

**THE EFFECT OF USING DIRECTED READING THINKING ACTIVITY (DRTA)
STRATEGY TOWARD STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION OF
NARRATIVE TEXT AT EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS OF MTSN 9 PADANG
PARIAMAN**

Rayhan Antonio¹, Syahrul²
Widya Syafitri³, Leli Lismay⁴

¹²³⁴ UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI SJECH M. DJAMIL DJAMBEK BUKITTINGGI

Alamat e-mail : 1rayhanantonio23@gmail.com, 2syahrul@uinbukittinggi.ac.id,
3widyasyafitri@uinbukittinggi.ac.id, 4lelilismay@uinbukittinggi.ac.id,

ABSTRACT

This study was grounded in the problems encountered by eighth-grade students in comprehending narrative texts. These problems included difficulties in making predictions, limited vocabulary mastery, and low learning motivation, which consequently led to passive reading and the lack of activation of prior knowledge. Such conditions highlighted the need for an appropriate instructional strategy; therefore, the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) strategy was implemented to promote active reading, prediction, and critical thinking. This study aimed to determine the effect of the DRTA strategy on students' reading comprehension. A quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design was employed. The population was all eighth-grade students of MTsN 9 Padang Pariaman, and the sample was determined by using cluster random sampling. The instrument was a reading comprehension test in the form of multiple-choice questions administered in pre-test and post-test. The results showed that the DRTA strategy had a significant effect on students' reading comprehension, as students taught using DRTA achieved better results than those taught using conventional methods. In addition, the implementation of DRTA increased students' participation, motivation, and engagement in the learning process.

Keywords: *DRTA Strategy, Reading Comprehension, Narrative Text.*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini didasarkan pada permasalahan yang dihadapi oleh siswa kelas delapan dalam memahami teks naratif. Permasalahan tersebut meliputi kesulitan dalam membuat prediksi, keterbatasan penguasaan kosakata, serta rendahnya motivasi belajar, yang pada akhirnya menyebabkan siswa membaca secara pasif dan tidak mengaktifkan pengetahuan awal yang dimiliki. Kondisi ini menunjukkan perlunya strategi pembelajaran yang tepat; oleh karena itu, strategi Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) diterapkan untuk mendorong membaca aktif, kemampuan memprediksi, dan berpikir kritis. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh strategi DRTA terhadap pemahaman membaca siswa. Pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain quasi-eksperimen digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Populasi penelitian adalah seluruh siswa kelas delapan MTsN 9 Padang Pariaman, dan sampel ditentukan dengan menggunakan teknik cluster random sampling. Instrumen yang digunakan adalah tes pemahaman membaca dalam bentuk soal pilihan ganda yang diberikan melalui pre-test dan post-test. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa strategi DRTA memiliki pengaruh yang signifikan terhadap pemahaman membaca siswa, di mana siswa yang diajar menggunakan DRTA memperoleh hasil yang lebih baik dibandingkan dengan siswa yang diajar menggunakan metode konvensional. Selain itu, penerapan DRTA juga meningkatkan partisipasi, motivasi, dan keterlibatan siswa dalam proses pembelajaran.

Kata Kunci: Strategi DRTA, Pemahaman Membaca, Teks Naratif

A. INTRODUCTION

Reading plays a crucial role in the learning process as it enables students to acquire information, develop critical thinking skills, and expand their knowledge across various academic fields. As one of the essential language skills, reading is fundamental for understanding academic materials and participating effectively in educational activities. It is not merely a process of decoding written symbols but also involves constructing meaning, interpreting ideas, and connecting new information with prior knowledge. Therefore,

reading competence becomes a key component in students' academic success.

According to Fazliddinovich (2025) reading functions as a gateway to knowledge, helping individuals broaden their perspectives and develop structured thinking patterns. Through reading, learners can access information from various contexts, including academic, professional, and daily life situations. Similarly, Yurko & Protsenko, (2022) state that reading is an effective way to learn and retain a language, as it supports vocabulary development and improves

communication skills. In line with this, Asih Tri Lestari et al., (2025) emphasize that reading should be systematically integrated into school programs to enhance comprehension, critical thinking, and vocabulary mastery. Zhu et al., (2023) further argue that students who actively engage in reading activities tend to achieve better academic performance due to increased motivation and deeper understanding.

Despite its importance, students' reading comprehension skills remain relatively low and continue to present significant challenges. Masyudi, (2023) found that only 5.27% of students achieved a very good level of reading proficiency, while more than half were categorized as having poor and very poor comprehension. This indicates that many students still experience serious difficulties in understanding English texts, particularly at the junior high school level.

