

# THE EFFECT OF COOPERATIVE INTEGRATED READING AND COMPOSITION (CIRC) STRATEGY ON STUDENTS' WRITING ABILITY

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## *Abstrak*

Penelitian ini bertujuan meneliti pengaruh strategi CIRC pada kemampuan menulis siswa dengan menggunakan desain *pre-test* dan *post-test* kelompok kontrol random. Sampel kelompok random ditentukan dengan lotere. Kelompok eksperimen dan kelompok kontrol terdiri dari 36 siswa. Pengambilan data dilakukan dengan memberikan tes menulis teks deskriptif. Untuk menganalisis data digunakan t-test. Hasil analisis t-test didapatkan nilai 2.57 dan setelah dikonsultasikan dengan tabel t dengan taraf signifikansi 0.005 dan derajat kebebasan 70 adalah 1.99 Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa nilai t-test lebih tinggi daripada nilai tabel t ( $2.57 > 1.99$ ), sehingga dapat disimpulkan bahwa terdapat pengaruh yg signifikan dalam menggunakan strategi CIRC pada kemampuan menulis siswa.

Kata kunci: Strategi CIRC, kemampuan menulis

## INTRODUCTION

Competency based curriculum which is implemented in Indonesian school stated that learning English aimed to develop students' competence to communicate in English both orally and written. Writing ability for students refers to the competence of mastering the genre, understanding and producing some kind

of texts. Moreover, English in Indonesia is learned as a Foreign Language. Commonly, in the writing teaching learning process, the teacher only focused it on the students' writing product rather than on the process of writing. The students need an effective strategy to be able to write English well.

Writing is the activity of expressing ideas in a written form. Fairbairn and Winch (1996: 32) define writing as an activity

to convey meaning by selecting words and putting them together in a written or printed form. However, for students on the seventh grade (12-14 years old), writing activity is not only deliver ideas, but it also construct them into paragraphs in the text. According to Harmer (2004: 28), to make students easy in writing is to let them read examples of the kind of thing we want them to do before we ask them to write. In other words, combining reading and writing is an effective strategy to make students produce their writing well. It means that reading and writing have significant connection that can influence each other. One of the teaching strategies that can be applied by combining reading and writing is CIRC (Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition) Strategy.

CIRC as one of the strategies in cooperative learning methods enables English teachers to teach reading and writing in integrated way. Slavin (1991: 12) stated that CIRC is a comprehensive method to teach reading, writing and language arts for upper elementary and middle grades. The students are assigned into groups to read and discuss the text. Analyzing, summarizing, and composing the text into a piece of paper. Then, they write a text personally.

Some researches showed that CIRC method was one of the effective ways to teach writing. Slavin (1991: 15) found the positive effects of CIRC on writing and oral reading skill. In addition, an experiment research conducted by Durukan (2011) showed that CIRC technique had a significant effect on reading-writing skills in a primary school in the center of Giresun Province, Turkey in the 2009/2010 academic year. The finding showed that the mean of the students' reading-writing score

in the experimental group was higher than that of the control group. Another research held by Himawati (2011) investigated the use of CIRC method on the eighth grade students' ability in composing narrative writing at MTs Negeri Kudus in the Academic Year 2010/2011. The research also showed that the use of CIRC method could improve the students' writing ability. In Artiyanti's study (2013), CIRC method can improve students' learning outcomes in writing hortatory exposition of the eleventh students of SMAN 2 Demak in Academic Year 2012/2013. Those researches indicate that CIRC strategy is a comprehensive strategy that can be applied in teaching and learning of writing.

Based on the explanation, to investigate wheter the students who are taught using CIRC have better writing ability are necessary to conduct.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **Participants**

The participants of this research were 72 students on the seventh grade students at SMP Negeri 3 Tanggul-Jember. Using cluster random sampling, the two classes VII C consisting 36 students and VII F consisting 36 students, were selected by lottery. The class of VII F as the experiment group and the class of VII C as the control group.

### **Instrument**

In this research, subjective test was used to measure students' writing ability. In the test, the students were asked to answer the questions by using their own words and interpretation based on their knowledge subjectively.

Regarding with the validity, this research used construct and content validity. The instrument administered is writing descriptive text consisting of 80-100 words. Besides, the reliability of the test was analyzed by using Alpha formula to calculate the score which is not 1 and 0, but in range of score 1 to 6. And the reliability of the test was is 0.819 (high correlation).

### Procedure

The research began on April until May 2014.

Two classes were taken in this research. One group was treated as control group and the other was treated as experimental group. Before the treatment was given, a pretest was established to both groups. Pre-test was given at first meeting in the same day to both groups.

strategy by giving them material and ask them to read the theme, then to write the descriptive text based on the example of the reading text. Meanwhile, the control group was taught by giving the same material, but it used lecturing method and the students worked individually.

After several meetings of teaching and learning process, the post test was given. The students of both group did the test individually.

### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

To collect the data of the research, pretest and post-test were given to both experimental and control group. The result of pretest and post-test of both groups can be described with the table below.

