# Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) to Improve Reading Comprehension for 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Students at SMP Negeri 1 Surabaya

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#### **Abstract**

The purpose of this research was to increase students' achievement in reading comprehension by implementing the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) strategy to the 7th grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Surabaya in the academic year 2020/2021. Each cycle of classroom action research consisted of three meetings and included four steps: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The data were gathered through the use of two instruments: observation and test. The results indicated that students made great progress in their ability regarding to the reading comprehension. Pretest mean score was only 67.28, but improved to 72.42 in cycle I and 81.22 in cycle II. The pre-test of the highest score was only 78 and improved to 82 to 90 in subsequent cycles. Meanwhile, the lowest pre-test score was 60, and the lowest post-test score ranged from 62 to 68. In case of the students who passed the tests, while only 6 students (16.67%) passed the pre-test, there were significant improvements in post-tests, with 12 students (33.33%) passing in post-test cycle I and 29 students (80.56%) passing in posttest cycle II. This research was stopped in cycle II due to the fact that the criteria for success were met in a percentage of 80.56%, with 29 students passing the post-test in cycle II, based on the Minimum Mastery Criteria (KKM) standard of > 76.

**Keywords**: reading, reading comprehension, DRTA Strategy

## INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the English abilities that students must learn in order to be successful in their studies. In order for pupils to acquire knowledge and new information, they must be able to read effectively (Brown H. D., 2007, p. 185). Reading, according to Brown, is the most important talent in the educational environment since it can be used to assess students' overall language proficiency and hence is the most important skill. Reading comprehension is one of the aspects of language skills that the student must master in order to be successful. Students should have strong comprehension skills in order to be able to interpret and absorb information from reading material. Reading comprehension is essential in every subject because the act of reading is inextricably linked to the learning process in every subject. As a result, students are expected to have strong comprehension abilities.

The application of appropriate strategies will be one of the determinants in the process of teaching and learning. Likewise, when it comes to improving reading comprehension. Students' reading comprehension should be improved as a result of the method or strategy that is employed. The inability to use methods or learning strategies has become one of the major

roadblocks in the achievement of learning objectives. When selecting learning strategies for each lesson, the teacher must pay close attention to the personalities of the students. Not only can differently approaches or strategies be employed, but they can also be diversified by other methods to ensure that pupils do not become fatigued or bored during the learning process. When students are motivated to learn well, it will make it easier to provide teaching to pupils in a way that is conducive and pleasurable to learning. As a result, the purpose of learning will be achieved as a result.

Pre-observation, interviews with English teacher and students, and the results of the study led to the conclusion that some students at SMP Negeri 1 Surabaya had difficulties with their reading abilities. The majority of students in 7<sup>th</sup> grade at class 7-F lacked fundamental reading comprehension skills. A lack of reading skill was assigned to concerns with content, organization, language use, vocabulary, and reading method, all of which were addressed. Additionally, the majority of students in class 7-F failed to express their views while reading comprehension was being taught to them. They frequently enlisted the assistance of friends or teachers to translate words from Bahasa Indonesia to English on their behalf. It was impossible for the students to read efficiently because they were so preoccupied with translating words into English. The upshot of this was that their paragraphs were jumbled, and their Minimum Mastery Criteria (KKM) score dropped below the required 76.

Also, during learning activities, they only ask the students to do assignments in LKS, and during reading comprehension learning, the teacher only asks the students to answer the question based on the text they have been provided with. My interview with some students at that school revealed that, aside from the fact that some students still find it difficult to answer the question based on its substance, there are some students who are unable to do so. It is evident from the low student performance in answering the question from the text, as well as the fact that the students continue to have difficulty identifying the key idea in the passage. When I ask the students to read the text for a few minutes and then ask them orally, "Who knows the main idea of the text?" they almost all remain quiet, with only one or two students who are brave enough to answer my question verbally, as evidenced by my experience. Students, on the other hand, have a limited vocabulary, which causes them to be even more perplexed when it comes to interpreting the material. In the past, when I asked students to repeat the story of the text in their own words, the students were terrified and could not do so.

Additionally, the researcher discovered that students rarely engaged in reading practices after conducting interviews with the teacher and students. When they did into reading practices, the teacher simply asked them to read a text without any accompanying activities. The teacher

only discussed a few examples of texts that were frequently provided via Power Point (PPT) during an online classroom via Google Meet or Zoom. Within the pandemic Covid-19 era, the specific procedures were not well-applied in the online classroom. As a result, students were disinterested in the educational process, particularly in writing activities.

