

# COOPERATIVE INTEGRATED READING AND COMPOSITION (CIRC) AND READING MOTIVATION: EXAMINING THE EFFECT ON STUDENTS' READING ABILITY

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## ABSTRACT

*This study examined the effect of Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) and reading motivation on students' reading ability. The design of the study was the factorial design of experimental research. The research was conducted on one state junior high school in Jepara Municipality under the Ministry of National Education. The independent variable of this research was teaching strategies which were classified into two; those who used CIRC as the experimental group and those who used conventional teaching strategy as the control group; while reading motivation, as the moderator variable, was classified into high and low motivation. Students' reading ability was considered as a dependent variable. This research used 68 students as respondents selected through simple random sampling. The research was analyzed by using multifactor analysis of variance (two-way ANOVA). The research reveals that teaching strategies differ significantly from one another in their effect on the students' reading ability. The students with high motivation perform better in their reading ability than low-motivation students, regardless of the teaching strategy used. Nevertheless, there is no significant interaction effect of teaching strategy and reading motivation on students' reading ability. It means that the effect of teaching strategy on the students' reading ability does not depend on the students' reading motivation where F-test (3,326) is lower than (<) F-table 3,99. at 0,05 significance level.*

**Keywords:** cooperative integrated reading and composition (CIRC), reading motivation, reading ability

## INTRODUCTION

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. Komiyama (2009) states that one of the goals of second language learners is by developing second language (L2) reading as well as first language (L1) reading to access information for the purpose of personal enjoyment, academic work and professional development, and daily information.

Reading becomes a crucial skill (Wu, 2012) and the most important skill (Grabe (1991) in Ediger (2001) among other English skills during second language learning process. It is considered as literacy skills (Carter and Nunan, 2001), and students reading in a second language have varied levels of language proficiency in that language, for example, English (O' Malley and Pierce, 1996).

Reading skills become an important skill to be mastered by learners in nowadays educational context.

In the era of information and technology society (Pečjak, Podlesek, and Pirc, 2011), it is useful for second language acquisition (Harmer, 2007), to improve students' skill in the aspect of word recognition and reading aloud (Akyol, Cakiroglu, and Kuruyer, 2014), and increasing students' reading levels, rate, and comprehension (Bastug and Demirtas, 2016).

Therefore, the main purpose of reading is that the students could learn to interact productively reading in order to determine the meaning (Nejabat, 2015). The integration between reading, writing in classroom, teaching, and learning is very important for students to reach the goal. The integration could result from an authentic language use because students' skill training and critical thinking are not two separate stages (Li and Yang, 2014) and the integration is beneficial for students both in reading and writing (Cho and Brutt-Griffler, 2015).

In order to achieve this scenario for the students' activities in reading class, teachers should be able to implement an interactive strategy and guide students to do

instructions in which they could engage and participate in reading activities. Several strategies are recommended to be implemented in the classroom, done by the teachers, which could grab students' attention and participation in class learning.

One of the strategies is Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC). It is a comprehensive program for teaching reading and writing in the upper elementary and middle grades (Slavin, 1995). In CIRC, students work in group to work cooperatively on various activities such as reading in pair, identifying the main story element, doing vocabulary and summarization activities, and practicing reading comprehension and creative writing (Calderon, Hertz-Lazarowitz, and Slavin, 1998).

CIRC is in line with the theory of cooperative learning (CL). According to Slavin (1987), CL requires students to participate in various activities to do interaction, sharing, problem-solving, and open-ended outcomes. These strategies differ in the concept of traditional interaction as they focus on learning outcomes as opposed to the productive-type task.

The benefits of cooperative learning in teaching strategy are shown by Alhaidari (2006). The implementation of cooperative learning in reading comprehension could improve students' achievement in the cooperative partner and group activities, reach learning goal, and individual assessment. Gupta and Ahuja (2014) state that CL is practical and applicable for students in creating effective classroom climate to reach common purposes by playing an important role in students' emotional and linguistic development. Therefore, a major goal of CIRC is helping students to learn reading comprehension skills cooperatively in teams (Slavin, 1995).

