

ACTUATING READING COMPREHENSION THROUGH GENRE-BASED DIRECTED READING THINKING ACTIVITIES (G-BDRTA) VIEWED FROM CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

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Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: August 2020 Revised: September 2020 Published: October 2020	<i>The significance of reading comprehension for learners' English mastery makes English teachers need to help learners to activate their background knowledge related to texts being read and promote the use of reading techniques. In this study, researchers applied the genre-based directed reading thinking activities (G-BDRTA). Genres here are oriented to provide learners with various text types for reading activities. Consequently, researchers aimed to actuate learners' reading comprehension through genre-based directed reading thinking activities (G-BDRTA) viewed from critical thinking skills. This study was classified as an experimental study using a non-equivalent control group design. This study was conducted at SMAN 1 Lingsar. There were 62 learners involved in this study. The learners were divided into two groups, and each group consists of 31 learners. One group becomes an experimental group subjected to the G-BDRTA strategy. The other group is subjected to the control group treated using student-team-learning (STL) strategy. To obtain the data, researchers used a reading test and critical thinking test as research instruments. Then, the data were analyzed using Two-Way-ANOVA. Based on the data analysis, there is a significant effect of G-BDRTA strategy on students' reading comprehension viewed from critical thinking skills.</i>
Keywords Reading comprehension; Reading strategies; Critical thinking skills;	

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INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the main language skills. Reading has an essential role for students to gain information from English texts to extend their knowledge and information (Haerazi & Irawan, 2020). The process of reading is a process of making meaning from written texts (Novita, 2018). It means reading is a process of gaining and understanding information from written texts. To achieve this sense, students require to have enough linguistic knowledge (Haerazi et al., 2019), vocabulary mastery (Setianingsih et al., 2018), and sufficient grammatical competence (Imran et al., 2019).

When students read English texts, students activate their linguistic knowledge. With this process, the book they read helps support their writing skills and enhance their vocabulary and grammar (Haerazi et al., 2020). In secondary schools, reading is the most crucial skill for foreign language students because they have little exposure to English outside their class, and mostly the information in English comes from reading (Ambarini et al., 2018). Furthermore, reading doesn't merely orient to know the meaning of words or recognize the vocabulary in English texts but comprehend the content of information or message implicitly and explicitly from the texts as well (Rohmah, 2018).

In an effort to improve students' reading skills, students face difficulties in utilizing their critical thinking ability during reading activities. As receptive skills, reading should involve their background knowledge dealing with the text being read (Thamrin & Agustin,

2019). Critical thinking skills here become essential to lead students to activate their potential. The essential skills of thinking that should be provided for students in reading activities include “interpretation, analysis, making an inference, making an argument, and self-regulation” (Par, 2018). Considering the importance of having critical thinking skills, researchers propose a learning strategy to help students improve their linguistic knowledge, grammar, vocabulary, and critical thinking skills. The strategy is the genre-based directed reading thinking activity (G-BDRTA) strategy. Giving students various genres to read and reading thinking activities can help them activate their background knowledge during reading activities.

This study's contribution to literature includes the genre-based directed reading thinking activity that can be utilized by English teachers to teach their students in reading comprehension. Reading is a crucial language skill for EFL students to get information. Reading thinking activities and critical thinking skills are increasingly recognized as a key of the 21st-century learning skills. Consequently, this study was oriented to find out the effect of the genre-based directed reading thinking activity on reading comprehension viewed from critical thinking skills at the secondary schools. Besides, this study was underpinned by some theoretical pieces of evidence, such as the G-BDRTA literature, pieces of critical thinking review, and reading comprehension. Therefore, the research questions that are proposed in this study cover; (1) how is the effectiveness of the G-BDRTA strategy to improve reading comprehension viewed from critical thinking skills?; (2) do the students who have high critical thinking skills have better reading comprehension than those having low critical thinking skills?; and (3) is there any interaction between teaching strategies and critical thinking skills in improving students' reading comprehension?.

