

**IMPROVING STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING
OF SHORT STORIES THROUGH COOPERATIVE INTEGRATED
READING AND COMPOSITION (CIRC)**

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Abstrak

Berdasarkan observasi peneliti, sebagian besar mahasiswa semester empat. Jurusan basasa Inggris di STAI-MU Tanjungpinang rendah dalam pemahaman dan susah dalam menganalisa lima unsur narasi; alur, waktu/tempat, karakter, sudut pandang penulis, ide cerita. Tujuan penelitian adalah untuk menemukan sejauhmana CIRC meningkatkan pemahaman mahasiswa pada cerita pendek dan faktor yang mempengaruhinya. Penelitian mempergunakan CIRC untuk menyelesaikan masalah.

Penelitian ini adalah tindakan kelas yang dilakukan dalam dua siklus, dengan 22 orang peserta. Peneliti dibantu oleh seorang kolaborator dalam melakukan prosedur penelitian. Test, tugas, pengamatan, catatan lapangan dan wawancara merupakan alat penelitian. Data dianalisa dengan dua teknik: data kuantitatif dianalisa degan menggunakan nilai rata-rata. Untuk melihat nilai rata-rata siswa yang didapat dari ujian pemahaman membaca, sementara data kualitatif didapat dari pengamatan, catatan lapangan, dan wawancara.

Temuan penelitian adalah terdapat peningkatan pemahaman cerita pendek melalui CIRC yang dapat dilihat dengan membandingkan nilai siswa siklus I (51,68%), dan II (78,1%). Peningkatan dipengaruhi oleh beberapa faktor: materi, alat peraga, aktifitas kelas, pendekatan guru, dan strategi. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa, Penerapan CIRC dapat meningkatkan pemahaman cerita pendek lebih baik pada semester empat jurusan bahasa Inggris STAI-MU Tanjungpinang

Kata kunci : improving, Understanding short stories, Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (C I R C)

1. INTRODUCTION

Short-story which is defined by Poe (in Lawrence) as a narrative that can be read at one sitting of from one-half hour to two hours. It does not take much time to read it. short-story which

is defined by Menrath. J / 2003. A short story is a piece of prose fiction which can be read at a single sitting. It is usually one plot, a few characters; there is no detailed description of setting. From those citations, we know that a

short story is a relatively short narrative which contains the elements of narrative such as: plot, setting, characters, point of view and theme that we can read in one-half hour to two hours. Compare to novels take long time to read and to understand. So that, short story is the suitable one to be used in teaching EFL

In understanding short stories, we have the following questions in our mind: What happens to readers while they read and respond to a short story? What do they think, feel, or react to at any moment? Studies or response to literature have dealt with reactions obtained at the end of reading after a story completed. All of those questions include in the five aspects of narrative; plot, setting, characters, point of view and theme. Malone (2011) states that In order to understand the story as a whole. The same basic story elements of plot, theme, characters, setting, and point of view are used to help college students develop critical thinking skills and writing proficiencies. The study of literature must involve not only consideration of literary work itself but also concern to the way in which students respond to the literary work.

Infact, some objections were always raised in my prose class. First, the deviated and figurative language of poetry necessitated very long time to grasp. Second, the length of novel made it difficult for such classes to finish. Finally, drama could be used in classes, but it was difficult to act out a play in crowded classes within limited course hours. Considering these objections, it is obvious that among literary forms, short-story which is defined by Menrath. J / 2003. A short story is a piece of prose fiction which can be read at a single sitting. It is usually one plot, a few characters; there is no detailed

description of setting. So, it is easy for the students to follow the story line of the works.

Short story is an effective way of capturing students' attention, and can also provide great literary examples of English and reading terminology that students should be mastered. Short story which is defined in Webster's New World College Dictionary is a kind of story shorter than the novel or novelette, characteristically developing a single central theme and limited in scope and number of characters. They are excellent source of literary masterpieces that the lengths are not too long to consume for students. The shortness of the text is important for the students because they will see that they can read, understand and finish something in English, and it will give the students a feeling of achievement and self-confidence.

The use of short-story in teaching English prose should be aimed to encourage the students to use what they have previously learnt. By doing this, the learning process will be student-centered. However, the teacher plays a great role. She/he must choose a suitable text to use in class, and should help her/his students understand the story with various activities. In using short stories to teach English, story selection is indeed one of the most important roles of the teacher or lecturer. Since the lengths of short-stories quite vary, choose a story short enough to handle within course hours.

Before giving the short-story, the teacher or lecturer should decide the readability of the text. Very long sentences are difficult for students to understand. As students will not understand these sentences and words, they will get bored and not read the

work. In order to meet that readability criterion, using graded or simplified stories is possibly the most practical way. Therefore, the use of simplified text with less proficient readers is highly suggested for the sake of suiting the texts with the level of students.

