# THE APPLICATION OF COOPERATIVE INTEGRATED READING AND COMPOSITION (CIRC) TO THE STUDENTS OF ENGLISH STUDY PROGRAM IN ACADEMIC READING AND WRITING COURSE

**Rumiri Aruan**

**Riau University, Pekanbaru-Indonesia**

## Abstract

This classroom action research seeks to investigate the learning process by applying Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC). The students who become research subjects were students of fourth semester school year 2011 / 2012. Before applying the CIRC, first performed a pre - test. The result of pre - test showed that students' writing ability is still low, if the value obtained is converted to the academic regulations of Riau University. There were 24% of students who obtained below average grades, and 76% students failed. While there were no students who obtained excellent and good grades. Once the application of CIRC implemented in two cycles, the results obtained were very meaningful learning. The result of first cycle showed that 28% students got average, 60 % students got below average, and 12% students failed. When the second cycle applied, the students percentage who obtained excellent is 16%, 72.84% in good grades, and 12% got average level. From the data of the study concluded that CIRC could be applied to the students of reading and academic writing course as one alternative method of teaching process.

Keywords: **Application, CIRC, Academic Reading and Writing, Classroom Action Research (CAR)**

## INTRODUCTION

English Study Program of FKIP Riau University has imposed new curriculum to students of the school year of 2011/2012. The curriculum offered academic reading and writing course that is presented in fourth semester. This course is a new course for students of English language education study program. However, the experience of writing and reading that students obtained in the previous semester can be equipped to follow this course. If one of the writing learning objectives is that students be able to write a paragraph or an essay and one of reading learning objectives that students are able to identify the discourse

around ideas presented, the academic reading and writing learning objectives are students able to write / draw conclusions and to interpret discourse in reading text presented.

The purpose of learning academic reading and writing will not be achieved, if the conventional learning still applied. That is, lecturers only demand product of the study conducted. This method is less attractive, while Uno and Mohammed stated that the teacher should think of learning strategies appropriate to the conditions that will impact student learning outcomes better (2012:3). This means that there are stages or processes that must be passed by the students prior to the final stages of writing a paragraph or an essay. Furthermore, interviews conducted on some of the students indicated that they require a learning strategy that motivates them to learn reading or writing course in order to obtain a good understanding.

As already mentioned above, that the academic reading and writing students are required to be able to analyze a passage into writing form. The demands to be able to interpret the readings presented is not an easy thing, especially if English is a foreign language for students. Understanding a discourse then analyze or criticize, requires its own strategies as Rose et al stated that, preparing for reading must work on two levels: the first is to orient learners to the text before reading, and the second is to interpret the information in the wording of each sentence. This statement shows that reading and analyzing a discourse requires the learning process, and not just the product of the student demands. Therefore we need a strategy that can motivate students to be active in these majors, as PAIKEM (Pembelajaran Aktif Inovatif Kreatif Efektif dan Menyenangkan) principle states that learning should be carried on, innovative, creative, effective and fun. In order to academic reading and writing lessons into meaningful learning, effective, creative, and

fun, it can be done with a variety of strategies. One way is to implement the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) in teaching academic reading and writing. In this learning model students sit in groups, discussing material that has been determined, and at the end make a summary or interpretation of the reading material in the form of writing. Furthermore, the methodology of Classroom Action Research (CAR) could be implemented to prove whether through the implementation of CIRC can create learning outcomes and learning activities of students on academic reading and writing in the category of good / excellent according to Monitoring and Evaluation (MONEV) FKIP UR Pekanbaru.

Based on the explanation above, the problem of learning in the academic reading and writing course can be identified as follows: (1) The teaching- learning Methods of writing course and reading course is still conventionally used; (2) Less motivating to write and read in the teaching-learning process of writing course and reading course in the classroom, made the students score stand in average level. Those identification of the problems above come to the problems formulation as follows: (1) How to implement a strategy of learning by using the CIRC in order to make the learning academic reading and writing in good categories according to the assessment of MONEV FKIP UR Pekanbaru?; (2) How to implement a strategy of learning by using the CIRC in order to increase the activity of students in academic learning reading and writing course? Meanwhile, the purpose of this study: (1) Lecturers can improve the quality of learning strategies and academic reading and writing; (2) Students get a chance to express opinions, ideas, thoughts in writing form; (3) Students can work independently or in groups and be able to account for all individual and group tasks; (4) The students could master academic reading and academic writing properly.

# LITERATURE REVIEW

Basically, in an atmosphere of academic, the activity of listening, speaking, reading, and writing can not be done seperately. Someone speaking because she is listening to her interlocutor. Similarly, in writing, someone wrote because of reading and infering or interpreting the reading passages. However, in certain situations these activities can be done separately. Someone merely conducting listening, reading, speaking, or writing only.

