

IMPROVING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION USING DIRECTED READING ACTIVITY STRATEGY (DRA)

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<p>Article Information</p> <p>Received: February 13, 2024 Revised: March 05, 2024 Accepted: May 5, 2024</p>	<p>Abstract</p> <p>The purpose of this research is to improve students' reading comprehension through Directed Reading Activity strategy. This research is action research, using mix method (qualitative and quantitative). The instruments used to collect the data were observation, documents, interviews and tests. This research was conducted at MAN I Metro, Lampung. This study took place from January to March 2013 in XI IPA with 35 sample. The study consisted of two cycles. Each cycle consisted of four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The success criterion for this action study was 90% of students successfully got more than 80. The result from post-test cycle II showed that 94% of the total number of students successfully got more than 80, with average score 88, 77. The result of this study indicates that implementation of the Directed Reading Activity strategy can improve students' reading comprehension.</p> <p>Keywords: <i>Action research; direct reading activity strategy; reading comprehension</i></p>
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Introduction

Reading comprehension is an integrated process of what is read, what is understood, and the ability to take the essence from the text. In order to comprehend the English reading, knowledge is needed, whether it is knowledge related to the language itself (linguistic) such as vocabulary, grammar, sentences, or pre-existing knowledge about the content.

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However, reading comprehension is not easy for each student. It is reinforced by the fact that students of MAN I Metro Lampung, still have difficulties in comprehending English reading, students fail to interact communicatively with some texts, so that students have not succeeded in getting the essence of reading or understanding its meaning. Because students often fail to interact with the reading, this activity just becomes meaningless and tends to be a tedious and less useful activity for the development of their knowledge.

Based on this problem, the researcher wanted to solve the problem by using the appropriate learning strategy to improve students' reading comprehension in XI grade students of MAN I Metro in the school year 2012/2013 using the implementation of Directed Reading Activity (DRA) strategy.

Corner stated that Directed Reading Activity is one of learning strategies that integrates independent and group reading strategy. This is basically designed for small group in the classroom. Directed Reading Activity strategy assumes that reading is not only mental process, but also social process. It means that there is an interaction between teacher and students, because DRA strategy is based on reciprocal learning strategy. Students are guided to prepare everything before reading (pre-organization process). Then, they discuss the title and subtitle of the text, so that students can finally hypothesize the essence. While reading, teacher should introduce the key words along with their meaning. If possible, the key words are found jointly by the students (Tirney, 2011: 80)

DRA learning strategy expects students to dig information. This strategy is intended to enable students to have clear reading objectives by linking the different knowledge they have to build up the comprehension. Hopefully, the reading comprehension can be improved by building a background of knowledge, setting out specific goals for reading, discussing, and developing a comprehension after reading.

Based on the above background of problems, the formulation of the problem in this study is "How to improve students' reading comprehension using Directed Reading Activity strategy of XI grade students of MAN I Metro in the school year 2012/2013?", And "Is Directed Reading Activity Strategy able to improve students' reading comprehension of XI grade students of MAN I Metro in the school year 2012/2013?".

Hodgson in Tarigan (2008: 12) described reading as a process which is done and used by the reader to obtain a message, which would be conveyed by the author through words or written language. It is a process which requires a group of words as one unity will be seen in a glance, and the meaning of words as individual will be known. Nuttal (1989: 52) explained that reading is actually a process of thinking that depends on the process of rationalization of what is read, which contains patterns of thinking, rules and laws, analysis, causation, problem solving, and not merely visual activity that only comes to the introduction of written formulas or symbols, but to understand them.

The above opinions, supported by Grabe (Grabe, 2009: 15). He said that in the process of reading, there are several activities that occurred at once including coding, translating, pronouncing, comprehending, and giving meaning, because there is a process of thinking in reading activity. This opinion is strengthened by specifying the definition of reading:

Reading is also an interactive between the reader and the writer. The text provides information that the author wants the reader to understand in certain ways. The reader also brings a wide range of background knowledge to reading, and she or he constructs the meaning of the text by comprehending what the writer intends by interpreting it (in terms of the background knowledge activated by the reader)

The definition above can be interpreted that reading is an interactive process (interactive process) between readers and authors, the author wants readers who read his writings get information and understand the message that the author wants to convey. It is hoped that the reader is able to reconstruct the knowledge that he (the reader) has in understanding the reading, so that in the end he is able to interpret the contents of all the passages. As we know, in reading

there is a process of interaction of what is read (written symbols) with the knowledge possessed by the reader. It produces an understanding of the reading and ability to reconstruct the knowledge in order to interpret the contents of the entire reading. This means that the most important thing in reading is the reader can understand the contents of the reading.

