

**COOPERATIVE INTEGRATED READING AND COMPOSITION
(CIRC) METHOD TO READING COMPREHENSION ON
DESCRIPTIVE TEXT OF EIGHT GRADERS AT SMPN 5
TAKENGON, ACEH TENGAH**

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Abstract: *Reading is one of receptive skills which lead people learn the context from kinds of information. The readers should be able to find out the main information from the text clearly. In this study, the researcher focused on students' comprehension skill on reading descriptive text. Having done a pre-research, it was found that there were many students found it difficult to find out specific information from the text they read. Due to the finding, the research was aimed at finding out whether Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) method was effective to improve students reading comprehension on descriptive text to second graders at SMPN 5 Takengon. Methodologically, this research referred to quantitative approach with experimental research design. The population of this research was all of the eight grade students of SMP N 5 Takengon with total number 112 students. As many 80 students were chosen to be samples which were divided into two classes, experimental and control, 40 students in each class. The data were analyzed by using t-test. It was found that the value of $t_{obtained}$ is higher than t_{table} ($6.66 > 2.02$) at the level of significance 0,05. Meaning, Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) method affected students' reading comprehension ability on descriptive text.*

Keywords: *CIRC, Reading Comprehension, Descriptive Text*

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a process of acquiring messages and information from what

writer delivers. Reading has three main purposes; for pleasure, application and comprehension. Reading for pleasure

means that the readers read to amuse themselves. Reading for application is an activity to get to know the process of doing something. Reading for comprehension is an activity by which the reader should get information to enhance their knowledge. Meaning, there is one way communication take places during reading; from author to reader.

For junior high school students, there are many types of texts that are actually presented in teaching learning English, reading. One of them is descriptive text. Descriptive text is a text which describes things; person, animal, place and others. The goal of descriptive text is to get clear description about something by; size, color, character, and appearance. The students should be able to understand and comprehend the information described in.

In learning English, it is essential to determine students' complexities in order that the teacher may apply such a proper method to help their learners acquire the substances, comprehending reading specifically. Here, the researcher conducted pre-research to the second grade students of SMPN 5 Takengon, as the object of study, which showed that

students found it difficult to take the gist or specific information from the text.

As reading is a receptive skill, students should master to understand what is written. To do so, it is not as easy as flipping hands. It needs efforts. The effort should be an appropriate learning method which might help readers comprehend what they are reading. Based on the explanation above, the researcher applied Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) Method to find out the effectiveness of the method to students' reading comprehension of descriptive text.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading and Comprehension Skills

A proverb says that reading is window to the world. It means that people are able to know the world by reading. To get the knowledge of the world, they have to be able to understand what they are reading. Reading is an activity by which the readers get in touch to authors' ideas, opinions, and messages. In line with this, Rubin as cited in Barchers (1998, p.14) defines reading as message-getting from the

printed page and problem solving (Schoenbach et al as cited in Barchers, 1998, p. 38).

To know the messages delivered by the authors, there are skills which indicate reader's comprehension ability; mentions some identifying topic, predicting and guessing, reading for general understanding and interpreting the text (Harmer, 2005, p. 201-202), reading for detailed information (Harmer, 2007, p.101), and analyzing vocabulary (Brown, 2001, p. 307).

Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) Method

CIRC was firstly developed by Slavin and his colleagues in 1987. It belongs to a cooperative learning in which the students are assigned in heterogeneous group (Stevens et al, 1987, p. 433). Slavin (1991, p. 12) and Durukan (2011, p. 2) states that the students are working in pair to help each other in performing basic skill activities; reading to one another, contextual guessing, making prediction, summarizing, asking questions, writing responses, revising-correcting composition, and practicing spelling, decoding and vocabulary to master main

idea and other comprehension skills. In short, CIRC method focuses on reading comprehension and writing skills.

Principal Elements of CIRC

According to Slaving (1991, p. 58) there are three principal elements of CIRC; basal-related activities, direct instruction in reading comprehension, integrated language arts and writing. They are explained as follows:

Basal-related activities

Basal-related activities are kinds of activities which the students have to do before and during teamwork. Before the students work in their team, the teacher proposes the purposes of reading, introduces the new word, and discusses the text read by the students. Next, the students do kinds of activities in their team after the teacher give some explanations (Slavin, 1991, p. 58).