Academic reading and writing course integrates two different skills, namely productive skills (writing) and receptive skills (reading). Integrated skills is to integrate the language skills with other language skills. As Harmer (1991: 52) states that very often the language skills can not be done without the other language skills. Furthermore, Harmer also states that one can not speak / respond if someone is not listening to what the previous speech. Similarly, a person rarely write if she did not read before.

In writing courses, students are expected to write several paragraphs models/texts including, narrative, description, reports, discussions, and expository. The ability of writing becomes so important to students who will write their final paper. However, in practice, the writing is not as easy as the other language skills such as listening, speaking, and reading. Writing requires a process or stages in practice, in order to produce good writing. According to Petty (1980: 32), writing is a process of submission of ideas, feelings, and the things experienced through writing. Furthermore, Phenix (1990: 11) states that writing includes what will be delivered, what will be expressed through written language, in accordance with the standards of the language used.

Writing in the native language is very different from writing in a foreign language. Not only because of different grammar and vocabulary, but the writer should also be able

to write her ideas into a foreign language that is used, so that the reader understands what is meant by the author (Raison et al, 1997: 14). According to Heffernan (1986: 6), the writing is good and right, it should include the application of correct grammar, the sensitivity of their ideas in writing, and the sense of the art of arranging words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs.

Similarly, in the activities of reading, the readers expect something from the readings that will be read. Readers expect the contents of the text to satisfy her curiosity will be obtained by reading the texts. (Harmer, 1991:183). Furthermore, Harmer also classify reading activities into six categories, namely, predictive skills, extracting specific information, getting the general picture, extracting detailed information, recognizing discourse function and content, and deducing meaning from context. Those categories are not easy to do individually. They need someone or a group to understand or practice the six skills mentioned above. If associated with a learning cooperative strategies, which require active and creative students, either individually or in groups, academic reading and writing learning needs input / feedback not only from the lecturer, but also from her friends in the group, the CIRC strategy could facilitate academic learning activities of reading and writing.

According to Durukan (2010:102), the CIRC is a learning strategy designed to develop reading and writing skills at the high school to college level. The Durukan's results showed that the CIRC not only enhances in teaching reading, but it also possible to use in teaching writing. In addition to CIRC, Suprijono (2011:130) argues *CIRC* learning steps as follows: Form a four-person group whose members are heterogeneous; Teacher gives discourse / clipping according to the lesson topic; Students work reading to each other and find the main idea and respond to discourse / clippings and written on a sheet

of paper; Presented the results of the discussion;Teachers make inferences with; and closing. The last stage of this activity is the evaluation conducted by the lecturers. The evaluation that will be carried out is to evaluate paragraphs written by students based on scoring rubric which helps teachers to evaluate students' writing.

## METHODOLOGY

The *CIRC* learning methods had been applied to students who take  academic reading and writing course by using Classroom Action Research (CAR) methodology. According to Rapopot in Wiriaatmadja (2007), conducted an action research is to help someone (in this case the teacher) to overcome the practical problems encountered and try to improve the students problems  better, with the cooperation and the ethical framework agreement. Through learning method of *CIRC* that conducted by the lecturer  at the time of implementing the teaching- learning process, it could be expected to good level of learning outcomes of academic reading and writing students'score, according to the assessments of MONEV (Monitoring and Evaluation) FKIP-UR.

Futhermore, the subjects of this research were 25 students who took academic reading and writing course in the even semester of 2011/2012 academic year. The research had been conducted for one semester (six months). The materials  used are taken from several sources of learning, such as books and  Internet. The research conducted in two cycles.  Each cycle included the stages of planning, action, observation, and reflection. The research design was an adaptation of the study design proposed by Kemmis and Taggart in Wiriaatmadja (Wiriaatmadja 2007:66). The sources of data obtained from this study were: *Students.* To obtain data on students' learning outcomes and activities in the learning process;

*Lecturer.* To see the success rate of implementation of the *CIRC* method in *academic reading and writing* students' activities during the learning process;*Collaborator.* Collaborator intended as a source for a comprehensively look at the application of *CAR* both the students and the lecturer. The data Collection Technique is as follow:*Test.* Used to obtain data on student learning outcomes;*Observation.* Used to collect data about students activities in learning *academic reading and writing* using *CIRC* method;*Discussion.* Discussions were held between the researcher and collaborator to discuss the results of cycles. Meanwhile, the instruments used were:*Test.* The test used a set of reading topics then students write a summary of students interpretation of the passages. The test consisted of pre test, achievement test of cycle I and II;*Observation.* The study used observation sheets to measure activity levels of the students and the lecturer. As for the performance indicators, it could be seen from the criteria specified as follows: *Students.* Students declared successful, if the students get 6.0. This score is appropriate to academic regulations that set by MONEV FKIP UR; *Lecturer.* The performance of the lecturer can be seen from the list of attendees and student observations.