Genre-Based Directed Reading Thinking Activity (G-BDRTA)

One learning strategy that can be used by English teachers to lead their students in the reading process is genre-based directed reading thinking activity (G-BDRTA) strategy. This learning strategy emphasizes reading activities with various genres. Therefore, it is possible to help students solve their difficulties in reading. According to Bos and Vaughan (2012), directed reading activities involve students making a prediction and teachers can actuate their students' prior knowledge by asking them questions relating to reading texts. It is in keeping with Nerim (2020) who conducts a study in which the directed reading thinking activity was able to lead students to build their background knowledge. Students feel easy to remember the words they get during the reading through active discussion.

In addition, Stauffer (in Nerim, 2020) states that the DRTA or G-BDRTA strategy adapted the reading stages, namely “pre-reading, during reading, and post-reading”. It is a popular strategy for engaging students in reading narrative text for understanding. In DRTA, prediction plays an important role in providing students with reading purposes. The teacher can guide their student by giving questions to activate their prior knowledge and provide clues like the title and picture from the text to stimulate their learners to make an accurate prediction (January & Nima, 2019). The question raised by the teacher before the student begins reading, make those reading strategies effective.

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking skill is the ability to solve problems and make reasoned arguments (Facione, 1999). Furthermore, Wallance (2011) states, “critical thinking is a wide range of cognitive skills and intellectual dispositions needed to identify, analyze, and evaluate arguments effectively and to make reasonable and intelligent decisions about what to believe and what to do (p.32)”. It means that critical thinking is crucial for students in regulating their cognition to learn. Richard and Linda (2004) depict that the indicators of students who have

critical thinking skills include that in leaning they have “purposes; questions; information; point of view; assumption; concept; inference; and implication”.

Kallet (2014) argues that thinking is the foundation of everything students do. Every action, every solution, and every decision they make shows the result of their thinking. Critical thinking can significantly enhance students’ problem-solving and decision-making skills (Espey, 2017). With critical thinking ability, students can make better-quality decisions, come up with more innovative solutions, and enjoy faster outcomes. In reading learning processes, Bakir (2015) argues that critical thinking requires skills that lead students to clear their understanding of problems or situations, make the faster and accurate conclusions, and produce quality decisions” (Pu & Evan, 2018).

Teaching Reading Comprehension

Among language skills such as speaking and listening, reading is more interesting from researchers in terms of research (Han et al. 2009) and teaching practice. Reading is considered “a process of making meaning from the text to understanding what the text informs” (Li & Wu, 2015). It means that if there is no meaning being created, there is no reading taking place. Some elements that must be mastered in reading activities include finding main idea, finding detailed information, finding explicit and implicit information, identifying word references, and making inferences (Grabe & Stoller, 2014).

Wu (2019) states that reading is the process to determine what the reader’s brain, emotions, and beliefs bring to the reading. It means that reading is the reader’s way in interpreting the printed words. Klauda & Guthrie (2008) depict that reading is a skill set that involves making sense and deriving meaning from the printed word such as making inference, and finding mind idea. In addition, Snow (2003) argues reading comprehension is the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. Haerazi and Irawan (2020) argue that in practice reading refers a process of understanding, evaluating and utilizing of information gained through the interaction between the reader and author.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study is categorized as an experimental study which is the quasi-experimental design using non-equivalent control group design. According to Cohen et al. (2018), quasi experimental design is random assignation of participants to control or experimental groups. Then, the non-equivalent group design indicates the non-parallel group learning strategies that possibly influence learners’ learning outcomes. This study uses this design because this study measures the effect of G-BDRTA strategy on learners’ reading comprehension viewed from critical thinking skills at the secondary schools. The critical thinking in study is considered an attribute variable that can affect the learners’ reading comprehension.

