

Published online on the Journal's Webpage: <http://deejournal.org/index.php/dee>



deejournal

**Datokarama English Education Journal**

Vol. 5 No. 1 (2024) 35-44

E-ISSN: 2723-4967

## The Use of Direct Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) to Improve Students' Narrative Text Reading Comprehension

**Moh. Fadil<sup>1</sup>, Muhammad Ihsan<sup>2</sup>, Dzakiah<sup>3</sup>**

Correspondent e-mail: [mohfadil923@gmail.com](mailto:mohfadil923@gmail.com)

English Tadris Study Program, Tarbiyah and Teacher Training Faculty  
Datokarama State Islamic University, Palu.

### Article History

**Received:**  
(06-05-2024)  
**Revised:**  
(02-06-2024)  
**Accepted:**  
(04-06-2024)  
**Published:**  
(14-06-2024)

### ABSTRACT

This study examines the effectiveness of the Direct Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) technique in improving the ability of ninth-grade students at MTs Alkhairaat Alindau to understand and comprehend narrative texts. The main study inquiry investigates the efficacy of the DRTA technique in enhancing students' reading comprehension abilities. The research utilizes a quantitative methodology and follows a pre-experimental design, specifically employing a one-group pretest-posttest framework. The study included a total of 27 ninth-grade students, who serve as both the population and sample. The data gathering process involved administering pretests and posttests, while the analysis utilized descriptive statistics, T-tests, and hypothesis testing. The results suggest that the DRTA technique has a substantial positive impact on pupils' reading comprehension. The initial average score was 46.29, and the statistical analysis showed that the calculated t-value (6.998) was higher than the critical t-value (1.708), resulting in the rejection of the null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>). These findings demonstrate that implementing the Directed Reading-Thinking Activity (DRTA) technique effectively enhances the narrative text reading comprehension of ninth-grade students at MTs Alkhairaat Alindau.

**Keywords:** *DRTA; Narrative Text; Reading Comprehension.*

### INTRODUCTION

Mastery of reading comprehension is an essential skill required for attaining scholastic achievement and ongoing personal development. It includes not only the ability to decode words, but also the capacity to understand and analyze complex writings. Having a high level of reading comprehension is particularly important in academic settings, as students are required to understand and evaluate information from many fields of study.



While reading comprehension skills are essential, many students encounter significant challenges in developing a strong aptitude for interpreting narrative texts. Narrative texts, such as stories and literary works, might demand a higher degree of cognitive engagement due to their intricate structures and the reader's need to infer significance and predict outcomes.

A considerable proportion of ninth-grade students at MTs Alkhairaat Alindau encounter difficulties in comprehending and analyzing narrative texts, thereby impacting their reading comprehension. The obstacles are apparent in their academic accomplishments and overall confidence in completing reading tasks. Traditional methods of teaching reading, which often focus on memorization and passive learning, have not proven effective in addressing these issues. There is a pressing need for additional pedagogical strategies that are interactive and student-centered, since they can effectively engage students and enhance their understanding skills. The Direct Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) has proven to be an effective strategy in various educational contexts.

The Direct Reading-Thinking Activity (DRTA) technique is designed to improve pupils' reading comprehension by including them in an active and participatory reading process (Yazdani, 2015:2). This method enhances students' involvement in the reading process by encouraging them to formulate hypotheses about the text before reading, actively confirm or refute their hypotheses during reading, and participate in discussions with both classmates and teachers to share their findings. The objective of DRTA is to foster a deeper engagement with the text and enhance understanding by including interactive and introspective components into the reading process (Glass and Zygouris, 2006:1). Research has shown that utilizing strategies like DRTA, which emphasize anticipation and active reading, can significantly improve students' understanding of texts, particularly those that are narrative in nature.