Many scholars investigate this strategy. Khan and Ahmad (2014) have found that CL becomes effective teaching strategy as compared to the conventional teaching strategy, better than the individualistic learning method (Chin-Min Hsiung, 2012). It helps students to find the part of the reading passage which they do not find before (Tanaka and Sanchez, 2016). Besides that, the Bilingual Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (BCIRC) becomes the useful strategy to improve students' performance in transitional bilingual programs at the critical point of transition from their first language (L1) to English as the second language (Calderon et al., 1998). The study is done by Zarei and Keshavarz (2011) that shows the significant effects of CL model of CIRC on students' reading comprehension and vocabulary for EFL students in elementary level.

The issue of cooperative learning is in line with Zone Proximal Development (ZPD) of Vygotsky which claimed that learning takes place through social interactions with others and that the learning occurs in a zone when scaffolded by or working in collaboration with more capable peers (Tanaka and Sanchez, 2016). The zone is defined as the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky uses the idea of the ZPD to give a new meaning to intelligence (Cameron, 2001). The point gives the implication that learning English is learning to do the thing and learning to think.

Motivation is considered as a crucial thing in reading comprehension as reading becomes an effortful activity (Wigfield et al., 2004). It is defined as some kind of internal drive which pushes someone to do the thing in

order to achieve something (Harmer, 2007). Brown (2001) has added that motivation is the extent to which you make choices about goals to pursue and the effort you will devote to that pursuit.

Moreover, reading motivation could be defined as the set of objectives and beliefs that ask students to make a positive connection of one another and direct reading behavior (Pecjak and Kosir, 2008). It also could be the individual purposes, value, and belief that direct students to focus on topics, processes, and aspect of reading (Guthrie and Wigfield, 2000). Reading activity could be predicted from reading motivation and reading comprehension could be predicted by reading activity (Cabral-Marques, 2011).

Many studies show that motivation in reading is associated with the students' achievement in reading comprehension. Students, as readers, show a high interest in reading when they have extrinsic and intrinsic motivation (Pecjak and Peklaj, 2006). For example, parents could also influence students' reading motivation (Klauda, 2009). Concept oriented reading instruction (CORI) increases students' motivation intrinsically and reading self-efficacy (Wigfield et al., 2004). Law (2005) has confirmed that young reading achievement is related to the instructional practices and linked with the use of various activities to stimulate their motivation.

Based on the theories and several studies which are elaborated, this study wants to examine the effect of cooperative integrated reading, composition, and reading motivation on reading ability. In reading instruction, the teacher usually uses conventional teaching strategy in which the students are given the texts from the textbook, and asked to finish the questions following them. Thus, it makes the students get bored and absorb little information from this activity, and it results in low reading ability. Therefore, by using CIRC, the students are expected to have better achievement in reading. It is also to be hoped that group activities in CIRC allow the students to learn the materials and help each other succeed.

This research differs with other studies elaborated above because of the presence of moderator variable. In this case is reading motivation, which strengthens or weakens the relationship between the independent variable (teaching strategy) and the dependent variable (students' reading ability).

## METHODS

This study uses the factorial design of experimental method as a research design. It is the simplest design which examines of two treatments, in which each treatment is varied into two levels of treatments. Tuckman (1978) states that factorial designs are modifications of the true experimental designs, with the further complication that additional independent variables (usually moderator variables) are included in addition to the treatment variable.

In this study, there are three variables; independent variable (CIRC and conventional teaching strategy), moderator variable (reading motivation), and the dependent variable (students' reading ability). The population of the study is the seventh grade of one state junior high school in Jepara Municipality under the Ministry of National Education which consisted of nine classes. By using simple random sampling, 68 students are selected based on the criterion reference of their motivation in reading class; high and low. The students, then, are divided into four groups of

subjects. Subjects within each of two reading motivations are assigned to the two treatments.

To achieve the goal of the research, this study uses two instruments; questionnaire and test. The questionnaire is used to determine the students' reading motivation which consisted of ten statements. These statements represent three types of motivation; motivation to learn, motivation to encourage groupmate, and motivation to help groupmates to learn (Slavin, 1995) which brought up self-actualization, self-knowledge, and cooperation (Brown, 2001). The validity of the questionnaire is good at statistical calculation, in which showed the significant correlation at the 0,01 level (2-tailed) by using product moment.

