

PROMOTING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION WITH COOPERATIVE INTEGRATED READING AND COMPOSITION (CIRC)

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ABSTRACT

Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) is one of cooperative learning method used in language teaching, specifically in high-level reading and writing. This method is designed to accommodate variety of student ability level with heterogeneous grouping or homogeneous grouping. CIRC aimed to develop students' ability in comprehending the content of reading and fostering the ability to write the materials they read. The purposes of this research were to know how CIRC is implemented in classroom, and to know to what extent CIRC promote students' reading comprehension. The researcher used classroom action research in conducting the research. The qualitative data was obtained from observation, interview, and documentation. The participants of the research were the 10th grade students of one senior high school in Bogor. The result of the research shows that CIRC can be implemented in two cycles and four meetings. The data shows that there are some competencies which indicates that CIRC promote students' reading comprehension in cognitive activity, motivation activity, and affective activity. This study suggests the good atmosphere and used another text to be implemented in other classes using CIRC.

Keywords: Cooperative integrated reading and composition, reading comprehension

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of language competence that should be mastered by the students besides the other aspects such as speaking, writing, and listening. In the case of foreign language learning, reading is an activity to comprehend written text in order to get information, knowledge, and messages implicitly or explicitly (Mubarok & Sofiana, 2017). Reading is purposeful to seek and obtain information, including the content, and understand the meaning of the passage.

According to Torgesen (2000), reading comprehension is thus a cognitive, motivational and affective activity. Further, Gupta and Ahuja (2014) describes reading comprehension as the construction of the meaning of a written text through an interaction between the reader and the text. Reading

comprehension is an activity when reader is read the text given, and they have an interpretation of it.

In fact, most of the implementation of reading comprehension in teaching-learning activity still not use the appropriate method. Reading comprehension activity done by the educators still use a conventional method in that the students are given a text, read the text, and do some assignments to answer the questions related to the text. Besides the inappropriate technique in implementing reading comprehension, the problems encountered by students in comprehending text are also being concerned. EFL students face several problems in the reading process, such as ambiguous words, unfamiliar vocabulary, and limited available time to cognitively

process the text (Qarqez and Rashid, 2017).

According to Kasim & Raisha (2017) reading comprehension problems divided into **linguistic reading problems** which can be defined as lack experienced by reader in the scope of linguistic area including semantic, lexical and syntactical reading problems, and **non-linguistic reading problems** which can be defined as reading problems encountered by reader out of the scope of linguistic area including the difficulty in relating the ideas of the text, lack of finding the differences between the main and supporting points of the text, difficulty in finding good reading strategy, less in cultural horizon, etc.

To anticipate the continuation of the problem from this style, the teacher can use various method in teaching reading.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cooperative integrated reading and composition or well-known as CIRC is a comprehensive program for teaching reading and writing in the upper elementary and middle grades (Slavin, 2005). Clearinghouse (2012) stated that there are three principal elements of CIRC: story-related activities, direct instruction in reading comprehension, and integrated language arts or writing. CIRC aimed to develop the students' ability to comprehend the content of reading and fostering the ability to write the reading materials they read. Based on the descriptions, the CIRC is relevant to apply and effective to improve students' reading comprehension.

According to Slavin (2005), CIRC consists of three principal elements: story-related activities, direct instructions in reading comprehension, and integrated writing/language arts. In all of these activities, students work in heterogeneous learning teams. All activities follow a regular cycle that involves teacher presentation, team

practice, independent practice, peer pre assessment, additional practice, testing, and team recognition.

There are some steps in implementing CIRC in order to realize the achievement. Steven and Slavin (1995) in Kautsar (2017) have mention the steps; (1) **Orientation step:** teacher doing apperception and giving basic knowledge about learning content, (2) **Organizational step:** teacher is dividing student in a few heterogeneous groups, and giving text related to the learning content will being discussed by students, (3) **Introduction to concept step:** Teacher is introducing about new concept intend to the finding during the exploration, (4) **Publication step:** Student make a presentation about their findings, proving, showing off, in a group or in front of the class, (5) **Strengthen and reflection step:** Teacher giving a strength related to the content learning, after that students are given a chance to reflect and evaluating their learning output, (6) **Closing.**

Based on the background above, the research questions to be addressed are; how is the implementation of CIRC to promote students' reading comprehension? To what extent does CIRC promote students' reading comprehension? Considering the research questions above, the aims that are expected to achieve from this research are to know how the implementation of CIRC and to know to what extent does CIRC promote students' reading comprehension.