This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of the Direct Reading-Thinking Activity (DRTA) technique in improving the reading comprehension of narrative texts among ninth-grade students at MTs Alkhairaat Alindau. The research will also analyze the potential benefits of using this technique. The study employed a quasi-experimental methodology to compare the reading comprehension results of students who received teaching using the DRTA educational approach with those who received instruction using traditional reading methods. The objective of this research is to evaluate the impact of DRTA and provide evidence-based recommendations to educators for better reading comprehension instruction and ultimately improving student learning outcomes.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Reading and Comprehension

Reading is a highly intricate skill that demands concentration. (Harrington & Sawyer, 1992; Lally, 1998; Miyake & Friedman, 1998; Saito et al., 1999; Lu & Liu, 2015). It encompasses the cognitive processes of recognizing words, understanding their literal meaning, interpreting information, engaging in critical analysis, and demonstrating creative understanding. Aprilia, Herlina, and Mortini (2023) assert that the main objective of reading



is comprehension, which refers to the ability to understand specific material. According to Widdowson (1979:123), reading involves more than just getting information from a text. It entails the complex procedure of combining the substance of the text with the reader's preexisting knowledge. This perspective emphasizes that reading is an active process where the reader's existing knowledge interacts with new information from the text, resulting in the improvement and broadening of the reader's comprehension (Linse, 2005:69). Crowhurst (1994:115) defines reading as a dynamic process where readers combine textual cues with their preexisting knowledge to comprehend the text's meaning.

Both Widdowson and Crowhurst emphasize the significance of reader engagement during the process of reading. Widdowson emphasizes the interdependent relationship between existing knowledge and new information, while Crowhurst underscores the dynamic interaction that readers engage in with the text. Collectively, these findings indicate that proficiency in reading comprehension demands more than just deciphering written material; it also involves actively interacting with the text to construct meaning and enhance comprehension (Stoller, Anderson, Grabe, and Komiyama, 2013:8).

Reading comprehension is a complex cognitive process that extends beyond simple word comprehension (Oakhill, Cain & Elbro, 2015:1). The process involves comprehending, examining, and incorporating information derived from the text. To achieve advanced reading comprehension, the reader must actively interact with the text by employing their existing knowledge, vocabulary, and comprehension skills to create meaning. Cognitive models of reading, such as the Simple View of Reading, highlight the relationship between decoding abilities and language comprehension in the development of advanced reading skills. Decoding accuracy and language comprehension are essential factors that contribute to an individual's overall reading competency.

### **Narrative Text**

Narrative texts, such as stories, novels, and other literary forms, are structured to convey a sequence of events that often involve characters, a setting, a conflict, and a resolution. Narrative texts serve the purpose of imparting moral lessons, providing amusement, and delving into social ideals. (Joyce & Feez, 2012; Christie & Derewianka, 2010). The narrative text can enhance students' reading comprehension, in addition to being highly engaging for them (Herlina, I., Romdanih, R., & Harmayanthi, V. Y. 2019). Narrative texts showcase verbs in the past tense, a variety of sentence structures, and unique linguistic features that create a lively and captivating reading experience. Understanding narrative texts requires readers to follow the plot, infer the motivations and actions of characters, and anticipate possible outcomes. The complex nature of this might pose challenges for students, particularly those who struggle with deductive reasoning and predicting the development of a narrative.

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

The Direct Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA), initially developed and enhanced by Stauffer (1996), is a remarkably efficient approach for enhancing students' comprehension of texts. It involves the use of symbols (words) to represent ideas or thoughts presented by



the author, requiring readers to draw on their own experiences and knowledge to reconstruct these concepts. The process of reconstruction remains dynamic as long as readers engage actively with the text.