Several factors contribute to this issue. Martini et al., (2025) identify lack of reading interest, limited vocabulary, and ineffective teaching strategies as the main causes of low reading comprehension. Students with low motivation tend to avoid reading

activities, which limits their exposure to texts. In addition, limited vocabulary makes it difficult for students to understand words, phrases, and sentences, ultimately affecting their overall comprehension. Furthermore, teacher-centered instructional methods often reduce students' active participation, making the learning process less engaging and less effective.

In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language, which presents additional challenges for students. Since English is not widely used in daily communication, students have limited exposure to the language. According to Richards & Schmidt, (2013) a foreign language is not commonly used in everyday contexts, making it more difficult to acquire. As a result, students often struggle with unfamiliar vocabulary, complex grammatical structures, and lack of reading practice, all of which negatively impact their reading comprehension.

To address these challenges, teachers need to apply effective strategies that actively involve students in the reading process. Awada & Plana, (2018) propose several strategies to improve reading

comprehension, such as summarizing, questioning, identifying main ideas, and the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA). Among these, DRTA is considered effective because it encourages students to actively engage with texts through prediction, verification, and reflection.

The Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA), introduced by Stauffer, (1969), is a strategy designed to enhance students' reading comprehension by guiding them to make predictions before reading, verify them during reading, and revise their understanding based on textual evidence. Agao-Agao, (2023) explains that this strategy promotes active engagement and critical thinking, allowing students to construct meaning more effectively. Previous research supports its effectiveness; for instance, Dumbela et al., (2024) reported a significant improvement in students' reading scores after the implementation of DRTA, indicating its potential in enhancing comprehension of narrative texts.

However, in MTsN 9 Padang Pariaman, the DRTA strategy had not yet been implemented in teaching reading, particularly narrative texts.

Based on preliminary observations conducted in April 2025, several Problems were identified. Students had difficulty making predictions while reading, showed low motivation in reading activities, and faced challenges in understanding vocabulary. In addition, the learning process was still dominated by teacher-centered methods, which limited students' active participation. As a rural school, MTsN 9 Padang Pariaman also faced constraints such as limited access to English learning resources and low exposure to the language. These conditions indicated a gap between existing teaching practices and students' needs in developing effective reading comprehension skills.

Based on these issues, this study aims to investigate the effect of the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) strategy on students' reading comprehension of narrative texts at the eighth-grade students of MTsN 9 Padang Pariaman. The findings of this study are expected to provide practical contributions for teachers in applying effective reading strategies and empirical contributions for future research in similar educational contexts.

B. METHOD

This study employed a quantitative method to examine the effect of the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) strategy on students' reading comprehension. A quasi-experimental design with a non-equivalent control group was applied, involving an experimental group taught using the DRTA strategy and a control group taught using conventional methods. Both groups were administered a pre-test and a post-test to assess students' reading comprehension.

The participants were selected using cluster random sampling, in which intact classes were randomly chosen from the population and designated as the experimental and control groups. Although individual random assignment was not conducted, both groups were considered to have relatively similar academic characteristics prior to the treatment. The use of pre-test and post-test allowed for comparison between groups and provided a more accurate estimation of the treatment effect.

The research instrument was a reading comprehension test consisting of 20 multiple-choice items

covering indicators such as main idea, supporting details, inference, vocabulary, and grammatical features. Each item was scored 1 for correct answers and 0 for incorrect answers, and the total score was converted into a 100-point scale by proportionally comparing correct responses to the total number of items.

C. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Description of Data

The data in this research were obtained from the students' reading comprehension scores of the eighth-grade students at MTsN 9 Padang Pariaman. The scores were collected through a pre-test and a post-test, in which the pre-test was administered at the beginning of the research to identify the students' initial reading comprehension ability, while the post-test was conducted at the end of the research after the implementation of the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) strategy as the treatment. The total number of students involved in this study was 38 students, consisting of 20 students in the experimental class and 18 students in the control class, all of whom participated in both the pre-test and post-test. Each test item was scored by assigning 1 point

for a correct answer and 0 for an incorrect answer.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of Pre-test and Post-test scores

Group	Test	N	Mean	SD
Experimental Class	Pre-test	20	49.00	19.10
Experimental Class	Post-test	20	74.50	11.46
Control Class	Pre-test	18	46.67	15.22
Control Class	Post-test	18	57.78	13.20

Normality Test

The normality of the pre-test and post-test scores was assessed using SPSS 20 through the Shapiro–Wilk test, which is appropriate for small sample sizes. The results of the pre-test normality analysis are presented in the following table.

