2. From these results, this research indicated that the use of DR-TA strategy in developing the students' reading comprehension achievement of narrative was effective in teaching and learning process.

Keywords: *Reading Comprehension, DR-TA Strategy, Narrative Text*

INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is a process of active reading where the readers use their ability to get the important information from the text. Reading comprehension also refers to the ability to understand information presented in written form. According to Birch (2002: 23), reading offers the potential for higher level thinking. Essential to the success of higher level reading is the reader's ability to relate new information to what is known in order to find answers to cognitive questions. Another underlying

principle in the instruction of higher order thinking skills in reading is the acceptance of the theme of active learning. For active readers, they should find plenty of texts so that they can get the core what they read about. One of the kinds of text is narrative text. Narrative text may either be fiction or non-fiction. Examples of fiction include realistic fiction, science fiction, mysteries, folk tales, fairy tales, and myths. The narrative text can be divided into four general components of understanding, they are *Orientation*-introducing about the characters and

setting, *Complication*-introducing the crisis or problem arises, *Resolution*-introducing the crisis and how the problem is solved, both are also called plot and *Coda*-introducing the moral value or message optional from the author. However, most students of SMP Haruniyah, particularly for the eighth graders, they cannot automatically get the ideas from the narrative text. They also cannot predict what will happen next during the reading process. Based on the result of diagnostic test of reading comprehension of narrative text, it was found that most of the students had incorrect answer for the questions that as about the general ideas of the text. From this result, it means that the students had serious problems in understanding the main ideas of the text. Therefore, the teacher should have an appropriate strategy to optimize their thinking potential development during reading activity. Concerning the developing the students' reading comprehension on narrative texts, DR-TA strategy was also suitable to energize the students' focus and thinking during the reading process diagnostic test of reading comprehension of narrative text, it was found that most of the students had incorrect answer for the questions that as about the general ideas of the text. From this result, it means that the students had serious problems in understanding the main ideas of the text. Therefore, the teacher should have an appropriate strategy to optimize their thinking potential development during reading activity. Concerning the developing the students' reading comprehension on narrative texts, DR-TA strategy was also suitable to energize the students' focus and thinking during the reading process.

According to Padak (2003: 3), Directed Reading-Thinking Activity (DR-TA) is a teaching strategy that guides students in making predictions about a text and then reading to confirm or refute their predictions. This strategy encourages

students to be active and thoughtful readers, enhancing their comprehension. To achieve the students' reading comprehension of narrative text, the writer conducted classroom action research to support this purpose. With its cycle, classroom action research (CAR) could focus on the treatment based on the problem occurs in reading skill particularly to understand the narrative texts. Furthermore, the importance of conducting this research was based on the students' problem in understanding the main ideas of the text and interpreting words/phrases as the part of reading comprehension. The use of DRTA reading strategy was to support the teacher's effort in developing the students' reading comprehension achievement in order to get the better score achievement of standard and basic competencies of reading skill for junior high school.

In relation to the above need, this research was aimed at investigating the students' reading comprehension of narrative text. To complete this research, the writer selected the eighth grades students of SMP Haruniyah Pontianak. Conducting a classroom action research should be based on the real problems occurred. From the writer's pre-observation, the students had the problems in reading comprehension of narrative texts. They seemed hard to catch the ideas of the stories and to determine the parts of narrative texts that they read.

As a result, most of the students had no idea when the teacher asked them about what they have read. In relation to this matter, the writer intends to overcome the students' problem of reading skill. As the result from pre-research, the writer found that the students seemed difficult to determine the parts of narrative text that they were reading, to comprehend what idea of the story told about and also the messages of moral value of the author. Based on the research problem above, the main purpose of this research was aimed at investigating "How well the use of DR-

TA strategy develops the students' reading comprehension of narrative texts."

To clarify the limitation of the research, it is necessary to ascertain the scopes of research so that ambiguity and misinterpretation can be avoid. Based on the form of this research, the scope of this research consists of a series of activity concerning the classroom action research; planning, execution, and evaluating the feedback of action (Elliot in Hopkins , 1993). Therefore, a teacher has explored in her knowledge about how to act to solve a classroom problem of students' reading comprehension. In other word, she has made a quest to find out the answer. From the writer's pre-research, she found that the students have difficulties in understanding the narrative text. To overcome this problem the researcher used DR-TA strategy as the action of this research.

METHOD

In conducting this research, the writer used a classroom action research. According to Zuber-Skerritt in Cohen, L et al. (2005: 227), there are four strategic cycles of conducting a classroom action research, they are: a) Strategic Planning, b) Action (implementing the plan), c) Observation (evaluation and self-evaluation), d) Critical and self-critical reflection on the result of point 1-3 making decisions for the next cycle of action research.