The test is used to examine the students' reading ability. The pre and posttest used in this study is the objective test in the form of multiple choices, true-false, and matching test. The validity of the test is good at statistical calculation which shows the significant correlation at the 0,01 level (2-tailed) by using product moment.

To test the hypothesis, this study uses the multifactor analysis of variance (two-way ANOVA) by using F-test at 0,05 significance level to find out the significant difference between two group of means. Manova requires the data that should be in normal distribution and variance scoring should be homogenous. Based on the output of homogeneous subsets by Levenes' test of the equality of error variances, it is known that the data is homogenous which is shown F-test 0,680 and probability the score  $0,568 > F\text{-table}$  at 0,05 significance level.

The treatment for both control and the experimental group can be described as follows. First is the experimental group. The students in the experimental groups are taught by using CIRC. The activity follows the variety of instructional practices that are developed by Slavin (1995). In the first section, the students are assigned into two reading groups according to their reading level, and they are assigned again into the teams consisting of four heterogeneous students. The students, first, is introduced with a reading passage (descriptive texts). In this activity, the teacher reads the text aloud while modeling the pronunciation and the students read the text silently. Then, the students are asked to find some difficult words and discussed the meaning of each word. These words are called as words bank.

After those activities are complete, the students do the sequence of activities with the member of their team autonomously. The first activity is words aloud in which the students read the words in a word bank aloud within their team to make them can read the words smoothly. Then, the students do partner reading. They take turns reading the text aloud with their partner, alternating each sentence. If the reader makes some errors in reading, their partner should correct it. The next activity is word meaning that asked the students to match the words with its definition. After that, story structure activity should be completed by the students. They have to discuss the answers to some questions related to the texts with their team. Finally, they have to accomplish the activity which focused on mastering spelling by doing a game, hangman. In this game, one student in pairs thinks a word and the other tries to guess it by suggesting letters. At the end of the activity, the students are asked to summarize the main points of the text and compose another text with their own words. In addition, the students are also provided with the variety of descriptive equipped with book report that should be given initials by their parents indicating that they have read the texts. These texts should be read independently by the students in their free time.

Control group is the strategy used by researchers in teaching control class. It is conventional teaching strategy in which the students are asked to discuss the topic before reading, read the text aloud, translate during reading, and answer questions after reading.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The objective of this study is to see the difference and interaction between the means of the reading ability of the experimental and control group with different reading motivation. Before students of the experimental and control groups get the treatment, they are pre-tested first to assess the initial level of reading skill. The result is depicted in Table 1.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of Pre-Test Result

Motivation	Strategy	Mean	Std. Deviation
High	CIRC	66,76	16,765
	Conventional	62,06	18,376
	Total	64,41	17,484
Low	CIRC	65,29	21,685
	Conventional	59,41	16,572
	Total	62,35	19,237
Total	CIRC	66,03	19,100
	Conventional	60,74	17,283

From the examination of the mean scores in Table 1, it indicates very small initial differences among the groups on this measure. Also, the result of the analysis indicates there is no significant difference among the groups of high and low students' motivation of experimental and control groups on the pre-measured of reading ability (all F-test  $< 3,99$ ,  $p: 0,05$ ). The result of statistical calculation could be seen in Table 2. It could be concluded that the treatments are started from the similar level of reading ability.

Table 2 Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	554,412a	3	184,804	,542	,655
Intercept	273177,941	1	273177,941	801,342	,000
Strategy	72,059	1	72,059	,211	,647
Motivation	476,471	1	476,471	1,398	,241
Strategy * Motivation	5,882	1	5,882	,017	,896
Error	21817,647	64	340,901		
Total	295550,000	68			
Corrected Total	22372,059	67			

a. R Squared = ,025 (Adjusted R Squared = -,021)

After the students get the treatment, the mean and standard deviation of each group from posttest are elaborated that is shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics of Posttest

Motivation	Strategy	Mean	Std. Deviation
High	CIRC	83,53	3,859
	Conventional	73,53	2,939
	Total	78,53	6,096
Low	CIRC	73,82	4,517
	Conventional	67,06	3,092
	Total	70,44	5,130
Total	CIRC	78,68	6,432
	Conventional	70,29	4,428

Table 3 summarizes the mean scores of the four groups on the dependent variable, the students' reading ability. If the mean score of CIRC, 78,68 is compared with conventional strategy, 70,29, it could be found that the difference between these means is 8,39 points. Therefore, it could be concluded that CIRC is more effective than conventional strategy. It has the positive effect on the students' reading ability.

