



THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COOPERATIVE INTEGRATED READING AND COMPOSITION (CIRC) TO IMPROVE WRITING IN DESCRIPTIVE TEXTS

Kamila Nurul Ibriza ✉

English Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia

Article Info

Article History:

Received in June 2017

Approved in July 2017

Published in August 2017

Keywords: CIRC, technique, writing, descriptive.

Abstract

This paper is based on a study which investigated the eighth grade students' achievement in writing descriptive text. The study aimed to find out the effectiveness of Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) technique to teach writing of descriptive and to investigate the significant difference of students' writing achievement between the students who were taught using that technique and those who were not. The study employed quasi-experimental non-equivalent control group design. The data were pre-test, and post-test scores. The result of the study shows that the mean score of the pre-test in the experimental group is 63.97, while in the control group is 64.46. Therefore, the result of post-test increased. In the post-test, the mean score of the experimental group is 76.26, and the control group gets 71.13. Moreover, the t-test result is 2.847 and ttable is 2.024. It can be clearly seen that tvalue is higher than ttable. It means that the hypothesis of H1 is accepted and H0 is rejected. Based on the proven hypothesis, it could be proven that Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) is effective to teach writing of descriptive text for the eighth grade students of junior high school students.

© 2017 Universitas Negeri Semarang

✉ Correspondent Address:
B3 Building FBS Unnes
Sekaran, Gunungpati, Semarang, 50229
E-mail: unnes_english@yahoo.com

ISSN 2252-6706

INTRODUCTION

Students should learn all of the language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) particularly in order to guide them to be able to communicate with other people who also speak English. Communicating in language learning not only happens in a spoken way by using spoken language, but also in the form of written language. Spoken and written languages are two different aspects of language in the language skills. Spoken deals with speaking and listening, whereas written language deals with reading and writing.

According to Boardman and Frydenberg (2002: 31-47), to create a good writing, there are some components that we need to consider; coherence, cohesion, unity, and completeness. A product of writing is considered as good if there are coherence, cohesion, unity, and completeness in it. Those are difficult components to master for the students in junior high schools even in universities.

Moreover, teachers play important roles in teaching and learning process such as designing lesson plan, preparing learning materials and media, and evolving teaching techniques. Relating to teaching writing, a teacher should find appropriate and interesting technique to make the students easy in writing. Furthermore, not only considering the technique, but also the teacher should consider the process of writing in resulting a good writing product. It is in line with Brown's statement. Brown (2001: 335), "Writing needs a process of thinking, drafting, and revising that requires specialized skills, skills that not every speaker develop naturally". It means that students need a lot of practices to master writing skill in order to produce a good text. Writing cannot be done in short times, it needs some stages in the process of writing. It is different from other skills which can be done in short times. In the process of planning, drafting, revising and editing, we will often re-plan, re-draft, and re-edit before we get the product of writing.

According to curriculum 2013, students of junior high school are demanded to comprehend descriptive text. There are standard and basic competencies in teaching writing of junior high school in line with Curriculum 2013. Its standard competence is revealing the meaning of short functional text and simple short essay in the form of descriptive to interact with surrounding. Meanwhile, its basic competencies is revealing the meaning and simple rhetorical step in the simple short essay using written language accurately, fluently, and appropriately to interact with the closer surrounding in the form of descriptive. For the students of junior high school, those competencies are difficult to be achieved especially in writing descriptive text.

Descriptive text is one of the text types or genres given to junior high school. According to Gerot and Wignell (1995: 208), descriptive text has social function to describe a particular person, place, or thing. It has two generic structures. They are: 1) Identification: identifies phenomenon to be described and 2) Description: describe parts, qualities, and characteristics. Furthermore, Gerot and Wignell mentions the lexicogrammatical features of descriptive text. They focus on specific participants, use of attributive and identifying process, frequent use of epithets and classifiers in nominal group, and use of simple present tense.

