

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Research Background

It is fundamental that individuals should acquire information for a number of purposes, such as academic or professional. Furthermore, this modern era allows information transmitted through written form digitally and non-digitally. For how important this is, reading comprehension has become one of the means to achieve the objectives regardless of the medium. This is because there are a vast number of opportunities for learning and improving language acquisition with topic-related text (Snow, 2002: 30). In other words, reading comprehension can be considered as an ideal starting point to acquire rich topic-related vocabulary, learn new grammar structures, and consistently promote cognitive development as well as literacy of an individual.

The relevance of reading comprehension in today's society cannot be overstated because it facilitates information acquisition and communication. Thus, reading comprehension involves us to be a passive and an active reader interchangeably. Whitten et al. (2016: 49) suggest that both types of readers engage to a reading passage in meaningful ways, such as predicting the next plots, creating questions about the main ideas, understanding elements of a passage (e.g., sequence, context and characters), and being aware of confusing parts that they might need to stop and clarify by connecting to prior knowledge. Hence, reading comprehension is the ability to understand a written passage of material. The key to good reading, which is required for a successful academic, professional, and personal life, is this link between passive and active readers.

However, reading comprehension is not necessarily improved just by reading more text passages. By utilizing metacognitive development, deciding how to approach a reading material, estimating what is already known about the topic, monitoring understanding, and assessing progress toward understanding and cognitive development, reading comprehension can

be fostered (Jennings et al., 2014: 7). After reading a text, a reader may know the

information obtained from what has been read. As a result, Snow (2002: 31) explains that reading comprehension can be complex to be promoted to students depending on several factors, such as lack of literacy exposure and reading preferences of the students.

One of the critical points of reading is transferring messages between the writers and helping the reader to comprehend an information. Consider the most crucial reading abilities for a number of reasons. First, instructional resources are organized as written texts that may be used to help students comprehend the content. Second, reading proficiency helps learners' reading abilities develop and advances other language proficiency. Other than that, vocabulary accuracy and grammar are more critical in reading than writing well and correctly (Richards & Rodgers, 2014: 64). However, readers may receive stimuli in written symbols that interpret the readings they read. This leads to an idea that, in reading, in order to improve students' attitudes and ability in communicating in both written and spoken forms, it is essential that they have a wide range of vocabulary and grammatical structures.

The relative contributions of word reading and language understanding shift throughout time. Hulme & Snowling (2013: 4) explain that students' basic word reading skills are still developing in the early stages of reading development. As a result, for beginner readers, word recognition ability is the most important factor of reading comprehension. Language comprehension takes over as the primary predictor of reading comprehension when word reading becomes more accurate, efficient, and fluent. On the other hand, reading comprehension problems can occur for a variety of causes. Because their word reading is delayed or imprecise, some high school students considered as beginner readers may have poor reading comprehension. Some pupils could excel in word reading but have trouble understanding what they are reading because of language barriers as suggested by Jennings et al. (2014: 16).

Learning to read English aims to develop students' communication competence in reading texts to accompany actions, so that students are

actively reading a text, such as recount text. Recount text is one type of text that contains our stories in the past including what the writer felt at the time, which is meaningful to retell (Knapp & Watkins, 2005: 224). According to Nerim (2020: 2), As a framework for teaching reading, Direct Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) was developed, placing a focus on students' capacity for reflective reading and the use of predictions when reading a text passage. This strategy can nurture the ability and skills of students to convey or integrate students and become active readers, as well as improve their ability to read texts. Students can ask questions on their comprehension of the material, make predictions, and then read aloud to check their predictions when implementing this technique in the classroom.

Numerous research imply that this strategy can help students who are struggling with reading, as mentioned earlier. A study conducted by Al Odwan (2012) reveals that this strategy can encourage students in developing active learning strategy in reading comprehension. Other than that, Lubis (2018) suggests that DRTA can be utilized in a classroom setting to encourage critical thinking in students learning reading comprehension. As also suggested by Whitten et al. (2016) in their research, a teaching strategy that nurture more actively engaging reading activity and critical thinking to comprehend information in a reading text can answer the challenges mentioned above.