As its name implies, classroom action research can be viewed as having two main requires two sets of procedures, one to achieve each of the outcomes. In terms of the distinction between content and process, these are both instances of process. The different conceptions of classroom action research can be revealed in some typical definitions of classroom action research, for example Hopkins (1985:32) and Ebbutt (1985:156) suggest that the combination of classroom action and research renders that action a form of disciplined inquiry, in which a personal

attempt is made to understand, improve and reform practice. Cohen and Manion (1994:186) define it as 'a small-scale intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close examination of the effects of such an intervention. Kemmis and McTaggart (1990b) argue: "Classroom action research (CAR) is a form of collective self-reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in classroom situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own classroom or educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out...".

The approach is only classroom action research when it is collaborative, though it is important to realize that the action research of the group is achieved through the critically examined action of individual group members. The subject of this research was the eighth grades students of SMP Haruniyah. Pontianak in Academic Year 2011/2012. In this CAR, the writer selected the students who were in charge in class A. There were 35 students of this grade.

In this research, the writer used the both quantitative and qualitative measurement techniques in this CAR. Quantitative measurement technique refers to the technique of collecting data, in which to measure the students' ability of reading comprehension using the written test. Meanwhile, qualitative measurement technique refers to the technique of collecting data in which the model of measurement is process oriented that the teacher/writer measured the students' progress after the activities have been accomplished. Therefore, to know the students' progress in each cycle, the writer used field notes (for teacher and students) as the instrument of data collecting and the tool of data collecting of this research was using the objective test in form of multiple choice for quantitative data analysis and the writer used checklist observation and field note

for observing the teacher's action during the process. In order to overcome any problem in the research, the researcher arranged the research procedure. The research procedure in classroom action research based on Cohen and Morrison (2000: 226) are as follows: 1. Planning Stage (After discussing with the English teacher at the school to investigate the real problems, the writer prepared what to do to solve the problems. This can be poured out into lesson plans, teaching media, observation checklist table and field notes), 2. Action Stage (The writer acted in classroom as a teacher then treated the students with the technique of which the purpose was to improve the teaching-learning process. In this case, the writer became the real teacher who has authority and responsibility to manage the class), 3. Observing Stage (This stage is done along with the action stage. The writer worked with a collaborator to observe what was happening in reality. Then the data of students' score was computed by the writer and collaborator whether the results were satisfied or not), 4. Reflecting stage (The writer got feedback to reflect to the next cycle. On this stage, the writer paid attention to the reports between the planning stage and the action stage). The researcher planned an activity that may overcome the problem that appeared in the classroom. Putting plan in action of a real treatment, the researcher then observed the process and finally reflected the treatment. The researcher also administered the treatment with the help of collaborator that acts as the observer of the treatment. In relation to the problem formulation and form of this research, technique of data analysis is analyzing the students' ability of reading comprehension using DR-TA strategy. Logically, this action was successful to develop the students' reading comprehension ability when the students' achievement of each meeting was increased. In the other words, the technique or data analysis was done by

comparing the results of students' progress through process assessment oriented. To measure the students' reading comprehension progress/achievement, the writer will do the analyses as follows: 1) Analysis on the students' individual score achievement, 2) Analysis on the students' average score achievement, to obtain the interpretation of the result of students' score, the writer used criteria proposed by Harris (1974), 3) Analysis of the work of DR-TA strategy in developing the students' reading comprehension of narrative text. There was a field note of observation technique used to analyze the process of DRTA's work in developing students' reading comprehension achievement, namely field note of teacher's action (enclosed).

Meanwhile, the use of Narrative text to develop students' reading comprehension in this research can be very interesting and useful. Since it contains an imaginary story which entertain the readers. According to Anderson and Anderson (1998), purpose of narrative text is to entertain, to tell a story or to provide an esthetic literary experience. Narrative deal with problematic event which lead to a crisis or turning point of some kind (climax), which in turn finds a resolution. Someone tells narrative in order to entertain, stimulate emotion or to teach. A narrative text is organized by using story grammar. Story grammar is the knowledge of how stories are organized with the beginning of the story containing the setting, characters, and character problems. The middle of the narrative is organized around the plot. The plot includes a series of episodes that are written by author to hold our attention and build excitement as the story progresses (Anderson and Anderson, 1998). McNamara (2007) argues that the concept of general or main ideas of the text can be described within three characteristics, they are: *a*. Deductive process, the process of searching the main ideas of the text that is

