

THE EFFECT OF COOPERATIVE INTEGRATED READING AND COMPOSITION (CIRC) METHOD TOWARD STUDENTS' READING ABILITY: A TRUE-EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH AT THE 8TH GRADE STUDENTS' IN SMP N 5 OF BENGKULU CITY, ACADEMIC YEAR 2024/2025

Siti Nur Azizah¹, Ferri Susanto², Dedi Efrizal³

^{1,2,3}Tadris Bahasa Inggris FTT UINFAS Bengkulu

¹sitii.az27@gmail.com, ²ferrisusanto@mail.uinfasbengkulu.ac.id,

³dedi.efrizal@mail.uinfasbengkulu.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This research investigates the effect of the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) method on students' reading ability. The research was conducted at SMP N 5 Bengkulu City with eighth-grade students during the 2024/2025 academic year. The CIRC method, a collaborative learning approach, was implemented to address challenges such as students' difficulty in understanding English texts, limited vocabulary, lack of confidence, and low interest in reading. The research employed a true-experimental design to examine the impact of the CIRC method on students' reading comprehension. The findings of this study are expected to provide valuable insights for educators and contribute to the existing literature on effective strategies for teaching reading skills.

Keywords: CIRC Method, Reading Ability, Cooperative Learning, SMP N 5 Bengkulu City

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji pengaruh metode Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) terhadap kemampuan membaca siswa. Penelitian dilaksanakan di SMP Negeri 5 Kota Bengkulu dengan subjek siswa kelas VIII pada tahun ajaran 2024/2025. Metode CIRC, yang merupakan pendekatan pembelajaran kolaboratif, diterapkan untuk mengatasi permasalahan seperti kesulitan siswa dalam memahami teks berbahasa Inggris, keterbatasan kosakata, kurangnya kepercayaan diri, dan rendahnya minat membaca. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain eksperimen sejati untuk menguji dampak metode CIRC terhadap pemahaman membaca siswa. Temuan dari penelitian ini diharapkan dapat memberikan wawasan yang bermanfaat bagi para pendidik dan berkontribusi pada literatur yang ada mengenai strategi efektif dalam pengajaran keterampilan membaca.

Kata Kunci: Metode CIRC, Kemampuan Membaca, Pembelajaran Kooperatif, SMP N 5 Kota Bengkulu

A. Introduction

Reading is a vital skill that serves as the foundation for both academic

and personal growth. It is a complex process in which individuals actively decode written symbols and transform

these visual representations into meaningful ideas, allowing them to fully understand the intended message (Aritonang et al., 2019). The ability to read well is essential not only for academic success in all subjects but also for navigating everyday life and fostering lifelong learning. Proficiency in reading provides access to a wealth of knowledge and helps individuals participate more fully and effectively in a literate society.

Reading is not just about decoding words and letters; it involves actively understanding the ideas and content embedded in the text. This includes various forms of written communication, such as exciting stories that spark the imagination, detailed descriptions that create vivid mental images, song lyrics that stir emotions, and poetry that conveys deep meanings. Furthermore, reading is an active process, where readers actively search for specific information and form an integrated understanding of the material they are reading (A. Adri & Haryudin, 2019). This engagement requires cognitive effort and the use of different reading strategies to make sense of the material.

The ability to read effectively enables individuals to extract relevant information from written text and accurately understand the author's message, purpose, and viewpoints. This level of comprehension is crucial not only in academic settings but also in everyday communication, both socially and professionally. Research has shown that frequent reading helps individuals expand their knowledge and develop a deeper understanding of the world (Sirait et al., 2020). Regular readers tend to have a broader perspective on various issues.

Reading consistently improves an individual's ability to communicate clearly, both verbally and in writing (Sirait et al., 2020). In other words, reading is a key element in developing strong communication skills by providing the necessary vocabulary, grammar, and understanding of language patterns. This solid foundation in reading is essential for success in various communication forms and is vital for effective participation in academic, professional, and social settings.

However, the development of reading skills in schools often faces several challenges. One major issue

observed is the lack of interest in reading among students, which can make it difficult for them to understand and engage with English texts (Syam et al., 2020). This lack of motivation creates a barrier to language learning and academic achievement, as reading is a fundamental skill required for learning in all subjects. Addressing this lack of interest is essential for developing a positive attitude toward reading and encouraging lifelong learning.

Initial observations at SMP Negeri 5 Bengkulu City in 2024 revealed that many students struggle with understanding English reading texts. They have difficulty grasping the meaning of the texts and lack confidence when asked to read English aloud in class. These challenges highlight the need to investigate the root causes of these comprehension issues and explore potential solutions. Being able to read fluently and comprehend texts is essential for students' success in English language studies and beyond.