The coronavirus disease pandemic of COVID-19 has caused widespread disruption in educational institutions around the world. As a result, Indonesia has taken the required steps to closely monitor the World Health Organization's (WHO) situation report on the COVID-19 pandemic worldwide since the virus was first discovered in Wuhan, South China, in November of this year (Agung, Surtikanti, & Quinones, 2020, p. 226). The infection then spread at an alarming rate over the entire world. In addition to education, this state of affairs has an impact on a range of other areas. Schools and other educational institutions, including higher education institutions, were directed to temporarily cease traditional teaching and learning activities in schools in favor of e-learning in a Circular Note issued by Indonesia's Minister of Education and Culture, Nadiem Makarim. He recommended that teachers make use of a variety of e-learning tools, such as Quipper-School, Ruang Guru, Google Classroom, Zoom, and Google meet, among other options. Furthermore, because of their general use and installation, these e-learning platforms are becoming increasingly popular in Indonesia. Online education has become a popular topic, as well as a possible problem.

As a result, in order to address the issues of reading comprehension skills, it is necessary to revise through learning tactics that can captivate students and motivate them to enhance their abilities. In this section, I propose a strategy. As one of the ways for improving students' reading comprehension skills, Direct Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) is implemented. When it comes to teaching reading comprehension, one of the tactics that can be used is the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) strategy. Strategies Students' involvement with the text is focused through the implementation of a Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA), in which they must predict and prove their predictions as they read. When teaching reading comprehension, students should be able to identify the key concepts included within the text. This strategy, known as Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA), attempts to equip readers with the ability to determine the purposes of reading, the ability to extract, comprehend, and assimilate information, the ability to make predictions about reading materials based on the purposes of reading, the ability to pass judgments, and the ability to make decisions based on the information gleamed from the reading materials. As a result, they may be able to read. Therefore, the researcher entitled "Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) to Improve Reading Comprehension for 7th Grade Students at SMPN 1 Surabaya". It aimed to describe the implementation of the DRTA to 7<sup>th</sup> grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Surabaya in the academic year 2020/2021 and their achievement of a reading comprehension skill.

Two studies have investigated directed reading-thinking activity on students and reported that teaching this activity is significant for enhancing reading comprehension. This section reviews a number of related studies from some researchers. Renn (1999) conducted a research on the effect of the directed reading thinking activity on second grade reading comprehension. In this research, she compared Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) with Directed Reading Approach (DRA). The result of her analysis shows that the mean score of the Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) group is significantly higher than the mean score of the Directed Reading Approach (DRA). group. It seems that Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) is more effective than Directed Reading Approach (DRA) in improving reading comprehension.

Another study was written by Odwan who examined the effect of Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) through cooperative learning on English secondary stage students' reading comprehension in Jordan. Although Odwan is combined the DRTA with cooperative learning, there are some points about the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) itself which are related to reading comprehension. He states, as the result of his study, that students' improvement in reading comprehension may be attributed to students' skills developing ability to read the material using DRTA. It is because during the activity students set purposes, make predictions, read silently, and verify predictions.

Even if it does not present about the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) only, the previous review of related studies stresses the importance of using Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) which may help the teacher using the effective means for teaching reading comprehension. Therefore, the researcher decided Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) for teaching reading in order to enhance reading comprehension of the grade 7 students at SMP Negeri 1 Surabaya.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Reading

Reading is the process of extracting information from a text, whether it be in the form of text, a picture or a diagram, or a combination of these formats. Knowing, seeing, and understanding the contents of what they read is also a talent that reading requires. As a result, after reading something, the reader is already aware of the information he or she has gained from the material. One of the most crucial aspects of reading is being able to comprehend the

communication between the writer and the reader. Following from a few of the facts supplied above, one may conclude that reading is an activity that involves obtaining information from written material through an interaction between the reader and the author, who is represented by his or her writings. When there is contact between the features of the reader and the traits represented by the researcher, this is called an interaction of contact. Contact between the two features will give birth to the reader's understanding of the author's underlying idea as a result of the interaction between the two characteristics. As a result, reading is more than just expressing written language and following through with the text line by line; it is also about attempting to fully comprehend the message, mandate, and meaning provided by the writers through reading media in its entirety and thoroughness.