assumed in the beginning lines of paragraph, b. Inductive process, the process of searching the main ideas of the text that is assumed in last lines of the paragraph, c. Beyond the lines, the process of searching the main ideas of the text is assumed that the ideas are not mentioned in lines (written) however, it is required from the higher understanding on the text. The way to find out the main ideas of the text can be searched by connecting the other information in the text that related to support the ideas we assume. To get the specific or detail ideas of the reading text, the students may seem to scan the text till they get what they are searching. The following strategies will describe how the strategy can minimize the time-consumed during the reading process (Laurie, 2000: 3 - 5). They are: 1) Strategy 1: Knowing what we want to know the first thing to ask ourselves is: Why we are reading the text? Are we reading with a purpose or just for pleasure? What do we want to know after reading it? Once we know this, we can examine the text to see whether it is going to move s towards this goal. An easy way of doing this is to look at the introduction and the chapter headings. The introduction should let you know whom the book is targeted at, and what it seeks to achieve. Chapter headings will give you an overall view of the structure of the subject. Asking ourselves whether the book meets our needs. Ask ourselves if it assumes too much or too little knowledge. If the book isn't ideal, would it be better to find a better one? 2. Strategy 2: Knowing how deeply to study the material

Where we only need the shallowest knowledge of the subject, we can skim material. Here we read only chapter headings, introductions and summaries. If we need a moderate level of information on a subject, then we can scan the text. Here we read the chapter introductions and summaries in detail. We may then speed read the contents of the chapters, picking out and understanding key words

and concepts. At this level of looking at the document it is worth paying attention to diagrams and graphs.

Furthermore, reading is not translating activity. When someone reads a text, s/he should ignore the single meaning or words or phrases. The process will be failed when s/he comes closer to the words' meaning without considering the theme or topic. For example, the "bank" might have ambiguous when the reader does not understand the context as in the paragraph below, "The government has banned the people in Jakarta to move their house into other places except near the *bank* of river. Living in the *bank* is not safety place for them because it full of risk, for example flood". Adapted from Laurie (2000: 6): The word "bank" in common meaning is known as the place to save money. However, from this context it refers to a place of reservoir of river, edge of the river. Therefore, interpreting the words/phrases in reading comprehension skill is important for the students to differentiate the words or phrases used in the sentence based on the meaning from the context.

Accordance to the relevant matter which has mentioned above through this research, DR-TA strategy can encourage the students to be active and thoughtful readers. According to Padak (2003), Directed Reading-Thinking Activity (DR-TA) is a teaching strategy that guides students in making predictions about a text and then reading to confirm or refute their predictions. This strategy encourages students to be active and thoughtful readers, enhancing their comprehension. The following steps outline the DR-TA process: **1. Introduction** (What do you already know about this subject?), **2. Predict** (Looking What do you already know about this subject? /Looking at the pictures, what do you think the story will be about? Why?), **3. Prove or Modify Predictions** (after reading each section answer the following questions: What do you think now? /Can you prove your

predictions, or do you need to modify them? /What do you think will happen next? Why?), **4. Reflect**, (after reading the entire selection, answer the following: What did you find in the text to prove your predictions? / What did you find in the text that caused you to modify your predictions?).

Before using this strategy with students, the teacher might create a classroom climate in which students are free to state their ideas and share their thinking. This is done especially necessary for students who are not risk-takers. Because the students want to be correct the first time they answer a question, DR-TA can be challenging for them.

In its implementation, when the teacher uses DR-TA, it seems that the teacher asks students to predict the unknown in a text, and at times the students will be incorrect. For some students, they may want to consider writing their predictions in a journal rather than posting them on an overhead transparency or the chalkboard. Therefore, to encourage the students not to be intimidated, the teacher might not take a risk to push more the students to have the predictions correctly. When the teacher uses this strategy, s/he can guide and stimulate the also students' thinking through the use of questions. By posing open-ended questions, and encouraging the students to state their predictions, the students will have a good value of reading comprehension. Therefore, it is better for the teacher to wait a few seconds after asking a question in order to allow students to process the information and form a prediction well. In addition, Padak (2003) claims that using DR-TA in a heterogeneous group can be a challenge due to the range of reading levels that may be present. In this case, the teacher may want to select two passages on the same topic one higher-level and one lower-level. Therefore, the teacher can divide the class into groups to read the text that

is appropriate for them. These groups should share information as described in the previous paragraph.

Finally, DR-TA can be useful to students who are reading to gain information from expository or narrative text. The teacher can ask students to preview a chapter of the social studies textbook, and to use the headings, bold vocabulary, maps, and charts to make predictions. As students read the chapter, the teacher can have them to verify or to modify their predictions. At the end of the chapter, the teacher might be better to discuss predictions with them and to have them to summarize the information they learned in a study guide.

