

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

Reading is an important activity for understanding the message that the writer intends to convey through words and sentences. When readers do not understand the meaning of words, they may not grasp the message written, causing the reading process to be ineffective (Aritonang et al., 2019). The purpose of reading is to comprehend the ideas or content of a text, whether it is in the form of a story, description, song, or poem, which can be a written or spoken work. Furthermore, reading also involves searching for information and understanding the overall meaning of the text that has been read (A. Adri & Haryudin, 2019).

Reading is a process that allows individuals to extract information from written text. By reading, people can grasp the messages conveyed by the author, which helps in communication with others. Those who read frequently gain more knowledge compared to those who read infrequently (Sirait et al., 2020). This knowledge enhances their ability to communicate, both verbally and in writing. Essentially, reading plays a key role in improving communication skills. However, the learning environment in schools often faces challenges that hinder reading development. A clear sign of this issue is students' lack of interest

in reading, which results in their difficulty in understanding English texts (Syam et al., 2020).

In line with reading ability, based on the initial observations conducted by the researcher at SMP Negeri 5 Bengkulu City in 2024, it was found that many students still struggled to understand English reading texts. These difficulties are evident from their low ability to comprehend the meaning of the texts and their lack of confidence when asked to read English texts. Furthermore, interviews with the English teacher at the school revealed that most students had limited vocabulary mastery. This has become one of the main factors hindering their understanding of English texts. The teacher also mentioned that students' interest in reading English materials was still relatively low. Many students perceive reading English texts as a difficult and uninteresting activity, leading them to avoid it. These issues highlight an urgent need to find solutions that can improve students' reading skills, expand their vocabulary mastery, and foster their interest and confidence in reading English texts. Therefore, the researcher has decided to implement the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) method as an approach to address these problems.

The Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) method is a collaborative learning approach aimed at enhancing reading, writing, and other language skills in upper primary education (Durukan, 2011). Cooperative Integrated

Reading and Composition (CIRC) is a learning model that emphasizes group collaboration, proving effective for teaching various skills. Through cooperative learning, students are expected to support and work together. Before delving deeper into the material, students read the content first, which helps them understand the subject matter more easily (Maruf & Anjely, 2020). This approach aims to maximize students' learning outcomes. The advantages of the CIRC method include enhancing students' reading comprehension, improving their ability to respond to questions, increasing their participation in learning, diminishing the teacher's role in the classroom, and fostering students' confidence through class presentations (Wibowo, 2016).

In line with the definition and the advantages above, several researchers have also conducted studies on the CIRC method on students' reading ability. For example, the study from (Ismail et al., 2022) entitled "Exploring The Impact of Cooperative Integrated Reading Composition Toward Students' Reading Ability", The objective of this study was to determine the improvement in students' reading ability at STKIP Kie Raha Ternate by applying the Cooperative Integrated Reading Composition (CIRC) method. The findings showed, based on the t-test results, that the researchers found a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores. This difference became evident after comparing it to the t-table values. There was a

significant difference in the t-test results before and after the learning process using the CIRC method, where students' post-test scores increased significantly. The second study from (Utami et al., 2024) entitled “Analysis of the Application of the Cooperative Integrated Reading Composition (CIRC) Model in Improving Reading Comprehension Learning Outcomes for Grade 5 Elementary School Students.”, the main objective was to analyze the application of the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) model to enhance reading comprehension outcomes among fifth-grade elementary school students. Specifically, the study aimed to assess the effectiveness of this teaching method in improving students' ability to understand reading materials, identify main ideas, and make inferences. The findings indicated that the CIRC model significantly improved students' reading comprehension skills. After two cycles of implementation, the average score of students increased from 59.82% (considered below the required standard) to 75.89%, showing a marked improvement in both comprehension and engagement.

Based on the background above, the researcher can formulate the title as follows: "The Effect of Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) Method toward Students' Reading Ability (*A True-Experimental Research at the 8th Grade Students' in SMP N 5 of Bengkulu City, Academic Year 2024/2025*)”.

The researcher assumes that this research is important as it can serve as a consideration for future researchers in conducting their studies.

B. Identification of the Problems

Based on the background of the problem as described above, the problem identification is as follows:

1. Many students still struggle to understand English reading texts
2. Limited vocabulary mastery hinders students' ability to comprehend English texts.
3. Students lack confidence when asked to read English texts.
4. Students' interest in reading English texts is low because they perceive it as difficult and uninteresting.

C. Limitation of the Research

In order for the researcher's discussion to be focused, the researcher limits this research to the implementation of Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) method in order to see its effectiveness on students' reading ability at eighth-grade students of SMP N 5 Bengkulu City academic year 2024/2025.

D. Research Question

Based on the background above, then the research questions can be formulated as: Is there any significant effect of Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) method toward students' reading ability at eighth-grade students of SMP N 5 Bengkulu City academic year 2024/2025?

E. The Objective of the Research

Based on the research questions above, then the objective of the research is aimed to see the effectiveness of the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) method toward students' reading ability at eighth-grade students of SMP N 5 Bengkulu City academic year 2024/2025.

F. Benefits of the Research

a. Theoretical Benefits

1. This research is expected to enrich the knowledge and understanding about the implementation of CIRC method in improving students' reading ability.
2. The findings can serve as a reference for future researchers who want to conduct similar studies about CIRC method or reading comprehension.
3. This research contributes to the existing literature on effective teaching methods in English language learning, particularly in reading skills.

b. Practical Benefits

1. For Teachers

- a. Provides teachers with an alternative teaching method to enhance students' reading comprehension.
- b. Helps teachers create more engaging and interactive reading activities through cooperative learning.
- c. Offers practical insights on how to implement CIRC method effectively in reading classes.

2. For Students

- a. Helps students improve their reading comprehension skills through structured cooperative activities.
- b. Enhances students' social skills and teamwork abilities through group discussions.
- c. Increases students' motivation and engagement in reading activities.
- d. Develops students' critical thinking skills through collaborative reading and composition tasks.

3. For Schools

- a. Contributes to the improvement of English language teaching quality in the school.
- b. Provides evidence-based information about effective teaching methods that can be implemented in the curriculum.
- c. Helps schools develop better strategies for enhancing students' reading abilities.

4. For Other Researchers

- a. Serves as a foundation for conducting further research on CIRC method or reading comprehension.
- b. Provides empirical data that can be used as comparative material for similar studies.
- c. Identifies potential areas for future research in the field of cooperative learning and reading instruction.

G. Definition of Key Terms

The following definitions are provided to ensure that researchers and readers have the same understanding of the concepts used in this research. These definitions are also intended to prevent misinterpretation. The terms are explained as follows:

1. CIRC Method, developed by Stevans et al., is a cooperative learning approach designed to enhance reading and writing skills in schools. By organizing students into small groups, it promotes collaboration and shared responsibility in the learning process.
2. Reading is a process that allows individuals to extract information from written text. By reading, people can grasp the messages conveyed by the author, which helps in communication with others.