



Students' Perception of Using Directed Activities Related to Texts (DARTs) in Teaching Reading

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Abstract. Running a reading classroom, the teacher needs to prepare the learning strategy which is assumed effective to achieve the learning goal. Directed Activities Related to Texts (DARTs) was applied in reading teaching learning process as the treatment which took times for 12 meetings. The students' perception on the teaching strategy implemented by the teacher is important, to indicate whether the teaching strategy in accordance with the students' need or not. Because of this reason, the research aimed at examining the students' perception on the implementation of Directed Activities Related to Texts (DARTs) in teaching Reading. The methodology used in this research was mixed method. The qualitative data were collected by using observation and semi-structured interview. Meanwhile, the quantitative data were collected using a questionnaire. This research was conducted in a class of 25 students at a Senior High School. The results revealed that most students believed Directed Activities Related to Texts (DARTs) has given positive contribution toward students' reading achievement. Through a set of activities which were the students involved, this strategy encouraged the students to read contextually and think critically so that their comprehending of the text would become easily. In summary, the result of the research found several main areas, namely students' behavior (79.3%), students' experience (76%), students' reading skill achievement (74.2%) and students' difficulty (40%). Knowing those things will ultimately help students to receive better a number of English texts that lead them to be autonomous learners.

Keywords: Perception · Directed Activities Related to Texts (DARTs) · Reading

1 Introduction

All EFL learners have the major project to be skilled in all part of English language. Especially, reading is often considered as a basic skill for academic and career development [1]. Such as those Indonesian who learning English as a foreign language, reading is a subject they must study, as it is one of the compulsory subjects in their curriculum. Doing the reading, they will collect the vocabularies gradually, and move towards language learning sustainably [2].

Understanding the text is the crucial purpose for the readers. To understand the text is a not just about recognizing individual word or even understanding them all while gliding your eyes. It involves a complex process including of components, processes

and factors with a view to recognize the effective ways in comprehending the text being read [3]. The integration over multiple sources of information is needed in this process.

Reading comprehension is not merely a process of recognizing and understanding words and their meanings. But further it can be taught as a strategy for extracting information from texts and developing interpretations of that information [4]. Additionally, Gilber [5] claimed that “reading in both first and second language context includes the reader, the text, and the interaction between the reader and the text”. This means that reading is also a technique students use to gather information and knowledge from texts. Therefore, more attention should be paid to reading comprehension, especially in English learner classes [6].

However, most often the problems of reading comprehension have been occurred when the students are learning to read the text. First, they were less motivated to learn English, as is common in countries like Indonesia where English is a foreign language. Second, they didn't feel comfortable reading because reading is not their habit. Third, they had poor concentration to read entire sentences or passage [7]. Fourth, it remained difficult to draw conclusions, identify key ideas, and find references. Fifth, they lacked vocabulary and did not understand how to pronounce words correctly. Realizing that achieving goal to understand the text is very crucial, these mentioned difficulties should be identified and solved both by the students and the teacher.

Using engaging methods in teaching reading classroom keeps the students inspired and energetic during the learning process. Teaching reading prepares students to understand the text as they read [8], and practicing specific reading strategies can make the time more efficient. Some common strategy of reading as skimming, scanning, Think Pair Share, Listen, Read and Discuss (LRD) are considered effectively used in reading classroom. They not only push the students to read but also encourage the students to understand the text. Knowing the benefits of these strategies, Directed Activities Related to Texts (DARTs) strategy has the same characteristics in increasing the students' reading skill.

Directed Activities related to Texts (DARTs) has known as the learning strategy that requires the students to interact with text. It also known as the text-based activities that activate the students engaged with the text [9]. They continued that DARTs encourages the students to read the text in more detail, understand the text, as well as get the information of the text. In this activity, the students do not only read the text in the paragraph but also get in the visual form such as image, diagram, chart and graph. The activity including in DARTs according to Davies and Green cited in Pamelasari & Khusniati [10] can be carried out with the two classifications below.

Reconstruction Activities (use modified text) include 5 types of the following activities: (a). Text completion; (b). Chart completion; (c). Table completion; (d). Disorder text completion activity; and (e). Prediction. On the other hand, analysis activities (use unmodified text) include 5 types of the following activities: (a). Underlining; (b). Labeling; (c). Segmenting; (d). Diagram representation; and (e). Tabular representation;

In line with the topic of the study, there was a previous study that recently conducted by the researcher [11] under the title “Improving English Reading Comprehension Ability through Directed Activities Related to Texts (DARTs) Learning”. The result conveyed that students' reading comprehension had significantly increased from an average

value of 70.32 in the first cycle and 85 in the second cycle. It reflected that there was an improvement on the students' reading comprehension after applying the Directed Activities Related to Texts (DARTs) strategy during teaching learning activity.

