



Contextualisation of Direct Instruction Method in Teaching Reading Comprehension Skills: The Literature Review

Nuraeni¹, Sitti Aisyah²

^{1) 2)} Universitas Muslim Maros

¹⁾ nuraeni@umma.ac.id

²⁾ aisyahaskin@umma.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Direct Instruction is an approach where a teacher becomes the center of the teaching process. This teaching strategy is suitable to teach reading comprehension skills. In the process of using the Direct Instruction, a teacher needs to apply three basic concepts those are delivery, design, and documentation which means the teacher must prepare a creative lesson plan that can support students to adapt to a new concept during the ongoing process, the teacher must monitor students' development using assessment. Some studies show that this method is effective by combining strategies or media and it can improve students' skills. However, criticisms also hit this method. Some scholar proves from their study that this method is not always effective and is used only for students with low-level knowledge.

Keywords: *Direct Instruction, Reading Skills, Reading Comprehension*

INTRODUCTION

In studying English as a foreign language, there are four skills as the basis of language learning and reading is one of the essential language skills that need to be mastered (Abame et al., 2017). This skill cannot be separated from the other skills as they are integrated. Krashen & Brown (as cited in Qrgez & Ab Rashid, 2017) contended that reading skill is considered the most crucial skill among the basic skills since mastering reading comprehension means the improvement in other skills in language proficiency. This statement is in line with the research of a study conducted by Kaya (2015)

who found that having good reading comprehension skills can give a positive effect on writing skills. Furthermore, Qrgez & Ab Rashid (2017) claimed that reading skill is hugely valued and has an essential role in the development of society and the economy.

According to Nurdianingsih (2021), the aim of teaching reading comprehension to students is to assist the students in conceiving written text using the target language. Hence, in the reading process, there will be a written text that needs to be interpreted by a reader (Abame et al., 2017). On that account, writing text and reading skills are two important elements to

understand the target language. Therefore, the importance of reading comprehension skills is inevitable to studying English as a foreign language. It is in line with (Astri & Wahab, 2018) who stated that reading comprehension is important since it is the process of constructing the meaning of the text.

Reading is a very complex process involving several factors influencing one another. Nunan (as cited in Pustika, 2015) stated that reading is usually understood as a solitary activity in which the reader interacts with the text separately. Another definition comes from Abame et al (2017) who said that reading refers to the ability to process written symbols into logical meanings which become information, and then the information is analyzed in one's sense to comprehend the writer's message. It can be concluded that reading is not only seeing words in symbolic form, but reading is a communication process that involves the reader's enjoyment of interacting with the text. In addition, according to Haryanto (2019) reading is a way to get information conveyed verbally and is the result of opinions, ideas, theories, and the results of expert researchers to be known and become knowledge of students.

However, being able to have good reading skills is not an easy task to do. It needs patience and practice throughout the process of mastering it. In Indonesia, many studies have been conducted to examine problems encountered by students to comprehend

written text. Nanda & Azmy (2020) argued that Indonesian students experience obstacles in studying reading skills. In their study, they found that three factors are hindering the students when learning reading comprehension skills: lack of motivation, low prior knowledge, and low English vocabulary. In addition, Wahyuni, Ritonga, & Anastasya (2019) claimed that students experience difficulties in reading skills such as unfamiliar vocabulary and difficulty in understanding long sentences and their structures. Furthermore, Nanda & Azmy (2020) added that these problems can cause three major effects, those are low learning achievement, low problem-solving skills, and becoming barriers to the students' future in study and careers. Moreover, a survey conducted by Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) showed that Indonesia is one of the lowest levels of reading literacy among countries that participated in PISA and is ranked 71 out of 76 countries (PISA, 2018) Therefore, many strategies in teaching reading comprehension have been applied. In this article we will focus on a strategy that is hoped to help students' reading skills, that is the use of the Direct Instructions strategy.

