



## **USING 'THE DART METHOD' TO IMPROVE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION OF A NARRATIVE TEXT**

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### **Abstract**

Reading as one of English skills should be taught to the students. However, students still find some difficulties in reading due to some factors: lack of background knowledge, motivation, and vocabulary. Therefore, teacher should select an appropriate method to solve those problems. This paper is aimed to inform how to use a teaching method which is called Directed Activities Related to the Text (DART) method in teaching reading narrative text to senior high school students. DART method relies on group discussion to achieve learning objectives. There are some purposes in this method: to help the students to comprehend the information in the text, to enrich students' vocabulary, and to improve students' interest in reading since the students involved actively in learning activities. Teaching reading comprehension through this method of a narrative text consists of two stages: the first stage, reconstruction activity, requires students to reconstruct the text through predicting, completing, and sequencing the text. While the second stage, analysis activity, requires students explore the text by analyze the elements of the text thorough questioning, highlighting, segmenting and labeling, and diagram constructing. Therefore, thorough these activities the students can understand and comprehend the text easily.

**Key Words:** *Reading, Narrative Text, Direct Activities Related to the Text Method.*

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

English has become a foreign language in Indonesia and it should be taught to the students in their school since it is stated in curriculum. In learning English, one of the skills that should be mastered is reading. Reading

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is extremely needed since most books and references are written in English. Besides, through reading, people will obtain plenty of information which can expand their knowledge. Krashen (1993) also states that people learn to write through reading, because they unknowingly get the author's writing style while reading. It means that people who read well will write better than those who do not.

The importance of reading can be seen from the implementation of curriculum 2013. Based on the curriculum of 2013, Senior High School students must deal with many kinds of texts. One of them is narrative text. Narrative text is a text that consists of several sequences to set up one or more problems in the text as one story (Knapp, 2005: 223). In fact, it is hard for students to understand the story because of some factors: the lack of background knowledge, motivation, and vocabulary. Therefore, an appropriate method is needed to overcome those difficulties. One of the methods that can be used is Direct Activities Related to the Text method.

Direct Activity Related to Text shorten as DART becomes an instructional procedure designed to improve students' reading comprehension by allowing students to interact with texts and make them to be critical readers. In DART method, there are two groups' activities that should be done: reconstruction activities and analysis activities. A set of activities provided in this method is not only ask the students to get the right answer from the text, but also lead the students on giving the reason related to the right answer. Moreover, DART can be done by individual students or in groups. Brindley (2005: 97) claims that DART is the main value placed on exchange by pupils in small group. This method relays on group discussion to help them to get involved actively in learning process. During discussion, students can share their own ideas and promote their understanding about the text by their own words. It can be assumed that, by using DART, the students' reading comprehension will be improved easily.

## **B. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This part describes the literature review of the study. It is an evaluative report of information found in the literature related to the selected area of study. It consists of the nature of reading, teaching reading at senior high school, narrative text, and the Direct Activities Related to the Text (DART) method.

### **1. The nature of reading**

Reading is a process which can update someone's knowledge (Patel, 2008: 113). It means that reading used as one of the ways to enrich his/her knowledge; the information presented in the written text will be gained by him/her as much as they can read it. Reading can be seen as interactive process between reader and a text which leads to automaticity or reading fluency (Alyousef, 2005). The interactive process refers to how someone builds a meaning by the interaction of his or her prior knowledge with the

presented information in the written text that he or she read. Creating meaning through the text demands the reader to have a good comprehension; beside comprehension is the goal of reading process.

Pang (2003: 6) states that reading comprehension is about understanding a written text. Reading process will be success if the information including the vocabularies in the text can be understood by the reader. It seems impossible for the reader to comprehend a text without a suffice knowledge of vocabulary.

According to Klingner (2007: 8) reading comprehension is multicomponent, highly complex process that involves many interactions between readers and what they bring to the text (previous knowledge, strategy use) as well as variables related to the text itself (interest in text, understanding of text type). In this case, the reader has to construct meaning through interaction and involvement with written language by combining their background knowledge and the new information in the text. It is supported by Kustaryo (1988: 11) who says that reading comprehension is an active thinking process that depends not only on comprehension but also on the reader's experiences and prior knowledge.