DRTA is a learning framework that views reading as a problem-solving process that is best achieved in a social context (Stauffer in Scott, 2008). DRTA has several goals, namely to encourage students to become active and thoughtful readers, to activate students' prior knowledge, to teach students to monitor their understanding of the text as they read, and to help strengthen reading and critical thinking skills (Mulyani & San Rizqiya, 2022). Tierney, Readence, and Dishner (El-Koumy, 2006) emphasize that DRTA serves various purposes, including fostering independent readers who can set reading objectives, evaluate texts based on these objectives, and make informed decisions using textual information (Schumm, 2006:241). Jennings and Shepherd (El-Koumy, 2006) highlight the beneficial influence of DRTA on students' understanding of reading strategies, comprehension mechanisms, and ability to make predictions. According to Glass et al. (2006), DRTA (Direct Reading-Thinking Activity) helps students make systematic progress by enhancing their comprehension of the subject and promoting their critical thinking skills. According to Allen (Al Odwan, 2012:141), it is important to make predictions before reading each section. This approach encourages the use of contextual cues and gives a specific reason for reading. Additionally, it involves students in an interactive process of applying their prior knowledge, establishing reading objectives, and cultivating critical thinking abilities.

The main objective of DRTA is to equip students with efficient reading strategies, activate their prior knowledge, establish reading objectives, and encourage ongoing assessment of comprehension, all with the ultimate aim of fostering independent readers. The outlined procedure of DRTA entails formulating anticipations prior to reading, reading to validate or adjust those anticipations, and subsequently confirming the accuracy of the anticipations after reading. To summarize, the DRTA method consists of three primary stages: prediction, reading, and verification of predictions, all of which enhance students' comprehension skills (Safitri, Marhaban, & Erdiana 2022; Bachtiar & Barus, 2011:2). Implementing DRTA encourages readers to utilize textual cues and background knowledge to create predictions, hence enhancing their learning and comprehension of the reading material (Brown, 2001). Through participating in prediction and validation exercises, students can actively assess their knowledge, leading to improved overall understanding of the content.

### **Previous research on DRTA**

Previous studies have demonstrated that DRTA has the ability to improve students' reading comprehension in various educational environments (Maulidyyana, 2014; Widya, 2018; Tolibin, 2014). Research indicates that the implementation of Direct Reading-Thinking Activity (DRTA) enhances students' understanding and examination of texts, while also heightening their engagement and excitement towards reading. Studies have shown that children who participate in education using the Direct Reading-Thinking Activity (DRTA) exhibit significant improvements in their performance on reading comprehension assessments, as compared to those who receive traditional teaching. The findings demonstrate that the interactive and student-centered method of DRTA effectively addresses



the challenges associated with reading comprehension, particularly in understanding narrative texts. This study aims to build upon the previously mentioned findings by examining the application of DRTA in the specific context of ninth-grade students at MTs Alkhairaat Alindau.

## METHOD

This research used a pre-experimental design, a quantitative study examining the effect of the Direct Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) strategy on students' reading comprehension skills at MTs Alkhairaat Alindau. The study uses a one-group pretest and post-test design, with total sampling used to ensure a specific sample size. The population in this research is 27 IX Grade students at MTS Alkhairaat Alindau. The dependent variable is reading comprehension skill, while the independent variable is the DRTA strategy. The research instrument is a test administered by the teacher to students before and after the treatment with the DRTA strategy. The test is in the form of essay questions.

The data collection steps involve a pretest to assess students' abilities before applying the narrative text material. After the pretest, the researcher conducts four sessions of treatment, each lasting 60 minutes. The treatment involves introducing the materials and explaining the tasks, followed by essay tests. The DRTA strategy is designed based on three stages: predicting, silent reading, and confirming predictions. Before reading, students identify the text's title, picture, grammar, function, generic structure, and language features. The teacher assists students in formulating questions and discussing their predictions. Silent reading involves students reading the entire text to gather information related to their earlier predictions. After reading, students are encouraged to explain what causes them to confirm or revise their predictions. Discussions help students interpret the material and discuss the concepts related to the topic and content. The posttest is conducted after the treatment to determine the impact of implementing the DRTA strategy. The data collected from the study is analyzed using descriptive and t-test techniques. The pretest and posttest scores are compared, and the difference between the scores is tested using the t-test.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### *Findings*

The research focuses on the use of Direct Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) strategy to improve students' Narrative Text Reading Comprehension at IX Grade of MTs Alkhairaat Alindau. The study consists of two parts: the pretest and posttest. The pretest results were analyzed using the mean score formula, which was calculated by adding all standard scores of the students and dividing them by the number of students. The average score for the pretest was calculated as 46.29, with the lowest score being 20 and the highest score being 70, with an average score of 46.29.