## **Reading Comprehension**

There are a wide variety of different definitions for reading. Reading definitions are provided in a variety of ways by linguists. Reading, according to several, is the process of obtaining, comprehending, and retaining the content of the reading. They also state that reading is a process of comprehending a written material, which entails getting as much information as possible from it in the shortest amount of time possible. The reading activity is defined by Smith as a creative and constructive activity with four distinctive and fundamental characteristics: it is purposeful, selects only what is important, anticipates what will happen next, and is based on comprehension. These are all areas in which the reader must clearly exercise control (Smith2004).

Reading encompasses a wide range of topics. It doesn't only recognize the meaning of individual words in a given text; it understands the entire content. In other words, reading can be characterized as the process of apprehending a text that contains four characteristics: a purpose, a selection, an anticipation, and a comprehension, and then forming fair interpretations about those features. One of the qualities of reading is the ability to talk about understanding. According to Mikulecky & Jeffries, comprehension is defined as the process of making sense of what someone reads and relating the ideas in the text to what he already understands. According to Richards and Schmidt, understanding is defined as "the recognition of the intended meaning of written or spoken communication". According to them, current comprehension theories highlight that understanding is an active process that draws on information contained in the message (bottom-up processing), background knowledge, information gathered from the context, as well as the listener's and speaker's objectives or intentions (top-down processing).

## **Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA)**

Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) is an activity that helps students' understanding that each segment of text can help them figure out the next segment. It is because the text is divided into smaller portions, the students can focus on the process of responding to higher - order questions. The use of prior knowledge and prediction is clearly of great value in helping students set purposes for reading and use their own experiences as a basis for comprehending text. Prior knowledge and prediction are utilized in the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) developed in 1969 by Russell Stauffer. According to Stauffer the DRTA is intended to develop students' ability to read critically and reflectively and is fundamentally different from the DRA used in basic. The Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) attempts to equip readers with the ability to determine purposes for reading; the ability to extract, comprehend, and assimilate information; the ability to examine reading materials based upon purposes for reading the ability to suspend judgments and, the ability to make decisions based upon information gleaned from reading.

## **Teaching of Reading using Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA)**

As this study employs directed reading-thinking activity, the teaching and learning process includes the steps of the activity for both the teacher and students. The steps employ the students to set reading purposes and make predictions, reading text, verify and revise predictions and prove set reading purposes. Therefore, the teacher assists the students by selecting the texts, dividing the text into meaningful section, facilitating discussion, and giving feedback. The elaboration of the teaching of reading using Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) is designed based on the following steps:

In making predictions, students observe and identify the selection by looking at the title, picture (if it is available), the vocabulary, the grammar, and other language features in the text. In response to it, students formulate questions which bridge them to next selection of the text and the whole part of it. In this stage, the teacher assists the students in observing and identifying selection of text and notices the key words that help them to guess the global understanding of the text. The teacher also facilitates students to formulate questions, discuss and share their predictions of each selection of the text.

Students read the whole text to gather information or data related to their earlier predictions. The teacher helps students identifying any crucial vocabulary items in context. After reading the complete text to gather information, students are encouraged to explain what

cause them to confirm or revise prior predictions. It is carried out through discussing the material read. The aim of this discussion is to help students interpreting the material. Students discuss among their group members about their prior predictions and the data in the text whether they are compatible or not. Teacher facilitates students to discuss related concepts and to consider the content of the selection of their own experiences.

## METHOD Research Design

The characteristic in this research is to repairing and improving the result of students' study on the learning reading comprehension in grade 7 students by applying Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA). Therefore, the characteristic this research is to repair, so the method in this research is Classroom Action Research (CAR). Classroom Action Research (CAR) is kind or research which is conducted during the learning process. It is designed to help the teacher to find out what happened in the class and use the information to take action for the future improvement of teaching-learning process.

## **Research Setting**

The researcher conducted the study at SMPN 1 Surabaya. It is located Jl. Pacar No. 4-6, Surabaya, Jawa Timur, 60272.

## **Research Subjects**

The subject of the research was the grade 7 students of SMPN 1 Surabaya. There were 36 students in Academic Year 2020/2021. The researcher selected the grade 7 students in class 7-F, because of some considerations. The first one is, firstly the research was to choose the grade 7 students but, they were still in the process of adaptation toward the school and learning environment, so the English teacher in that school didn't give permission. The second one, the potential problems were found after the interview and observation was done. The students' low reading comprehension was one of the main problems to solve.

### **Data and Research Instruments**

The researcher used qualitative and quantitative data in their research. Data obtained through direct observation were utilized in the DRTA implementation, where students learned using a system similar to that of a class. Meanwhile, direct tests were used to measure the quantitative data. As part of the implementation of the DRTA, the researcher used field notes to acquire data on the ability of students to read the text within the context of learning activities.