## 2. Teaching reading at senior high school

Based on curriculum of 2013, the senior high school students have to comprehend and understand various meanings of the words and sentences in various interactional and transactional written texts such as descriptive, narrative, report, recount, and explanation text. Furthermore, it has been arranged in the curricula that the students are taught about understanding sentences, topic, main idea, supporting ideas, even the vocabulary related to the text as the reading material. Those aspects help the students in comprehending English written text well. Thus, the teacher has an important role to teach and help them to understand and comprehend the text.

Teaching reading is an ability to teach the students to read as well to understand what is being read. In order to guide the students in improving their reading skill, the teacher must consider several principles in teaching reading. Langer (2000: 3) states that there are six principles in teaching reading in middle and high school: (a) students learn skills and knowledge in multiple lesson type, (b) teachers integrate test preparation into instruction, (c) teachers make connections across instruction, curriculum, and life, (d) students learn strategies for doing the work, and (e) classroom foster cognitive collaboration. Therefore, the teacher needs to consider to applied these several principles in teaching reading to help students in improving their reading skill for they are taught varied kind of texts. One of them is Narrative text.

## 3. Narrative text

Narrative text is a kind of text which presents a unified sequence of events that add up to something (Chatman, 1993: 8). It consists of a story

within several sequences of problematic events which in turn to find resolution. According to Sudarwati (2007: 74) the purposes of this text are to amuse or entertain the reader and deal with actual or imaginative experiences in different ways.

According to Sudarwati (2007: 74) the generic structure of narrative text consists of some parts: orientation (to introduce the characters and the setting such as when and where the story takes place), complication (to indicate a particular problem that starts to happen, and it should be faced by the characters) and resolution (to describe how the problem is solved and how the events affect the character).

Moreover, a research conducted by Fatu'imah (2017) shows that there are several language features that should be known in narrative text. Narrative text uses nouns and pronouns to identify the characters in the story, and also, adverbs and adverbial phrase in order to indicate the settings such as place and time. Knapp (2005: 221) states that narrative uses simple past tense, action verb and temporal connection in sequencing the characters and the events in the story, thinking or feeling verbs of sense in action sequence. Furthermore, the movements of thoughts and feelings can give a sense of character movement (Disher, 1949: 50).

#### 4. Direct Activities Related to the Text (DART) method

Direct Activities Related to Text shortened as DART is developed by Lunzer and Gardener in the 1970s. Lewis (1997: 35) states “DART refers to the text processing method which covering a wide range of text based activities that enable students to actively engage with the text”. The activities provided in this method help students in creating meaning about the text by having interaction with the text as much as they can.

Hernandez (2017: 79) states that DART leads the students to interact with the text so that the students can improve their reading comprehension related to the text, and also take them to a critical level. DART also can be done by individual students or in groups, so that the students can share and discuss their ideas.

DART method is regarded as a series of instruction in teaching reading comprehension which consist of two main activities: reconstruction activities and analysis activities, in order to help students to comprehend the text easily. Brindley (1994: 99) says that the reconstruction activities involve prediction, completion, and sequencing. Meanwhile the analysis activities involve highlighting, segmenting and labeling, questioning, and diagram constructing. Those activities guide the students to read the text closely and their comprehension is improved automatically.

### C. DISCUSSION

This part describes how DART method should be conducted. It consists of some preparation that teachers should do before teaching narrative text through DART method and the way to implement DART method to teach a narrative text in senior high school.



### 1. Preparation in Teaching Narrative Text through DART method

Before teaching process, the teacher needs some guidelines which is called lesson plan to run the teaching process efficiently. A lesson plan contains of what students need to learn during the process of teaching and learning and how it will be done effectively. This lesson plan regarding the Direct Activities Related to Text is a method that will be implemented later. It is essential to let the students know the reason why they learn narrative text and what objectives that should be achieved.

