

Application of Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) Learning Theory to Improve Reading Aloud through Picture Stories

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Abstract

The background of this study is the low level of students' reading comprehension in Indonesian language learning using picture stories. This is because Indonesian language material is abstract and requires audio visualization and an engaging and interactive learning approach. The implementation of the cooperative model is considered effective because it encourages active student involvement in the learning process, while reading aloud through picture stories helps students understand concepts in Indonesian language learning. The subjects in this study were 32 first-grade students at SDN Cibeureum Mandiri 2 in Cimahi City. The results of the study indicate that the implementation of the Cooperative Model (CIRC) has increased reading comprehension using picture story teaching media, effectively learning Indonesian language. This Cooperative Learning Model enables students to play an active role in learning and helps them build a better understanding of concepts through reading aloud. This cooperative model also produces positive changes in students' perspectives on understanding through picture stories. This is evident in the students' increased conceptual understanding, their ability to apply concepts, their high reading interest due to engaging and colorful books, which makes reading more effective, and their higher learning motivation. Based on this, the cooperative approach of reading aloud and picture stories has been proven to facilitate students' mastery of abstract Indonesian language learning in a fun and meaningful way. The researcher encountered a challenge, namely the lack of varied picture storybook facilities and infrastructure. The solutions implemented to overcome this obstacle included conducting a library survey, searching the internet, and duplicating picture story books.

Keywords:

Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC); Learning Theory; Reading Aloud; Picture Stories

1. Introduction

Learning Indonesian in elementary schools presents problems, challenges, and obstacles in understanding abstract concepts for students in Phase A, or the beginning of the first grade. The Indonesian language material being studied is a process by which students enrich their vocabulary through reading practice/literature review, conversations with their surroundings, and experiences listening to vocabulary spoken by others in everyday life.

Obstacles encountered during Indonesian language learning include incomplete and limited media, facilities, and infrastructure, resulting in poor student understanding of the material. This can be seen through observations from the initial pre-test, which showed slow, inaccurate reading development, and students' inability to comprehend what they have read.

To address this, learning media are needed that can engage students in the learning process and enhance their understanding of what they have read through reading aloud, using the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) learning theory, illustrated stories, and media relevant to students' daily lives. According to research by Indri Widiastuti (2025), the cooperative learning theory,

Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC), is defined as cooperative learning that integrates a reading passage thoroughly and then composes it into its essential parts.

The importance of this topic lies in the need to improve students' understanding of reading aloud, which serves as a foundation for literacy learning at subsequent levels of education. A good understanding of reading aloud is not only important in an academic context but also has practical relevance for building awareness in everyday life, particularly regarding the instilling of moral messages from books read. The application of media through picture stories is also in line with developments in the digital era, which increasingly integrates technology into classroom learning (Wahyuni, 2023). The research questions in this article are:

- a) How can the application of the CIRC model with picture stories improve the reading aloud skills of lower-grade elementary school students?
- b) How can reading aloud skills be improved using the CIRC model with picture stories?

The benefits of this research include determining the extent to which the application of cooperative learning theory can improve reading aloud comprehension through picture stories in Indonesian language learning. The results are expected to contribute to teachers' selection of more effective and innovative learning strategies for teaching Indonesian language, while simultaneously motivating students to be more active in their learning. Based on the description above, the author intends to conduct research on "The Application of Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) Learning Theory to Improve Students' Reading Aloud in Indonesian Language Learning with Picture Story Material for Grade 1 Elementary School" at SDN Cibeureum Mandiri 2, Cimahi City.

Literature Review

According to Learning Theory, Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) is a cooperative learning method that connects and unifies all readings, then summarizes or sorts out the important points. The Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) learning model implements the Indonesian language learning process by considering the steps involved in achieving optimal, effective, and efficient learning objectives. According to Shoimin (2014:52-53), the steps for Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) learning are as follows: a) Form heterogeneous groups of four students; b) The teacher acts as a facilitator by providing teaching materials or learning materials relevant to the topic being studied. c) Students discuss with their study groups, working together to read and find the initial material from a passage/main idea. They then respond to each other and write their responses on a worksheet. d) Students can present their group learning outcomes by reading them aloud to the class. e) The teacher and students draw conclusions together; f) Closing.

