

EFL STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT IN READING COMPREHENSION USING COOPERATIVE INTEGRATED READING AND COMPOSITION (CIRC) TECHNIQUE

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ABSTRACT

The reading comprehension skills of EFL students have been a concern of scholars by researchers, but some researchers found that EFL students face some problems in understanding English texts due to lack of techniques while teaching. Therefore, this study investigates how students engage in reading comprehension using the Cooperative Integrated Reading Composition Technique. This study uses a case study as a qualitative research design, involving EFL tenth graders from an Islamic Senior High School in Karawang as participants. Researchers collect data through observation and interviews. The findings show that EFL students' engagement in reading comprehension using the CIRC technique resulted in three engagements, namely behavioral engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement. Behavioral engagement which means students can contribute to class discussion and follow all instructions from the teacher, emotional engagement which means students can express their feelings during reading comprehension activities, and cognitive engagement which means students can try to complete tasks in different ways to achieve the same result. This research suggests that educators should expand or develop their teaching techniques to produce better learning activities.

Keywords: *Student Engagement; Reading Comprehension; CIRC Technique*

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INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension skill of EFL students has been primary concerns by Indonesian researchers since genre-based approach was implemented in the English education curriculum in Indonesia. This approach leads the curriculum makers and teachers to teach English through English texts. However, some researchers found that Indonesian EFL students have faced some problems in comprehending English texts.

Some problems faced by EFL learners are lack of vocabulary and background knowledge, problems with grammar knowledge, and incorrect reading strategies (Davoudi & Yousefi, 2015; Suryanto, 2017). Some studies revealed that the EFL students' problem in comprehending the English texts were also caused by their inability to determine the main idea, lack of vocabulary, low motivation in reading comprehension and the teaching techniques used by teachers are not interesting and often monotonous (Kasim & Raisha, 2017; Pradana, 2017). To overcome this situation, teacher needs to find out appropriate strategies in teaching reading that can stimulate high motivation, interest, and attention of the students, and enhance reading comprehension of EFL students (Sholeh et al., 2019).

There are several alternatives in teaching reading comprehension that teachers can use, one of which is Cooperative Integrated Reading Composition. The Cooperative Integrated Reading Composition (CIRC) technique is a comprehensive approach to literacy or language education (Egger, 2019). Students follow a sequence of teacher

instruction, team practice, and assessment. They assist each other in carrying out basic skill development activities such as partner reading, summarization, vocabulary, and reading comprehension exercises (Ismawati & Sugirin, 2019).

Some researchers have investigated CIRC for reading comprehension in different context. Harahap and Swondo (2020) analyzed the effect of CIRC on EFL secondary students' reading comprehension. The CIRC technique is good to apply to improve students' reading comprehension skills because this can affect the efficiency of strategies in controlling students during learning activities (Rahman and Hijriati, 2020). The student activity seen in the CIRC learning is that students are more enthusiastic in completing the tasks given by the teacher and dare to present the results of their work in front of the class (Adriana & Haryudin, 2019). Azhari, Cahyani, and Kirana (2019) concluded that an increase in student scores can occur because the Cooperative Reading and Integrated Composition model allows students to exchange information and study together with other friends. Based on the previous research, most of them are looking for implications or effects in improving student reading comprehension using cooperative integrated reading composition. To fill this gap in this research, the researcher aims to investigate students' engagement in reading comprehension using Cooperative Integrated Reading Composition (CIRC) technique.

METHOD

The method used in this study uses a case study design. According to Creswell (2012) the case study is an exploration of a bounded system or a case (multiple cases) overtime through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context. This study aims to investigate students' engagement in reading comprehension using the CIRC technique. Researchers involved tenth grade EFL students from Islamic Senior High School in Karawang as participants. The research focused on the question: How are EFL students involved in reading comprehension using the CIRC technique. Data collection was carried out by observation and semi-structured interviews adopted from Rahmat, et al (2018) to obtain more detailed data. After collecting the data, researchers conducted a transcript, displayed the data, and made conclusions based on Sugiono (2018). This study also uses pseudonyms in collecting interviews and pseudonyms such as respondent 1, respondent 2, etc.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this result and discussion, the researcher concludes by looking at the students' engagement in reading comprehension using the CIRC technique.

a. Behavioral Engagement

The first result for students' engagement in reading comprehension using CIRC was behavioral engagement. Behavioral engagement can be

seen from student activities during group learning activities.