In this study, there are two types of data, namely: *Quantitative data.* In this case the value of student results are analyzed in descriptive statistical analysis, which is looking for the mean, and the percentage of successful studies. The data obtained from the students used the *scoring rubric*; *Qualitative data.* In this case, the data / information obtained from observation sheet, which would then be described / outlined in sentence form. The research procedures applied in two cycles.

In cycle 1, the study applied planning, action, observation, and reflection. In planning, the study did the steps such as: The research team analyzed the syllabus to determine the basic competencies that will be presented to

students; Made the lesson plan; Made the learning media to be applied in teaching; Created the students observation sheet;Made the lecturer observation sheet; Propose alternative solutions to be tested in order to solve the problem; Made instruments used in the two cycles; Constructed the learning evaluation tool.

In the action step, the study applied learning scenarios which has been designed. In the observation step, the study observed learning activities using observation sheets  prepared, namely observation sheet of students and lecturer. In the reflection step, the results of the monitoring would be analyzed relating to the implementation of the measures taken and their impact on students. The next planning of corrective action to be performed in cycle 2 are discussed in this step. Cycle 2 continued with the revision steps. Considering the time constraints, the research team would carry out the study as much as two cycles.

## RESEARCH  FINDINGS

The pre test is conducted prior to the implementation of *the CIRC*. This test aimed to look at the students writing ability  in the context of academic reading and writing. The pre test results indicated that the students  writing ability was still low as shown on the table below:

**Table 1. Students Score before the implementation of the CIRC.**

| Value Figures | Amount | Quality Value | Percentage | Quality Score | Mentions Quality |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 81-100 | 0 | A | 0 | 4 | Very good |
| 66-80 | 0 | B | 0 | 3 | Good |
| 56-65 | 0 | C | 0 | 2 | Enough |
| 41-55 | 6 | D | 24 | 1 | Less |
| 0 -40 | 19 | E | 76 | 0 | Failed |
| Total | 25 | - | 100 | - | - |

When examined in the above table, that no one student got very good and good level. The table showed that the implementation of teaching methods need to be implemented. The lecturer decided to apply the steps of *CIRC* method. While classroom management to be applied was to classify students into small heterogenous groups, where in one group consists of three or four students.

After giving the pretest, the lecturer started to do cycle 1. The cycle 1 was conducted in three meetings. In each meeting students sat in their group that has been chosen by mention the numbers. Each student that has the same number sat in one group. There were 7 groups in this cycle. Then the treatment was conducted by following the steps of *CIRC* method. The result of the treatment could be seen on table below:

**Table 2. Students Score after the implementation of**
**_the CIRC_ in cycle 1.**

| Value Figures | Amount | Quality Value | Percentage | Quality Score | Mentions Quality |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 81-100 | 0 | A | 0 | 4 | Very good |
| 66-80 | 0 | B | 0 | 3 | Good |
| 56-65 | 7 | C | 28 | 2 | Enough |
| 41-55 | 15 | D | 60 | 1 | Less |
| 0-40 | 3 | E | 12 | 0 | Failed |
| Total | 25 | - | 100 | - | - |

The table above shows that there are 28% students who got enough level, as much as 60% of students who got less level, and as much as 12% of the students failed. The above tabulation shows that the application of learning _CIRC_ still need to proceed to cycle 2. The discussion with collaborator decided that the application of the change in cycle 2 _CIRC_ would be held, with the change of the group members. If at cycle 1 the number of group members were fixed in each meeting, then at each meeting of cycle 2, the number of group members were changed, but each group has members that are not fixed. This meant the method of determining the members of the group remains the same, but done at each meeting. The purpose of this changed was done so the students have good interrelationship to each member.

In cycle 2, the lecturer applied the same steps of CIRC, but it had different topics to each meetings. The collaborator had observed the lecturer and the students activity.The observations of the students showed that students are more active and creative when compared to observations in Cycle 1. This is presumably due to a complete overhauled of the members of the discussion group. In this cycle, the lecturer gave the instructions

clearer than in cycle 1. In addition, the lecturer did good approach to each gorup. As a result, the students score changed evidently. The data obtained in cycle 2 showed that the results were in good score as shown in the following table.

