



Article History:

Submitted:

20-07-2020

Accepted:

07-08-2020

Published:

08-09-2020

## IMPLEMENTING CIRC STRATEGY TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' ABILITY IN READING COMPREHENSION AND WRITING EFL AT HIGHER EDUCATION LEVEL

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URL : <https://doi.org/10.32682/jeell.v7i1.1555> DOI:[doi.org/10.32682/jeell.v7i1.1555](https://doi.org/10.32682/jeell.v7i1.1555)

### Abstract

This study was describe the improvement of students' reading comprehension and writing ability through CIRC. In conducting this study, the reseracher collected data from students of second semester Speaking class in their second semester at STKIP PGRI Jombang. . The problems faced in this class are the students were still confused of how to find implicit and explicit information, word meaning, and reference word in reading comprehension, the students were still confused how to start producing narrative text and sometimes they lose their ideas in the middle of composing narative text because they were lack of vocabularies.The instruments used here were interview. observation, field note, questionnaires, and test. . Each cycle consisted of four meetings in which two meetings were for implementing reading comprehension and the other two meetings were for implementing writing. The results of the study show that CIRC can improve (1) students' ability in reading compehension and writing and (2) teaching and learning process. Thus, CIRC can be an alternative teaching strategy that benefits for improving students' achievement, ability, and participation in the teaching and learning process.

**Keywords:** Reading Comprehension, Writing, and Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC)

### Abstrak



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Penelitian ini menggambarkan peningkatan kemampuan membaca siswa dan kemampuan menulis melalui CIRC. Dalam melakukan penelitian ini, peneliti mengumpulkan data dari siswa kelas Berbicara semester kedua di semester kedua mereka di STKIP PGRI Jombang. . Masalah yang dihadapi di kelas ini adalah siswa masih bingung bagaimana menemukan informasi implisit dan eksplisit, makna kata, dan kata referensi dalam pemahaman bacaan, siswa masih bingung bagaimana mulai memproduksi teks naratif dan kadang-kadang mereka kehilangan ide di tengah menyusun teks naratif karena mereka kekurangan kosakata. Instrumen yang digunakan di sini adalah wawancara, observasi, catatan lapangan, kuesioner, dan tes. . Setiap siklus terdiri dari empat pertemuan di mana dua pertemuan untuk menerapkan pemahaman membaca dan dua pertemuan lainnya untuk menerapkan menulis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa CIRC dapat meningkatkan (1) kemampuan siswa dalam membaca dan menulis, dan (2) proses belajar mengajar. Dengan demikian, CIRC dapat menjadi strategi pengajaran alternatif yang bermanfaat untuk meningkatkan prestasi, kemampuan, dan partisipasi siswa dalam proses belajar mengajar.

Kata kunci: Pemahaman Membaca, Menulis, dan Membaca dan Komposisi Koperasi Terpadu (CIRC)

## Introduction

Cooperative learning is one of active learning means provide as an appropriate strategy which can improve learning effectiveness and providing students with the skills of collaborating and cooperating. Gupta & Ahuja (2014) argue that Cooperative learning may be defined as any classroom learning situation in which students of all levels of performance work together in structured groups toward a shared or common goal” (p. 20)

Most of the students feel bored when they have reading class. They prefer talking each other or replying message to reading a book or writing something in public place. This is because students think that reading and writing are not interesting activities Nevertheless, students should have ability to read and write. Reading comprehension is a process that engages the reader. Reading comprehension is a construction of the meaning of written text through interaction between the reader and the text (Zaerei & Keshavas, 2015).

Teaching reading as foreign language doesn't seem the level of difficulty with teaching reading in the first language. It happens in Indonesia because reading as English as foreign language has different linguistics aspects and meaning with Indonesian language. The same problems were faced by the third semester Reading class in STKIP. The problems were found through preliminary study. The serious problems on reading comprehension were the students could find implicit and explicit information, word meaning, and reference word while on writing were the students confused to start producing narrative text and sometimes they lose their ideas in the middle of composing narrative text because they were lack of vocabularies.

Reading ability can be developed best by integrating with writing, listening, and speaking ( Brown, 2001). This is the reason why integrated teaching skills should be implemented ( Mubarok et al., 2016). One of skills that can be integrated with reading is writing since after reading , the students need to write a note or summary taken from the text. The task of a teacher is to provide suitable learning strategy in order students can improve their achievement and ability.

Gupta & Ahuja (2014) argue that Cooperative Learning is an effective technique to implement into reading classes. This student-centered approach changes the one-way operation in traditional classroom and creates harmonious atmosphere by establishing active cooperation among students.