Direct instruction in reading comprehension

Teacher clearly gives direct instruction in specific reading comprehension skills such as identifying main idea, finding specific detail information, understanding causal relations, and making inferences. After accomplishing each lesson, students do a

comprehension task or play games as a whole team, understanding one set of worksheet items and then assess one another and discuss the remain issues on second set of items (Slavin, 1991, p. 60).

Integrated language arts and writing

Here, the students work in team on language arts and writing program. These highlight writing skill. They write a composition based on the topic they have chosen and draft a composition after discussing with their teammate and teacher. The teacher directs the topic of writing skill such as compare/contrast paragraph, newspaper articles, mystery stories, and letters. As team, the students revise and edit the writing one another using peer grammatical and mechanical correctness. (Slavin, 1991, p. 60)

CIRC Procedures

Slavin (1991, p. 58) mentions the procedures as follow:

- a. **Before working in team:**Teacher appoints students to two or three group based on their reading level which consist of pairs or triads. For example, they are composed from two top reading groups and two from the low group. Team members achieve point based on their performances; quizzes, composition, and book reports. These points are as a reference to form a team.
- b. The teacher sets purposes of reading, introduces old and new vocabulary, and discusses the text read by the students that meet approximately 20 minutes each day.
- c. **After discussion led by teacher:** Students silently read the text and take turn to read it out loud with their partner.
- d. Students are given questions related to text which highlight the grammar and structure. At the end, the students respond holistically to the text and write a few paragraphs related to the topic of the text.
- e. Students are given list of new words and asked to practice to read correctly with their teammate until they can read smoothly.
- f. Students are given list of words that are new in their speaking and asked to identify the meaning, paraphrase the meaning, and write sentence for each meaning.
- g. Students sum up and deliver the main points of the text to their partner.

- h. Students check the list of spelling words one another every week.
- i. Students use a “disappearing list” of words to make practice the spelling and missed words until they go back to the full list.
- j. After accomplishing the activities, the students are given assignment by their partners to check whether they have completed the criteria of the task.
- k. At the end of three meetings, the students are tested to see their comprehension on a text, asked to form meaningful sentence from the vocabulary words, and read the word aloud to the teacher.

Descriptive Text

Descriptive text is a non fictional passage which describes or illustrates person, thing, animal, and place. The aim is to give clear description of the objects by their features and characters, so that the reader may visualize the object of what is read. According to Andersons (2003, p. 26), descriptive text describes particular person, place, and thing by its feature without including personal opinions.

The structure of the text consists of identification which states the object of the description, and description paragraphs illustrate the features and characters. Descriptive text has language features which use specific participant, adjective, linking verbs, relational and material processes, and is written in present tense.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was designed as experimental method which belonged to quantitative approach. Quantitative research is a research which stresses on analyzing phenomena or such condition mathematically. In line with this, Cresswell (1994, p 24) mentions that quantitative approach focuses on explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data which are analyzed statistically. He (2008, p. 299) also suggests researcher who wants to establish cause and effect between independent and dependent variables by applying experimental research design. Sugiyono (2010, p. 107) agrees that experimental research design is used to find out the effectiveness of technique toward the variables in controlled

condition. This controlled condition means that there are no factors which can interfere condition during the research.

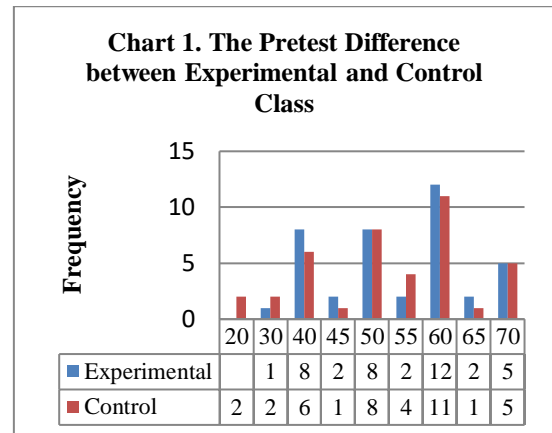
Here, the researcher divided the class to be experimental and control classes. The experimental was the class which was treated by CIRC method, while the control was the class which was taught without applying CIRC method. The sample of the research was eight graders of SMPN 5 Takengon which consisted of 40 students in experimental class and 40 students in control class.