To help students improve their reading comprehension, it is necessary to have an effort to use an effective learning strategy in accordance with the students' circumstances and abilities. The Directed Reading Activity strategy first introduced by E.A Betts is intended to enable students to have a clear reading objective by connecting the knowledge that students have to build the understanding. According to Eanes, DRA strategy is defined as a framework of thinking for planning reading lesson that emphasizes reading as a medium of learning and literacy as a learning tool. Basically, the steps in the DRA follow the instructions for preparing students before reading, while reading silently, and continuing reading by checking. (Robins, 1997: 111).

According to Jennifer Conner (2006), DRA has several objectives: 1) teaching the ability to identify vocabulary; 2) cultivating students' background knowledge on reading topics; 3) teaching special reading skills; 4) setting the purpose of reading; 5) allowing students to assess their ability to understand reading; 5) providing opportunities for students to develop ideas related to reading.

Directed Reading Activity is a strategy consists of three stages including: pre-reading, reading, and post-reading. Pre-reading stage begins by enabling student schemata, introducing new vocabularies, and setting out reading objectives. In reading stage, students read the text silently by guiding and answering the objectives which are set in the final step of the pre-reading stage. In the post-reading stage, teacher ensures that 1) the objectives are achieved, and directing the students to review and assess his/her own comprehension; 2) directing students to analyze the content and discuss the content of the reading; and 3) providing enrichment. The hypothesis in this action research was, if DRA learning strategy was applied, the reading comprehension of XI grade students of MAN I Metro Lampung would improve.

Methods

This research used action research method. In this research, the researcher was researching actively and directly involved in the whole teaching and learning process (research), starting from pre-observation, planning, until the reflection stage in each cycle. In addition, researcher acted as a planner, implementer, processor, and data analyst.

This action research referred to Kemmis which outlined the following procedures: 1) planning, 2) action, 3) observation, and 4) reflection, and re-planning is the basis for a problem-solving design. Each cycle consisted of planning, action, observation, and reflection. There were pre-test and post-test. The indicator of the success was if 90% of students got score more than 80.

Data analysis technique in this research is qualitative based on the result from each action: a) data reduction, in this activity, researcher chose, focused, disposed, arranged the data so that conclusion could be described and verified, b) data model (data display), the researcher presented data in the form of models or data displays. c) Verification and conclusion, the final step of data analysis activities is to make conclusions based on the data model presented.

1. Students' early stage in comprehending the reading texts

Prior to conducting the research, the researcher did the preparation and experimental stage of students' reading comprehension using DRA strategy on the research subject, that was, the students of XI grade of MAN I Metro in the school year 2012/2013. At the preparatory stage, it seemed that the students were still very difficult in understanding the contents of the English texts. Students felt hard to find the key ideas, and difficult to retell the content they had read, both in written and oral forms.

Researcher conducted a pre-test to determine the level of reading comprehension on the subject of the research. The results of the pre-test showed that there was no student got 80, only

one student earned 78. 12 students (34%) got 61-69, 14 students (40%) got 53-59, and 9 students (26%) got 70-78, with an average score of 65.94. It shows that students' reading comprehension in the early stage was still low and needed improvement.

Planning

Planning in the first cycle is done by setting the standards of competence, basic competence, and indicators that must be achieved by students in reading subject. The indicators were students are able to comprehend the English texts literally, inferentially, and critically. The reading materials for the first cycle consisted of two narrative readings and three hortatory expositions. The next stage was to develop learning scenarios using DRA strategy. The stages in each cycle as follows:

Stage 1: Pre-reading Stage

At this stage, the teacher brainstormed to explore students' schema by asking questions or statements that inspire students' knowledge. These questions and statements also enabled students to link their knowledge to the theme of the reading material. Then, the teacher also discussed the difficult words to introduce new vocabularies. The vocabularies were written on a whiteboard in form of sentences taken from the text. And finally, the teacher explained the purpose of reading in the form of questions.