Respondent 1: *I discussed with my friends. Then when I was given an assignment, I began to share each question with my group.*

The extract above reveals that the activities in groups led them to have discussions. In this case, some students said the activities became easy because the tasks given were divided again to each group member. At the time of observation, the researcher observed that they all seemed to involve their ideas in communicating and discussing with each other.

In addition, behavioral engagement can also be seen during writing activities such as students following all instructions from the teacher.

Respondent 2: *Yes, I followed all the instructions during the writing activity. First, the students are divided by the teacher because we make the text must be in groups. Second, the teacher gave instructions to write descriptive texts about tourist attractions in their respective areas. Then teacher also told me that when writing a descriptive text, it must be in accordance with its structure, grammar, and according to its purpose.*

The extract above reveals that in writing activities, student followed all the instructions from the teacher to compose a text.

2. Emotional Engagement

Another result for students' engagement in reading

comprehension using CIRC was emotional engagement. The researcher found positive responses that most of the students felt fun and easier when doing reading assignments in group activities.

Respondent 1: *In my opinion, it's easier and more fun.* And Respondent 2: *It's fun because there are so many discussions with my friends.*

When doing writing activities, the researcher also found that students felt happy to make reading texts because they made them not alone and shared their experiences with their group mates.

Respondent 2: *I feel happy because I am not alone in making the descriptive text.*

Respondent 3: *I feel happy because you can share my experiences with my group mates.*

However, the researcher still found negative responses when students took individual tests.

Respondent 2: *It's difficult for that. I don't understand the instructions, so I'm afraid I'm wrong.*

Respondent 3: *It's difficult and a bit confusing to choose a meaningful sentence.*

Respondent 4: *A little nervous, Miss. I'm afraid I'm wrong in answering the individual test.*

Based on the extract above, students felt difficult and confused in doing individual texts because some did not understand the instructions, some were

confused in choosing meaningful sentences, and respondent 4 was nervous and insecure about the individual test answers.

3. Cognitive Engagement

The last result for students' engagement in reading comprehension using CIRC was emotional engagement such as student efforts in flexible problem solving and student efforts in doing study assignments.

The researcher found that students can solve problems using many ways and produce the same answers. Respondent 1 was able to determine the main idea after being given a re-explanation by the teacher, while Respondent 2 was able to determine the main idea by reading the text first.

Respondent 1: *I was a little confused, but after being explained again by the teacher that the main idea was usually at the beginning or at the end of the paragraph so that I also understood and was able to determine the main idea.*

Respondent 2: *I can determine the main idea. I read the text first, then I looked for the main idea.*

In contrast to Respondent 3 who was able to determine the main idea because she had studied before. Likewise with Respondent 4 who actively asked his friends about how to determine paragraphs.

Respondent 3: *I was able to determine the main idea. I have previously learned how to determine the main idea by*

reading the first paragraph of a text.

Respondent 4: *I was able to determine the main idea. At first, I couldn't, but after asking my friend how to do it, I understand that if the main idea is at the beginning of the paragraph.*

They all solve problems in different ways but succeed in finding the same answer. Not only solving problems flexibly, but students also make efforts in doing learning assignments.

Respondent 1: *I got quite a lot of new vocabulary. By looking for vocabulary that I don't understand and then interpreting it into Indonesian. It also helps me in understanding the reading text.*

Based on the extract above, the researcher found students got a lot of new vocabulary. They all make efforts to complete their tasks, such as first looking for difficult words and then translating them into Indonesian using a dictionary. Some of them also understand the reading text given by the teacher.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result, there are three student engagements in reading comprehension using CIRC technique such as behavioral engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement.

The first student engagement is the behavioral engagement. Students demonstrate behavioral involvement by contributing to class discussions and following all instructions from the teacher. It

related to Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004) stated that behavioral engagement requires positive behaviors such as following rules, obeying class norms, asking questions, contributing to class discussion, and avoiding behavior that violates rules. Students also discuss during group reading assignments and involve their ideas in communicating with each other. Not only that, in the activity of making texts, students also revealed that they followed all instructions from the teacher.

The second student engagement is the emotional engagement. In line with Fredricks et al (2003) stated emotional engagement refers to feelings so that it becomes something important for students in learning outcomes. In this case, students show emotional engagement such as feeling easy, fun, happy, enjoy in doing reading assignments in groups and making texts in groups. Some of them also felt difficulty and confusion in conducting individual tests and even felt nervous.

The third student engagement is the cognitive engagement. Almost all students can solve problems flexibly such as using many ways to produce the same answer. Some of them asked friends and teachers, there were also those who had studied before, and there were also students who paid close attention to their assignments, so they understood. Those are all their efforts in completing reading group assignments, individual tests, and writing text assignments.

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