Further investigation through interviews with the experienced English teacher at the school revealed that many students have limited English vocabulary. This vocabulary

gap poses a significant challenge to understanding English texts, making it hard for students to decode words, understand their meanings in context, and fully grasp the content of the material.

The teacher also noted that many students show little interest in engaging with English reading materials, suggesting the need for teaching methods that can increase motivation and appreciation for reading in English.

Many students at SMP Negeri 5 Bengkulu City see reading English texts as a difficult and unappealing task, often avoiding it whenever possible. The combination of difficulties with comprehension due to limited vocabulary, lack of interest, and avoidance behavior highlights the urgent need for targeted interventions. These interventions should focus on improving basic reading skills, expanding students' vocabulary, and, most importantly, increasing their interest and confidence in reading English texts successfully and with enjoyment.

In response to these challenges, this research proposes the implementation of the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition

(CIRC) method in the English language classroom. The CIRC method is a well-established and research-supported approach to collaborative learning, specifically designed to enhance various language skills, including reading, writing, and overall language proficiency, particularly in upper primary education (Durukan, 2011). This method offers a structured and engaging framework for language development through cooperative learning principles.

The CIRC method emphasizes group collaboration, creating a dynamic learning environment where students actively interact with their peers, support each other academically, and learn together (Maruf & Anjely, 2020). A key part of this method involves students engaging in pre-reading activities that are carefully designed to help them understand the reading material before tackling the main text. This early engagement activates prior knowledge, builds anticipation, and improves reading comprehension (Maruf & Anjely, 2020).

The CIRC method offers several benefits that directly address the challenges students face with reading.

These benefits include improved reading comprehension, better ability to answer questions about the text, increased student participation, reduced dominance of the teacher in the classroom, and increased self-confidence through opportunities for class presentations and group work (Wibowo, 2016). By creating a collaborative and engaging learning environment, the CIRC method aims to provide a more effective and enjoyable experience for students.

Previous research has shown strong evidence supporting the positive impact of the CIRC method on students' reading abilities in different educational contexts. For example, a study by Ismail et al. (2022) demonstrated significant improvements in students' reading skills at STKIP Kie Raha Ternate after implementing the CIRC method. Similarly, Utami et al. (2024) found that applying the CIRC model significantly improved reading comprehension outcomes for fifth-grade elementary students. These studies provide a strong foundation for investigating the effectiveness of the CIRC method at SMP Negeri 5 Bengkulu City.

Therefore, this research aims to examine the effect of the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) method on the reading ability of eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 5 Bengkulu City during the 2024/2025 academic year. The results of this research are expected to provide valuable insights for teachers at the school and potentially for a broader audience of English teachers.

B. Research Method

This research employed a true-experimental quantitative method using the Solomon Four-Group Design to assess the effectiveness of the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) method on eighth-grade students' reading abilities at SMPN 5 Bengkulu for the 2024/2025 academic year. The design included four groups—two experimental and two control—to control for the effects of pre-testing and isolate the treatment's impact. The total population comprised 367 students from 11 classes, with classes VIII.B and VIII.C (34 students each) selected as the sample through random assignment. Data collection involved pre-tests, treatment using the CIRC method, and post-tests. The

reading ability was assessed using CAEL-based scoring criteria, ranging from Very Limited to Expert Reader. Validity and reliability of the instruments were tested on 30 students from a comparable school, yielding 27 valid items with a high reliability coefficient of 0.797. Item difficulty and differentiability tests showed the questions had moderate difficulty (65.46%) and good discrimination power ($DP = 0.3083$). Data analysis included normality (Shapiro-Wilk), homogeneity, paired and independent t-tests, and two-way ANOVA, all conducted using SPSS version 28, to evaluate statistical significance and ensure data assumptions were met. These analyses aimed to determine whether the CIRC method significantly improved students' reading performance and to examine the interaction between pre-tests and treatment effects.

C. Result and Discussion

This research investigated the effectiveness of the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) method on the reading ability

of eighth-grade students at SMP N 5 Bengkulu City. A true-experimental design using the Solomon Four Group was implemented. The experimental groups received treatment using the CIRC method, where students worked in cooperative groups to read, discuss, and complete tasks related to reading texts. During group time, students engaged in identifying main ideas, interpreting vocabulary in context, and making inferences. Meanwhile, the control groups followed traditional, teacher-centered instruction. Reading ability was measured through pre-tests and post-tests that focused on indicators such as explicit information, vocabulary mastery, and reading comprehension.