**Table 1. The Research Design**

	Group	Pre test	Treatment	Post test
R	Experimental	T1e	CIRC	T2e
R	Control	T1c	-	T2c

Notes:

- X : Treatment by giving CIRC strategy
- T1e : Pre-test for experimental group
- T1c : Pre-test for control group
- T2e : Post-test for experimental group
- T2c : Post-test for control group

For experimental group, at first week before treatment, the students were randomly divided into 9 groups in which each group consists of 4 heterogeneous members. It was to ensure that every group balanced. Then it was started to use CIRC (Suryabrata, 2011: 105)

Based on the calculation of t-test from the score of pretest and post-test on writing descriptive text, the result was 2.57. The result of the degree of freedom (df) was 70 compared with t-table by using significance 0.005 or t 0.95 gave the result 1.994. It was clear that the value of t-test

**Table 2. Comparison Of The Control and Experimental Group's Scores**

Group	Pre-test		Post-test		Difference		Quadrat Difference	
	Sum	Mean	Sum	Mean	Sum	Mean	Sum	Mean
Experiment (X)	469	13.03	676	18.78	207	5.75	1477	41.03
Control (Y)	466	12.94	585	16.25	119	3.31	1247	34.64

was higher than t-table ( $2.57 > 1.994$ ). So, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected. It means that CIRC strategy had significant effect on the seventh grade students' writing ability at SMPN 3 Tanggul Jember in the 2013/2014 Academic Year.

The result indicates that using CIRC strategy is effective in teaching writing descriptive text. It shows that the experimental group gain better result (pre- test result was 13.03, post-test was 18.78) on writing descriptive text than control group (pre-test result was 12.94, post- test was 16.25). Based on the treatment, the students in experimental group are understood better how to write descriptive text by using appropriate grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, and organization. It is because CIRC strategy facilitates them to make descriptive text easier by letting them to read and analyze the example of the text before they create their own writing. Moreover, the students work collaboratively, so that they can discuss with their peer group about descriptive text.

CIRC is one of the strategies in cooperative learning. Slavin (1991:12) states that CIRC is a comprehensive program for teaching reading and writing in the upper elementary grades. It means that for teaching the beginning writers in EFL context to discover, organize and express their ideas or message in written form, it is important to give them reading practice and continue the process by writing .

In this research, the experimental group students are assigned into groups consisting of 4-5 students heterogeneously in order they studied together with their groups about descriptive text which teacher

gave. They read and discussed the text in group. Then, they analyzed the text by considering the aspects of grammar, vocabulary, mechanics and organization. The next was summarizing and composing the text into a piece of paper. By working in group could give mutual support for members to help each others. Therefore, the students could understand the use of appropriate grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, and organization in descriptive text.

In contrast, the control group that received the same material only used explanation without apply CIRC strategy. They only got silent reading that was done conducted individually. It made them bored and the students did not give a good response when the teacher asked about the material and most of them only silent. Moreover, the students did not interested to the lesson which was given in lecturing method, so that most of them talked each other without listening the teacher's explanation. They were also difficult to write descriptive text because the teaching learning only focused on teacher's explanation and student worksheet.

In fact, this study shows that using CIRC strategy was useful, interesting and effective to increase students' writing ability in teaching learning process. It also proved that reading has an important role in the process of writing. It provide positive effect in the students' writing product. Besides, studying in group also gave positive impact to the effectiveness of students learning, especially in learning descriptive text writing. It can be proved by the result of the experimental group students that the mean score of pre-test

is 13.03 and post-test is 18.78. So the difference is 5.75.

The connection between reading and writing is agreed by Harmer (2001:251) that "a lot of language production (speaking and writing) work grows out of texts that students see or hear, what we write often depends upon what we read." In other words, the role of reading in the teaching of writing is as a key outcome of beginning writing instruction, in inferring analysis, synthesis, and evaluating materials which are used by students in their writing.

Meanwhile, the positive impact of working in group is also in line with the statement of Kagan (2009:7.1) that working in group can give mutual support for members to help each others. The number of students which consist of 4-5 is efficient and effective, and the active participation of students are equal. Heterogeneous group is used to equalize educational opportunities, resources, and expectations. In brief, studying in group make students help each other when the members have difficulties. According to Slavin (1991:22), the advantages of CIRC strategy are first, combination of mixed-ability teams and same-ability reading groups that allow students to succeed at their own levels. It means that CIRC strategy encourages the lower students group in reading and writing class. The students are grouped heterogeneously based on their reading level. One group consists of higher, moderate and lower students. Therefore, the lower students will be helped by the others. Second, reading program replaces workbooks with engaging activities supported by reading research. It also minimize teacher's domination in teaching and

learning process. The teacher's domination is decreased because the students work in their groups. Third, writing program provides practical approach to the writing process that combines writing and language arts instruction. CIRC strategy helps students to work carefully. CIRC strategy facilitates students to check each other's work that the students can do the tasks carefully.

In English as Foreign Language (EFL) context, making reading as model to facilitate the student's writing proficiency is an effective strategy to help them that initially have limited vocabulary and insufficient knowledge of grammatical structures of English. It also make them easier in their writing process. As Leki and Carson (in Al Buainain, 2006:8) said that what EFL students would like to have learned or learned better in their writing classes is "more language skills". The integration of reading and writing that exist in CIRC is an appropriate way. So, it can be implemented in Junior High School in Indonesia. The statements above strengthe that CIRC strategy is designed to ease the students in writing descriptive text and make them well in delivering ideas in written form. Moreover, this strategy is also suitable for teaching writing in Junior High School.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the research and the discussion, it is proved that the experimental group have better writing ability than the control group. So, the conclusion is CIRC strategy has significant effect on the seventh grade students' writing ability at SMPN 3 Tanggul Jember in the

2013/2014 Academic  
Year.

It is clear that CIRC strategy can revise and increase the students' writing English skill. Therefore, it is recommended to apply it for other

levels of learning group. So, it can be a reference for teachers as teaching process models and students to enrich their appropriate way of learning something new.

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