The next thing that should be prepared by the teacher is the material. Considering that the discussion is about narrative text, the teacher has to find materials related to the curriculum and the school level. The materials can be found by teacher on students' book, newspaper, or internet. The teacher also needs to consider whether the material could catch students' attention and suitable for them.

### 2. Implementing 'the DART method' to Teach Narrative Text in Senior High School

As commonly suggested by the 2013 Curriculum, there are three stages in teaching:

#### 1. Pre-Teaching Activities

Before the teaching process begins, the teacher does some activities: greets the students in English, takes students' attendance, give motivation to the students to prepare them physically and psychologically before learning process, do warming upsuch as asking and answering about the previous materials. After that, the teacher explains what the students are going to learn and its objectives that should be achieved later.

#### 2. Whilst Teaching Activities

Whilst-teaching activity is the central activity of teaching procedure. In this activity, the teacher leads the students to the main activities in teaching learning process by using Direct Activities Related to the Text (DART) method.

There are two stages activity of DART method. The first one is reconstruction stage activity and the second one is analysis stage activity. At the process of those stages, the teacher guides the students by giving an example of a narrative text and leads them to work in group. The teacher asks students to make a group of 4 or 5.

#### A. Reconstruction Stage Activity

In this stage, there are three activities that should be done; predicting, completing, and sequencing. The teacher initially presents the context by using pictures, presents audio visual material, or showing realia.

##### a. Predicting

The teacher delivers a narrative text with the title is 'The Tortoise and The Hare'. The text given consists of some paragraphs that have been

modified by the teacher, such as there are some missing phrases or sentences so that the students have to try to predict the plot. The teacher might ask the group to read only the first paragraph or whole of incomplete text. Then, they try to predict what will come next in the text by their own words.

b. Completing

After doing prediction at the previous stage, the teacher asks students to complete the blank parts of the text by their own words. They can use their prediction before to help them in completing the missing phrases or sentences in the text. Then, the teacher and students discuss about their prediction and their answer with what is actually written in the text.

c. Sequencing

In sequencing activity, the teacher jumbling the text into paragraphs. Then the students in group try to rearrange them into a meaningful text. The groups have to connect one event to another, and give their reasons in rearrange the jumbled paragraph.

B. Analysis Stage Activity

The activities in analysis stage require students to find and categorize information from the text. The activities involved are questioning, highlighting, segmenting and labeling, and diagram constructing.

a. Questioning

On questioning phase, each of group has to produce at least one question about information that is not understood from the previous stage. The teacher also models how to make a question from the text by using question words such as who, what, when, where, how, and why to help them so that they can discuss about their questions to be asked. After that, the teacher guides the group to discuss about the right answer of the questions. Every group has opportunities to try to answer the questions. The answer might be in the reading, in the clues, or in the group's opinion.

b. Highlighting

In this stage, each of group is asked to find out the information related to the narrative text. The information collected such as the definition of narrative text, function, structure, and language features of the text. They can use text book, internet, and other sources in the classroom to help them in understanding the topic. After collecting the information, the teacher guides them to do discussion group about the important information of the text. Then, they try to highlight or underline some points such as the structure of the text and the language features of the text. After that, the teacher and students discuss it back together.

c. Segmenting and Labeling

In this stage, each of group is given the new topic story; “Two Travelers and a Big Tree”. The teacher provides the text which consists of only one paragraph. Then, the groups are asked to separate the text into some paragraphs with acceptable reason so they can make a good and meaningful paragraph. After that, they are asked to label each paragraph appropriately, such as orientation, complication, and resolution.

d. Diagram Constructing

The teacher provides a flowchart to each of the group and asks them to fill the chart. The chart given can be consists of the title of the story, the characters, character traits, problem or complication, and its resolution. The students have to work in group to find the idea of each paragraph so that they can fill the chart easily. They can paraphrase the paragraphs and write it down by their own words. Here, the interaction among the students is very helpful for them to engage in meaningful communication in learning process. After fill in the chart, one member of the group presents their chart in front of the class, and then the teacher and other groups evaluate it. The other group also analyzes the content and language features used in the story. They might also give their opinion, suggestion, and critics about the story presented in the chart.