The descriptive statistics revealed a substantial increase in reading scores among the experimental groups. In Group A, which received the CIRC treatment and was given a pre-test, the average pre-test score was 50.35, and it increased significantly to 95.12 in the post-test. Meanwhile, Group C, which also received the CIRC treatment but was not given a pre-test, achieved a post-test average of 89.82.

In contrast, the control groups showed lower post-test scores. Group

B, which received conventional instruction, had a pre-test average of 51.82 and a post-test average of 69.29. Similarly, Group D, which also followed traditional instruction without a pre-test, only reached a post-test average of 45.71.

These findings clearly demonstrate that the CIRC method resulted in significantly higher improvements in students' reading ability compared to the conventional teaching method.

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis of Experimental and Control Group

	N	Descriptive Statistics			
		Mini mu m	Ma xim um	Mean	Std. Deviation
Prettest A	17	37	67	50,353	8,568
Posttest A	17	89	100	95,118	3,179
Prettest B	17	37	67	51,824	9,507
Posttest B	17	63	78	69,294	3,426
Posttest C	17	81	100	89,824	4,643
Posttest D	17	33	67	45,706	8,696
Valid N (listwise)	17				

Paired sample t-tests were conducted to determine the difference in scores before and after the treatment within the same groups. The results showed significant

improvement in both the experimental and control groups ($p < 0.05$), although the gain in the experimental groups was significantly greater. This confirms that while both instructional methods may improve reading performance to some extent, the CIRC method leads to more pronounced gains.

An independent samples t-test between the post-test scores of Group C (experimental) and Group D (control) revealed a statistically significant difference ($p = 0.000$). This suggests that the CIRC method significantly outperforms traditional instruction in enhancing reading skills. The method appears especially beneficial in supporting students' comprehension, vocabulary development, and inference-making, all of which were reflected in the test results.

A two-way ANOVA test further confirmed that the treatment had a statistically significant effect on students' reading ability. The obtained F-count value was 21.33, which was much higher than the critical F-table value of 2.74 at the 0.05 significance level. The between-groups sum of squares was 25757.69, with 3 degrees of freedom (df) and a mean square

(MK) of 8585.89. The within-group sum of squares was 2023.30, with 64 degrees of freedom, resulting in a mean square of 402.46. The total sum of squares was 27780.98.

These results indicate a strong and significant interaction effect between the treatment and students' performance in reading. Therefore, it reinforces the conclusion that the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) method had a measurable and beneficial impact on students' reading ability compared to conventional methods.

Table 2. Interpretation of Data from Two-Way ANOVA Calculation

Varians	JK	DB	MK	F Count	F Table
JK Between Groups	25757,69	3	8585,89		0,05
JK in Group	2023,296	64	402,46	21,33	2,74
Sum of Squares (JK)	27780,98	67			

These findings are consistent with previous studies. Ismail et al. (2022) found that the CIRC method was effective in improving reading comprehension, particularly among junior high school students. Similarly, Utami et al. (2024) highlighted that the CIRC model significantly enhanced

students' reading ability, especially in identifying main ideas and making inferences. The results of this study support these claims by showing how cooperative reading activities allow students to engage with one another, enhance their motivation, and deepen their understanding through discussion and collaboration.

In summary, the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) method proved to be effective in improving students' reading ability, supporting collaborative learning, and increasing group interaction. The combination of structured cooperation and student-centered group activities fostered a more engaging and impactful learning environment. These results not only reinforce the value of the CIRC method in English language learning but also suggest its potential for broader application in other subject areas that require strong reading skills.

D. Conclusion

The research conclusively demonstrates that the implementation of the CIRC method significantly improved students' reading ability.

The consistent statistical significance observed across paired t-tests, independent t-tests, and two-way ANOVA analyses provides robust evidence for the CIRC method's positive impact on reading comprehension. The findings strongly indicate that the CIRC method is a more effective instructional approach for enhancing reading ability compared to traditional teaching methods.

It is strongly recommended that teachers integrate the CIRC method into their reading instruction to foster improved reading comprehension, active student engagement, and the development of collaborative learning skills. Furthermore, future research should explore the CIRC method's effectiveness in diverse educational contexts, including different grade levels, subject areas, and student populations, to further validate its applicability and identify potential moderating factors that may influence its outcomes. Longitudinal studies are also recommended to investigate the long-term effects of the CIRC method on students' reading development and academic achievement.

To facilitate the successful implementation of the CIRC method,

schools and educational institutions should provide teachers with adequate resources, training, and ongoing support. This support should include professional development opportunities focused on cooperative learning strategies, access to appropriate reading materials, and guidance on classroom management techniques to effectively implement the CIRC method and maximize its benefits for students' reading development.

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