Regarding to the result of the previous study, which was the implementation of DARTs in teaching reading gave the positive effect to develop students' reading skill, it is implied that the writer should know how this strategy can solve the students' problem for their learning that is Knowing the students' perception. Perception is an opinion-forming process, related to experiences, expectations and overall impressions [12]. This is relevant to the purpose of this study that the student's perceptual score predicts the student's reading response and helps to record the student's reading performance, whether positive or negative. Undeniable, the result of perception is going to be an evaluation for teaching learning process.

The main topics directing the discussion are: (1) Student behavior in the Directed Activities Related to Texts (DARTs) activities; (2) Student experience; (3) Students' reading skills achievement; and (4) Students' problems throughout the implementation of the teaching strategy.

2 Method

In line with the purpose of the research, mixed method was used to find the data. There were involved quantitative and qualitative data. In this research, quantitative data were collected using close-ended questionnaire. The obtained quantitative data were evaluated using descriptive statistics. In addition, qualitative data for this research were obtained from classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. Data from classroom observations were analyzed using thematic or coding analysis, and interview data were analyzed using three activities: data reduction, data display, and closure [13].

Students' perceptions on their experience on the use of Directed Activities related to Texts (DARTs) in reading classroom were explored. The Directed Activities Related to Texts (DARTs) was conducted for 12 meetings. During their school experience, this research was conducted with 25 students in the first grade of MA Ummulqura Indonesia. There were 17 female, and 8 male students.

2.1 Questionnaire

The student questionnaires were divided into four categories called Area-1, Area-2, Area-3 and Area 4 with close-ended questions. A questionnaire-type item format was developed with a four-point scale, namely strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1) in which individuals are asked to respond in a series of statements. The Area-1 questionnaire consisted of six statements designed to determine student behavior for reading in DARTs activities. The Area-2 questionnaire consisted of six statements respectively. These statements are intended to determine the student's experience in an ongoing reading activity with DARTS. The Area-3 questionnaire consisted of nine statements, which likewise aimed to determine the students' reading proficiency. The Area-4 questionnaire consisted of one statement. This statement is intended to determine the difficulties of the students emerged in their ongoing reading activities with DARTs.

Table 1. Percentages of the Students' Perception on the use of Directed Activities Related to Texts (DARTs) in Teaching Reading.

	Areas of Students' Perception	Agree	Disagree
1	Students' behavior	79.3%	20.7%
2	Students' experience	76%	24%
3	Students' reading skills achievement	74.2%	25.8%
4	Students' difficulty	40%	60%

2.2 Observation and Interview

Observation checklist was used by the writer to evaluate the learning process through Directed Activities Related to Texts (DARTs) in their reading subject. It includes of real information about the performance and behavior of the students, the sequence procedures in the activity, the strength and weaknesses of the activity and the outcomes achieved from the learning.

Additionally, interview guidelines were also developed by the authors to minimize bias, assess students objectively, and ensure student perception in the questionnaire. A type of semi-structured interview used to gather detailed information about a topic related to a research question. Then, the result can be used to determine a student's perspective on the reading activity; elaborate on the responses to the questionnaire, and let the students objectively consider the responses in their own words as conveniently as possible.

3 Results and Discussions

3.1 Results

Questionnaire and interview data were collected and analyzed by intending to reflect the students view and opinion with regard to the implementation of Directed Activities Related to Texts (DARTs) in their reading classroom. Detailed information is explained in Table 1.

The table shows that the result of the questionnaire distributed for the students which is divided shortly into 2 scales (Agree and Disagree). It can be seen that the highest positive response of the students was on Area- 1 "Students' behavior" (79.3%), then followed by Area-2 "Students experience" (76%), Area-3 Students' reading skills competence" (74.2%), and lastly was Area- 4 "Students' difficulty (40%)". The result of the questionnaire will be explained more in the following section.

3.1.1 Students' Behaviour

Diagram 1 shows that there were 6 statements which had been perceived by the students. At this area, the highest improvement could be seen from the "Interest" statement was 92%. Almost all the students were stated that DARTs was interesting. The students engage themselves by keeping their attention during the learning process The