The learners will be divided into two classes, namely the control group and the experimental group. In experimental group will be subjected to the genre-based directed reading thinking activity (G-BDRTA) strategy, while the control group will be treated using student team learning (STL), the existing learning strategy applied the real English teacher. Then, the treatment results of the two groups will be analysed and compared in this study. The research design can be presented in Table 2 as follows.

Table 2
Research Design

Group	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test
Experimental Group (EG)	01	Genre-Based Directed Reading Thinking Activity (G-BDRTA) Strategy ↔	02
		Critical Thinking Skills	
		↓	
		Reading Comprehension	
Control Group (CG)	03	Student-Team-Learning Strategy ↔	04
		Critical Thinking Skills	
		↓	
		Reading Comprehension	

Population and Sample

The population of this study covers all tenth-grades learners of senior schools consisting of eight classes (X-IPS I, II, III, IV classes and X-IPA I, II, III, IV classes). The total population includes 200 learners. The sampling technique of this study uses the cluster random sampling technique with equal characteristics and probability. Creswell and Creswell (2018) state that in this random sampling technique, the research subject in the population is mixed. All subjects are considered equal, and every member of selected groups has similar characteristics and probability. Based on Creswell’s argument, the researchers will take the X-IPA III Class (Experimental Group) and X-IPA IV Class (Control Group) as the sample of this study. The X-IPA III class learners consist of 31 students and the learners of X-IPA IV include 31 students. So, the total samples are 62 learners.

Instruments

The instruments of this study use reading tests and critical thinking tests. The kind of reading tests includes multiple choices, while critical thinking skills use essay tests. For reading tests, the researchers will give 2 point for each correct answer and 0 point for incorrect answer. The items of the reading test 50 questions. It means if the learners answer all items correctly, they get 100-score. In the meantime, the critical thinking test covers 10 questions leading-learners to draw inferences, understand concepts, and make arguments. Because of this, instruments are very important for attaining the appropriate data. According to Cohen et al. (2018), research instrument is the tool in describing and qualifying the data in distinctive way.

Data Analysis

The technique of data analysis in this study applied the descriptive and inferential statistic. Descriptive analysis was used to get a general overview of the result of the study. The data obtained were presented in the form of a mean, median, modus, and standard deviation. Meanwhile, the data of inferential statistic were computed using two-way ANOVA or two-dimensional analysis of variance. According to Cohen et al. (2018), two-way ANOVA is employed when two independent variables are compared. In addition, the both variables have two or more levels. The normality and homogeneity data were considered before proceed to ANOVA analysis. The statistical program of IBM SPSS 22.0 device was applied to calculate.

The use of analysis variance aimed to know the G-BDRTA strategy's effect on learners’ reading motivation viewed from critical thinking skills. The normality and homogeneity data were analyzed as well. The data were stated normal data because the sig. value was higher than sig. level 0.05. To find out the result, the researchers used Kolmogorove-Smirnov

formula. In the meantime, the data was stated homogenous because the the sig. value was greater than the significant level of 0.05. In doing so, Levene test was employed in this study.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Teaching English as a compulsory subject at Indonesian senior high schools was done in an integrative way among speaking, listening, and writing including reading skills. In doing so, English teachers are demanded to find an appropriate way to teach. One of the teaching strategies that teachers applied is genre-based language teaching. In this study, researcher modified the genre-based language teaching in the form of a combination between this strategy and DRTA strategy. The two strategies are called the genre-based directed thinking activities and it is abbreviated G-BDRTA strategy. Therefore, this study focused on finding out the effect of the G-DRTA strategy on students' reading comprehension viewed from critical thinking skill. Based on the research findings, the G-BDRTA strategy has a positive effect on students' reading comprehension viewed from critical thinking skills. This study was designed in an experimental study in which the students were divided into groups, namely control and experimental groups.