METHOD

This study was conducted using action research design. According to Lewin (1946) in Kemmis et al., (2014), classroom action research is a cycle of steps of planning a change, putting the plan into action, observing what happened, and re-formulating the plan in the light of what had happened.

The setting of this research was in one senior high school in Bogor. Thirty-six students with 21 male students and 15 female students of ten grade were chosen to be participants. The class consist of mixture students in terms of English competency. During the research process, the researcher taught them and also implemented CIRC.

The data were collected using observation, interview, and documentation. The steps in analyzing the data were *organize the data, transcribe the data, code the data, theme the data, and conclude the data.*

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The research was conducted on November 8th – November 29th, 2019. November 8th – November 15th to conduct observations and November 18th – November 29th in implementing the cycles. The researcher used 2 cycles of classroom action research which consists of 2 meetings in each cycle.

The Implementation of CIRC

The researchers implemented the cycle using six steps of CIRC which are orientation step, organizational step, introducing to concept step, publication step, strengthen and reflection step, and closing. The result shows that CIRC was successful enough to be implemented in classroom, and it could be proven by their grade improvement toward cooperating. The researchers used different task to be given in each meeting. In the first meeting, the task that were given to the students were finding some strange words, the meaning, and synonyms of an auction announcement. In the second meeting, the students were given a vacancy announcement. They were asked to analyse the generic structure of the text, identifying the main idea of each paragraphs, and writing the

most important details in their own language. In the third meeting, the students were taught about demonstrative pronoun and they were completing a task about it. In the last meeting, the students were asked to create an announcement using Canva.

Students' Reading Comprehension Promoted by CIRC

The researcher found there are some competencies which indicate that CIRC promote students' reading comprehension. Here are the evidences according to Torgesen (2000) theory:

1. Cognitive Activity

- Understanding the organization of text

After the interview session was carried out, the researcher found that the students are able to mention the structure of announcement text. They are also able to broaden the information of the structure by explaining each part. It is depicted from the following excerpts:

Excerpt 1:

"The structure of announcement text is opening, content, and closing." (Student A)

Excerpt 2:

"Opening is stating purpose of the announcement, contents are stating the information about what kind of event that will be held, and closing stating the information about sender or contact person." (Student B).

- Obtaining new vocabularies

From the series of action in CIRC, the researcher found the increase of students understanding toward vocabulary. The students contended that:

Excerpt 3:

"Before I learned with you, I mostly forget about vocabularies because I'm not able to pronounce the words. After you taught me, I can remember the words because you were

asked my group to held a discussion." (Student C).

Excerpt 4:

"I don't know about the words before, but after you taught us auction and job vacancy are kinds of announcement text. I know also what are the meaning." (Student B).

Excerpt 5:

"It was easy to answer the question from the text after I know what are the meaning, because it was difficult to answer question if I weren't understand the meaning." (Student D).

- Understanding the language feature

During the interview session, the students statement about tenses used in announcement text and their explanation about demonstrative pronoun make the researcher highlighted that they are understand the language feature of announcement text. The students shared that:

Excerpt 6:

"Tenses used in announcement text are simple future tense and simple present tense." (Student F).

Excerpt 7:

"Demonstrative pronoun used to show person or thing that point to. This and that to point something singular, these and those to point something plural. This and these to point something near, meanwhile that and those to point something far." (Student E).

2. Motivation Activity

- Praising other group findings

The activity of CIRC in classroom not only promoting students' cognitive domain, but also their motivation activity. It was an action of giving compliment to findings that has been presented by the other. They commented that:

Excerpt 8:

"When my group and I were made presentation, we were felt brave, and not

worry about mispronouncing. We were confident." (Student C).

Excerpt 9:

"When I received compliment, I was excited to participate the classroom activity." (Student D).

3. Affective Activity

- Cooperating in group to complete task

The result of interview session pointed out that the students were able cooperating in group. The facts were depicted from the following excerpts:

Excerpt 10:

"I enjoyed the discussion because I felt comfortable learning in group. I was in the same group with my close friends." (Student F)

Excerpt 11:

"The tasks were distributed to be answered in group, and we were discussed the result after we completed our part. We did discussion about how to pronounce some words, before presentation. We were afraid to mispronounce some words." (Student E).