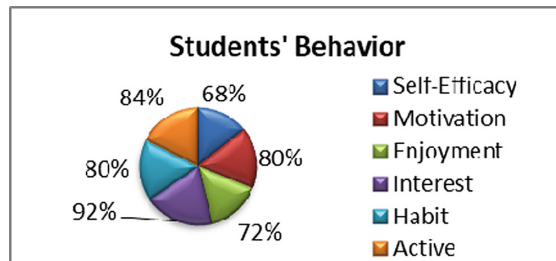


Fig. 1. Students' Perception for Area -1

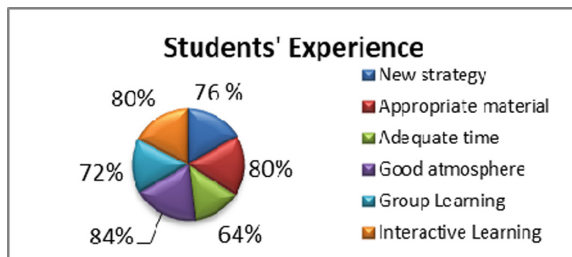


Fig. 2. Students' Perception for Area -2

second highest percentage was 84% stands on the statement “active”. During the lesson, the students did more movements. This occurred when the students to accomplish the activities about a topic, such as in discussing or comparing each other’s opinion. Then followed by these two statements are motivation (80%) and habit (80%) were at the same degree. Their motivation can be seen from their desire to act in service of a learning goal. Besides, habit is a condition where the students doing the learning activity at regularly time whether inside and outside school. The next statement is enjoyment was 72%. DARTs activities contained many kinds of activities in which the students felt joyful to run the task in a non-monotonous manner. Self-efficacy has the lowest percentage among six measured statements that was 68%. In the practice of learning, the students gave their best performance to succeed, no matter how difficult or easy it is, the activities that they had to be accomplished. Reflecting the results above, every statement for Area I had positive response from the student. It means using DARTs in teaching reading gives good improvement for the students’ behavior in reading (Fig. 1).

3.1.2 Students' Experience

At this area, the students responded for 6 statements related to how they were experienced in the learning by DARTs. The statement “Good atmosphere” was the highest percentage among others, was 84%. Most of the students stated that DARTs had the activities that create the students to learn without negative or anxiety feeling. The second achievement was on “appropriate material” and “interactive learning”. They were at the same degree that was 80%. By using the various in their learning, their interactive leaning was appeared. It can be seen how deeply they can interact each other, either

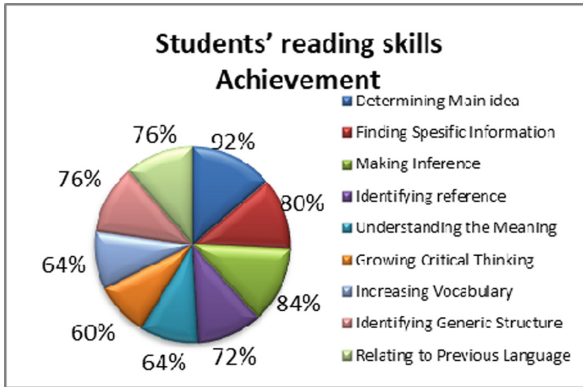


Fig. 3. Students' Perception for Area -3

students to teacher, students to students or students to text. Then, 76% percentage of the students said that learning by DARTs was a new strategy for them. They felt surprised to receive the learning, which is not presented in the written form, but also cover the diagrams or charts. After that, the statement “Group learning” was chose by the students more likely than individual learning. It was 72% of them said that they adore to learn in group because they able to share and help each other. It reflects their action in finishing labeling, underlining, and text completion. The final statement was “adequate time”. More than half of students or 64% in the classroom said that the strategy provides adequate time for learning activities. It showed that the duration of playing activities could be finished by the students as the instruction given by the teacher. As a result, the all statements in “Area 2” can be classified as a good perspective due to the application of Directed Activities Related to Texts (DARTs) (Fig. 2).

3.1.3 Students' Reading Skills Achievement

There were several perceptions in the “Area 3” had been responded by the students regarding to see how DARTs may influences their reading skill. Surprisingly, the results suggested that the students gave positive responses. In fact, almost all of the students (92%) stated that the strategy really helps them in determining main idea. Next, the percentage of making inference was 84%. The students are usually used making inference in order to know the do the worksheet. It reflects their action in finishing labeling, underlining, and text completion. The third statement was stood on “Finding specific information. In this skill, as much as 80% of the students agreed that DARTs improve their skill to find specific information. In conducting the activities, the students are asked to read the text carefully and marked specific information to ease them in getting some point of the text. The following statement was on “identifying generic structure” and “relating to previous knowledge”, that at the same degree was 76%. At the beginning of class, the students would be allowed considerable freedom to bring their own prior knowledge or experience that they had related to the main text what should be discussed. It is known as pre-reading activities which aims to activate the students' background before get in the text [14]. It can be detected 76% of the students agreed this strategy activated their

