IMPROVING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION IN DESCRIPTIVE TEXT THROUGH DIRECTED READING THINKING ACTIVITY (DRTA) STRATEGY

(*A Classroom Action Research on Seventh-Grade Students of SMP Negeri 19 Kota Pontianak in Academic Year 2025/2026*)

A THESIS

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ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM

LANGUAGE AND ART EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

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UNIVERSITAS TANJUNGPURA

PONTIANAK

2026

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Hereby declare that this thesis entitled "Improving Students' Reading Comprehension in Descriptive Text Through Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) Strategy'' (A Classroom Action Research on Seventh-Grade Students of SMP Negeri 19 Kota Pontianak in Academic Year 2025/2026) is my work. I am completely responsible for the content of this thesis. Other researchers' opinions or findings included in this thesis are quoted or cited following ethical standards.

Pontianak, 10 Agustus 2026

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, the researcher would like to say *Alhamdulillahirabbil 'alamiin*, praise, and gratitude to Allah *Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala,* the Almighty and the Merciful for loving, guiding and giving the researcher the health and strength so that this thesis entitled "Improving Students' Reading Comprehension in Descriptive Text Through Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) Strategy" is finally finished. This thesis was written to fulfil one of requirements for the Undergraduate Degree Examination in the English Education Study Program of Language and Art Education Department of Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Universitas Tanjungpura Pontianak.

In this opportunity, the researcher would like to express sincere appreciation to supervisors; Dr. Dewi Novita, S.Pd., M.AppLing. as first supervisor and Dwi Riyanti, S.Pd., M.A., Ph.D. as second supervisor. The researcher could not be able to finish this thesis without their corrections, advice, guidance, and criticsm. Here sincere gratitude is also to Dr. Yohannes Gatot Sutapa Yuliana, M.Pd. as the first examiner and Surmiyati, S.Pd., M.Ed., Ph.D. as the second examiner who had given correction and suggestions to the researcher's design so the researcher could conduct the research and complete the thesis.

Furthermore, grateful appreciation is also delivered to:

1. Prof. Dr. Ahmad Yani T, M.Pd., the Dean of Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Universitas Tanjungpura Pontianak;

2. Dr. Agus Wartiningsih, M.Pd., the Head of Language and Arts Education Department;

3. Yanti Sri Rezeki, S.Pd., M.Ed.Wals., Ph.D., the Head of English Education Study Program.

4. Heppi Fitri Yenni, S.Pd., M.Pd., as the headmaster of SMP Negeri 19 Kota Pontianak for allowing the researcher to conduct the research;

5. The seventh-grade students (class of 7E) of SMP Negeri 19 Kota Pontianak in academic year 2025/2026 as the participants of this research.

Furthermore, the biggest gratitude would be given to the researcher's family who give support spiritually, emotionally, and financially. The researcher is also thankful to all of friends in the English Education Study Program batch 2022 for their support and togetherness throughout the years.

Finally, the researcher realizes that there might be weaknesses in this thesis. This may be far from perfect. Therefore, any suggestions and criticism would be highly appreciated. Hopefully, this thesis would be useful for readers, especially students of the English Education Study Program.

Pontianak, 6 Mei 2026

The researcher

ABSTRACT

Amalia, Nur. 2026. Improving Students' Reading Comprehension In Descriptive Text Through Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) Strategy (A Classroom Action Research on Seventh-Grade Students of SMP Negeri 19 Kota Pontianak in Academic Year 2025/2026)

Supervisors: 1. Dr. Dewi Novita, S.Pd., M.AppLing.

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This research aimed to improve students' reading comprehension in descriptive text through Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) strategy. This research used Classroom Action Research (CAR) consisting of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting stages conducted in two cycles. The participants of this research were 32 students of class 7E at SMP Negeri 19 Kota Pontianak in the academic year 2025/2026. The data were collected through observation checklist, field notes, and reading comprehension tests. The qualitative data obtained from field notes were analyzed descriptively, while the quantitative data obtained from the reading comprehension tests were analyzed by calculating the students' mean scores. The findings showed that the implementation of DRTA strategy improved students' reading comprehension, especially in identifying the main idea and understanding vocabulary in descriptive text. The qualitative data analysis revealed that students became more active and engaged during the learning process, particularly in making predictions, discussing ideas, and confirming information from the text. In addition, students showed better participation and focus during classroom discussions. Meanwhile, the quantitative data analysis showed that the students' mean score was 72.26 in cycle 1 and 81.94, in cycle 2. Based on the findings, DRTA strategy was effective in improving students' reading comprehension in descriptive text in class 7E at SMP Negeri 19 Kota Pontianak.