Descriptive text belongs to one of the difficult genres of writing for junior high school students. It is difficult for them because there are many aspects to consider such as generic structures and lexicogrammatical features. Beside those aspects, they always get stuck when they are asked to describe someone or something. This matter is caused by some cases not only because of their lack of vocabularies, grammar, or lexicogrammatical features, but also

the teaching method or teaching method of teaching and learning source that are not appropriate for them. The teacher tend to use monotonous teaching techniques. They use lecturing technique by explaining the materials using power point. They explain the material while the students are looking it at the projector screen. After that, the students are asked to describe directly after they got the topic whereas they do not understand the materials. Hence, the teaching and learning process become monotonous and so it influences the atmosphere of the class automatically. The students get bored quickly and do not comprehend the materials well. Moreover, the teacher directed the students to work individually in writing. As a result they merely did their work inactively without participating in the learning process. The teacher seldom gave a feedback to the students' writing. She usually gave the students a topic to write about, asked them to submit it, and then just returned the marked sheets without discussing them with the students. Besides, the students had difficulties in developing their ideas, using sentence patterns, choosing appropriate words and they were confused deciding what to write about. It was shown from the duration they need to compose a text in fact, the number of students left their papers blank.

In this study, I consider that Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) can solve the problems above. Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition is one of the cooperative learning techniques which can be an effective way in teaching writing. Richard and Rodgers (2001: 192) state that cooperative learning is an approach to teaching that makes maximum use of cooperative activities involving pairs and small groups of learners in the classroom. In cooperative learning, teachers teach students collaborative or social skills so that they can work together more effectively. Cooperative learning provides and facilitates students to work together in group (pair of team) in order to accomplish their work at the end of the learning process, every individual is responsible for learning something by using his or her own way. CIRC technique is categorized as cooperative learning which mainly involves students learning from each other in groups. In this technique, teacher prepares instruction as the focus of the lesson. Students practice the points taught by the teacher in preparation for quiz (Faridi, 2012:80). Moreover, Durukan (2011: 103) states that CIRC technique is developed to support traditionally used "skill-based reading groups" approach. Firstly, reading groups are established in the classroom. Next, students are paired off within the groups. When the teacher works with a reading group, couples try to teach each other meaningful reading and writing skills by using reciprocal learning technique. They help each other in performing basic skill-building activities (such as oral reading, contextual guessing, asking questions, summarizing, writing a composition based on the story, revising-correcting composition).

In CIRC, students work in pairs on a series of cognitively engaging activities, including reading to each other, predicting how stories will end, summarizing stories, and practicing spelling, decoding, and vocabulary. The students will be asked to create a descriptive text with the model of one of their group members. It makes the students will be easy to describe the object because they will observe it directly, not just imagine that.

Therefore, based on the explanation above, hopefully Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) can be a successful way to solve those problems above. It is in line with my objectives in conducting this study that by using CIRC technique, it can be an appropriate technique to teach writing of descriptive text and can be an effective way to improve the students' writing skill mastery especially in writing descriptive text.

METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

This study employed a quasi-experimental which used non-equivalent control group design I used this design, because firstly, this design required two classes, one was as experimental group and the other was a control group; and secondly, selecting the subject randomly was impossible to me.

This study was conducted in one of the state junior high school in Kudus. Population of this study was eighth grade students of one of junior high school in Kudus in the academic year 2016/2017. There were seven classes of the eighth grade students of that school. On the average, each class consisted of 39 students. The sample of this study were two classes of eighth grade students in that school. The first class as the control group and the second class as the experimental group. I chose the sample based on some consideration; these classes are taught by the same teacher, these classes have given the same facilities from school, these classes are never taught by using CIRC technique, these classes are taught the same material that is descriptive text.