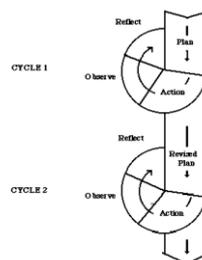
Farzaneh & Nejadansari (2014) find that teaching reading comprehension in Iranian context toward the students' attitude using CIRC has positive response because the students generally tend towards supporting the implementation of cooperative strategies in teaching and learning reading comprehension. While Mubarak & Rudianto (2018) they learned many things to ask such the question beginning with what, where, when, why and how in their writing. They got the theory from the lecture and the lecturer guided them to write, gave a feedback, did editing and revision.

This paper concerned on CIRC strategy as the best answer to the problems. CIRC does not concern on reading comprehension or writing only but both of the skills. The activities in CIRC are reading then writing. Through the strategy, the students eager to know the material given. Therefore, students can find implicit and explicit information, word meaning, and reference word. Besides, they can read more paragraph as well as more books than before. Also, through CIRC, students can compose good writing. Thus, it is expected can increase students' achievement, participation, and ability in reading comprehension and writing.

### Research Methods

Classroom Action Research (CAR) is the best research method as CIRC is the best strategy to solve classroom problems. The function of CAR is to solve classroom problem which means a classroom practice that can still be developed in resulting better learning achievement of the students (Latief, 2011). CAR activities involve repeated cycles. Each cycle consists of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The result of one cycle would have been used to determine the need for the following cycle, until the problems get solved by the strategy.

**Figure 1**  
**The Action Research Spiral**



Kemmis, S., McTaggart, R. (1998)

### Planning

Planning was activities of doing preliminary study, planning strategy, and arranging criteria of success.

**a. Planning the Strategy**

Planning the strategy is a step to arrange the classroom instructional strategy to be developed in the study to solve the instructional problems (Latief, 2010: 148).

**-Teaching Strategy**

After finding problems, and CIRC as the solution. These are the steps of implementing CIRC. First, lecturer explains the materials. Second, lecturer gives one exercise to the class to be answered together. Third, lecturer divides students into heterogenous member of groups reading based on the result of preliminary test. Fourth, lecturer gives a different text to the groups. In this part, groups are asked to read silently and work together. Fifth, groups answer questions by discussing the characters, setting, problems, plot, resolution, finding main idea, and reference words. Sixth, groups present their works in front of the class. Seventh, each students is asked to produce a text. Eighth, students are given test. Ninth, lecturer reflects the material.

**- Lesson Plan**

The lesson plans are designed with the purpose of providing the teacher with guidelines of teaching and learning activities. This study developed 2 lesson plans to be covered in four meetings which two meeting were for teaching reading and two meetings were for teaching writing. The indicators of reading that had to be achieved were students are able to: (a) determine the general idea of narrative text; (b) guess the implicit information from narrative text; (c) guess the explicit information from narrative text; (d) determine the main idea of narrative text; (e) determine moral value from narrative text; (f) guess the word meaning of narrative text; (g) guess reference word from narrative text. The indicators of writing that had to be achieved were students are able to: (a)

plan their writing; (b) draft their words based on planning; (c) revise their writing; (d) edit their revising.

**b. Criteria of success**

The criteria of success were used to find out the students' improvement after the implementation of a strategy. For this paper, the criteria of success were students' achievement and students' participation. Students' achievement was measured from the score of minimum passing grade of sub base competence through test of reading comprehension and writing process through on going process whereas students' participation was measured from students' questionnaires. Furthermore, the action research considered successful if: their reading comprehension score was passing minimum passing grade of sub base competence that was 65; their writing score was passing minimum passing grade of sub base competence that was 64; and students' participation was above 50%.

**c. Participants / Subject / Population and Sample**

The subjects were 30 students of the third semester Reading class inSTKIP. This paper was done collaboratively with English Lecture of the class.

**d. Instruments**

The instruments that used to collect the data were interview, questionnaires, observation check list, field note, and test.

**- Interview**

The researcher got data of lecture's problem, students' characteristics (includes their input, motivation, and self confidence), lesson plan (how was the lesson plan preparation, materials, media, teaching strategy, evaluation, "kartu soal", scoring system, and teachers' follow up)

**- Questionnaires**

Questionnaires were given for students which were used to know the information from students as their participation. Questions in questionnaires to reveal students' characteristics, students' learning device, facilities and source of learning, students' participation, and learning reading and writing.

**- Observation Checklist**

Researcher as an observer. It was used to know the teacher's and students' activities in the class during preliminary study.

**- Field Note**

It was used to know the atmosphere of class between teacher and students during preliminary study by seeing their strength and weakness. The researcher took field note of the class during preliminary study. In teaching reading, the strength of the teacher was in giving motivation before materials, explaining materials clearly, and pronouncing the words. Mean while, the strength of the students was their curiosity to know the material and they were cooperative. In teaching writing, the strength of the teacher was in explaining and giving brainstorming. Mean while, the strength of the students was some of them ask about the difficulties.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Results**

Collecting data during implementing CIRC. The data collected were related to the criteria of success. The following would like to describe the findings in cycle 1 and cycle 2.