The posttest results showed that the lowest score was 50, and the highest score was 90, with an average score of 69.25. The posttest results also revealed that students who participated in the DRTA strategy had better reading comprehension than those who did not participate in the DRTA strategy.



The results of the DRTA strategy were compared with the control group, which consisted of students from other grades. The pretest results showed that students who participated in the DRTA strategy had better reading comprehension than those who did not participate in the DRTA strategy.

The posttest results showed that students who participated in the DRTA strategy had better reading comprehension than those who did not participate in the DRTA strategy. The results suggest that the DRTA strategy can be a valuable tool for improving students' reading comprehension and overall academic performance.

In conclusion, the use of the DRTA strategy has shown promising results in improving students' reading comprehension and overall academic performance. However, further research is needed to fully understand the effectiveness of this strategy in improving students' reading comprehension and overall academic performance.

### ***Discussion***

The researcher conducted a study on students' narrative text reading comprehension at the IX Grade of MTs Alkhairaat Alindau, a madrasah located in the western part of Pante, Sindue Tobata. The study involved calculating the deviation and square deviation of the students' scores from pre-test and post-test.

The T-test was used to test the truth of the hypothesis proposed by the researcher. The researcher analyzed the data statistically on students IX Grade of MTs Alkhairaat Alindau to determine the significance between before and after the implementation of the Direct Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) strategy. The results showed that the use of the DRTA strategy was effective in improving students' narrative text reading comprehension.

The research was conducted from October 11th to November 8th, 2022, every Tuesday and Thursday based on the English subject schedule at MTs Alkhairaat Alindau. The study used two variables X and Y, and used a Pre-Experimental with One Group Pretest and Posttest design.

The pretest results showed an average score of 46.29 for students' narrative text reading comprehension. Before using the DRTA strategy, students' comprehension was classified as Fair, as they appeared confused and did not understand the content of narrative text material. Additionally, the teacher did not use the DRTA strategy in reading before, which could have contributed to the students' confusion and difficulty understanding the content of narrative text.

The lack of vocabulary among students also became an obstacle for them to understand the content of narrative text. Therefore, the use of the DRTA strategy was found to be effective in improving students' narrative text reading comprehension at the IX Grade of MTs Alkhairaat Alindau.

The research study aimed to improve students' narrative text reading comprehension using the Direct Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) strategy. The researchers conducted various steps in the learning process, starting with a pretest before the treatment and then



presenting the DRTA strategy in four meetings with different materials. In the last meeting, students took a posttest to assess their comprehension with the narrative text material after the treatment.

The first meeting was initially boring due to the teacher's lack of experience with DRTA strategy in reading, leading to confusion among the students. The researcher provided explanations about the DRTA strategy and guided the students through the process. Students were given the opportunity to predict a picture and title of the material, continue reading the text, and prove their predictions based on the text. This was done by discussing the material their reading.

In the second meeting, students appeared enthusiastic and confident in their predictions, as they began to understand the content of the narrative text. The researcher was always available to help students when they needed clarification. In the third and fourth meetings, students showed enthusiasm and excitement, as they had previously learned narrative text using DRTA strategy. They more easily understood the text, finding the main idea and specific information.

After using the DRTA strategy, the posttest resulted in a score of 69.25, indicating that the DRTA strategy was effective in improving students' narrative text reading comprehension. The students enjoyed learning the materials and the researcher provided instruction that helped them understand the content of the text and answer questions.