Table 3. Students score after the implementation of the *CIRC* in cycle 2

| Value Figures | Jlh. MHS. | Quality Value | Percentage | Quality Score | Mentions Quality |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 81-100 | 4 | A | 16 | 4 | Very good |
| 66-80 | 18 | B | 72 | 3 | Good |
| 56-65 | 3 | C | 12 | 2 | Enough |
| 41-55 | 0 | D | 0 | 1 | Less |
| 0 -40 | 0 | E | 0 | 0 | Failed |
| Total | 25 | - | 100 | - | - |

The table above showed that no one have failed and less category level. The discussion with collaborator decided that the application will be suspended until cycle 2 by considering the time and materials inadequately.

IMPLICATION

The results of the action research using *CIRC* steps towards learning academic reading and writing could answer the previously stated research objectives. The implementation of *CIRC* steps may increase students' learning outcomes. The carefully classroom management by dividing students into small groups of three people increased the students activity.The comparison of score results of Pre test, Cycle 1, and Cycle 2 could be seen in the following table.

Table 4. The percentage score of Pre Test, Cycle 1 and Cycle 2

| Value | Pre Test | Cycle 1 | Cycle 2 | Mentions Quality |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 81-100 | 0 | 0 | 16 | Very good |
| 66- 80 | 0 | 0 | 72 | Good |
| 56- 65 | 0 | 28 | 12 | Enough |
| 41- 55 | 24 | 60 | 0 | Less |
| 0- 40 | 76 | 12 | 0 | Failed |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | |

From the comparison of cycle 1 and cycle 2 it is clear that there is a changed of grouping effects on learning outcomes of academic reading and writing. That change made students excited and motivated to perform activities better than before.


## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the classroom action research that conducted by applying the learning steps of *CIRC* could be concluded that the ratio of the score of the pre test, the score of learning outcomes of Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 had increased. This increased could be achieved within 14 weeks of the meeting. In Cycle 1, 28% students were in enough level, 60% were in less level, and 12% of the students in the category of failure. While in Cycle 2, there were 16% of students were in very well level, 72% of students were in good level, and 12% of the students in enough level. Furthermore, the results of observations showed that the grouping method has contributed significantly to the students learning outcomes. If the Cycle 1 group members were fix in every meeting, then in Cycle 2 members of the group changed at each meeting. Thus it could be concluded that *CIRC* steps were applicable in teaching- learning academic reading and writing course.

However, further scrutiny to the acquisition individual score in the category of very good still needs to

be improved. For that reason, continued research by using *CIRC* method should be done, but in the modification of learning steps, in accordance with the character of students taking the course, or with other methods that can improve the ability of individual students within the context of academic reading and writing.

## REFERENCES

Durukan, Erhan. (*2010). Effects of CIRC Technique on Reading-Writing Skills.* Educational Research and Reviews Vol. 6 (1), pp. 102-109, January 2011. Turkey: Turkish Department of Education, Faculty of Fatih Education, Black Sea Technical University.

B Hamza, and Nurdin Mohammed Uno. (2012). Learning Approach *PAILKEM.* Earth Literacy. Jakarta.

Harmer, Jeremy. (1991). *The Practice of English Language Teaching.* London: Longman.

Heffernan, James AW, and John, E. Lincoln. (1994). *Writing A College Handbook.* New York: WW Norton Company.

Jordan, RR.(1999). *Academic Writing Course.* England: Pearson Education Limited.

Kunandar. , (2010). *Classroom Action Research.* Jakarta: Rajagrafindo Persada.

Nunan, David. , (1999). *Second language Teaching and Learning.* Boston: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.

Oshima, Alice and Ann Hogue. , (1997). *Introduction to Academic Writing.* 2nd Edition. New York: Longman.

Petty, T. Walter and Jullie, M Jensen. , (1980). *Ways of Writing.* Boston: Allya and Bacon Inc..

Phenix, Jo. , (1990). *Teaching Writing.* USA: Pembroke Publishers Limited.

Rose, David, et al. , (2003). *Scaffolding Academic Reading and Writing at the Koori Centre.* The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education. Vol. 32. P.43.

Rooks, George M. , (1999). *Share Your Paragraph: Interactive Approach to Writing.* USA: Prentice Hall Regents

Suprijono, Agus. ,(2011). *Cooperative Learning: Theory and Applications PAIKEM.* Yogyakarta: Dawn Library.

Wiriaatmadja, Rochiati. , (2005). *Methods Classroom Action Research.* Bandung: PT. Teens Rosdakarya.

Journal Rose et al.,
Www.atsis.uq.edu.au/ajie/docs/2003324149.pdf