Learning strategies are very important because they can facilitate the learning process to get maximum and effective results (Halim, 2012). For teachers, the learning strategy becomes a guide and reference for action, while for students it can make it easier and faster to understand the content of the lesson. In other

words, the learning strategy is an outline of acting in managing the process of teaching and learning activities to achieve effective and efficient learning objectives. According to Karismanto (2003), as cited in Nurdyansyah & Fitriyani, (2018), a learning strategy is a strategy used by teachers in class interaction, such as discussion, observation, and question and answer, as well as other activities that can encourage the formation of student competencies. In learning, the main task of the teacher is to condition the environment to support behavioral change for students, and this learning strategy is a general pattern of teacher and student actions in the manifestation of learning where the learning process has been carefully prepared to achieve learning goals. Kemp (1995, as cited in Nurdyansyah & Fitriyani, 2018) said the learning strategy is a learning process in learning that must be carried out by teachers and students to achieve effective and efficient learning goals.

One of the strategies that is suitable for improving reading comprehension is the use of Direct Instruction. Direct Instruction is a strategy used by a teacher focusing on the instruction with simple steps in the process of learning and the process should be in sequential steps (Zahrani, 2014). According to Burden & Byrd (2010), this learning strategy is effective to be applied in any lesson as it is based on behavioral learning principles such as gaining pupils' attention, reinforcing correct responses, providing feedback and corrective actions to

pupils, and conducting practice towards acquired knowledge

METHOD

This paper is an article review. In this paper, some significant articles related to Direct Instruction in teaching reading skills are reviewed. This review aims to acknowledge the use of the Direct Instruction method as one of the learning strategies that are relevant to be applied in language learning. This paper reveals studies conducting the Direct Instruction method as a strategy for teaching reading comprehension skills

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Direct Instruction

Direct Instruction refers to "an approach with skills-oriented and teacher-centered" (Sierra, 2012, p. 5). It means that Direct Instruction uses the teacher as the center of learning to develop students' skills. In the application of this method, Sierra claimed that the teacher needs to apply three basic concepts: delivery, design, and documentation which means the teacher must prepare a creative lesson plan that can support students to adapt to a new concept. Moreover, during the ongoing process, the teacher must monitor students' development using assessment. In addition, this method can use small group discussions and face-to-face instruction to explore students' cognitive skills (Sierra 2012 p.5). In terms of teaching reading comprehension, this method can advance students' comprehension using an

explicit teaching strategy. Additionally, Direct Instruction promotes fast-paced, scripted, well-sequenced, rule-based, and highly focused lessons (Shippen et al., 2005; Swanson & Hoskyn, 1999).

In order to succeed in this approach, there are steps that a teacher must follow (Zahrani, 2014), those are

1. Preparation: a teacher must be optimally prepared in the way that all the preparation such as media and lesson plans can gain students' motivation and come out from passiveness.
2. Presentation: a presentation technique should be prepared well therefore; the teaching material will be easier to understand
3. Correlation: it means that students can correlate the new information with their prior knowledge and gain new knowledge.
4. Generalization: it is the step that encourages the students to understand the material
5. Application: in this step, the teacher collects information from the students aiming to know how far students understand the material. For instance: giving a formative assessment.

Zahrani (2014) explained that in applying this method, some modeling steps are essential to assist teachers in implementing it. Namely:

1. Attention phase: The teacher gives a demonstration in front of students. Students then make observations of the

demonstration on the sheets provided. Further, the teacher and the students discuss the results of the observations made. The goal is to find the deficiencies and difficulties of students in understanding the material presented by the teacher and to train students in using observation sheets.