Keywords: Classroom Action Research, Reading Comprehension, Descriptive Text, Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA)

TABLE OF CONTENT

APPROVAL SHEET ..... **i**
DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY ..... **v**
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ..... **vi**
ABSTRACT ..... **viii**
TABLE OF CONTENT ..... **ix**
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION **1**
1.1 Background of The Study 1
1.2 Research Question 4
1.3 Research Purpose 4
1.4 Research Significance 4
1.5 Scope and Limitation of Research 5
1.6 Terminology 6
CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW **8**
2.1 Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) Strategy 8
2.1.1 The Procedures of DRTA 10
2.1.2 Theoretical Underpinning of DRTA 12
2.1.3 Purpose of DRTA 15
2.2 Reading Comprehension 15
2.2.1 Purpose of Reading Comprehension 16
2.2.2 Components of Reading Comprehension 17
2.2.3 Teaching Reading Comprehension in EFL Context 19
2.3 Descriptive Text 20
2.3.1 Purpose of Descriptive Text 21
2.3.2 Generic Structure of Descriptive Text 22
2.3.3 The Example of Descriptive Text 23
CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHODOLOGY **24**
3.1 Research Design 24
3.2 Research Participants 27
3.3 Tools and Techniques of Data Collection 28
3.4 Data Analysis 29

3.5 Data validity 30
CHAPTER IV RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.....32
4.1 Summary of Research Findings 32
4.2 Description of The Research Process Across Two Cycle 34
4.3 Research Discussion..... 53
CHAPTER V CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION 60
5.1 Conclusion..... 60
5.2 Suggestions..... 61
BIBLIOGRAPHY 64
APPENDICES 67
Appendix 1 Modul Ajar Cycle 1 67
Appendix 2 Reading Comprehension Test Cycle 1 77
Appendix 3 Students' Individual Score of Cycle 1 85
Appendix 4 Field Notes Cycle 1 86
Appendix 5 Modul Ajar Cycle 2 89
Appendix 6 Reading Comprehension Test Cycle 2 99
Appendix 7 Students' Individual Score of Cycle 2 108
Appendix 8 Field Notes Cycle 2 109
Appendix 9 Documentation Cycle 1 111
Appendix 10 Documentation Cycle 2 112
Appendix 11 Surat Telah Melakukan Riset..... 113
Appendix 12 Surat Izin Riset 114
Appendix 13 Surat Tugas Penelitian 115
Appendix 14 SK Pembimbing Skripsi 116
Appendix 15 SK Pembimbing Artikel 117
Appendix 16 SK Penguji Skripsi..... 118

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

Reading is one of the most important skills in language learning, especially in learning English. Reading comprehension plays a crucial role in language learning because it enables learners to understand information, ideas, and meanings conveyed in written texts. Bruggink et al. (2022) define reading comprehension as a complex process requiring readers to actively construct meaning from texts. However, many students encounter difficulties in comprehending descriptive texts.

Learning English in the classroom at SMP Negeri 19 Kota Pontianak is generally carried out through three stages, such as the opening, the main activities, and the closing. In the opening stage, the teacher greets the students, carries out apperception, and motivates them. In the main activity stage, the teacher presents the material, gives exercises, conducts question-and-answer sessions, and assigns tasks related to the material being studied by using teaching media such as the blackboard and sometimes PowerPoint slides (PPT). In the closing stage, the teacher and the students summarize the material that has been learned together. The teacher also provides reflection to identify students' difficulties during the learning process and determines appropriate follow-up actions. In addition, homework is assigned, if necessary, to reinforce students' understanding.

Based on the preliminary observation and interview with the English teacher, it was found that students struggled to connect sentences within paragraphs

and tended to focus on isolated words. Moreover, an interview with the English teacher reported that only 5 out of 32 students (15.6%) could identify the main idea and understand vocabulary meaning in context, whereas 27 students (84.4%) still experienced significant difficulties in these areas. In vocabulary, students struggled particularly with determining word meanings (vocabulary meaning) and finding synonyms (closest meaning) in descriptive texts. In determining the main idea, students were able to read the text until the end, but they still had difficulty identifying the main idea of each paragraph. Although they read the whole text, students often focused on certain words or sentences without clearly understanding how the sentences in a paragraph were related to one another. These findings indicate that students' reading comprehension skills require immediate instructional intervention.

Considering the students' problems in reading comprehension, the researcher proposed the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) strategy to solve that problem. Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) encourages students to become thoughtful readers, thus enhancing their reading comprehension. Several previous studies support the effectiveness of this strategy. The research conducted by Afifah (2019), Hutapea et al. (2025), Anaktototy and Lesnussa (2022), Nudho (2013), and Ahmad et al. (2023), which found that the implementation of the DRTA strategy improved students' reading comprehension. The similarity between those previous studies and this research lies in the use of the DRTA strategy, which encourages students to become active readers by predicting, reading, and confirming information from the text. As a result, students become

more engaged in the reading process and show improvement in their comprehension skills.