In addition, using this strategy was applied in systematic way in order to get the successful of learning outcomes. With step of activity in DR-TA strategy, the students were supposed to develop their reading comprehension of narrative text. At the end of this process, the students were also supposed to retell the ideas of the story in their own way to other students as the proof of students' achievement in reading comprehension of narrative text.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

In accordance with the research findings of CAR, it is better for the writer to describe more detail on what this research has found. As mentioned in the previous part of this chapter, the writer has done two cycles. The reason of conducting the cycle 2 was that the failure of achieving the MLA in cycle 1. As a result, conducting the cycle 2 gave the expected result of score achievement. From this success, the writer conducted CAR for two cycles; cycle 1 and 2.

In this case, the use of DR-TA strategy was effectively help the students' problems to predict and to think what the students read before concluding the text. As a result, the students' reading comprehension achievement of narrative

text has indicated the increase from the average scores of reading comprehension in two cycles (cycle 1 and cycle 2). The students' average scores who achieved minimum level achievement (MLA) that is 70(seventy) was 59% in cycle 1 and 85.7% in cycle 2. From these results, this research indicated that the use of DR-TA strategy in developing the students' reading comprehension achievement of narrative was effective in teaching and learning process.

Discussion

Therefore, the writer has selected DR-TA technique as the effort to overcome the students' problems in reading comprehension of narrative text. The results of this research have been taken from two cycles, cycle 1 and 2. The cycle 2 was taken that the students' minimum level achievement was not achieved the MLA that is only 59% in cycle 1; therefore, it is necessary to conduct the cycle 2 in order to achieve the level of achievement based on KTSP syllabus. Each cycle will be described systematically based on the research has been conducted by the writer.

First, Research finding of cycle 1; In cycle 1, there were four steps that carried out concerning the aims of this research. They are: A. planning of Action; Identifying the problems and planning the work in cycle I, Designing the lesson plan, Determining the subject of discussion/lesson that will be taught in CAR, Planning a scenario of teaching, Preparing the materials of teaching aids,

Planning the evaluation forms, Planning the observation forms.), B. Acting; In action stage, the writer has conducted one meeting of cycle 1, which was scheduled on Monday, January 9th 2012 at 7.AM until 9.AM on Class 8A at SMP Harunyah Pontianak. The writer has applied the scenario of teaching through certain activities such as: *Teacher greets the students, Opening the lesson or set induction (Showing the pictures that related to the lesson means that the teacher showed some pictures that direct the students to preview the lesson will be discussed. This activity made the students was enthusiastic to follow the lesson. It was proved that the students enjoyed following this activity, Asking the students about the title of the story means that the teacher did not only to show the title but also to ask the students to predict what might be told about in the story. It was found that the students could not predict and mention the deep ideas from the title correctly), Describing what students are expected to do in the lesson, Stating the activity that students would do is something they can enjoy (create good activities in the classroom is entrusted the major duty of the teacher), Tasking on the unit of lesson has been discussed DR-TA (the The teacher then gave the students some examples how to find out the main ideas using deductive and induction process and also the examples how to find out the supporting ideas using WH questions. , Reviewing the lesson, Assessing the students.*

Table 1. The Results of Students' Test in Cycle 1

No.	Name	Score	Mean	Qualification
1.	-	-	-	Achieved/ Not Achieved
	Total		2065	
	Average		= 59%	

Closing the lesson (The teacher ends the lesson and reminds the students to read the reading text much more at home). C. Observing; In the process of observation, the writer was assisted by another teacher as her assistant as her collaborator. As a result of observation in cycle I, it was found the following findings as follows: 1. Observation on teacher action showed that that the teacher expected the students to understand whole the story without part by part of the generic structure of narrative text and the students were difficult to give their own opinion in order to conclude their reading source of narrative text. From these problems, the writer decided to set their class into several small groups. This strategy could help some students who did not participate in the classroom and could minimize the percentage of students who did not understand the use of DR-TA. 2. The observation on students' responses was found that the students were difficult to get the main, supporting ideas and also the meaning of words/phrases based on the context. D. Reflecting; After having finished some actions in one cycle, the teacher then did some reflections concerning the results and processes in the cycle 1 and done the following activities, they are: a. Assessing the teacher's action of CAR, b. Designing some improvement from the results of self-assessment by the following actions: Examining the level of difficulties of reading comprehension, Focusing on the contextual learning (adding some pictures presentation), Re-designing the procedures of DR-TA in the next cycle.