2. Retention phase: filled with teacher activities explaining demonstrations that students have observed.

Criticism of Direct Instruction

Even though many researchers believe that Direct Instruction is an approach that can benefit students to gain knowledge, critics from scholars are unavoidable. Leontovich (as cited in Shippen et al., 2005) claimed that this method is rigid, stifles teacher creativity, promotes passive learning, and fails to foster higher-level skills. This means that this approach is only suitable for students with lower performers. Further, other scholars Eppley & Dudley-Marling (2019) assumed that the result of Direct Instruction is only temporarily effective for low-level performance. In addition, they said that this method is not always successful as some studies review that it shows methodological problems that outweigh the effectiveness.

Contextualization: the Use of Direct Instruction in Improving Students' Reading Comprehension Skills

In terms of English reading skills, students must have good comprehension to comprehend reading materials. Therefore, it is necessary to find the best way to trigger students' engagement as many students have found that reading comprehension subjects are boring (Ganie & Rangkuti, 2019). Additionally, students can maximize learning chances, optimize approaches and abilities that should be highlighted, and gain the most from the classroom and education programs (Astri et al., 2022). As quoted from Ulfa (2011) claimed that students struggle to keep up the motivation to read since they need to comprehend a reading text in a foreign language. Furthermore, students' motivation, engagement, and comprehension will all improve if they are taught using engaging methods (Syamsir et al., 2021). In addition, students will learn more effectively if teachers present an appropriate teaching method to stimulate the learning process, and ultimately, this will lead to an improvement in the students' level of success (Astri, 2018). Therefore, there is a need to find methods that can help students to comprehend written text. It means that an interesting method needs to be carried out to keep students active in reading class.

Direct Instruction as a teaching strategy is not new however it is still one of the best ways to teach comprehension. Huitt, Monetti, &

Hummel (2009) in their study found that Direct Instruction has high quality and is able to assist students to reach their maximal potential. So, designing a Direct Instruction strategy to teach reading comprehension can direct students to achieve good comprehension skills. However, the application of this method will be the best by combining some media or strategies such as using paper-based tasks (Sari & Ivada, 2013) and cognitive strategies (Rusmiati & Kamalina, 2017).

Studies conducted using the Direct Instruction strategy benefit students by giving a positive impact on their comprehension skills. For instance, the study carried out by Zahriani (2014). She conducted research on high school students in grade XI at SMA Islam AL-Fatah Abu Lam U. in her research using a descriptive qualitative method she found that using the Direct Instruction with some cognitive strategies could improve students' reading comprehension skills. The cognitive strategies that students used were resourcing, repetition, summarizing, and deduction. From the questionnaires, the researcher found that most students used deduction to understand ideas in every passage. The next research using Direct Instruction was conducted by Sari & Ivada (2013). They carried out a study to improve students' comprehension using Direct Instruction with paper-based task media. This study was action research with two cycles. During the experiment in learning cycles, students showed a positive impact. They

became more active during the interaction and gained more motivation to learn.

The other study was also carried out by (Cromley & Azevedo, 2007). They studied the use of the Direct and Inferential Mediation (DIME) model. The model hypothesizes relationships among background knowledge, inferences, reading comprehension strategies, vocabulary, and word reading and addresses the direct and mediated effects of these five predictors on comprehension. This model was tested on 175 students in grade 9. The result showed that from all the measures with the DIME model, students had averagely low scores. Therefore, the researchers suggested that to improve reading comprehension skills, the best way to begin was to advance vocabulary lists and diagnose students' background knowledge. In doing so, it was hoped that teachers could find the best method to improve their comprehension skills

From the studies mentioned previously, the use of Direct Instruction is still relevant as a good method to improve students' reading comprehension skills. The studies showed that students were engaged to learn using this strategy and became more motivated.

CONCLUSION

The Direct Instruction method is still one of the best ways to teach reading comprehension skills. Some strategies or media can be combined with this method to enhance students' motivation to learn. However, critics also come to the surface. Critics said that this

method only works for lower-order thinking students and is not effective for higher-order thinking. Therefore, teachers must be creative by creating activities that can gain students' engagement in classroom interaction

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