Otherwise, this fact mentioned that some students argued that the language of those narrative texts were difficult for them to read. Besides, the texts were long and time consuming to learn, and the target-language culture on which the literature was based, it was strange for them and might be difficult to related to. They found difficulties in expressing their experiences after reading novels or short stories. Another fact based on the researcher's experiences, the students enjoyed studying in groups or team rather than individually. They became more active and creative. They helped each other, shared ideas. It made the learning process more communicative.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this case, the researcher found some related research finding which had been done by researchers or teachers in related to implementasion of CIRC.

(1) Sulistianingsih (2010) did a research on The Influence of Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) Method on Students' Ability in Writing Narrative Text: A Case Study on the Eight Grade of Junior High School of SMP N 1 Tegal in the Academic Year of 2009/2010. Based on the results of her study, she concluded that Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) method gives positive influence on Students' Ability in Writing Narrative Text. (2) Suwarjo (2007) He conducted his research on The Implementation Pattern of Fiction Prose Appreciation Learning Based on

the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) Strategy in Elementary School of Metro City of Lampung, this research has purposes to establish Literature learning includes fiction prose appreciation learning (FPAL) through Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) strategy in elementary school. It is done by developing components of learning, that is: (1) the development of Lesson Plan (LP) of proses fiction appreciation, and (2) the implementation pattern of FPAL based on the CIRC strategy. (3) Farboy (2010) did a research on Intensive reading learning using CIRC method to increase student's intensive ability in main idea finding at text of students of grade VII SMP Negeri 3 Batu Junior High year 2009/2010. The research showed the percentage of students completeness in intensive reading in cycle 1 was 66%, and cycle 2 was 96.77%. Students seemed more enthusiastic and active when using CIRC method.

3. METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

The type of the research used in this study was classroom action research, focused on improving the classroom teaching and learning process. The classroom action research is carried out through a well-organized (cycles) process. It is expected that a teacher can implement certain treatments in order to provide improvement to the students. While no improvement after carrying out the treatments, the teacher can give more treatments by adding some cycles until the teacher find out the significant improvement of the students. Wallace (2001:15), Creswell (2005:550), Ann, et.al(2006:1) state that action research is a form of self-reflective investigation of

participants (the teacher and the students) in social and educational situation as well in order to improve their own social or educational practices.

Gay and Airasian (2000:593) state that classroom action research is intended to describe teacher- initiated, school based research . In the process, several teachers collect the evidence and make decision about their own knowledge , performance, belief and effect in order to understand and improve them.

According to Zainil (2008:1) classroom action research is a research conducted in the classrom by a teacher and a collaborator in order to improve teaching learning process. So the research can not be conducted by the teacher only. She needs a collaborator to help her in doing the research.

Related to those theories, the researcher concluded that she conducted a classroom action research to solve problems in her class by using CIRC. It was done to improve the student's understanding short stories especially in analyzing them by using cooperative integrated reading and composition (CIRC) at the fourth semester students' problems in prose subject at the English Education Department of STAI Miftahul 'Ulum Tanjungpinang.

Procedure of the Research

In conducting a classroom action research, there were some procedures that must be considered by the researcher. The aim of the procedures was to help the researcher to be easily in carrying out the research. The procedures consisted of Plan, Action, Observation and Reflection. It can be seen as the following.

1. Plan

A classroom action research was begun with plan. It meant that all of the activities that were conducted in the research must be organized well. In action research the planning was a lesson plan as guidance for the researcher to conduct teaching and learning activities in the classroom. She also needed to prepare on this study through formulating all of the things that supported her in teaching and learning activities, such as the strategy was be applied, how to assess the students' assessment.

In the process of plan the reseacher prepared all all things needed for

action, such as :

- a. Preparing the topics and the materials for teaching reading by applying CIRC.
- b. Designing the Lesson
- c. Discussing all necessary things with the collaborator about the
- d. research instruments: observation sheets, field notes, and other related materials.
- e. Arranging the research schedule.

2. Action

Action was the implementation of the plans, which had been arranged by the researcher. All of the activities which were done by the researcher in teaching and learning process were based on the lesson plans that had been prepared, and other materials that helped the researcher in teaching and learning.

At this stage, the researcher conducted the activities of teaching learning process by applying CIRC and the actions were based on stages in CIRC . Beside that, the collaborator observed all the activities.

3. Observation

Observation used to documented the effects of the action that had been done by the researcher. It was done carefully in order to find the truth information about the students' behavior or action. In observation, the researcher was also helped by collaborator. He filled the observation checklist to collect the data. He also wrote field notes about something that found while teaching learning process. He observed the improvement of students' understanding short stories from the first unil the last meeting of the cycle. The result of the observation was discussed together with him, in order to solve some weaknesses that had been found during teaching and learning process.