In addition, the mean score for the two high-motivation groups is 78,53, and the mean score for the two low-motivation group is 70,44. Since this difference is 8,09 points, it could be assumed that there is an effect attributable to motivation level. The high-motivation group has a markedly higher mean score. Thus, regardless of the teaching strategy used, the high-motivation groups perform better than the low-motivation group. The data, then, reveals no interaction between the teaching strategy and students' reading motivation. In other words, the teaching strategy and students' reading motivation are independent each other. The lack of interaction could be illustrated graphically in Figure 1. However, the significant difference in the students' reading ability should be statistically proved. The results of Manova are elaborated in Table 4.

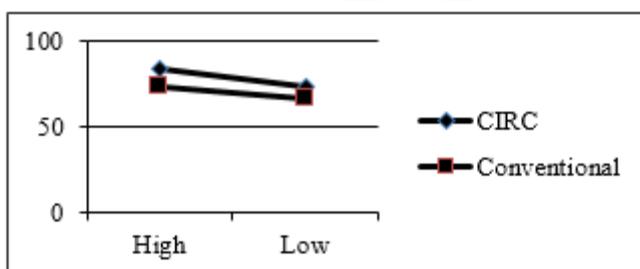


Figure 1 Illustration Lack of Interaction between Teaching Strategy and Students' Reading Motivation

Table 4 Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	2351,103a	3	783,701	58,603	,000
Intercept	377268,015	1	377268,015	28210,832	,000
Strategy	1194,485	1	1194,485	89,320	,000
Motivation	1112,132	1	1112,132	83,162	,000
Strategy * Motivation	44,485	1	44,485	3,326	,073
Error	855,882	64	13,373		
Total	380475,000	68			
Corrected Total	3206,985	67			

a. R Squared = ,733 (Adjusted R Squared = ,721)

Table 4 summarizes the F-ratio of each variable. The first F-ratio (teaching strategy) is 89,320. Consulting the table, it could be seen that, with 1 and 64 degrees of freedom, it reaches 3,99 (0,05 level) or 7,05 (0,01). Thus, F-test (89,320) is higher than the value shown in the table. It indicates that F-test is significant at the 0,01 level and shows that the teaching strategies differ significantly from one another in their effect on the students' reading ability. Moreover, examining the data showed in table 3, it could be seen that those students who are treated under CIRC obtain a combined mean of 78,68 as compared with a mean of 70,29 for those students who are treated under the conventional strategy. Since it is obtained a significant F-test for the difference, it can be concluded that under the different motivation, CIRC improves the students' reading ability better. The results are in line with the research done by Khansir and Farajolahzadeh (2015), which shows that CIRC as the teaching strategy is applicable and useful to be used rather than the conventional teaching strategy and considered as an effective and efficient strategy in teaching reading activity.

Then, the second F-ratio (reading motivation) is 83,162. With 1 and 64 degrees of freedom, it also reaches 3,99 (0,05 level) or 7,05 (0,01). Thus, the obtained value of F-test exceeded both values, and it is significant at the 0,01 level. From the significance of this F-test, it could be inferred that the difference between the reading ability of the students who have high and low motivation is beyond expectation. In addition, examining the data that presented in Table 3, it could be seen that those students who have high motivation obtain a combined mean of 78,53 as compared with a mean of 70,44 for those students who have low motivation. Since it is obtained a significant F-test for the difference, it can be concluded that under the same teaching strategy, a higher reading ability could be expected when the students have high motivation than when they have low motivation.

The third F-ratio also shows the interaction effect between the two variables, teaching strategy, and reading motivation. It is found that F-test is 3,326. It indicates that it does not reach 3,99 at the 0,05 level or it is smaller than the value shown in the table. Therefore, it could be said that the F-test is not significant at the 0,05 level.