The focused problem in this research was inspired by the observation done by the researcher during the third apprenticeship program. The researcher discovered similar reading difficulties among SMA Negeri 1 Sekadau Hulu students in the eleventh grade. When the classroom was observed, the students appeared to participate less actively in the reading lesson, which was being taught using lecturing at the time. The teacher seemed to be aware of this problem and confirmed that she used lecturing method because the time for the lesson is very limited (30 minutes per meeting and twice a week). It was also found that the eleventh-graders have less exposure to English language and they only learn the language in high

school level. According to the recent reading exercise, more than half of the class got lower score and are indicated to have poor reading comprehension. The researcher also agreed with the teacher that this issue occurred because they do not have sufficient time to learn and practice in the classroom (most of the exercises are home assignments). The problem became even more obvious when they learn about recount text that engages students to comprehend a sequence of past events and it involves unfamiliar grammatical features in this case, past tenses. It causes the students to have the difficulty to follow the lesson and understand the recount texts when reading.

On the other hand, little is known about how Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) implementation might be utilized to enhance students' reading comprehension in a text with a particular genre, such as a recount text. The researcher finds it exciting to investigate this topic for this reason. In order to help students become active readers who can comprehend the recount text after the proposed study is completed, the DRTA technique is believed to be effective. This instructional approach can be applied to one student, small groups, or entire classes.

In conclusion, the researcher was inspired to examine the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) strategy's application in instructing students in reading comprehension using recount texts. The Direct Reading Thinking Activity technique was specifically applied in this research to teach recount texts, enhance students' reading comprehension, and shape their attitudes through a number of improvement-focused learning activities. Additionally, a classroom action research design was used in this study, and a mixed method approach was used to gather, examine, and present the data.

B. Research Question

The research question for this study can be phrased as follows in light of the research background mentioned above:

How does the use of Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) strategy improve students' reading comprehension?

C. Research Purpose

The following is the study's research objective, which is based on the research question the researcher posed above:

To describe how the use of Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) strategy can improve the students' reading comprehension towards the eleventh-grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Sekadau Hulu.

D. Scope of the Research

In order to classify and to avoid misunderstanding, the scope of research should be stated. The scope of research goes as follows:

1. Research Variable

A variable, according to Creswell (2012: 13), is a quality or trait of a person or an organization that the researcher can measure or see and that differs amongst the people or organizations under study. The two variables of the study are students' reading comprehension and the implementation of the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) strategy.

2. Research Terminology

To guarantee consistency and understanding of these terminology throughout the study, the following definitions are provided:

a. Direct Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA)

Reading Thinking Ability (DRTA) is a reading method that involves students in the learning process gradually and designed to make it easier for students in the reading process.

b. Recount Text

Recount text is a type of text that retells something that has happened in the past. Recount text is a type of text in English that contains the story of an action or activity of students or characters in the story.

- c. The eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Sekadau Hulu
The eleventh-grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Sekadau Hulu are the subjects of this research because it was found in an observation done in Internship program that these students had a lack of understanding in reading English texts, especially recount text.

E. Research Significance

The implementation of this research is expected to bring benefits that can be seen in terms of theoretical and practical.

1. Theoretical Significance

This research enriches studies of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), especially the ones related to teaching strategies to improve students' reading comprehension ability.

2. Practical Significance

- a. For English Teachers

The research findings are expected to provide the English teachers in conducting reading instruction to promote the students' comprehension ability to English reading passages and to improve their literacy skills progressively. In terms of practical, this research would also provide specific information for English teachers, who are interested in using Direct Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) strategy in improving students' reading skills.

- b. For Students

This research would improve the comprehension ability of students in reading recount texts. It can also provide other possible benefits to the students, such as promoting critical thinking and confidence in processing information from a reading passage, as well as promote positive attitude towards English reading activity in and hopefully outside the classroom.