Stage 2: Reading Stage

After the teacher set the goal of reading was to answer questions related to the reading material, then the teacher instructed students to start reading silently. Teacher walked around to monitor students' reading activities, to detect problems and observe students.

Stage 3: Post-reading Stage

For this stage, students and teacher exchanged information and had discussion. At this stage, students were able to communicate their findings, and prove the results of their observations. Students could give their new ideas. Students were ready to accept criticisms, suggestions, or otherwise reinforce arguments. In addition, the teacher asked some difficulties faced by them in understanding the reading material and examining students' reading comprehension. This stage aimed to ensure that the objectives of reading activity could be achieved.

From Cycle I Observation Result

The result of observation in cycle 1 shows that students still found it difficult to understand the reading material. Difficulties occurred at the pre-reading stage, they felt hard to identify and find the meaning of some words. At the reading stage, students still found difficult to answer questions about the texts when they were asked individually. Many students were still difficult to answer questions inferentially and critically. Likewise, students were not familiar with the learning stages of DRA strategy. And the scores on post-test cycle 1 showed that there were 23 students who got 80 (66%), and the remaining 34% or 12 students got 73 to 79, with an average score of 81.03.

Cycle I Reflection

The improvement plan is adapted to reflect the action of cycle I and consider the steps of the DRA learning strategy. Such improvement plans include; the teacher will involve all students in the process of generating initial skills, the teacher guides the students thoroughly and not just focuses on some students only, the teacher will share the reading sheet on each student, so that all students can read optimally. In addition, for the efficiency of time, then before the teacher learning process has set the position of the group to be conducive and not obstruct each other, when will continue on the action cycle II.

Cycle II Observation

Furthermore, based on the results of observation of the learning process in cycle II, overall there was a significant improvement in comprehending the materials literally, inferentially, and critically. And from the test result at the end of cycle 2, students who got more than 80 reached 33 students or about 94% of the total research subjects, and only 2 students (5.7%) who got 76 and 79, with average score of 88,74. It showed that this research achieved the indicators of success, so that research did not need to be continued.

Cycle II Reflection

From the results of the analysis conducted in cycle I and observation in cycle II, it clearly shows that the indicators of success in this study were successfully achieved, so there was no need to take the next action.

From the results of data analysis, it can be stated that the result of this action research is the improvement of students' reading comprehension using the Directed Reading Activity Strategy. The aspects of literal, inferential, and critical understanding effectively improved students' reading comprehension. 90% of the respondents got score more than 80. In the following chart, there are the results of pre-test, post-test in cycle I, and post-test in cycle II.

Pre-test results showed that 12 students (34%) got score between 61 and 69, 14 students (40%) got score between 53 and 59, and 9 students (26%) got score between 70 and 78. From cycle 1 post-test, there were 23 students (66%) got score 80 and above, and the remaining 34% or 12 students got score between 73 and 79 or not yet reached 80, with an average score of 81.03. From the data of cycle 2 post-test, there were 33 students or about 94% of the total subjects, and only two students (5.7%) got 76 and 79, the average score was 88.74. For more details, look at the following chart of students' reading comprehension improvement from pre-test, post-test in cycle I, and post-test in cycle II.