The control group students were treated using students-teams-learning (STL) strategy, while those of the experimental group were subjected to the G-BDRTA strategy. The two strategies have the similar instructional goal which is to involve students in active learning processes and students are demanded to be autonomous learners. The difference of the two lies on the learning ways and teaching materials how to make students be active learners and autonomous learners inside the classes and outside the classes. The students' score of the two groups in reading comprehension can be presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Students' Reading Comprehension in the Experimental and Control Group

Strategy	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
The G-BDRTA Strategy	68.319	.975	66.365	70.272
STL strategy	65.157	.920	63.314	67.001

Table 1 shows that the G-BDRTA strategy is greater than the STL strategy. Compared to the STL strategy, the G-BDRTA provides students with reading activities such as "pre-reading, during reading, and post-reading". These activities are done in small groups and individually. It leads students to predict the meaning of words in the text. Students are given some various genres to read. The various genres are designed to activate students' knowledge before reading. In reading, predictions are essential for students with reading purposes. In doing so, teachers give questions before reading. It aims to help them activate their prior knowledge. Furthermore, students are provided with some clues such as a title of the text and a piece of pictures so as to stimulate them to carry out an accurate prediction.

In this study, the teaching steps of the G-BDRTA comprise; (1) predicting activities, (2) reading activities, and (3) proving or disproving activities of predictions. Another view of this consists of (1) reading, (2) making prediction, (3) rereading, and (4) confirming or readjusting predictions. This study employs the first three steps. It is in line with Nerim (2020) who conducted a study using the strategy's three steps. Furthermore, in reading activities, students are asked to predict and reflect on what they think of the text. It trains students to think critically of what they understand. It also helps students to administer their reading purposes (Haerazi & Irawan, 2020). Besides, provided with meaningful segments, students can use those segments to gain understanding of the content. The segments are designed in the form of keywords, illustrations, pictures, and clues that bring students to predict the content of the

text. In this phase, students are able to activate their critical thinking skills. Based on the result of analysis, the students’ critical thinking skills can be presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Students’ Critical Thinking Mean Score

Critical Thinking Skills	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
High	77.736	1.207	75.317	80.154
Medium	66.192	.928	64.334	68.051
Low	56.286	1.314	53.654	58.918

Table 2 informs that the students’ critical thinking skills for students treated with the G-BDRTA strategy and those treated using STL strategy coexist in the high level with mean score 77.73. It indicates that the G-BDRTA strategy utilizes various genres to engage students in predicting what they think the content or story will be about. With giving genres, students are asked to reconstruct the author’s ideas in line with their reading abilities. This activity train students to think of texts critically. It is in accordance with Yulia and Budiharti (2019) who state that teachers can modify various genres to involve students in higher order thinking skills. Thus, the directed reading thinking activity aids students in developing critical thinking. It is proven with some provided questions for students such as “what do you think that the story with this tittle is about?”, “what do you think it may happen in this story?”, and “which of those predictions do you agree with?”. These questions lead students to think and reflect their thinking of the content of the text. It is supported by Ilyas (2018) and Khan (2019) who inform that providing students with the various high-level question can train them to have critical thinking skills. These also help students acquire vocabulary and grammatical competences during reading.

Compared to the G-BDRTA strategy, the STL strategy helps students to work in a kind of teams. In the learning activity, this strategy tends to rely on partners. A student does the reading activities under helping the other student. It minimizes the student’s role as an autonomous learner. Nevertheless, the STL strategy engages students in active learning in the form of team learning. Thus, the STL strategy is considered a failed learning strategy to activate students’ prior knowledge in reading comprehension. It means that the G-BDRTA strategy is greater than the STL strategy in developing students’ reading comprehension viewed from critical thinking skills. The data of students’ critical thinking skills at the two groups subjecting to different treatments can be presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Students’ Critical Thinking in the Experimental and Control Group

Learning Strategies	Critical Thinking	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
G-BDRTA Strategy	High	79.07	5.954	14
	Medium	66.38	2.844	13
	Low	59.50	4.435	4
	Total	71.23	8.819	31
Student-Team-Learning	High	76.40	4.037	5
	Medium	66.00	5.461	12
	Low	53.07	3.852	14
	Total	61.84	9.883	31
Total	High	78.37	5.540	19
	Medium	66.20	4.213	25
	Low	54.50	4.731	18
	Total	66.53	10.425	62