The result of this study shows the main effect of CIRC as the teaching strategy on students' reading ability without ignoring moderator variable; in this case, is reading

motivation. Students' reading ability taught by using CIRC is better than students' reading ability taught by using conventional teaching strategy. This result is in line with the study conducted by Zarei and Keshavarz (2011) which shows that there is only a significant difference between the CIRC and the non-cooperative groups, with the CIRC group being significantly better than the non-cooperative group. While Gupta and Ahuja (2014) have reported that the cooperative learning gives students an opportunity to interact and discuss in the group that resulted from an increasing of students' motivation in reading. Besides that, those who are taught by using cooperative learning shows better score than the students who get instructions through conventional teaching strategy. Khan and Ahmad (2014) have suggested that the English teachers should implement the CL in teaching reading activity for the elementary level because the use of CL is better than the traditional teaching method in teaching English.

Comparing to CIRC, students who are taught conventionally are not dependent upon one another in reading instruction. They have to understand the reading passage individually without any chance to share it with their partner. The effect of this teaching strategy is that the students should memorize the information in their mind without having any communication at all with their friends or teacher. And there is no positive interaction among students to produce a qualified work.

On the other hand, in CIRC by having the students work in small groups, it helps the students to accomplish their assignments more quickly. It supports the assumption of Atkins (2010) that the students would learn better from each other and the teacher is not the only source of an information in the classroom. In this study, the students should not only study the materials, but they also should help each member in their group to gain information from the text easily. It should be done because each score of an individual would be added to contribute to a team score. The team which gains the highest score would get the reward from the teacher. Thus, it makes the students whose have the better reading ability with pleasure is willing to assist their fellow group members. It means that the students who are taught by using CIRC as teaching strategy could enhance their social skill in accomplishing the task given. This makes their reading ability better than the students who are taught by using the conventional teaching strategy.

The use of CIRC as the teaching strategy in reading class could also help the students to accomplish cooperatively toward the material delivered. The students could do different activities in pairs like finding the difficult words and discussing the meaning of a single word. The words discussed are called words bank. These words would be pronounced by each member of the group until they could pronounce it smoothly. In the partner reading, the students are asked to read aloud, predict the purpose of the passage, and answer some questions related to the text.

In this teaching strategy, the students should be able to communicate, share, and the propose of the idea to their partner in order to accomplish the task. During in-class learning, the students work in pair to identify some features of the passage; like characters, setting, problem, time, main idea, and plot of passage. The students could discuss the material they have not understood yet to their partner before clarifying to their teacher, to explain the problem to be solved and summarize the passage to one another to increase their reading comprehension.

In addition, the finding shows that both students

who are taught under the conventional teaching strategy and CIRC gains better achievement in reading if they have high reading motivation. This result is in line with the study conducted Pecjak and Kosir (2008) which shows students' motivation differ to their age and sex (young students and girl shows high motivation). Students who have high motivation, show high reading efficiency.

Therefore, it is not suggested that CIRC is more effective in enhancing reading ability of the students who have high or low motivation in reading. It also means that the effect of teaching strategy on the students' reading ability do not depend on the students' reading motivation. As Law (2005) has indicated that the extrinsic motivation does not influence students' reading achievement. In other words, the teaching strategy and the students' reading motivation are independent of each other.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the elaborated result, it could be concluded that started from the similar level of reading ability the students of the experimental group performed better on reading ability than the control group. It indicates that CIRC increases students' reading ability better than the conventional teaching strategy. Then, the students' reading motivations, low and high, also differ significantly from one another in their effect on the students' reading ability. It is also found that CIRC, the conventional teaching strategy, and students' reading motivation do not have a combined effect on the reading ability of the students. In other words, there is no interaction between the teaching strategy and students' reading motivation.

Cooperative learning in the form CIRC strategy provides practical and applicable activities which could be done by teachers in improving students' reading ability. In a group, students could work and cooperate to discuss the material given better than the use of conventional teaching strategy in class teaching. Based on the finding of the research, further research is recommended to verify the result and examine the effectiveness of cooperative, integrated reading and composition (CIRC) for other variables such as students' attitude toward reading achievement, students' social skills, intergroup relation, and students' writing ability.

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