Post-test evaluations were the second step in solving the second problem, after conducting tests before and after the assessments. Before any treatment was administered, a preliminary test was given to the students to allow them to check their data. Then, after the treatment was administered, a post-test was given to the students to evaluate the effects.

## **Data Collection Procedures**

Information which was gathered by observing in pre-research, the process and the results of action research implementation, and the discussion between researcher and teacher, were used to create the qualitative data used in this study. The test- taker's reading comprehension skills were evaluated with quantitative data. The first test was prior to the examination and the second was after. In the free-writing test of descriptive texts, the writing tests were administered. The topic for reading comprehension was decided in advance by coordinating with the English teacher.

## **Data Analysis**

Data from the observation was drawn from activities that occurred while students were in the process of learning. The researcher wanted to find out how the teaching and learning process related to writing skills, so he conducted an experiment that involved teacher collaborator, researcher, and students. While looking at both quantitative and qualitative data, the researcher found that students' reading scores tend to follow a pattern. The test scores served as the quantitative data, which were reported in the form of scores before and after the test. The researcher used Excel software to analyze the students' mean scores to see how their scores changed after implementing the activities.

## RESULTS FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Observation was done prior to conducting any preliminary research. It was done on February 8, 2021 when the Microsoft Teams platform was used to do online learning. As the researcher and the teacher entered 7-F, the class teacher greeted them warmly. As a way of both greeting and encouraging students, the teacher greeted and prayed, and then checked the attendance list. The teacher opened the lesson by asking students to answer a series of questions that dealt with materials that would be covered in the online class. The teacher asked the students directly if they know anything about certain texts, which texts, or which kind of texts. In this section, some students took part in a lively brainstorming session. The teacher gave a pre-test to the students before the main discussion about describing texts because reading texts was going to be a major topic of discussion. Based on the results, it appeared that most of the

7th-grade students struggled to read the texts. As a result, only five students passed the test based on the Minimum Mastery Criteria (KKM)  $\geq$  76, with five others falling below the passing threshold. As stated earlier, DRTA was implemented twice, starting on February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021 and ending on February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021, during which each cycle featured three meetings. The study found that DRTA helped improving the students' reading comprehension skill. Classroom Action Research (CAR) in the implementation of DRTA could be seen in table.1. In figures.1 and table.1, it is shown that when it was compared to the pre-research that was done, the writing results significantly differed between the students in the first cycle and the second cycle.

Table.1 Students' Scores Pre-test & Post-tests

	Tuble.1 Students Scoles Tie test & Fost tests			
Code	Pre-test	Post-test (Cycle I)	Post-test (Cycle II)	
S7F-1	70	68	72	
S7F-2	60	68	75	
S7F-3	65	64	68	
S7F-4	60	70	74	
S7F-5	78	75	80	
S7F-6	76	76	84	
S7F-7	72	80	88	
S7F-8	60	76	86	
S7F-9	68	78	90	
S7F-10	65	70	75	
S7F-11	60	72	80	
S7F-12	60	65	78	
S7F-13	70	72	90	
S7F-14	78	65	76	
S7F-15	70	70	72	
S7F-16	78	75	80	
S7F-17	78	76	84	
S7F-18	62	74	86	
S7F-19	60	70	76	
S7F-20	60	66	90	
S7F-21	68	72	88	
S7F-22	62	68	72	
S7F-23	72	80	84	
S7F-24	60	74	82	
S7F-25	76	82	86	
S7F-26	70	78	82	
S7F-27	62	72	86	

S7F-28	60	65	88
S7F-29	60	62	78
S7F-30	68	74	80
S7F-31	62	70	80
S7F-32	72	76	84
S7F-33	68	78	80
S7F-34	72	68	80
S7F-35	75	80	84
S7F-36	65	78	86
Mean	67,28	72,42	81,22
<b>Highest Score</b>	78	82	90
<b>Lowest Score</b>	60	62	68
Passed	6	12	29
Percentage	16,67	33,33	80,56