To collect the data, the researcher used pretest and post test which was delivered before and after applying CIRC method. They were to know the preliminary data and the effect of CIRC method toward students' capability on comprehending descriptive text. Furthermore, the researcher analyzed the data by using t-test.

RESEARCH FINDING AND RESULT

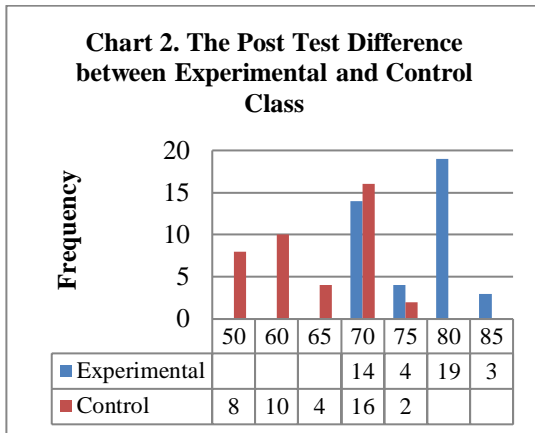
Having collected the data from pretest and post test of experimental and control class, the researcher analyzed the data to know the difference between

those classes by comparative analysis technique. The following describe the dissimilarity:



Source: Research Finding, 2019

The chart displays slight difference on the number of students who achieved the same score between experimental and control class. Mostly, the difference between the two classes was one to two students each score. For example, those who obtained 30, 45, 60 and 65 in the experimental class were more than in the control class, one student for each score and difference between students had 40 between treated and untreated class were two students. On the other hand, those getting 30 and 55 in the experimental class were less than in the control one. However, there were the same frequency of the students acquired 50 and 70.



Source: Research Finding, 2019

The chart describes that there was big difference between students who were and were not treated by CIRC method. In experimental class, there were no students who achieved 50, 60, and 65 rather than in the control class. Fourteen of 40 students got 70, four of them obtained 75, nineteen out of 40 students had 80, and the rest scored 85.

Seemingly, the chart shows that the CIRC method affected students' ability in comprehending descriptive text. To prove whether the method did, the researcher analyzed the data by using t-test at the 5% level of significance. The result was that the t-obtained was 6.66 higher than t-table, 2.02. Hence, it declares that the CIRC method affected students' reading comprehension to descriptive text.

DISCUSSION

As CIRC focuses on reading comprehension and writing skills, the students work cooperatively in heterogeneous group which are formed based on their reading level. Teacher begins the lesson by setting up the purposes of reading, introducing new vocabulary, and discussing the text read by the students. Next, the students are given list of activities to have comprehension about the text and to compose a writing based on the topic they choose after consulting the drafts of composition to their partners and teacher. Moreover, the students revise and edit the composition one another by using peer grammatical correctness. At the end, the students do a reading comprehension worksheet to confirm their reading comprehension ability.

After applying CIRC method to teach reading comprehension on descriptive text, the researcher found the significant difference between students who were and were not taught by CIRC method. It proved that those who were in experimental class enhanced their ability in comprehending descriptive text.

CONCLUSION

Reading as a receptive skill plays important role to comprehend the world. Readers need to have such a good comprehension skills that they enjoy the reading. For Junior High School students, however, reading English is kind of boring activities. It is because they are stuck at finding word meaning in order to be able to understand the text being read.

In teaching reading, the teacher should be able to use appropriate methods to engage students' interest. CIRC method is one of them. CIRC is a cooperative method or technique concentrating on reading and writing. The students are grouped heterogeneously based on their reading level. They get involved in basal reading activities which focus on reading comprehension skills and ending with writing a composition.

Having conducting the research by applying CIRC method, the researcher found that the t-test score which was higher than the t-table ($6.66 > 2.02$) with 5% level of significance. Meaning, students' reading

comprehension on descriptive text was affected.

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