

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

The four fundamental skills in English as a language are speaking, listening, writing, and reading. It is important for learners to have these skills for expressing themselves clearly and appropriately. They also need to be able to understand English in different forms, whether in written or spoken form (Meyer et al., 2022). Writing and speaking are considered as productive skills where learners produce language to convey or express their ideas, thoughts, or information. Meanwhile, listening and reading are considered as receptive skills because learners learn to interpret and understand the incoming information. All the four skills are interconnected and needed to form a proficient language understanding.

One of the four skills that plays an important role in language acquisition and cognitive development is reading. Reading is the process of looking at and understanding written or printed words and symbols to extract meaning. It involves decoding the symbols on a page or screen, recognizing words, and comprehending the information or ideas conveyed by the written text. Engaging in reading encourages the skills needed for proficient reading, including understanding key elements such as vocabulary, grammar, grasping main ideas, employing strategic reading approaches, and recognizing different discourse structures (Grabe & Yamashita, 2022). Reading is important whether for educational purposes, entertainment, or acquiring new knowledge.

Furthermore, reading comprehension is the ability to understand and make meaning from written texts. It involves a set of skills, including decoding words, recognizing grammatical structures, and extracting the main ideas and details from a passage. Reading process involves not only what is visually perceived on the page, but also personal experiences in the world, assumptions about the organisations and connections, and expectations of the written texts (Spiro & Paran, 2023). Reading comprehension is crucial for reader to understand complex text such as academic journal, technical document, or scientific paper. Developing reading comprehension can be done with various strategies for language learners who have difficulties to comprehend reading material.

Reading comprehension is crucial for academic success. However, many students face challenges in understanding and interacting with texts, especially narrative texts. Previous research shows that the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) can help students more involved in reading. For example, a study by Satriani et al., (2022) showed that DRTA really boosted students' ability to understand narrative texts by guiding them through steps like predicting, reading, and proving. Additionally, Safitri et al., (2022) looked at several studies and found that DRTA improves comprehension for different types of students and learning situations. The focus on critical thinking and active reading is especially helpful in smaller classes where students can engage more with the reading material. Based on these findings, this research explored how effective DRTA is in helping students who struggle with narrative texts.

The researcher conducted this research in SMP Negeri 4 Gianyar. After having an interview with the English teacher from SMP Negeri 4 Gianyar, the researcher

found out that students' difficulties in comprehending reading material are affected by their pre-existing knowledge, motivation, and classroom condition. The students have little vocabulary knowledge to understand to reading material. They also could not for a grammatical answer when responding to a question. Moreover, lack of motivation from the students in learning English causes them to view reading activity unexciting. Lastly, the classes in SMP Negeri 4 Gianyar commonly consist around 30 students, which affect the student's attention on the learning activity. The researcher observed areas for improvement and utilized Directed Reading-Thinking Activity as the strategy to develop the overall reading comprehension for students in this school.

The researcher utilized DRTA (Directed Reading-Thinking Activity) combined with pictures to solve students' difficulties in comprehending reading material. DRTA is particularly effective in promoting reading comprehension, critical thinking, and student involvement in the learning process. It involves the process of reading, predicting, proving and evaluating predictions (Davidson & Wilkerson, 1988). The students will predict or create hypotheses based on a small part of a text, then they will confirm their prediction by reading the text further. Students may adjust and revise their prediction the further they read. This method not only improve reading comprehension but also enhance interactive learning experience by frequently involving student to share their thoughts or predictions in the learning process. The inclusion of picture will help students to visualize the narrative text. By integrating DRTA into the learning activity, the researcher aimed to create an interactive and reflective atmosphere that improved students' comprehension in reading more effectively.

Recognizing the importance of the statement above, the researcher believes in the used of an appropriate strategy to improve students' reading comprehension. Considering that reading comprehension is crucial in academic success and overall learning, implementing effective strategies is important. DRTA strategy is designed to not only strengthen students' understanding of the materials but also encourage essential skills such as critical thinking. This strategy helped students to think and interpret information in a text more effectively. It also promotes interaction and discussion in the learning process. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of the DRTA strategy combined with pictures in enhancing the reading comprehension of eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 4 Gianyar in the academic year 2024/2025.