Table 2 Normality Test

Group	Statistic	df	Sig.
Experimental Class	.969	20	.739
Control Class	.945	18	.353

The normality of the data was assessed using the Shapiro–Wilk test, with a significance level of 0.05. As presented in Table 2, the experimental

class obtained a significance value of 0.739, while the control class obtained 0.353. Since both values are greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that the data in both groups were normally distributed.

Homogeneity Test

The homogeneity of variance was analyzed using SPSS 20 by applying Levene’s test. This test was used to determine whether the variance between groups was equal. The results of the homogeneity analysis are presented in the following table.

Table 3 Homogeneity Test

Test	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Pre-test	.793	1	36	.379
Post-test	.634	1	36	.431

Homogeneity of variance was tested using Levene’s test at a significance level of 0.05. The results show that the pre-test scores obtained a significance value of 0.379, while the post-test scores obtained 0.431. Since both values are greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that the variance of

the data is homogeneous. Therefore, the assumption of homogeneity is fulfilled.

Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis testing was performed to answer the research questions by examining three hypotheses. A paired sample t-test was used to analyze differences between pre-test and post-test scores within the same group, while an independent samples t-test was applied to examine differences between the experimental and control groups. All tests were conducted at a significance level of 0.05. The decision was based on the p-value, where $p < 0.05$ indicates rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0), while $p \geq 0.05$ indicates its acceptance.

The first hypothesis was tested to examine the effect of the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) strategy on students' reading comprehension of narrative texts. A paired sample t-test was conducted to compare the pre-test and post-test scores within the experimental group. The decision was based on the significance value (p), where $p < 0.05$ indicates that the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted and the

null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, suggesting a significant effect of the DRTA strategy on students' reading comprehension.

Table 4 Paired Sample Test

Pair	t	df	p-value
Pre-test vs Post- test	-6.65	19	< .001

The results of the paired samples t-test indicated a significant effect of the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) strategy on students' reading comprehension, $t(19) = -6.65$, $p < .001$. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected.

The second hypothesis was tested to examine the difference in students' reading comprehension between those taught using the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) strategy and those taught without it. An independent samples t-test was employed to compare the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups. The decision was based on the significance value (p), where $p < 0.05$ indicates that the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, while $p \geq 0.05$ indicates its acceptance.

Table 5 Independent sample t-test

Comparison	t	df	p-value
Experimental vs Control	4.18	36	< .001

Group	N	Mean
Experimental Class	20	74.50
Control Class	18	57.78

The results of the t-test indicated a significant difference between the experimental and control groups, $t(36) = 4.18$, $p < .001$. This finding shows that students who were taught using the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) strategy achieved higher reading comprehension scores than those who were taught without the strategy. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected, indicating a significant difference between the two groups.

The third hypothesis was tested to determine whether students taught using the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) strategy performed better than those taught without it. An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the post-test scores between the experimental and control groups. The decision was based on the p-value, where $p < 0.05$ indicates that the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected.

Based on Table 6, the experimental class consisted of 20 students with a mean score of 74.50, while the control class consisted of 18 students with a mean score of 57.78. These findings indicate that students taught using the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) strategy perform better than those taught without it, as reflected in the higher mean score of the experimental class compared to the control class.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) strategy had a positive and significant effect on students' reading comprehension of narrative texts. The experimental group achieved higher post-test scores than both their pre-test performance and the control group, suggesting that DRTA effectively enhances comprehension through prediction, verification, and reflection processes.

Table 6 Independent sample t-test

These findings are consistent with previous studies. Azzahra, (2024) Dumbela et al., (2024) and Azahro et al., (2024) reported that DRTA significantly improved students' reading comprehension and engagement in EFL contexts. In addition, Harmayanthi et al., (2023) found that DRTA increased students' motivation and active participation during reading activities.

From a theoretical perspective, DRTA promotes metacognitive engagement by encouraging students to predict, monitor, and confirm meaning (Natalia & Ningrum, n.d.) The results of the normality and homogeneity tests also indicated that both groups had comparable initial abilities, suggesting that the improvement in the experimental group was attributable to the DRTA strategy. In contrast, the control group did not show comparable improvement, indicating that conventional methods may not sufficiently support active and strategic reading processes.

Overall, this study corroborates recent evidence that DRTA is an effective strategy for improving reading comprehension among junior

high school students in EFL contexts. By promoting prediction, active engagement, and reflection, DRTA supports both cognitive and affective aspects of reading, making it a valuable instructional approach for teaching narrative texts.