Excerpt 12:

"When I learned in group, I could understand the text faster." (Student C)

- Responding other groups findings

The students' affective domains are being promoted after the implementation of CIRC. The activity of paying attention and giving feedback towards group which presenting their own findings are the evidences. Student E, for instance, conveyed that:

Excerpt 13:

"When you were allowed us asking questions about other group findings, we were asking enthusiastically because a number of the other findings were different." (Student E).

DISCUSSION

The Implementation of CIRC

As stated previously, this study was started on November, 8th and ended on November 29th, 2019 to the 10th grade students of Senior High School in Bogor. CIRC had been implemented successfully in two cycles and completed the five steps in every meeting. The students' comprehension encountered some matters before the research was conducted. Some students had difficulties in capturing meaning of the text, finding an appropriate strategy in reading, moreover don't know what to do with the text.

After the steps of CIRC were implemented in the classroom, there are some proofs that CIRC can be implemented to promote students' reading comprehension. This is explicitly proven from all the process had been done by the teacher in teaching the students by implementing CIRC. Cooperative integrated reading and composition can be implemented in classroom because there are some activities that have an integration with curriculum 2013 such as discussion which requires collaboration and critical thinking in completing task. Moreover, the activity of communication in the form of presenting their result from discussion.

Students' Reading Comprehension Promoted by CIRC

According to the competencies that has been found during the interview session, the researcher found out an integration between theories from experts, the findings from other researcher, and findings from this research.

In cognitive activity, the students are able to understand the organization of text which consist of opening, content and closing. The students are obtaining new vocabularies, and able to identify the use of simple future tense and simple

present tense, furthermore the use of demonstrative pronoun as the language feature of announcement text. Those competencies are obtained during discussion activity and writing activity. Discussion activity requiring group processing and interpersonal and small group skill as stated by Huda (2012) about elements of cooperative learning. Meanwhile writing activity in classroom was in the form of teachers' instruction about creating an announcement text using Canva which had been implemented in the last meeting of cycle II. This activity is appropriate with statement from Slavin (1983) about three principal elements of CIRC. These findings had been proven by Kautsar (2017) and Nurvasari (2017) about teaching Bahasa Indonesia and teaching recount text.

In motivation activity, students are praising other group's finding during the presentation session in publication step of CIRC. They are giving compliments to each other moreover resulting confidence and braveness. This is in line with the statement from Tobergte & Curtis (2013) about purpose of cooperative learning. Hapsari (2013) has proven the increase of students' motivation through the use of CIRC in teaching descriptive and narrative text from her research.

In affective activity, the students are working in group to complete the task with some activity of discussing text and preparation for presenting findings. They also responding to the other findings by paying attention and giving feedback. They learn to help one another, giving learning support, and involving students' participation in teaching learning activity, and those are purpose of cooperative learning as stated by Tobergte & Curtis (2013). Students' affective domain are being promoted by CIRC has been proven by Yusuf (2016) about teaching announcement text using explanation,

reading, questioning, discussion, and controlled writing.

CONCLUSION

After four meetings of implementing CIRC is completely settled, the researcher figured out that the implementation of CIRC is considered successful when the teacher carries out the process very well and follows each step of CIRC sequentially. By referring to the syllabus, the teacher makes lesson plan, designed task and preparing the organization of the activity in every step of the implementation of CIRC.

There are some improvements on students' reading comprehension while the teacher applying CIRC in classroom. In cognitive activity, the students were understood the organization of text, obtaining new vocabularies, and understand language feature of text. In motivation activity, the students were praising other groups findings. Meanwhile in affective activity, the students were able to cooperating in group, and responding other groups' findings.

Based on the result of the study, the researcher has some suggestions:

1. For the English teacher who want to implement CIRC in their class should create good atmosphere in teaching learning and stimulate students in order to make students motivated. The researcher also expecting English teacher to use the text found by the researcher or use another text to be implemented in their own classroom.

2. For the next researcher who will conduct a study of CIRC, the researcher expect the next researcher can apply another type of text to know that another type of texts are suitable in the implementation of CIRC or not. The researcher also expecting further researcher of CIRC can promote another aspect of reading comprehension. The result of this study can be used as starting

point for next researcher in conducting study of CIRC to create better classroom activity.

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