However, there are differences in terms of text types and research focus among those studies. Afifah (2019) found that DRTA improved students' reading comprehension in recount text and report text, which was shown by an increase in students' activeness and cooperativeness. Similarly, Anaktototy and Lesnussa (2022), Nudho (2013), and Ahmad et al. (2023) focused on narrative text. In addition, Ahmad et al. (2023) also reported that DRTA enhanced students' behavior and participation during the learning process. Meanwhile, Hutapea et al. (2025) found improvements in students' reading comprehension in descriptive text among 10^{th} grade students. In contrast to those studies, this research focuses on descriptive text at the junior high school level, and specifically examines students' ability to identify the main idea and understand vocabulary meaning in descriptive text.

Considering that the problems identified are practical classroom issues that require immediate improvement, this research employs Classroom Action Research (CAR) as the methodology. CAR is considered appropriate because it enables teachers to systematically address real classroom problems through iterative cycles of planning, action, observation, and reflection, allowing continuous refinement of learning practices based on student needs. By using CAR as a method and Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) as a learning strategy, this study aims to investigate the extent to which students' reading comprehension, particularly their ability to identify the main idea and understand vocabulary meaning in descriptive texts, can be improved through the implementation of the DRTA strategy.

Therefore, the researcher took the title "Improving Students' Reading Comprehension in Descriptive Text Through Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) Strategy''.

1.2 Research Question

To guide this research, the researcher formulated a research question: How does the use of Directed Reading Thinking Activity strategy improve students' reading comprehension in descriptive text of the 7th grade students of SMP Negeri 19 Kota Pontianak?

1.3 Research Purpose

Based on the research question, the purpose of this research is to describe how Directed Reading Thinking Activity strategy improves students' reading comprehension in descriptive text of the 7th grade students of SMP Negeri 19 Kota Pontianak.

1.4 Research Significance

After conducting this research, the researcher has expectations to give some advantages for students, teacher, and next researcher as follows:

a. Significance for the students

This research can be a useful recommendation to improve students reading comprehension, particularly in reading descriptive texts. The findings encourage students to practice active reading strategies, such as predicting content, discussing ideas, and understanding vocabulary in context. This is crucial because many students still face difficulties in comprehending texts

deeply due to passive reading practices. By applying the strategies discussed in this study, students are expected to become more critical and effective readers.

b. Significance for Teacher

This study can serve as a reference in selecting appropriate techniques for teaching reading comprehension, especially descriptive texts. The research highlights that the DRTA strategy can engage students more actively and foster better understanding of text content. This is necessary because many teachers still use traditional methods where students merely read and answer questions, leading to passive learning. The findings provide an alternative approach that can make the learning process more interactive and stimulate students' interest.

c. Significance for the Next Researcher

This study can be a reference for further studies in the field of reading comprehension. It provides empirical data and findings that can be developed in different contexts, such as other text types, reading strategies, or different student groups. This is important because this study focuses only on descriptive texts and the DRTA strategy. Future researchers can expand the knowledge on the effectiveness of active reading strategies in various learning settings.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of Research

Based on the problems that have been found, the scope of this research is the implementation of Directed Reading Thinking Activity strategy and also the improvement of students' reading comprehension in descriptive text through

Directed Reading Thinking Activity strategy in grade 7th of SMP Negeri 19 Kota Pontianak.

The researcher limits these problems in order to achieve the objective of this study. This research was conducted in junior high school (SMP Negeri 19 Kota Pontianak) located in a city centre of Pontianak.

1.6 Terminology

a) Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is the ability to understand and interpret meaning from a written text. It consists of several components, including identifying the main idea, supporting details, understanding vocabulary, and interpreting references.

b) Descriptive Text

Descriptive text is a piece of writing that describes a particular person, place, or thing. The text consists of two generic structures: identification and description.

c) Directed Reading Thinking Activity Strategy

Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) strategy is a reading comprehension strategy that makes students active participants by having them question, predict, and discuss a text before, during, and after reading.

d) SMP Negeri 19 Kota Pontianak

SMP Negeri 19 Kota Pontianak is public junior high school located at Ampera Street, Sungai Jawi, Pontianak City District, Pontianak City, West Kalimantan.

e) Main Idea

Main idea of a reading selection is what the passage is mostly about. It is the central point or the most important thought that the author wants to convey to the reader. In a paragraph, the main idea is often stated in the topic sentence, usually found at the beginning or the end of the paragraph. Identifying the main idea requires readers to distinguish between the general topic and the specific point the author is making about that topic.

f) Vocabulary

Vocabulary meaning in context refers to the ability to understand the meaning of a word based on the surrounding words and sentences in a text. According to Anjomshoa and Zamanian (2014), vocabulary knowledge plays an important role in reading comprehension because when students are able to recognize word meanings, they are better able to comprehend what they read. Understanding vocabulary in context means that readers do not rely solely on memorized definitions but instead use contextual clues to infer the meaning of unfamiliar words.