Then, Shoimin (2014:54) also stated that the advantages of the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) learning model are as follows: 1) CIRC can train students' skills and knowledge to find solutions to problems; 2) Students play a crucial role, with the teacher acting as a facilitator; 3) It can motivate students to be enthusiastic about learning and study the material in detail; 4) It increases students' understanding of the material they are studying and allows them to mutually assess the work of their groupmates; 5) Students help each other if they don't understand the material; 6) It is effective for problem-solving.

Reading Aloud

Reading aloud is a reading activity performed by pronouncing the text aloud with appropriate pronunciation and intonation. This allows listeners to understand the information or meaning of the text. According to Trelease (2006), reading aloud activities must be implemented continuously at every level of school. This is done to improve reading literacy sustainably and sustainably. This allows students to develop a lifelong love of reading and utilize it in their daily lives.

Picture Storybooks

According to Mitchell (2003:87), "Picture storybooks are books in which the picture and text are tightly intertwined. Neither the pictures nor the words are self-sufficient; they need each other to tell the story." This statement can be interpreted as a picture storybook containing colorful, attractive pictures accompanied by words that tell the story, interconnected and forming a unified whole. The use of picture storybooks is an appropriate medium because elementary school children enjoy listening to stories and reading books with colorful pictures. This allows them to think concretely and facilitate reading.

Learning Indonesian in Elementary Schools

According to Munandar (2023), Indonesian language learning must be conducted in a way that is interesting and relevant to students' daily lives. In this case, cooperative learning theory can be an effective approach because it involves student collaboration in direct reading activities.

Furthermore, the use of interactive media, such as illustrated story materials, also provides a more enjoyable and effective learning experience.

Research findings in the field, students read aloud only read the description but have not understood the entire content of the story coherently, so that students can understand the content of the story more quickly, more interesting media are needed, including colorful picture stories and the CIRC method, namely a summary of several parts combined into a complete story. This is in line with the opinion According to Nurhayati (2023), visual media-based learning facilitates the discovery process, especially in the topic of picture story material. The use of this media provides visual support that can improve students' understanding of the material being studied.

Based on the various theories outlined, cooperative learning theory and reading aloud comprehension through illustrated story materials have significant potential in supporting Indonesian language conceptual reading comprehension, particularly in illustrated story materials. Cooperative learning theory, which encourages cooperation and active student involvement in the reading aloud process, enables them not only to discover concepts independently but also to develop critical and analytical thinking skills. Through this approach, students are encouraged to become independent and more cognitively engaged learners, resulting in a deeper and more meaningful understanding of concepts.

2. Method

The method applied in this research was to discuss, understand, and read existing learning theories or review literature. The subjects of this research were first-grade students at SDN Cibeureum Mandiri 2. The steps in the Classroom Action Research (CAR) procedure using the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) model are designed to improve elementary school students' reading aloud skills through picture stories.

- a) Identify problems by conducting initial classroom observations, starting with analyzing students' reading aloud abilities, including speed of reading aloud with picture stories, low motivation, intonation, and pronunciation.
- b) The planning stage involves developing a CIRC-based teaching module by selecting short picture stories, forming student groups, preparing a reading aloud test instrument with rubrics for expression, pronunciation, and intonation, and creating observation sheets and a cycle schedule.
- c). The implementation stages per cycle are as follows:
 - 1) The teacher explains the picture story material and the purpose of reading aloud.
 - 2) Forms student study groups.
 - 3) Distributes picture stories to each group.
 - 4) Holds a group discussion.
 - 5) Student representatives present the results of their group discussions.
 - 6) Draws conclusions together with the teacher.
 - 7) Conducts a brief reflection.
- d). Observation Stage
Data collection, implementing observation sheets, conducting reading aloud tests.
- e). Reflection Stage
Calculating the percentage of completion, planning improvements, etc.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

The author reviewed the content of the classroom action research article analysis related to the implementation of the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) Learning Model on Elementary School Students' Reading Aloud Skills.