D. CONCLUSION

This study concluded that the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) strategy had a positive and significant effect on students' reading comprehension of narrative texts. Students who were taught using DRTA achieved better comprehension than those who were taught using conventional methods, indicating that the strategy effectively enhanced reading comprehension through active engagement in predicting, verifying, and confirming information during reading. Furthermore, DRTA promotes meaningful learning by encouraging students to actively participate in the reading process, making it an effective instructional strategy for teaching reading comprehension, particularly at the junior high school level.

Therefore, it is recommended that teachers apply the DRTA strategy in reading instruction to improve

students' comprehension and overall learning outcomes. In addition, future researchers are encouraged to investigate the use of DRTA in different educational levels, text types, or broader learning contexts to obtain more comprehensive and generalizable findings.

REFERENCES

- Agao-Agao, A. M. A. (2023). Effectiveness of DRTA Strategy in Improving the Reading Skills. *Randwick International of Education and Linguistics Science Journal*, 4(1), 96–102. <https://doi.org/10.47175/rielsj.v4i1.635>
- Asih Tri Lestari, Didan Faisal, Dinda Adila Aprina, Rahma Fauziah Azzahra, & Irpan Taupik. (2025). Analysis of Literacy Programs in Increasing Students' Reading Interest in Schools. *Socrates : Journal of Education, Philosophy and Psychology*, 1(2), 45–50. <https://doi.org/10.63217/socrates.v1i2.109>
- Awada, G., & Plana, M. G. C. (2018). Multiple strategies approach and EFL reading comprehension of learners with dyslexia: Teachers' perceptions. *International Journal of Instruction*, 11(3), 463–476. <https://doi.org/10.12973/iji.2018.1132a>
- Azahro, N. Y., Hamid, R., & Hamid, S. M. (2024). IMPROVING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION THROUGH DIRECTED READING THINKING ACTIVITY (DRTA) METHOD. 4(2), 145–157.
- Azzahra, G. A. (2024). Enhancing Junior High School Students' Reading Comprehension : The Effectiveness of Directed Reading Thinking Activity Technique. 2(1), 32–42. <https://doi.org/10.33830/ijelp.v2i1.7875>
- Brown, H. D. (2004). *Language Assessment: Principles and Classroom Practices*. Longman. <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=NqglAQAAIAAJ>
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*. Pearson. <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=4PywcQAACAAJ>
- Dumbela, U. A., Otoluwa, M. H., & Abid, A. (2024). Examining English Reading Comprehension' Enhancement on Narrative Texts using the Application of Direct Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) Strategy. *Jambura Journal of English Teaching and Literature*, 5(1), 46–53. <https://doi.org/10.37905/jetl.v5i1.21517>
- Fazliddinovich, M. O. (2025). The Role of Reading in Developing Critical Thinking. *American Journal Of Social Sciences And Humanity Research*, 5(5), 181–182. <https://doi.org/10.37547/ajsshr/volume05issue05-46>
- Harmayanthi, V. Y., Wutsqa, U., Harmayanthi, V. Y., Wutsqa, U., Program, E. E., & Program, C. E. (2023). Using Direct Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) Strategy To Improve Students' Reading Comprehension. 22–28. <https://doi.org/10.37640/ice.02.4>

- 33
Martini, T., Hasanah, A., & Riznanda, W. A. (2025). Students' Difficulties in Reading Comprehension. *Jadila: Journal of Development and Innovation in Language and Literature Education*, 5(1), 47–60. <https://doi.org/10.52760/jadila.v5i1.798>
- Masyudi, M. (2023). A Study on The Mastery of Reading Comprehension of Junior High School Students. *Tut Wuri Handayani : Jurnal Keguruan Dan Ilmu Pendidikan*, 2(4), 144–148. <https://doi.org/10.59086/jkip.v2i4.148>
- Natalia, D. A., & Ningrum, Y. S. (n.d.). *Directed Reading Thinking Activity as an Alternative Strategy to Improve Reading Comprehension*. 1, 150–166.
- Richards, J. C., & Schmidt, R. W. (2013). Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics. *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315833835>
- Stauffer, R. G. (1969). *Teaching reading as a thinking process*.
- Sugiyono. (2020). *Metodologi Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif dan R & D*.
- Yurko, N., & Protsenko, U. (2022). Reading Comprehension: the Significance, Features and Strategies. *Репрезентація Освітніх Досягнень Мас-Медіа Та Роль Філології У Сучасній Системі Наук (1St Ed)*, 106–114. <https://doi.org/10.36074/rodmmrf>
- ssn.ed-1.10
Zhu, A., Mofreh, S. A. M., Salem, S., Li, Z., & Yao, M. (2023). A Review of the Effect of Reading Engagement on Reading Achievement. *Encyclopaideia*, 27(67), 17–28. <https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1825-8670/16180>