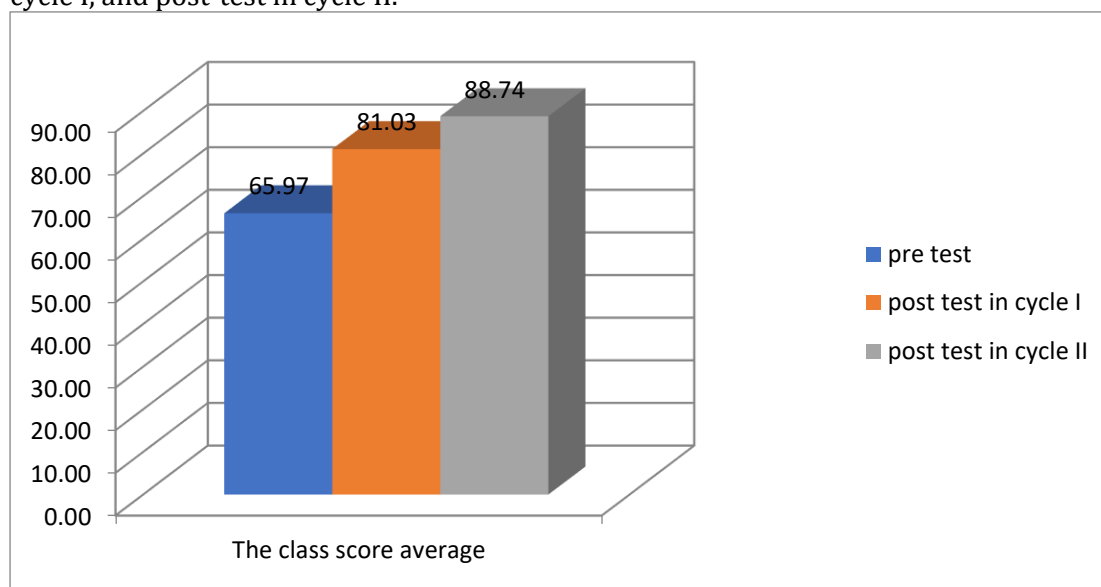


Figure 1. Students' Reading Comprehension Improvement

Based on the above data, the findings in cycle I and II generally improved. All respondents' scores increased from the initial cycle until the second cycle. The greatest improvement experienced by a respondent number 11 with 35 points enhancements. In pre-test, he only got 55. After following the action until cycle II, he got 90. Referring to the fact, it can be concluded that more than 90% of students have reached 80 points followed by improvement in comprehending reading materials included three levels of understanding: literal, inferential, and evaluative or critical.

Conclusion

Based on the discussion from this research, the conclusion of this research as follow:

1. The process of improving students' reading comprehension by implementing DRA learning strategy to the XI grade students of MAN I Metro Lampung in the academic year 2012/2013, began with identifying problems, putting them into the research design, carrying out learning process, observation, and reflection that conducted during 2 cycles.

The implementation of DRA strategy in learning process had been modified and varied. The modification at the pre-reading stage was in the introduction of new vocabularies, which focused not only on the most difficult and essential vocabularies, but also modified to: 1) Each student in

the group had to write all new words and look for their meanings, 2) Each student was asked to explain meanings of the new words within the group or other groups; and 3) Each group prepared its own new vocabularies. Variations in individual and group learning activities integrated reading silently and loudly, also assigned some tasks. The DRA strategy was implemented in accordance with the three basic steps contained in 3 steps: pre-reading, reading, and post-reading. The teacher took an active role when she prepared students to read the passage by teaching important vocabularies first, relate the reading material with students' existing knowledge, teach students how to understand the texts and give clear reading objectives. In the process of assigning tasks and discussions in the first and second cycle, teacher played an important role in improving students' reading comprehension.

2. Implementation of DRA learning strategy can improve students' reading comprehension of XI grade students of MAN I Metro in the school year 2012/2013. Before implementing the action, the average score of comprehending reading material was only 65.97 and no student got more than 80. In the first cycle, the average score increased by 15.06 points to 81.03 and 19 students (54.3%) got score more than 80. Average score in cycle II increased by 22.77 from the pre-test result, to 88.74. Students' learning outcomes in cycle II showed 94.3% or 33 students earned score more than 80. It proved that reading learning process in XI grade students of MAN I Metro in the school year 2012/2013 by using DRA strategy was effective to improve students' reading comprehension from the aspects of literal, interpersonal, or critical level of understanding.

Based on the results of this study, it can be suggested to improve students' reading comprehension that DRA learning strategy can be used as a reference in learning reading in school. As a teacher, there are few things to consider in order to implement DRA learning strategy. They are: 1) student learning motivation must be maintained throughout the learning process, 2) teacher should have sufficient English grammar and vocabularies (4) learning tasks need to be combined between group and individual tasks to overcome students' saturation, 5) the implementation of DRA strategy needs modified activities and objectives within each stage, based on the needs and characteristics of the class.

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Indicate source of finding or help received in carrying out your study and/or preparing the manuscript if any before the references.

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