In this study, I used written test as instrument, then analyzed the result of the test (pre-test and post-test) using t-test formula. It is used to know whether there is any significant difference between the students who were taught by using CIRC technique and those who were not. If the tvalue is higher than ttable, it means that there is significant difference between two means. On the other hand, if tvalue is lower than ttable, it means that there is no significant difference between two means. Before computing the t-test value, I had to find the normality and homogeneity of experimental and control groups' pre-test to find out that the data was normally distributed and homogeneous.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data were obtained from the students' achievement in writing of descriptive text. I used analytic scale for rating composition task by Brown and Bailey as cited by Brown (2004: 244-245) to analyze the pre-test and post-test writing product of the students. The analytic scale covers five components of writing; organization, content, grammar, punctuation and spelling, and style. The following tables show the average of each component both in pre-test and post-test of the control and experimental group.

Aspects	Pre-test	Post-test
Average of organization	15.1	15.6
Average of content	12.8	14.9
Average of grammar	9.9	12.2
Average of punctuation and spelling	11.6	13.6
Average of style	15.0	15.0

Table 3.1 Average of each Component both in Pre-Test and Post-Test of the Control Group

Aspects	Pre-test	Post-test
Average of organization	12.3	16.1
Average of content	13.4	16.5
Average of grammar	9.8	12.8
Average of punctuation and spelling	14.2	14.9
Average of style	14.2	15.7

Table 3.2 Average of Each Component both in Pre-Test and Post-Test of the Experimental Group

From the table above, it can be seen that the average scores of each component of writing on the two groups were improved on the post-test.

After analyzing the students' writing product of pre-test and post-test, then I calculated the scores. The following table shows the mean scores for pre-test and post-test for all aspects of students' mastery.

Group	Mean of Pre-test	Mean of Post-Test	The Difference between Pre-Test and Post-Test
Experimental	63.97	76.26	12.29
Control	64.46	71.13	6.67

Table 3.3 The Result of Pre-Test and Post-Test mean Scores of the Experimental and Control Groups

Table 3 gives the information about the mean of pre-test of the experimental group is 63.97 and their mean of post-test is 76.26. Meanwhile, in the control group, the mean of pre-test is 64.46 and the mean of post-test is 71.13. The difference between pre-test and post-test of the experimental group is 12.29 and the difference between pre-test and post-test of control group is 6.67.

To make the difference easier to be understood, I applied the mean score between the control and the experimental groups into the chart as follows:

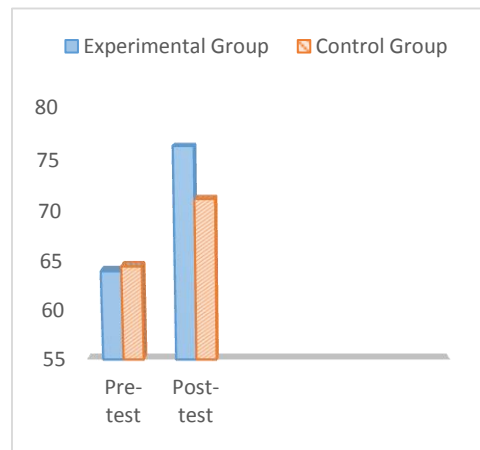


Diagram 3.1 The Mean Score between the Control and Experimental Groups

The chart 1 describes about the pre-test and post-test result of experimental and control groups. The chart 1 shows the result of post-test of both groups increased. Meanwhile, in the control group, there was less improvement than the experimental group. It meant that the difference of mean score in the experimental group was higher than in the control group.

After getting the data of the experimental and control groups, the normality of those data were analyzed to make sure the data were normally distributed or not. Based on the data of pre-test normality computation in the experimental group, the χ^2_{value} was 2.398 and χ^2_{table} was 7.815. Since χ^2_{value} was lower than χ^2_{table} ($2.398 < 7.815$), then it could be concluded that the pre-test of experimental group was said to be normally distributed. Beside that, according to the data computation of pre-test in the control group, the χ^2_{value} was 5.160 and χ^2_{table} was 7.815. Since χ^2_{value} was less than χ^2_{table} ($5.160 < 7.815$), it could be inferred that the pre-test of control group was said to be normally distributed.