Table 1

Improvement in Learning Outcomes of First-Grade Students at SDN Cibereum Mandiri 2

No	Indicator	Cycle I	Cycle II	Cycle III
1	Student Learning Outcome Completion	60 %	70 %	71 %
2	Student Activeness	72,5 %	74 %	80,2 %

The data indicate a gradual improvement in both indicators, namely Student Learning Outcome Completion and Student Activeness, from Cycle I to Cycle III. In terms of learning outcome completion, the percentage increased from 60% in Cycle I to 70% in Cycle II, followed by a slight increase to 71% in Cycle III. This pattern shows that the instructional improvements implemented in each cycle had a positive impact on students' learning achievement. The significant increase in Cycle II suggests that the applied learning strategies began to work effectively in supporting students' understanding of the material, while the smaller increase in Cycle III reflects a stage of consolidation and stabilization of learning outcomes. Meanwhile, the Student Activeness indicator demonstrates a more consistent and substantial improvement, rising from 72.5% in Cycle I to 74% in Cycle II, and then increasing sharply to 80.2% in Cycle III. This trend indicates that students' engagement in the learning process improved significantly, particularly in terms of participation, interaction, and involvement in discussions and learning activities. Overall, these findings suggest that the applied instructional approach successfully enhanced both the quality of the learning process and students' learning outcomes through a systematic and continuous cycle of improvement. The data presentation is as follows.

Table 2

Improvement in Elementary School Student Learning Outcomes Related to the CIRC Learning Model on Reading Aloud Skills

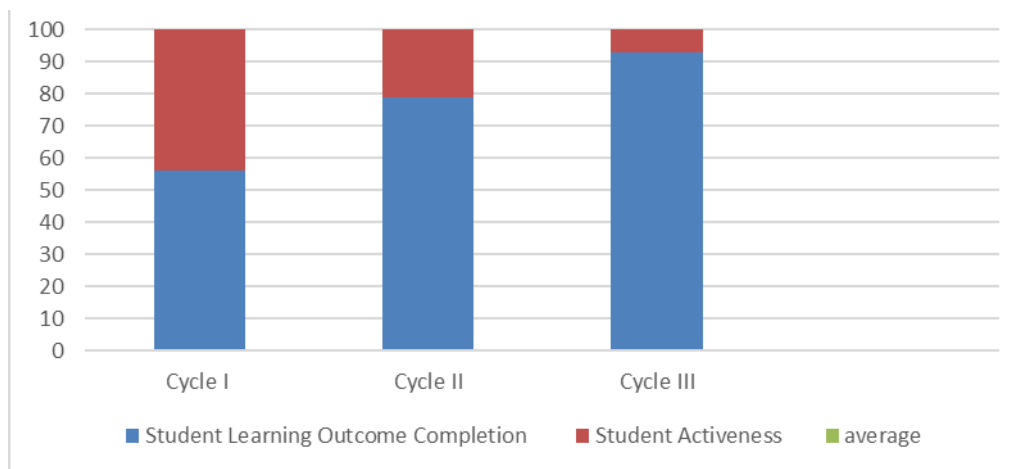
Cycle	Student Learning Outcome Completion	Student Activeness	Average
	Cycle I	Cycle II	
Cycle I	56 %	71 %	65,6 %
Cycle II	79 %	86 %	76,2 %
Cycle III	93 %	96 %	85,8 %