Table 3 indicates that students' critical thinking skills in the experimental group is higher than those in control one. It proves that the G-BDRTA strategy helps students comprehend texts with providing them with reading activities that encourage critical thinking. For instance, the teacher gives students a simple text containing a story of "Putri Mandalika". Students are asked to activate their prior knowledge of the story. In doing so, students correlate their background knowledge with the text. Also, students promote the use of reading strategies. To support the learning activities, students are supposed to interact with other learners in pairs and group work. It is in accordance with Sumekto (2018) who declares that the learning form such as in pairs and group work can facilitate students to accomplish reading assignment easily. It also facilitates them to think and prevent them from misunderstanding the text.

The second phase of the G-BDRTA strategy's reading activities are designed to encourage students to apply their linguistic knowledge. Students are involved in analyzing the text's language features such as phrases, sentences, and grammatical structures of each paragraphs. In doing so, the teachers prepare some vocabulary lists to guide students who have difficulties understanding the text. Besides, students are asked to predict the meaning during reading activities. They are directed to interact the vocabulary and word reading fluency in predicting the meaning of sentences. It is supported by Lee and Chen (2019) who state that students' reading comprehension is influenced by reading fluency and word knowledge. Therefore, the G-BDRTA strategy drives students to have a reading fluency.

Dealing with the interaction between learning strategies (G-BDRTA and STL strategy) and critical thinking skills on students' reading comprehension, the data show that there is no interaction among both on students' reading comprehension. The two strategies have the same effect on developing students' reading comprehension. Also, students with high critical thinking skills are no better than those who have medium and low critical thinking abilities. The students at the experimental and control class have the same ability to think critically during reading activities. The G-BDRTA and STL strategy give students chance to activate their knowledge before reading and after reading. The interaction between the learning strategies and critical thinking skills can be presented in Table 4.

Table 4
The Result of Two-Way Anova Analysis

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	5426.301 ^a	5	1085.260	50.514	.000
Intercept	212905.690	1	212905.690	9909.717	.000
Strategy	119.448	1	119.448	5.560	.022
CT	3142.931	2	1571.465	73.144	.000
Strategy * CT	76.038	2	38.019	1.770	.180

Table 4 points that the students subjecting to the G-BDRTA and those treated using STL strategy are not influenced by the level of their higher order thinking skills. It is proven with which the sig. value (0.18) was higher than sig. level (0.05). In both groups, the teaching materials are designed intentionally to prime students with reading activities to think critically. For example, students are asked to analyze, interpret, and predict the content of the text. In the analysis process, students in pairs do language features analysis of the text. They try to internalize those features when they read. During reading activities, they are asked to interpret the meaning of sentences and paragraphs. During doing so, students feel easy to understand the paragraphs of texts and easy to predict the story of the texts. In accordance

with Mursyid and Kurniawati (2019), Al-Zahrani and Elyas (2017) state the level of higher thinking skills can give a positive effect of students' EFL proficiency. Besides, in the phase of proving their prediction toward the content of the text, students are asked to discuss in a small group to make sure their comprehension toward the text. It leads students to avoid misunderstanding of the text.

CONCLUSION

This study focused on investigating the G-BDRTA strategy's effect on students' reading comprehension viewed from students' critical thinking skills. The result showed that there was a positive effect of the G-BDRTA strategy on students' reading comprehension viewed from critical thinking skills. This learning strategy consisted of some steps, namely predicting activities, reading activities, and confirming or disconfirming activities toward predictions made. Also, critical thinking skills have no effect on determining students' reading comprehension. It means students with high critical thinking skills are no better than those with medium and low critical thinking skills. In other words, the G-BDRTA strategy and STL strategy have the equivalent quality in developing students' reading comprehension and critical thinking skills.

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