4. Reflection

The reflection in this research was personal reflection from the researcher the strength or the weaknesses in conducting the treatment. The result of the observation was collected, analyzed and evaluated. The reflection based on the test given in the ending of teaching learning process and students' response to the technique during the lesson. To know whether the treatment had the effect or success, the standard of treatment effectiveness clear. Learning process was considered successful if student's score was 70. From the result, the lecturer reflected the success of the treatment by seeing the data whether the activities, which were implemented in the class, could improve the students' understanding short stories and the data were guidance for the researcher to do the next activities.

The researcher tried to find out :
(1) the extent to which CIRC could

improve students' understanding short stories at morning class of the fourth semester of the English Department at STAI Miftahul Ulum Tanjungpinang.(2) To find out the factors that influence the changes of students' understanding short stories at morning class of the fourth semester of the English Department at STAI Miftahul Ulum Tanjungpinang. The researcher and collaborator analyzed the test result to find the improvement of the students' understanding short stories. She replanned the next learning activities based on the problems found in the activities were the same as the first cycle , but it gave attention to the components which were lower.

The researcher did some activities related to the using of CIRC. the activities were :

STAGE I : OPENING (Pre-Teaching)

1. The leturer greets the students.
2. The leturer checks attendance.
3. The leturer gives motivation.
4. The leturer asks somequestions related to. prose/ short stories.

STAGE II : MAIN ACTIVITIE (Whilst-Teaching)

1. The lecturer explains about prose.
2. The lecturer explains about short story.
3. The lecturer determines the reading group or team.
4. The lecturer sets a purpose of reading comprehension :introduces new\vocabularies, reviews old vocabu- lary, discusses of the story after reading.
5. The lecturer gives questions related to each story and emphasizes the structure of short stories on the halfway the story.
6. The lecturer asks the students list the new and difficult words, and

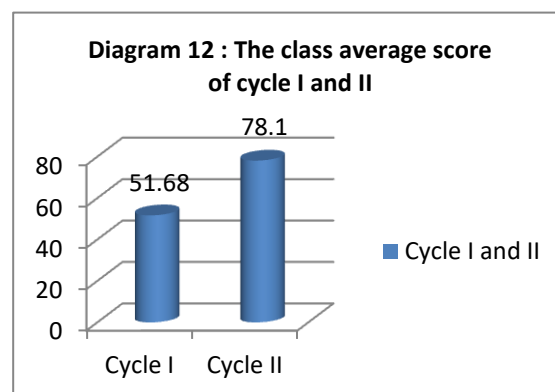
asks the students to practice the words with partner until they can read smoothly.

STAGE III : CLOSING(Post-Teaching)

1. The lecturer asks the students' difficulties in answering the questions
2. The lecturer asks the students whether the cooperative integrated reading and composition strategy is helpful for them or not in understanding short stories. Concludes material given.
3. The lecturer asks the students to find the meaning of new words by looking up the dictionary.
4. The lecturer asks the students to master spelling the words with partner.
5. The lecturer asks the students to summarize the main point of story with their partner.
6. The lecturer asks the student's partner initial a student-assignment from indicating that they have completed the task.
7. The lecturer asks the students to write a draft composition and edit one another's work using peer editing.
8. The lecturer gives a task/ a test.

4. FINDING

The improvement of the students' understanding short stories in the cycle I compared to the cycle II could seen in the following diagram :



From the graph above, it could be seen that students' understanding short stories improved significantly from cycle I and cycle II. The data shown that CIRC was able to improve students' understanding short stories. At the end of cycle I the average score was 51,68%. However, at the end of cycle II, the average score was 78,1%. It was increase about 26,42%.Based on the diagram, there was a good achievement from the first cycle to the second cycle.

In conclusion, the students understanding short stories after having applied action reseach through CIRC technique in teaching prose at the fourth semester of the English education department of STAI Miftahul 'Ulum Tanjungpinang could achieved better improvement. If it was compared to student's understandng short stories before carrying out the research.

Teaching learning process through Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition have brought a lot of improvement toward students' understanding short stories. The improvement of the students' understanding short stories could be seen from the students' score of the tests which were held at the end of each cycle. The researcher found some factors influenced students'

understanding short stories through CIRC technique.

CIRC could increase students' understanding short stories through writing composition or making summary. In this case, students' ability in comprehending narrative text improved by composing the story base on the five aspects of narrative. Slavin (1995:104) mentions that in CIRC, students plan, revise, and edit their composition with teammates. Students memorized and retell the five aspects of the short stories, than they wrote their composition of the story. The peer editing was a very important part for the students. It gave good result for their understanding short stories.