Moreover, I computed the normality of post-test of both groups. The post-test normality computation of the experimental group showed χ^2_{value} was 1.974 and χ^2_{table} was 7.815. Since χ^2_{value} was less than χ^2_{table} ($1.974 < 7.815$) so the post-test of experimental group was considered to be normally distributed. For the control group, the normality computation resulted χ^2_{value} was less than χ^2_{table} ($5.517 < 7.815$) so the post-test of control group was considered to be normally distributed too.

Beside calculating the normality of pre-test and post-test, I computed the homogeneity of both tests. The objective of homogeneity (F -test) is to test the hypothesis whether the two samples are from the same normal population with equal variance or from two normal populations with equal variances or not. Therefore, homogeneity is important to be checked. If $F_{value} \leq F_{table}$ it means that the data had the same variance and they were homogeneous. From the pre-test homogeneity computation of both groups, I found that F_{value} (1.061) $<$ F_{table} (4.10). It could be concluded that the experimental and control group had the same variance. It meant that the population of the two groups were homogeneous. Meanwhile, from the post-test homogeneity computation of both groups, it resulted F_{value} was 1.829 and F_{table} was 4.10 . Since F_{value} was less than F_{table} ($1.829 < 4.10$) so I concluded that the population of the two groups was homogeneous.

After the data were considered as normal and homogeneous, I applied the t-test. In order to know the t-test result, it is needed to find the mean score and score deviation of the post-test of the two groups. The score deviation of the post-test of experimental group was 1699.436 and the control group was 3108.389 . After computing the score deviation, the result can be put into the t-test formula. Based on the calculation, it resulted $t_{value} = 2.847$. For $\alpha = 5\%$, with $df = 39-1 = 38$, so

$t_{table} = 2.024$. Since t_{value} exceeded t_{table} ($2.847 > 2.024$), the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and the working hypothesis (H_1) that there were significant difference in writing achievement between the students who were taught by using CIRC technique and those who were not, was accepted.

The objective of this study were to find out whether CIRC was effective to teach writing of descriptive text or not and to find out how much the significance difference between control group's achievement after taught by using regular technique (lecturing) and experimental group's achievement in writing of descriptive text after taught by using CIRC as the technique to teach writing of descriptive text at the eighth grade students of one of the state junior high school in Kudus in the academic year of 2016/2017.

The mean scores difference between pre-test and post-test of the experimental and the control group were calculated to know the improvement of the students' writing skill before and after getting the treatment. In the pre-test, the mean score of the control group and the experimental group were 64.46 and 63.97. According to the pre-test result, it could be concluded that the ability of two group was relatively same. The mean score of pre-test of the experimental and control group also had slight difference, so it was said to be normally distributed and homogeneous.

After the students received the treatment, the mean scores of the two group increased. However, the mean score of the post-test of experimental group was higher than control group. The experimental group's mean score was 76.26 and the control group's mean score was 71.13. The score indicated that after getting the treatment, the experimental group achieve a better result than the control group.

Teaching writing of descriptive text by using CIRC technique made an upgrading of the students' writing ability more than teaching them by lecturing technique. It could be seen in the average of each aspect of writing components both in the pre-test and post-test. (see table 1 and 2)

Based on the average of each aspect of writing components both in the pre-test and post-test, it could be seen that the students' writing ability of descriptive text increased. Increasing ability involved the whole aspects of the components of writing; organization, content, grammar, punctuation and spelling, and style.

The students' ability in organizing their ideas was so bad before getting the treatment. They lacked of understanding of how to give an appropriate title, to make effective introductory paragraph or give supporting sentences for generalizations. Some of them, even, did not give the title for their texts. After teaching the students by using CIRC technique with the help of explanation from the teacher the students of the experimental group were better in organizing their ideas compared to the control group.