3. Post- Teaching Activities

At the end of the lesson, the teacher and students conclude the lesson that has been learned together by re-explains the material. In order to see students' understanding about the material, the teacher gives homework to the students. The teacher asks students to find a story, then they asked to identify the main characters, setting, problems, events and resolution of the story and complete it into the chart given (as the previous activity). After giving homework, the teacher closes the class

**C. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

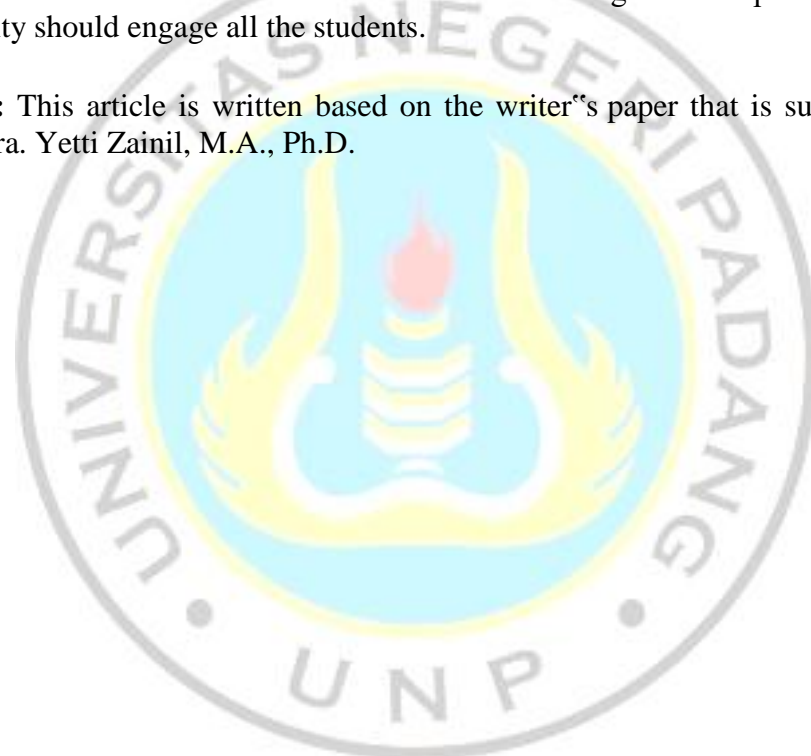
Direct Activities Related to the Text (DART) can be implemented as one of the method in improving students' understanding and comprehending English text, especially narrative text. It can be implemented since it actively engages the students working with the text through discussion. There are two stages activity in DART method; reconstruction stage activity and analysis stage activity. The first stage requires students to reconstruct the text through predicting, completing, and sequencing the text. While the second stage requires students explore the text by analyze the elements of the text thorough questioning, highlighting, segmenting and labeling, and diagram constructing.

Through this method, the students who lack of background knowledge will be stimulated to build their knowledge by having prediction about the text. They can relate it to their environment or their experiences. If the students have enough ideas or knowledge related to the text, they will understand the text easily. Reconstruction activity helps students could improve their vocabulary. In this activity, the students are assigned to complete the missing words of the text. They can use dictionary, context clues, and discuss it with their pairs or group. Thus, their vocabulary will increase. Then, the students to work with the text more closely through the analysis activities, the students learn to decide the main ideas, details, and the other essential information to help them to conclude what is the text about.

Moreover, this method helps students to take them to a critical level; they have to convey their opinions and reasons by their own words while answering the question and doing group discussion, they also have to connect one idea to others in order to produce a good and readable text. It means that this method can improve students reading comprehension.

It is suggested for English teacher to be more creative in choosing strategy or method. She/he should know what students need to improve students' weakness. If the teacher wants to use Direct Activities Related to the Text method, he/she should consider on the situation of the class so that she can manage the class well. She also should consider on the topic of the text that will influence students' motivation in reading. More importantly, this activity should engage all the students.

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