The process of teaching learning by using CIRC to improve students' understanding short stories was succesful. It was shown by the increasing of students' scores after every cycle. Through the observation, the students followed the activities and participated actively. They were happy, excited, and enjoyed themselves.

5. Discussion

Based on the finding of the research, which wa taken from the activities of the two cycles of this action research, it can be concluded that teaching learning process through Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition have brought a lot of improvement toward students' understanding short stories.at the fourth semester of the English Education Department of STAI Miftahul'Ulum Tanjungpinang. The findings also support the research from Santi (2010) who mentioned that CIRC could improve the students' reading comprehension of narrative text better. The improvement was influenced by several factors: the material, classroom

activity, classroom management, teacher approach, and teacher strategy.

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Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition as a technique in solving the teaching and learning problem in understanding short stories has proved that there were significant improvements on students understanding short stories during the two cycles. The improvement were conluded through the data gathered from the result of the test, observations and interview.

The researcher found some factors influenced students' understanding short stories through CIRC technique. They were the material, media, classroom activity, classroom management, teacher approach and teacher strategy.

The first factor influence the changes of students' understanding short stories was materials used during the research, but material was not the most influence one, eventhough it was a big infuence toward the increased of the students' understanding short stories.

The second factor was media. The media used to convey the material had a big influence too. without media the teaching learning process would run slowly. Media was helpful but did not have much influence to the students' understanding short stories.

The third factors was classroom activities. this activities had big influence toward students improvement. In this activities applied all of the aspects which were related to CIRC technique. It became the most influence factor that cause the improvement student of understanding short stories.

The classroom management was also important. The researcher should be able to manage the classroom in order class could run smoothly. Teacher approach also had great influence. The teacher or lecturer had to motivate, to know the students difficulties and to find the solution of the problem which were faced by the students.

Teacher strategy was the very important factors that have a big influence toward the students' understanding short stories. Slavin (1995:104) mentions that in CIRC, students plan, revise, and edit their composition with teammates. Students memorized and retell the five aspects of the short stories, than they wrote their composition of the story.

6. CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION, AND SUGGESTION

6.1 Conclusion

After having completed analyzing the data gained from the test, observation, field notes and interviews, the researcher can conclude three main points in this research, entitled "Improving Students' Understanding Short Stories Through Cooperative

Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) at the Fourth Semester of English Education Department of STAI Miftahul 'Ulum Tanjungpinang" as follows:

1. Using CIRC improves students' understanding short stories in teaching prose in morning class of the English Department at the fourth semester of STAI Miftahul 'Ulum Tanjungpinang could improve students' understanding short stories. It could be identified from the teaching process and increasing score of their understanding short stories from cycle I, and cycle II. CIRC gives positives contributions and better outcomes to improve students' understanding short stories. There was a significant improvement of students' understanding short stories after conducting CIRC in teaching learning process.

2. The factors that influence the changes of students' understanding short stories are: material, classroom activity, classroom management, teacher approach, and teacher strategy.

The first factor is material. The material does not influence much the students' understanding short stories.

The second factor is media. The media used to convey the material has a big influence. The media used in the teaching learning process runs slowly. It is helpful but does not have much influence to the students' understanding short stories.

The third factor is classroom activities. The classroom activities has a big influence toward students' improvement understanding short stories. These activities implent all the aspects: students plan, revise, and edit their composition with teammates, memorize and retell the five aspects of the short stories, write their composition of the story which are

related to CIRC technique. They become the most influence factor that causes the improvement of students' understanding short stories.

The fourth factor is classroom management. The classroom management could run smoothly because the researcher is be able to manage the classroom

The fifth factor is teacher approach. The teacher approach motivates the students, to know their difficulties and to find the solusion of the problem that they have.

The last factor is teacher strategy. The teacher strategy influences the students' understanding short stories. In CIRC, the students plan, revise, and edit their composition with teamates, memorize and retell the five aspects of the short stories, than they write their summary of the story.

6.2 Implication

The Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) technique can be implemented at the English class, especially in prose class. The result of this research shows that students' understanding short stories in analyzing the five aspects : plot, setting, characters, point of view, and theme. improved after they were taught through CIRC.

6.3 Suggestion

Based on the result of the research, the conclusion and implications stated above, the lecturer, the students and everyone that involved in this research can consider the following the suggestions :

1. The researcher as a lecturer should continue using CIRC in teaching prose because CIRC better improves students' understanding short stories.

2. The students in the morning class of the fourth semester of the English Department of STAI-MU Tanjungpinang should use CIRC in learning prose.
3. For further research, the researcher suggests to other researcher to investigate related studies.

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