The results across the three learning cycles show a clear and consistent improvement in all measured indicators, including Student Learning Outcome Completion, Student Activeness, and the Average score. In Cycle I, learning outcome completion reached 56%, while student activeness was 71%, resulting in an average score of 65.6%. These initial results indicate that although students were moderately active in the learning process, their mastery of learning outcomes was still relatively low, suggesting the need for instructional refinement. In Cycle II, substantial improvements are evident. Student learning outcome completion increased to 79%, and student activeness rose to 86%, with the average score improving to 76.2%. This significant growth reflects the effectiveness of the instructional adjustments made after Cycle I, particularly in enhancing both cognitive achievement and active participation in learning activities. The most notable progress appears in Cycle III. Learning outcome completion reached 93%, student activeness increased to 96%, and the average score rose to 85.8%. These results demonstrate a strong alignment between student engagement and academic achievement. High levels of activeness were accompanied by very high learning outcome completion, indicating that the learning model successfully fostered both active learning and deep understanding. Overall, the data confirm that the cyclical improvement process led to sustainable enhancement of both learning quality and student performance.

In addition to the explanation above, the improvement in student learning outcomes in reading aloud using the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) Model can also be illustrated in the diagram.

Figure 1

Improvement in Student Learning Outcomes in Grade 1 Students Related to the CIRC Learning Model on Reading Aloud Ability



The improvement in Grade 1 students' learning outcomes is strongly influenced by the implementation of an appropriate instructional model, namely the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) approach. This model successfully reduced teacher dominance in the classroom and shifted the learning process toward student-centered activities. As a result, students became more actively engaged in learning, particularly through peer interaction, group discussions, and collaborative reading practices. The opportunity for students to discuss learning outcomes with peers in small groups fostered confidence, motivation, and deeper understanding, which contributed directly to the improvement in both learning achievement and participation.

The assessment process within the CIRC model was conducted using comprehensive and structured instruments. These included a read-aloud rubric focusing on pronunciation, expression, and fluency; group observation sheets measuring alternating reading, collaboration, and shared responsibility; and systematic testing and data analysis. Data were collected through video recordings of picture story read-aloud activities, calculation of average scores and learning completion percentages, student interviews, and analysis of pre-test and post-test results, ensuring both qualitative and quantitative evaluation of learning progress.

In Cycle I, students were introduced to the picture story "The Mouse Deer and the Crocodile", followed by group formation and turn-taking read-aloud practice. The final test showed an average score of 65.6, with a 56% completion rate and 71% student participation. However, obstacles such as limited time and low student confidence were identified. In Cycle II, improvements were made by extending learning time, reorganizing group roles, and introducing new picture stories. These adjustments led to better outcomes, with an average score of 76.2, a 79% completion rate, and 86% participation, although expressive reading still required improvement. In Cycle III, learning was optimized using the story "The Ant and the Grasshopper" with direct assessment. This resulted in significant progress, with an average score of 85.8, a 93% completion rate, and 96% participation. Students also demonstrated improved independence in reading aloud, indicating the effectiveness of the CIRC model in developing both academic achievement and active learning behavior.

4. Conclusion

The above research concludes that the use of the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) learning model resulted in improved reading comprehension in elementary school students, enabling them to read aloud using picture stories. This approach is effective in improving reading comprehension in first-grade elementary school students. The study was conducted in one class with a sample of 30 students and consisted of three cycles of six meetings. Teachers can apply the CIRC model to Indonesian language lessons using picture stories. This can improve collaboration with group members. Students who lack confidence can be addressed by integrating video self-reviews to improve

expression and intonation, which are routinely conducted.

Further research recommendations include integrating the CIRC model with digital and interactive reading applications at higher grade levels. The effectiveness of the cooperative model can be compared with the quasi-experimental design, and a post-cycle evaluation can be conducted. The results of this study can be seen in the calculation of the average learning achievement completion score of first-grade students at SDN Cibeureum Mandiri 2, with a percentage of 65,6 % in cycle I and 76,2% in cycle II and 85,8 % in cycle III, representing a significant increase of 22%. Therefore, based on the assessment results above, the implementation of the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) learning model is highly recommended for elementary school students.

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