The DRTA strategy stimulated students to think before reading, stimulated their memory before reading, and spurred them to make predictions based on their knowledge. Students were asked to predict the title and picture of the text before reading, which helped them become more prepared for reading comprehension. Reading silently allowed students to concentrate more, allowing them to understand the contents of the reading text more quickly.

The next step was to test the predictions, as students were asked to read silently by concentrating. The researcher asked students to prove their predictions based on the text, and they were allowed to discuss with their friends. This activity aimed to get the main idea and specific information of the narrative text.

The new innovation in the form of the DRTA strategy made students feel less bored, more interactive, and more active and critical thinkers. This enthusiasm can be seen in the students' enthusiasm when working on tasks assigned to them.

In conclusion, the DRTA strategy effectively improved students' narrative text reading comprehension by encouraging students to think before reading, make predictions based on their knowledge, and engage in discussions with their peers. This approach has been shown to be effective in improving students' reading comprehension and overall reading skills.

## CONCLUSION

The research findings and discussion suggest that the study's results demonstrate the suitability of implementing the Direct Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) technique in the



ninth grade of MTs Alkahairaat Alindau. The pre-implementation outcomes of students using the Direct Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) technique can be examined, specifically 46.29. Implementing the Direct Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) technique led to an enhancement in students' ability to understand narrative texts. The scores obtained by pupils using the Direct Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) approach can be noted, namely as 69.25. The analysis of the Pretest – Posttest data shows that the tcount value is 6.998, which exceeds the ttable value of 1.708. This evidence indicates that the proposed research hypothesis is valid.

The results of this study suggest that using the Direct Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) approach significantly improves the reading comprehension abilities of ninth-grade pupils at MTs Alkahairaat Alindau. The substantial improvement in the post-test scores of the experimental group, as compared to the control group, highlights the effectiveness of DRTA in fostering a deeper understanding of narrative texts. The DRTA technique improves comprehension, analytical thinking, and involvement by involving students in making predictions, actively reading, and engaging in debates. The results of this study align with previous research and confirm the efficacy of interactive, student-centered teaching methods in improving reading outcomes.

Additional research is necessary to explore the broader spectrum of circumstances and varieties of written material in which the DRTA technique can be successfully utilized. By doing study on the effectiveness of this approach in various age groups, genres of reading material, and other educational environments, we can gain a more thorough understanding of its potential benefits. Moreover, carrying out longitudinal studies to examine the long-lasting efficacy of DRTA on reading comprehension and overall academic attainment might yield valuable insights. By incorporating qualitative approaches, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the perspectives of students and teachers regarding DRTA. This approach would provide a holistic view of how DRTA impacts the learning process.

## REFERENCES

- Al Odwan, T. A. A. H. (2012). The effect of the directed reading thinking activity through cooperative learning on English secondary stage students' reading comprehension in Jordan. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2(16), 138-151.
- Aprilia, D., Herlina, H., & Mortini, A. V. (2023). The Implementation of Direct Reading Thinking Activity to Improve Reading Comprehension. *Esteem Journal of English Education Study Programme*, 6(1), 117-124.
- Bachtiar and Barus, D. R. (2011). *Improving Students' Reading Comprehension Through Directed Reading Thinking Activity*.
- Brown, H. Douglas. (2001). *Teaching by Principle and Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*. New York; Longman Inc.
- Christie, F. & Derewianka, B. (2010). *School Discourse: Learning to Write Across the Years of Schooling*. A&C Black.