#### **Cycle 1**

The data collected were students' achievement and students' participation.

##### **a. Students' Achievement**

Students' achievement was from test. It was used to measure students' proficiency in reading and writing. Reading comprehension test ,there were 20 questions of multiple choices. From the students' reading comprehension test,

only 7 students got score more than 65, the minimum passing grade of sub base competence. From students' writing, there were only 9 students got more than 63.

#### **b. Students' Participation**

Questionnaires were given after implementing the strategy. Questionnaires after implementing CIRC (whereas as students' participation after implementing CIRC) were different from questionnaires in preliminary study (whereas to know the evidence). These revealed 4 aspects that were students' characteristics, learning device, reading step and writing step.

#### **Cycle 2**

The data collected were students' achievement and students' participation.

##### **a. Students' Achievement**

Reading comprehension test was done. There were 20 questions of multiple choices. From the students' reading comprehension test, all students got score 65 or more, the minimum passing grade of sub base competence. From students' writing, all students got more 63, the minimum passing grade of sub base competence.

##### **b. Students' Participation**

Questionnaires were given after implementing the strategy. Questionnaires in the cycle 2 had the same questions in the cycle 1 whereas used as students' participation after implementing CIRC.

These are the result of questionnaires that related to students' participation: (1) question number 6 which shows most of students agree that group presentation make them active in asking question, as shown by the percentage of 64.28% mode; (2) question number 7 which shows that most of students in the class agree that group presentation make them active in giving opinion, as shown by the percentage of 64.28% mode; (3) question number 8 which shows that most of students can work with their friends when teacher asks them to answer the questions, as shown by the

percentage of 71.43% mode; (4) question number 12 which shows that half of students in the class who can read text fast to see the important points when teacher asks students to answer questions in group, as shown by the percentage of 50% mode; (5) question number 13 which shows that more than half students in the class who can read fast to identify the specific points when teacher asks students to answer questions in group, as shown by the percentage of 57.14% mode; (6) question number 15 which shows that most of students can not retell the text in the end of the study, as shown by the percentage of 87.71% mode; (7) question number 17 which shows that most students can not make a plan after working in group, as shown by the percentage of 64.28% mode; (8) question number 18 which shows that most of students can draft after planning, as shown by the percentage of 71.43% mode; (9) question number 19 which shows that most of students can revise their writing, as shown by the percentage of 71,43% mode; (10) question number 20 which shows that most of students can edit their writing, as shown by the percentage of 64.28% mode.

In the cycle 2, lecturer still acted as observer who observed the activities that related to students' participation. This was still done by using observation checklist. From observation checklist, was found that (1) 64,1% students participated in giving question, opinion, and argument; (2) 100% students participated in planning their writing; (3) 100% students participated in drafting sentences; (4) 100% students participated in revising their writing; (5) 100% students participated in editing their revising.

Field note was also done by an observer which was used to observe the classroom atmosphere between the practitioner and the students. From field note, was found that the strength of the practitioner was in getting close too students but the weakness was there was no ice breaking before the material given. Meanwhile, the strength of the students was active in asking

when presentation was being done, they was active in asking their difficulties and they were cooperative in discussing the questions given.

## **Discussion**

Discussion is about describing how the data collected. The data were related to the criteria of success. The criteria of success were students' achievement and students' participation. Students' achievement was from test and students' participation were from questionnaires, observation checklist, and field note.

### **1. Cycle 1**

The data collected were students' achievement and students' participation.

#### **a. Students' Achievement**

Students' achievement was from test. In reading comprehension test, there are 20 questions of multiple choices. The questions were related to the indicators that students had to be achieved. In writing, the activities were related to the indicators that students had to be achieved. From the students' reading comprehension test, only 7 students got score more than 65, the minimum passing grade of sub base competence. Meanwhile, 7 students still did not pass the minimum passing grade of sub base competence. From students' writing, there were 9 students got more than 63. Meanwhile, 5 students still did not pass the minimum passing grade of sub base competence.

#### **b. Students' Participation**

Questionnaires after implementing CIRC were different from questionnaires in preliminary study. Students were called success if students' questionnaires as their participation were above 50%. It revealed 4 aspects that were students' characteristics, learning device, reading step and writing step. Teacher acted as observer. Observer observed the activities that related to students' participation. It did not

mean to judge the practitioner's performance and did not influence students' achievement.

