

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the foundation and general outline of the study, which consists of the background of the study, the research questions, the study's aim, the study's scope, the study's significance, the study's clarification of terms, and the organization of the paper.

1.1 Background of Study

Reading is a receptive skill, and it is considered an appropriate way to help develop the learners' language skills, particularly in input-poor settings. Reading also involves the process of understanding a written text to gain knowledge and information (Erliana, 2011). In short, reading is an active activity of interpreting print and graphic texts, and cognitive process (Serafini, 2011). Reading in an EFL context may help students learn or understand something from the text while providing new knowledge, especially in teaching and learning activities. In learning English as a second or foreign language, reading skills are considered vital as they can help students enhance their language acquisition and pursue a successful career in their education (Channuan, P., & Wasanasomsithi, P., 2012).

Most instructors believe reading class is integral to the learning process and enhances class discussion (Brost et al., K, 2006). Therefore, students' reading skill actively influences their performance in a classroom activity. Considering reading necessities, developing strong reading habits among students is particularly important. However, various surveys showed meagre rates of reading interest in Indonesia. Since reading has become one of the receptive skills, its process and specific products are unobservable (Brown, 2003). Because of that, sometimes, it is quite tricky for teachers to know students' reading skills because reading performance is an invisible process in somebody's brain. Various research studies have highlighted students' difficulties when trying to enhance their reading skills. Those problems are related to limited vocabulary knowledge,

inability to connect the word ideas and infer the information, inability to pronounce the word correctly, and the unfamiliar subject matter or topic of their reading. Several studies related to reading habit shows that students at the High School level have a low interest in reading and do not enjoy reading as much as they enjoy doing other technology-related activities (Annamalai, 2013). Nevertheless, only 20–30% of High School students complete the required readings (Berry, 2011). Some of them perceive reading as an uninteresting, stressful, and tedious activity, leading them to be disinclined to read.

Numerous studies have identified four key factors contributing to student's lack of reading engagement. These factors, which contribute to academic difficulties, can be classified as follows: 1) lack of preparedness, 2) low motivation, 3) time limitations, and 4) underestimation of the significance of reading (Leamson, 1999; Lei et al., 2010 as cited in (Kerr et al., K. M, 2017)). The concept of "lack of preparedness" refers to students' inadequate language skills and comprehension, which may explain their inability to complete assigned reading tasks (Brost, B. D., & K. A. Bradley, 2006). One can argue that students' limited reading proficiency actively leads them to avoid completing assignments, thereby hampering their understanding of texts assigned by educators (Brost, B. D., & K. A. Bradley, 2006). Reading is critical for students to be successful nowadays; as mentioned by (Schoot, 2008) to make students succeed in today's society, students must know how to read—knowing how the importance of reading will help students to achieve a better understanding and performance in a classroom activity. Nowadays, reading ability is no longer an option, but it is a need for all students to be literate and prosperous throughout their careers in the future. However, many students struggle with the essential skill of comprehending what they read (Nerim, 2020).

Reading is a multifaceted activity beyond the mere process of decoding words. While reading entails recognizing and understanding written symbols, the ultimate objective is comprehending and grasping the presented information or text. This act can occur at different levels and is commonly known as reading comprehension. The term "reading comprehension" refers to the understanding

and utilizing information contained in written texts (Erliana, 2011). It involves not only decoding the words on the page but also comprehending the ideas, messages, and information conveyed by the author. As students engage in reading comprehension, they must not only grasp the content of a text but also construct a coherent and meaningful understanding of it. While being taught to read, most students naturally develop reading comprehension skills, but a significant portion of students actively face challenges in comprehending text. Consequently, comprehending and interpreting texts has become difficult for these students (Oakhill et al.; C., 2014).

In the classroom, Indonesian students are sometimes only required to read the material from cover to cover and then answer questions on the work's substance. For instance, in the reading section, some teachers only focus on finding information in a text to answer specific questions rather than encouraging their students to expand their understanding and literacy skills as a foundation (Harris et al.; A., 2017). This method excludes students' cognitive processes, thus not actively engaging them in the reading process. Consequently, there are ongoing concerns regarding teaching reading comprehension, including issues related to text comprehension. The difficulty occurs due to a need for more instruction in understanding a text, especially in English (Maarof et al., M. K, 2010). Also, there are still several issues with the reading comprehension learning process, such as difficulties understanding the text. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate students' reading comprehension abilities in relation to the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) in learning and teaching reading.

The Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) is one example of an instructional strategy that can be employed to address reading instruction challenges. As described by Stauffer cited in (Erliana, 2011), this strategy guides students systematically through informative books. (Nerim, 2020) suggests that the Directed Reading Thinking Activity is particularly effective for comprehending informational texts as it facilitates students in organizing, monitoring, and evaluating their reading process, thereby meeting the requirements for comprehension. Its primary objective is to assist students in

navigating the reading process. (Schumm, 2017) argues that the DRTA model significantly enhances independent reading and learning. The Directed Reading Thinking Activity aims to equip readers with the necessary knowledge and skills to identify their motivations for reading, assess reading materials in relation to those motivations, and form opinions based on their reading experiences. The researcher believes that implementing the DRTA strategy will enable teachers to help students increase their reading frequency and expose them to various types of reading materials. By posing questions about the text, teachers can facilitate the development of student's prior knowledge and foster active learning in the classroom.

Numerous studies on the use of Directed Reading Thinking Activity have been conducted several times to explore the effectiveness of the DRTA in enhancing reading comprehension. These studies primarily employ Classroom Action Research (CAR) and experimental design to assess the impact of the DRTA. Besides, some of them were conducted at the Junior High School level. Thus, by conducting the study in Senior High Schools using Quasi-experimental, this study's findings will contribute to improving reading comprehension in EFL classrooms. It seeks to identify whether a treatment made a difference in a particular outcome rather than to explain why the difference occurred.

1.2 Research Question

Based on the previous introductory remarks of this research, the researchers conducted this research to answer the following question:

How does the DRTA strategy help students improve their reading comprehension?

1.3 Aim of the Study

As formulated in the research question, this study aimed to investigate impact of the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) strategy on the reading comprehension of Senior High School students. The aim was to determine

whether implementing the DRTA strategy in teaching and learning reading would lead to improvements in students' reading comprehension.

1.4 Scope of the Study

Referring to the aforementioned research question and objectives, this study focuses on the utilization of the DRTA strategy as a means to improve student's reading comprehension abilities, especially in English texts. Thus, the context of this study actively focused on how the researchers carried out the DRTA in the 10th grade of a senior high school, which served as the research sample and population of this study. This research merely focuses on improving their reading comprehension and competencies in specific reading micro skills such as understanding the meaning and ideas presented in the text, Analyzing and evaluating the text's content and arguments, also drawing conclusions or making the guesses based on the information provided in the text. Type of text students read while using this technique is not limited to a specific type of text. It will flexibly follow the type of text that students are learning during the study period. The researcher will conduct the research during PPL, from February 2023 until May 2023.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This current study aims to the theoretically, practically, and professionally enrich the teaching and learning of English in the High School classroom regarding the strategy in Reading skills.

Theoretically: The result of this study will provide the students with some knowledge of using DRTA as a strategy to help students reading comprehension. By knowing their comprehension, they will know their strength and weakness in reading, giving them some motivation to be better at reading. At the end of this study, students might know why Directed Reading Thinking Activity is a good learning strategy and how this strategy helps students in improving their reading comprehension and solving students reading problems.

Practically: The result of this research will be helpful information and a reference for English teachers because teachers might be used the DRTA as an alternative strategy in teaching and learning reading, especially in giving treatment effectively and encouraging students with different comprehension levels. This study can be valuable material to be considered by teacher trainers or teachers to develop their teaching competencies in dealing with students with reading problems.

Professionally: The result of this study aims to enrich research literature concerning the use of Directed Reading Thinking Activity, becoming a reference for respective scholars or researchers in the future. Subsequent researchers can actively regenerate the deficiencies that exist in the data through their research.

1.6 Clarification of the Key Terms

The terms below will be frequently used in this study. Therefore, to avoid misconceptions and misunderstandings, below are the list containing clarifications of the terms:

1. **Reading** in this paper refers to the process of making meaning from text. It is an interactive and complex process involving integrating prior knowledge, language skills, and comprehension strategies.
2. **Reading Comprehension** in this paper refers to the abilities required to understand and make meaning from written texts. It involves not only decoding the words on the page but also comprehending the ideas, messages, and information conveyed by the author.
3. **The Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) strategy** in this paper refers to a strategy introduced by Staufer (1965). During the DRTA process, students are directed through the process of asking questions about a text, making predictions about what they think will happen in the text, and then reading the text to either confirm or contradict their predictions. The DRTA process encourages students to become more active and reflective readers, which can enhance their level of comprehension.

1.7 Organization of the Paper

This paper organized into five chapters. Each chapter has its own capacity to explain the contents in detail.

Chapter I is the Introduction. This chapter presents the background of the study, the research questions, the study's aim, the study's scope, the study, the significance of the study, the clarification of key terms, and the organization of the paper.

Chapter II is Theoretical Foundation. This chapter presents the foundation of theories that are relevant to the topic of the research.

Chapter III is Research Methodology. This chapter describes the research procedures the researcher uses to conduct the fundamental research. It will include the research method, participants, data resources, data collection, and data analysis.

Chapter IV is Findings and Discussion. This chapter consists of a presentation of the data obtained from the research followed by an explanation and interpretation of the data.

Chapter V is Conclusions and Suggestions. This chapter consists of the conclusions of the research and the researcher's suggestion on the impact of the Directed Reading Thinking Activity on reading comprehension.