Second, research finding in cycle 2. Conducting the next cycle or cycle 2 was that the result of students' achievement below MLA (Minimum Level achievement, 70). The students' average score who achieved the MLA only 59%. Having this result, the writer re-planned the action and conducting the cycle 2. A.

Planning; Planning the cycle 2 was based on the recommendation and reflection in cycle 1. In the cycle 2, the writer focused on the activity to develop the students' ability to find the main ideas. To complete this action, the writer uses several pictures and drills the students to read the text using DR-TA by guiding them into their group and individual. B. Acting; In action stage, the writer has conducted one meeting of cycle 2, which was held on Monday, January 16th 2012 from 7AM until 9AM on class 8A at SMP HARUNIYAH Pontianak (the writer more focused on repairing the students' ability to find the main ideas using DR-TA technique and also used some connecting illustrated pictures as media to guide the students to predict what the text tells about.

After having finished pictures presentation, the students were asked to read the reading passage and answer the comprehension questions from the teacher. When the students have problem, the writer guided them with DR-TA strategy to see the text using pictures and elaborated them to the passage.

To have a better result, the teacher/writer also re-explained how to find out the main ideas from the passage based on its characteristics). Since the procedure was accomplished well, the teacher then gave the students assessment of cycle 2.

After having the process of treatment in the cycle 2, the writer conducted cycle test 2 with the similar test to the previous. The result of the test showed that the students' achievement score of cycle test 2 indicated was not achieved to the MLA (Minimum Level Achievement, 70). The average score was 85.7% who achieved the MLA. The result can be seen on the table below. In the closing session, the teacher asked the students to enrich their skill in reading comprehension of

narrative text by exploring another source of reading.

Table 2. The Results of Students' Test in Cycle 2

No.	Name	Score	Mean	Qualification
1.	-	-	-	Achieved/ Not Achieved
Total			2890	
Average			= 85.7%	

C. Observing; Based on the result of field notes, both the teacher's action and students' responses to the teacher during the process was not out from the procedure of using DR-TA in reading comprehension. It was proved that the students' average score of cycle test 2 was better than cycle test 1 that the score was achieved to MLA. D. Reflecting; The reflection in the cycle 2 was focused on the score achievement of the students, particularly on the aspects of students' achievement in order to get the main ideas of the passage. One of the major reflections that discussed on the cycle 2 was on the way of giving the practices of DR-TA that can be used to guide the students to find out the main ideas of the passage.

Based on the target of competency that the students should be able to find out the main and supporting ideas of the text, the writer designed the teaching material that focused on this matter. In conducting the cycle 2, the teacher has got many contributions from the reflection that DR-TA activity should be modified as well. Therefore, the writer re-planned the activities and made them different from cycle 1 and 2. Finally, the students' average score of MLA has significantly increased into 85.7% in cycle 2. It has proved that the DR-TA strategy was very

effective for Eighth grades students in developing reading comprehension of narrative text.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

Based on the results of CAR at SMP Harunyah Pontianak, particularly on the Eighth grades students in academic year 2011/2012, the students' reading comprehension ability of narrative text are increase in cycle 1 and cycle 2. From the explanation and research findings of the previous chapters, it can be concluded as follows: 1. Teaching reading comprehension for the Eighth grades students can be joyful and challenging for them when the teacher uses several teaching strategies such as DR-TA. The students seemed helpful to recognize, to predict and to differentiate the main ideas and supporting ideas if the text. As a result, the students' achievement score of cycle test increases from cycle test 1 to cycle test 2. 2. Conducting CAR to solve the students' problems in reading comprehension ability using DR-TA gives more useful ways for the students to think more during the reading activity and also to map the information the read between main ideas and supporting ideas. However, this teaching and technique need much time allocation in order to

direct the students' understanding in reading comprehension, 3. The use of DR-TA by involving several kinds of pictures gives more significant value to develop the students' reading comprehension achievement, particularly how to find out the main ideas and supporting ideas of the text.

Suggestion

After having conducted a classroom action research, there are some suggestions that can be made by the writer, as follows: 1. The teacher should provide the variations of DR-TA by using interesting media in order to avoid the students' boredom in learning. 2. To have a better result in every cycle, the teacher should consider all the stages of action so that the process cannot be redundant. The redundant activities will make the students feel bored. For example, re-explaining the DR-TA used with the different activities such as simulation technique. 3. To have the better achievement of using the DR-TA strategy in reading activity, the teacher might consider the students' grade level. It might be better to apply this strategy to senior high school students. 4. The teacher also should be able to create comfortable classroom atmosphere, good time management (divide time allocation appropriately in each section) so that the teaching and learning process using DR-TA strategy can runs well.

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