1.2. Research Problem

Based on the background of the study above, the eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 4 Gianyar in the Academic Year of 2024/2025 face difficulty in comprehending reading material. This present study was conducted to improve their reading comprehension by using DRTA. The research problem of this study can be formulated as follow: can the reading comprehension of the eighth-grade student of SMP Negeri 4 Gianyar in the Academic Year of 2024/2025 be improved through DRTA with pictures?

1.3. Objective of the Study

The specific objective of this study was to find out whether the reading comprehension of the eighth-grade student of SMP Negeri 4 Gianyar in the Academic Year of 2024/2025 can be improved through DRTA with pictures.

1.4. Limitation of the Study

The types and complexity of reading material are too broad to study in single research. Thus, the researcher focused on reading narrative text. The type of the narrative text is be imaginary short story. The researcher decided the text types based on the teaching module of SMP Negeri 4 Gianyar. This study was focused on improving the reading comprehension of Class A students of SMP Negeri 4 Gianyar in the Academic Year of 2024/2025.

1.5. Significance of the Study

The results of this research are expected to give significant contribution to students, English teachers, and other researchers, they are:

1. For the students, the researcher hopes that they could comprehend and understand a reading material more effectively with DRTA strategy with pictures. This strategy is used for improving their critical thinking, predictive skills, and engagement with the text, which will develop their reading comprehension and academic performance;
2. For the English teachers, the researcher wishes this research will contribute in recommending the variety of test. The research could give an influence to the understanding of the effectiveness of diverse teaching methods. By showing the benefits of the DRTA strategy, lecturers may be encouraged to utilise this approach in their teaching to improved student academic performance;
3. For the others researchers, hopes that the finding of the research can be useful as the source of the researchers' reference, especially in the field of reading comprehension and language education. This study can serve as empirical

evidence on the effectiveness of the DRTA strategy combined with pictures. Future researchers can investigate upon these findings by exploring different subject, teaching strategy, or reading material.

1.6. Definition of Key Terms

In this research, key terms are defined to give a clear understanding of the theories and strategies utilized for the readers. These definitions are important for establishing the limits of the research and maintaining focus on the intended areas of investigation. The key terms below are related to reading comprehension and the teaching strategy utilised for the eighth-grade students.

1. Reading comprehension, in the context of this research, specifically refers to eighth-grade students' ability to understand and interpret narrative texts, such as short stories and fables. This includes understanding the literal meaning of the words and sentences, making inferences about implied ideas, and connecting the text to their own experiences and prior knowledge. It also involves critical analysis of the narrative structure, identifying main ideas and themes, and predicting story developments. The focus is on students' ability to engage with and extract meaning from narrative texts through targeted strategies, such as the Directed Reading-Thinking Activity (DRTA) with pictures.
2. DRTA (Directed Reading-Thinking Activity) with pictures is a strategy chosen by the researcher to improve reading comprehension. At first, it involves the process of predicting what will happen or what will the text talk about. Then, those predictions will be proven or confirmed after reader reads the text further. The reader may adjust or revise their prediction to get better understanding of

the text. At last, reader will reflect their whole predictions and summarize the text. The researcher include picture within the narrative text to help students in visualizing the text. DRTA can be used to improve reader critical thinking and skill to interpret deeper information within a text.



CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical Review

Theoretical review discusses each understanding and its concept of theories. The purpose is to provide facts on information in the direction of variables. In this research, the researcher uses theoretical review for: (1) Reading Comprehension, (2) Narrative Text, (3) DRTA with Pictures, and (4) Assessing Reading.