These are the result of questionnaires and observation checklist: (1) in questionnaires, most of students agree that group presentation make them active in giving question, as shown by the percentage of 64.28% mode while in observation checklist, only 50% students participate in giving question, opinion, and argument. It means that students agree if group presentation can make them active but it does not mean that most of them can bravely give question, opinion, and argument; (2) in questionnaires, most of students cannot make a plan after working in group, as shown by the percentage of 64.28% mode while in observation checklist, 100% students participate in planning their writing. It means that even all of students participate in planning but most of them still cannot plan their writing; (3) in questionnaires, most of students can draft after planning, as shown by the percentage of 71.43% mode while in observation checklist, 100% students participate in drafting sentences. It means that even all students draft their writing, it does not mean that all of students can do that; (4) in questionnaires, half students can revise their writing, as shown by the percentage of 50% mode while in observation checklist, 100% students participate in revising their writing. It means that even all students participate in revising but only 7 students can revise their writing; (5) in questionnaires, most of students can edit their writing, as shown by the percentage of 64.28% mode while in observation checklist, 100% students participate in editing their revising. It means that even all of students participate in editing their revising but it does not mean that all of students can edit their revising.

Furthermore, the practitioner reflected and evaluated the learning activities in the first cycle and tried to get solution on the problem by planning some action such as:

- 1) The practitioner should be more creative in delivering materials.
- 2) The practitioner should give clear instruction and guide students in doing activities.
- 3) The practitioner should manage the class well.

Thus, this can be concluded that the practitioner needs to conduct the following cycle in order students' reading comprehension and writing improved.

## 2. Cycle 2

The data collected were students' achievement, questionnaires, observation checklist, and field note.

### a. Students' Achievement

Students' achievement was from test. In reading comprehension test, there are 20 questions of multiple choices. The questions were related to the indicators that students had to be achieved. In writing, the activities were related to the indicators that students had to be achieved. From the students' reading comprehension test, all students got score 65 or more, the minimum passing grade of sub base competence. From students' writing, all students got more 63, the minimum passing grade of sub base competence.

### b. Students' Participation

Questionnaires were given after implementing the strategy. Questionnaires in the cycle 2 had the same questions in the cycle 1 whereas used as students' participation after implementing CIRC. Students were called success if students' questionnaires as their participation were above 50%. In the cycle 2, teacher still acted as

observer who observed the activities that related to students' participation. This was done by using observation checklist. It did not mean to judge the practitioner's performance and did not influence students' achievement.

These are the result of questionnaires and observation checklist in cycle 2: (1) in questionnaires, most of students agree that group presentation make them active in giving question, as shown by the percentage of 64.28% mode while in observation checklist, 64.1% students participate in giving question, opinion, and argument. It shows almost balance which means that students agree if group presentation can make them active in giving question, opinion, and argument; (2) in questionnaires, most of students cannot make a plan after working in group, as shown by the percentage of 64.28% mode while in observation checklist, 100% students participate in planning their writing. It means that even all of students participate to plan their writing in the cycle 2; (3) in questionnaires, most of students can draft after planning, as shown by the percentage of 71.43% mode while in observation checklist, 100% students participate in drafting sentences. It means that even all of students draft their writing in cycle 2, it shows some students in the class still cannot drafting sentences but 71.43% has been above 50%; (4) in questionnaires, half students can revise their writing, as shown by the percentage of 64.28% mode while in observation checklist, 100% students participate in revising their writing. It means that even all students participate in revising but 3 students still cannot revise well their writing but 64.28% has been above 50%; (5) in questionnaires, most of students can edit their writing, as shown by the percentage of 64.28% mode while in observation checklist, 100% students participate in editing their revising. It means that even all of

students participate in editing their revising but 3 students cannot edit well their revising but 64.28% has been above 50%.

Therefore, the research data in the cycle 2 were collected. Then, the researcher reflected that all students passed the criteria of success. The condition of the class was getting better than before. Finally, the researcher concluded that the problems had been solved by the use of Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC). Furthermore, this proved that CIRC can improved improve students' ability in reading comprehension and writing in which students who has good in reading also good in writing.

## **Conclusion**

Teaching writing in the university level will be better by using cooperative learning technique called CIRC. Students in the EFL context are motivated by the concept of working together in a group rather than individually. Students can learn from other teammates if they are not willing to ask the lecturer. They can achieve the same goals in the learning rather than compete each other. After observing the process of teaching learning in the class, the researchers come to the conclusion that CIRC technique is appropriate to be applied in the class of writing subject where the students are students-workers type. This research could be a preliminary research to others who want to conduct a research about teaching writing. The researchers recommend that the effectiveness of using CIRC technique is further researched more comprehensively.

CIRC is one of cooperative learning which uses the curriculum package approach to develop basal readers and to conduct reading, writing, spelling, and language mechanics. It can be an alternative teaching strategy that benefits in improving students' achievement, ability, and participation in the teaching and learning process. To be successfully improving students' reading comprehension and writing, the teacher should be more innovative in delivering the material.

Furthermore, CIRC has many activities so this needs sufficient time allocation in gaining the goal.

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