Relating to the content, there is a significance difference between the content of students' writing in the pre-test and post-test for both groups. In the pre-test, the students did not know about what they had to write in their descriptive text. Therefore, they only produced very simple sentences. After getting the treatment, the content of the students' writing improved, especially in the experimental group. They chose one of their group members to be the subject description. The improvement of the content of the experimental group's writing was higher than the control group.

Talking about the grammar, generally, the students' grammar was still weak. Most of the students in both of the groups lack of understanding of how to produce some sentences into a good structure in terms of simple present tense and adjective order.

However, after the experimental group and control group received the treatment, they showed improvement in their grammar. The treatments given to both the experimental group which was CIRC technique and control group which was lecturing technique gave significant contribution to the students' punctuation and spelling. Before the treatment was given, the students did not know how to use the appropriate words and had problems in vocabularies. In the pre-test, the students could not find appropriate words for showing their ideas. After the students of the experimental

group were treated by using CIRC activities in which there were revising and editing, they had known what register should be used according to particular topics appropriately. Whereas, the control group which was taught by using lecturing technique still got the problems in the case of register. It was proven by their average score of style of post-test which was same as their average score of style in pre-test.

Both of treatments in the experimental group which was CIRC technique and control group which was lecturing technique did not give significant contribution to the students' punctuation and spelling. The gain of these aspects depended more on the teacher's explanation and correction during the treatments.

Based on the average of each aspect of writing components, both in the pre-test and post-test between the experimental and control groups, I inferred that there was a significant effect in teaching writing of descriptive text by using CIRC technique. Moreover, the t_{value} was higher than t_{table} . t_{value} obtained 2.847 and t_{table} was 2.024. It proved that the difference is statistically significant. From that data, it can be concluded that there was significant difference between the group which was taught by using CIRC technique and the group which was by using the lecturing technique as the English teacher's regular technique. The data also indicated that the use of CIRC technique to teach writing of descriptive text was effective.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the result of the data analyzes and research findings, I concluded that firstly the student of experimental and control group relatively have equal level in writing of descriptive text before getting the treatment by using CIRC technique. It could be seen by the result of pre-test in the control group that was slightly different from the experimental group. Since there was only slightly difference in the pre-test result between two groups, it could be concluded that the two groups were homogeneous before getting the treatment.

Secondly, after calculating the t-test, I concluded that there was significance difference of achievement in writing of descriptive text of the students who were taught by using CIRC technique and those who were taught by using the lecturing technique since the t_{value} which was higher than $t_{(table)}$. In other words, this t-test result revealed that the working hypothesis of this study was accepted that the null hypothesis was rejected.

Lastly, I inferred that CIRC technique gave contribution to improve students' achievement in writing of descriptive text. It could be seen from the mean scores differences between pre-test and post-test of experimental and control groups. The mean scores difference between pre-test and post-test of control group was lower than experimental group. By comparing the mean scores difference of both groups and this scores achieved by each group in two tests (pre-test and post-test), I come to conclusion that CIRC technique was effective to be used in teaching writing of descriptive text and it gave higher significant difference of the experimental groups' achievement in writing of descriptive text than the control group.

REFERENCES

- Boardman, C. A., and Frydenberg, J. 2002. *Writing to Communicate Paragraph and Essays*. New York: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Brown, H. Douglas. 2001. *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy, Second Edition*. New York: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Brown, H. Douglas. 2004. *Language Assessment: Principles and Classroom Practices*. New York: Pearson Education, Inc.

- Durukan, Erhan. 2011. Effects of Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) Technique on Reading-Writing Skills. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 6/1. pp. 102-109.
- Faridi, Abdurrahman. 2012. *Language Teaching Theories*. Semarang State University: Unnes Press.
- Gerot, Linda, and Peter Wignell. 1995. *Making Sense of Functional Grammar*. Sydney: Gerd Stabler.
- Richards, J. C. & Theodore S. Rodgers. 2001. *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.