2.1.1. Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is a complex process and involves the integration of different cognitive abilities. The foundations of reading comprehension can be divided into two main areas, including language comprehension and word recognition (Hoover & Tunmer, 2020). Language comprehension involves the ability to comprehend both explicit or implicit meaning in spoken and written language. It can be influenced by the reader's background knowledge, inferential skill, and linguistic knowledge. Furthermore, word recognition involves accurately identifying and decoding written words. The reader will need to understand the basic concept of written text and the recognition of letters. Understanding these components are crucial for developing effective reading comprehension.

The foundations of reading comprehension will help reader in the process of reading. The process of reading comprehension includes: (1) recognising individual words and connecting them to form ideas; (2) linking acquired ideas, noticing details, and creating a small structure of understanding; (3) figuring out the main idea of the whole passage and creating a big picture; (4) identifying important points and forming the basis of the reading material; (5) mixing reader pre-existing

knowledge, making guesses and creating a personal understanding; and (6) remembering what the reader understood and using it later on (Caldwell, 2008). The steps will lead readers to deeper and better engagement of the reading material.

The explanations of reading comprehension and its foundational components is related aiming to the purpose of these research. The researcher utilises the Directed Reading-Thinking Activity (DRTA) with pictures strategy to improve these foundational skills. Through DRTA, students will predict, read, confirm their predictions, engage with the text, understand detailed information, and form interpretations. The addition of pictures will further support these foundations by providing visual cues that aid in understanding and retaining information. This approach aligns with the steps of the reading comprehension process and intends to promote engagement with narrative texts for the students.

2.1.2. Narrative Text

Narrative text is a form of writing that tells a story or recounts events, experiences, or sequences of actions. The main purpose of narrative text is to provide entertainment and tell knowledge through reflection of past experiences (Hyland, 2004). Narrative texts engage the reader in a storyline, allowing them to experience events indirectly through the characters' journeys and interactions. The use of narrative texts in the classroom can significantly improve reading comprehension by stimulating students' imaginations and interests that lead to the improvement of their effort in understanding the text

Narrative texts typically follow a structured format that includes key elements, namely orientation, complication, resolution (Knapp & Watkins, 2005), and sometimes re-orientation. The orientation sets the stage for the story,

introducing the characters, setting, and background information necessary for understanding the context. Following the orientation, the complication introduces a problem or conflict that the characters must navigate, driving the plot forward and creating suspense or tension. The resolution comes next, where the conflict is resolved, and the outcome of the characters' actions is revealed. Sometimes, a re-orientation is included, which reflects on the events and sometimes offers a moral or lesson learned from the story.

Short story is the type of narrative text utilised in this research. Short stories are defined by their concise format when compared to longer literary pieces. It can capture the attention of readers and engage them in the narrative. Reading short stories not only attracts the reader, but also improves vocabulary, offers real examples of grammatical structures, and enhances logical thinking abilities (Novasyari & Fauziah, 2023). Even though they are shorter in length, short stories can cover a complete story arc, including the introduction, progress, and conclusion (Sinamo et al., 2023). The utilisation of short story will be beneficial to improve the reading comprehension of the students.

2.1.3. DRTA with Picture

Directed Reading-Thinking Activity (DRTA) is a strategy designed to improve reading comprehension. The purpose of DRTA is to motivate students to predict story outcomes or text developments, interpret the author's cues to establish meaningful connections and predictions, and promote an active reading approach to better engage with the text (McLaughlin & Allen, 2002:139). DRTA is suitable to improve reading comprehension because it draws reader critical thinking skill to make better prediction on each section of the text as they read.

The use of DRTA strategy with pictures needs to follow a solid procedure for it could provide the best outcome. According to Westwood (2002), there are a procedure of conducting DRTA strategy. (1) The reader predicts some of the information they might encounter or formulates questions they hope the text will address. (2) Then, they read the text attentively, keeping their predictions and questions in mind. (3) Finally, they validate any conclusions drawn from the reading by providing evidence directly from the text. The procedure is used for the students from the beginning until the end of the text to give them deep understanding of the reading material.