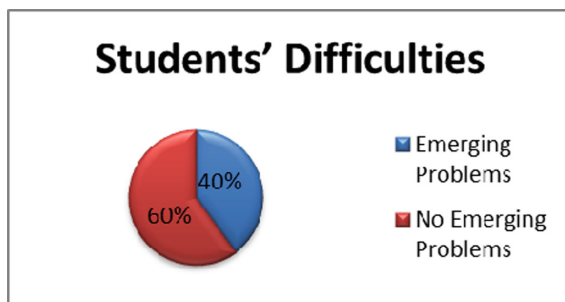


Fig. 4. Students' Perception for Area -4

background knowledge that affected the construction of meaning, during or after reading activities. Then followed by the statement “identifying the references” that was 72%. The term of this reference mostly refers to the pronouns in the sentences such as you, their, him and others, which aimed to show people, place and circumstances. The next statements were followed by “increasing vocabulary” and “understanding of meaning”. Both of them had similar percentage was 64%. There was a correlation between vocabulary and understanding of the meaning of the text. The texts in the activities were presented with any kind of topics which includes a variety of words whether familiar or unfamiliar for the students. Lastly, growing critical thinking was appeared by the students during their learning (Fig. 3).

3.1.4 Students' Difficulty

The final area merely focuses on a statement. Surprisingly, the result proved that Directed Activities Related to Texts (DARTs) might able to minimize the difficulties in learning reading comprehension. Diagram 4 pointed that 60% of the student did not face the problems during the learning. In contrast, some of them said the difficulties were often caused by the lack of their concentration, low level of proficiency in reading skill and the lack of familiarity with DARTs. These circumstances then influenced their low performance in achieving the goal of learning (Fig. 4).

3.2 Discussions

This research resulted the students' though regarding to the use of Directed Activities Related to Texts (DARTs) in their reading classroom. Based on the described result, the students conveyed that the strategy could enhance their performance in reading. Their positive responses are standing on the following issue. Starting an action, motivation to begin the specific activity, especially to read the text is very crucial element for the students. Alizadeh [15] stressed that motivation will influence the students' reading performance. It is because when the students have high motivation to read, for sure they will get better identifying and understanding the text. The students thought that the kinds of activities in the strategy, made them quickly understand the text and then stimulates them to read more, even to use it for another subject. As suggested by Palani [16], the

students are able to do a literate society by activating the reading habit. When they actively engaged themselves in reading activity, the students' self-efficacy will be improved. Bandura as cited in Siddiqui [17], found that perceived self-efficacy influences coping behaviors initiated when a person encounters stress or challenge, and how much effort is expended to achieve one's goals. In this strategy, the students said that they obtained the materials which are relevant to their level and their needs. Mutiara & Emilia [18] verified that the learning material is a crucial indicator for students which affect the objectives of the study. Additionally, as stated by Lim, Eng, and Mohamed, et al. [19], the reading process takes place when readers can interact with each other and especially with the text itself. The activities in analyzing and reconstructing the text made them had to ask or answer share on the information with their peer or classmates. Besides, in the learning by DARTs, the students more likely group learning than individual learning. Pai, et al. [20] argued that cooperative learning is undoubtedly having a major impact on how school learning environments are structured to facilitate student learning and socialization. Finally, those improvements affect the students' achievement goal of getting better in reading comprehension.

The perceptions above can be illustrated that the strategy of Directed Related to Texts provided good contribution in improving the students' reading skill. Consequently, this finding was related to the result of the current study by Kamaliah & Putri [12] in which the students' reading skill was significant increased after they were taught by DARTs. Likewise, the strategy of DARTs not only could be applied in English field but also for other subjects and other countries. Lately, the study conducted by Shamsulbahri & Zulkipli [10]. The study aimed the impact of DARTs which connected to the students' gender on their achievement in chemistry. The results argued that the learning of participants in the combined methods group could have been enhanced by the DARTs teaching strategy. Meanwhile, Pamelasari and Khusniati [11] applied this method to science students. This study was an experimental study comparing DARTs and Direct Instruction (DI) strategy to determine which strategy is more effective to the students' reading achievement. In short, DARTs were found to be more effective than DIs in improving students' reading comprehension.

4 Conclusion

The researcher concluded that the students had positive responses on the Directed Activities Related to Texts (DARTs) used by the teacher in reading comprehension Classroom. Most of the students agreed that they got many advantages from the application of DARTs. The results were focused on the students' perception into 4 areas. They were students' behavior was increased by 79.3%, students' experience was developed by 76%, students' reading skill competence was improved by 74.2% as well as students' difficulty was obtained by 40%. This study can contribute to the thinking in developing the competence of the 21st century, especially in the study of language. EFL teachers and future researchers might use and modify DARTs strategy by promoting high reading culture using current issue and various genres of the text, adding various media, creating a variety of learning environment as well as considering the components in the learning

needs that suitable in achieving the learning objectives. However, this study has the limitation in taking the respondents only from one class in which the study does not reflect the results of various grade and even school.

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