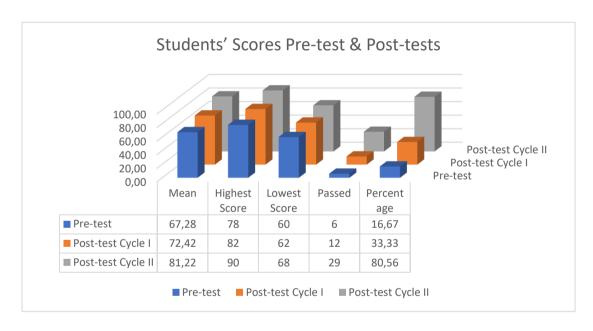


Figure.1 Students' Score Pre-test & Post-tests

The results of the pre-test, post-test cycle I, and post-test cycle II tests are presented in the table.1 and in figure.1. Now, it can be argued that the students of class 7-F performed better as a result of completing the activity. At pre-test, the mean score was only 67.28, but it improved significantly from cycle I (which was from 67.28 to 72.47) to cycle II (which was from 72.47 to 80.56). To way to prove, the score at the beginning of the pre-test in highest score was 78 and by the end of the study, the score had improved to 82-90. Meanwhile, the lowest-scoring participants also showed significant improvement in their post-test scores compared to the pre-test. Pre-tests yielded scores ranging from 60, while post-tests ranged from

62-68. There were some improvements made to the students who had passed the exams. only 6 students who previously passed the test were permitted to take the test (16.67%). Though, in post-tests, the number of students who passed the tests increased to 35.33% (from cycle I) and 80.56% (from cycle II), in post-tests there were improvements in students who passed the tests. Successful teaching learning process indicates that 75% or more of students' KKM is 76 or higher. The implementation of DRTA appears to have worked in improving students' writing skills. During the pre-test phase, a researcher used DRTA to examine the students' learning in reading comprehension skill. The researcher then compared the students' scores in post-test cycle I with their scores in post-test cycle II. On the following figure, the students' progress in writing ability was demonstrated when describing texts, with the results presented in the form of the following bar graph.

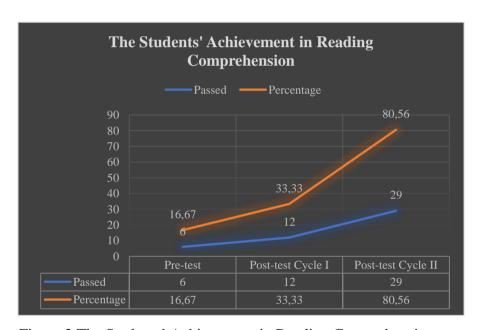


Figure.2 The Students' Achievement in Reading Comprehension

As illustrated in Figure 2, DRTA enhanced students' reading comprehension abilities when they were tested in reading comprehension texts. The improvement was interpreted to mean that the students were able to explore ideas for reading skills following treatment with DRTA, and the results confirmed this. According to the information gathered, this research was stopped in cycle 2 because the success criteria were met in a percentage of 80.56%. According to the Minimum Mastery Criteria (KKM) standard, which is greater than 76, there were a total of 29 students who passed the post-test in cycle II. As a result of the research findings, the researcher concluded that DRTA was effective in improving students' comprehension skills for students in class 7-H at SMP Negeri 1 Surabaya in the academic year 2020/2021.

## **CONCLUSION**

According to the research findings, the process of improving students' reading comprehension skills through the implementation of the Direct Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) technique via online learning for students in class 7-H at SMP Negeri 1 Surabaya in the academic year 2020/2021 significantly improved. Students' improvements can be seen in the process of improving students' reading tests in each cycle, as well as in the increase in students' mean scores and the percentage of students passing the tests administered during preliminary research, cycle I, and cycle II. The mean score at pre-test was only 67.28, but it increased to 72.42 in cycle I and 81.22 in cycle II. Following that, the highest pre-test score was only 78 and improved to 82 to 90 in subsequent cycles. Meanwhile, the lowest pre-test scores were 60, and the lowest post-test scores ranged from 62 to 68. Finally, only 6 students passed the pre-test (16.67%). While post-tests revealed an increase in the percentage of students who passed, with 12 students (33.33%) passing in post-test cycle I and 29 students (80.56%) passing in post-test cycle II. This research was stopped in cycle II because the criteria for success were met in a percentage of 80.56%, with 29 students passing the post-test in cycle II, based on the Minimum Mastery Criteria (KKM) standard of ≥ 76.

Based on the result of the research, the conclusions of the using Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) to improve the students' reading comprehension, the researcher wants to suggest some points for the English teacher and the further researchers. The suggestions are intended to find and enhance the effective ways in teaching reading, especially for the junior high school students. The recommendations are presented as follows: the teachers should facilitate the students with the most suitable and feasible strategy of reading. DRTA can be used to help the students thinking while reading. The using of DRTA can improve the students' reading comprehension. It is suggested for other researchers to use DRTA as one the references in teaching reading.

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