- Crowhurst, M. (1994). *Language and Learning Across the Curriculum*. Scarborough: Allyn and Bacon Canada.
- El-Koumy, A. S. A. K. (2006). *The effects of the directed reading-thinking activity on EFL students' referential and inferential comprehension*. Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), USA.
- H & Feez S, Joyce. (2000). *Writing Skills: Narrative and non-fiction text types*. Sydney: Phoenix Education Pty Ltd.
- Harrington, M., & Sawyer, M. (1992). L2 working memory capacity and L2 reading skill. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 14, 25-38.
- Joyce, H. D. S. & Feez, S. (2012). *Text Based Language and Literacy Education: Programming and Methodology*. Pheonix Education.
- Lally, C. (1998). Friend or foe: The use of direct object pronouns by native English speakers in both English and French. *Reading Improvement*, 35(1), 31-37.
- Linse, C. T. T. (2005). *Practical English language teaching: Young Learners*. McGraw Hill Companies.
- Lu, Z., & Liu, M. (2015). An investigation of Chinese university EFL learner's foreign language reading anxiety, reading strategy use and reading comprehension performance. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 5(1), 65-85. doi: 10.14746/ssl.2015.5.1.4.
- Mauliddyana, Eva Septi. (2014). *Pengaruh Penerapan Strategi Direct Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) terhadap Keterampilan Membaca Pemahaman Dongeng pada Siswa Kelas V SD Putra Jaya Depok Tahun Pelajaran 2013/2014*.
- Miyake, A., & Friedman, N. P. (1998). Individual differences in second language proficiency: Working memory as language aptitude. In A. F. Healy & L. E. Bourne (Eds.), *Foreign language learning: Psycholinguistic studies on training and retention* (pp. 339-364). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Mulyani, R., & San Rizqiya, R. (2022). The Implementation of Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) Strategy in Teaching Reading Descriptive Text Using Discovery Learning Project. *Professional Journal of English Education*, 5(3), 505-511.
- Oakhill, J., Cain, K., Elbro, C. (2015). *Understanding and Teaching Reading Comprehension*. Routledge. New York.
- Safitri, M., Marhaban, S., & Erdiana, N. (2022). A review of Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) strategy in teaching reading comprehension. *English Education Journal*, 13(2), 290-303.



- Saito, Y., Horwitz, E., & Garza, J. (1999) Foreign Language Reading Anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 83, 202-218.
- Schumm, J. (2006). *Reading assessment and instruction for all learners*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Scott, K. A. D. S. (2008). The effects of three instructional methods on the reading comprehension and content acquisition of novice readers. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 40(3), 359-393.
- Stauffer, Russell, G. (1996). *Directed the Reading-Thinking Process*. New York.
- Stoller, L. Fredericka., Anderson, J. Niel., Grabe, W., Komiyama, R. (2013). *Instructional Enchancement to Improve Students' Reading Abilities*. United State.
- Tolibin, I'anatut. (2014). "Pengaruh Penggunaan Strategi Direct Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) Terhadap Kemampuan Membaca Pemahaman Pada Siswa Kelas V MIS Sidorejo Tahun Ajaran 2013/2014.
- Widdowson, H. G. (1979). *Teaching Language as Communication*. Oxford: OUP.
- Widya, Ephin Tiara. 2018. *Efektivitas Implementasi Strategi Direct Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) dalam Pembelajaran Membaca Pemahaman Siswa Kelas VIII SMP Budya Wacana Yogyakarta Tahun Ajaran 2017/2018*.
- Wiguna, I Wayan Radiarta. (2014) Pengaruh Strategi DRTA (Directed Reading Thinking Activity) Terhadap Hasil Belajar Membaca Intensif Kelas IV Semester 1 di SDN Gugus Belantih Kecamatan Kintamani" Tahun Pelajaran 2013/2014. *Journal Mimbar Pgsd Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha Jurusan PGSD*, Vol.2 No. 1 (Februari, 2014).
- Yazdani, M. M. (2015). *The Explicit Instruction of Reading Strategies: Directed Reading Thinking Activity vs. Guided Reading Strategies*. ELT Department, Faculty of Persian Literature and Foreign Languages, Roudehen Branch, Islamic Azad University, Roudehen, Iran.