Vaughn and Linan-Thompson (2004) outlined the steps of Directed Reading-Thinking Activity (DRTA) in the classroom to improve reading comprehension. Firstly, students are given a marked text and a DRTA organizer, with the teacher explaining the process of DRTA. The text's topic and title are introduced, and students predict its content, and then share and discuss these predictions. After reading the first section, they reflect on their initial predictions, check for accuracy, and make revisions or new predictions as needed. This process continues throughout the text, with ongoing reflection and discussion of predictions. Finally, all the students' predictions are reviewed and they make the conclusion of the text.

The researcher combined DRTA with picture for this research. The picture could help students in comprehending the reading material by providing visual context and clues. The utilisation of pictures can aid students in predicting the upcoming lesson. By looking at an image, students can predict on its meaning and what it may represent (Harmer, 2007). When students view an image, they can make educated guesses about its meaning and the narrative elements it may represent.

This process encourages them to think critically and draw connections between the visual cues and the text.

2.1.4. Assessing Reading

Assessing reading is the process of identifying, measuring, evaluating, and gauging students' comprehension, interpretation, and proficiency in understanding written material. Assessment is a continuous process that combines a diverse set of systematic methods (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019). Reading assessment serves multiple purposes, including recognizing proficient reading behaviours, identifying areas of weakness, establishing students' reading levels, and recording their progress (Caldwell, 2008b). Choosing the correct reading assessment is necessary to recognize students' reading comprehension before and after the teaching and learning activity.

A test can be used to measure students' reading comprehension. In this research, the researcher utilized short-answer task. It is one of the most common tests used for measuring reading comprehension. Short-answer tasks include general information, specific information, textual reference, and textual meaning of the narrative text as the reading material of this research.

2.2. Empirical Review

In conducting this study, the researcher wants to improve the reading comprehension of the eighth-grade student of SMP Negeri 4 Gianyar in the Academic Year of 2024/2025. Previous study by Handayani (2021) entitled "The Use of DRTA with Picture to Improve Students' Reading Comprehension of the Seventh-Grade Students of SMP Negeri 1 Denpasar in Academic Year 2020/2021"

and another research by Wikrama (2021) entitled “Improving Reading Comprehension of the Seventh Grade Students of SMP Negeri 5 Mengwi in Academic Year 2020/2021 Through DRTA with Picture Book” are used as empirical review for this current study. Both previous studies were conducted to seventh-grade junior high school students. Based on the conclusion of the studies, students’ reading comprehension can be improved with DRTA.

The first difference of this current research with the previous ones is the grade level. The researcher wants to find out whether DRTA strategy could also improve the reading comprehension of eight-grade students. Furthermore, research by Handayani used descriptive text for the learning material. Meanwhile, this current research utilized narrative text. DRTA is useful for comprehending narrative text because the students can predict, prove, and reflect their understanding of the text.

Research by Handayani concluded that DRTA with picture can improve students’ reading comprehension. She designed the learning activities and instrument of the research properly. However, the researcher found that she used two topics for the descriptive text, which were places and animal. The topics might be too broad to be taught in two cycles, which may lead the students to be overwhelmed.

Moreover, research by Wikrama also concluded that DRTA with picture can improve students’ reading comprehension. She implemented DRTA properly in the learning activities. However, Wikrama did not specify the type of text that is used for her research. The researcher found both descriptive and narrative text in the learning material. This may cause confusion or overwhelmed feeling for the

students. In addition, she used multiple choice task as the instrument of the research. While multiple-choice task can be efficient in assessing a range of content quickly, they may not effectively measure deeper comprehension skills. One significant drawback of multiple-choice task is the possibility of students selecting the correct answer by guessing, which can raise their scores without accurately reflecting their understanding of the material.

From the empirical review, the researcher wants to specify the learning material that is given to the students. Short story is a type of narrative text that is suitable with DRTA strategy because it has multiple stages that students can predict, prove, and evaluate their understanding of the story. Furthermore, the researcher utilized short-answer task to assess the students' reading comprehension. With short-answer task, the students must recall, interpret, and apply the information they get rather than just simply choosing the correct answer.

