

## CIRC LEARNING MODEL FOR READING COMPREHENSION OF FRENCH LANGUAGE

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| Article Info  | Abstract  |
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| <b>Article History</b><br>Received: December 2022<br>Revised: January 2023<br>Published: January 2023 | <i>Reading comprehension is a third language skill that must be mastered after speaking. What is expected of this skill is that learners can apply their understanding of the language to obtain information from reading. However, the reality found in the class shows that many learners complain about the difficulty of understanding sentences in a text, especially in the French language. This study aims to determine whether the CIRC model improves students' French reading comprehension before and after learning using the CIRC model. The use of the CIRC model for Reading Comprehension aims to improve the quality of students' comprehension in obtaining French textual information. Its application to French reading comprehension is based on previous similar studies which state that this model is appropriate to be applied to improve reading comprehension skills. The research method of this study is a qualitative study with a classroom action research design. There were two cycles in this study, Cycle 1 was a research procedure before the CIRC model was applied and Cycle 2 was after the model was applied. Direct observations were made in the classroom during the RC learning process. Four learning steps that maximize individual abilities in group learning such as (1) the Planning phase, (2) the Implementation phase, (3) the Observation phase, and (4) the Reflection phase, produce a 5% increase in the value of the learning process. It is a certainty to apply this model for French reading comprehension to help learners understand a text well.</i> |
| <b>Keywords</b><br>Reading comprehension;<br>CIRC model;<br>French language;                          |   |

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### INTRODUCTION

Speaking should be the most difficult language skill compared to the other three skills such as listening, reading, and writing in mastering a foreign language. This is demonstrated by the many ways to improve the ability to speak or to create comfort when speaking, especially in public. Dzurotul Ilmi & Anwar (2022) stated in the results of their research on the ability to speak English that problems commonly faced by students in speaking are students are not accustomed to using English because the environment they live in does not use English as the language of everyday communication. Likewise, Hadi and Junor (2022) found that teachers must provide a lot of practice so that students get used to speaking English, one of which is by utilizing ICT-based media in order that students can practice speaking easily through their devices. However, not only speaking, but other skills also hinder language acquisition by language learners, it is a skill that requires learners to be able to understand the essence of reading, particularly in foreign languages.

Reading comprehension is a third language skill that must be mastered after speaking. It is the ability to understand, use, and analyze written texts to achieve learners' goals, develop learners' knowledge and potential, and play an active role in society (OCDE, 2000). Reading comprehension means reading to understand the content of the reading which is a representation of the author's thoughts, ideas, ideas, and opinions (Rahmi & Manola, 2020);

Alquraishy et al., 2020). Reading comprehension learning is the easiest learning to implement, both conventionally and modern using technological media (Arndt & Woore, 2018; Anwar & Sailudin, 2022). In general, the activities of reading comprehension learning will go through stages such as giving material in text form to students, then they will have to read aloud, and a few minutes later they draw the information presented by the author from the text, and finally, they answer questions related to the text. These processes are an effort to justify the students' understanding of the text being studied. What is expected of this skill is that learners can apply their understanding of the language to obtain information from reading and become accustomed to understanding the content of the interlocutor's message in oral production (Firdaus & Mayasari, 2022; Haerazi et al., 2021). The success of students participating in learning and increasing their knowledge is strongly influenced by their reading ability. However, the reality found in the reading comprehension class shows that many learners complain about the difficulty of understanding sentences in a text.

Retrieving information, developing interpretation, and reflecting on the text are the three types of reading processes or objectives that are defined by designers to assess this skill (Soussi & Nidegger, 2002). More specifically, Liane (2014) found at least six causes of students' low mastery of reading comprehension consist of (1) the use of discourse language that is too complicated, (2) discourse topics that do not match the characteristics of students, (3) discourse texts that are too long, (4) evaluation questions that are not by discourse or not related to discourse, (5) low ability teachers in giving feedback to students so that there is a misunderstanding of meaning, (6) presentation of learning that only emphasizes the concept of reading than answering questions. Despite that, many variables on text types (such as narrative, informative, descriptive, explanatory, and argumentative), contexts, reading processes, and forms of questions to be answered are given to students to help them understand the information in a text, but this does not work well. Although reading is not just voicing the sounds of language or difficult words in a text but involves understanding what is read, what is meant, and what are the implications.

Vocabulary deficiencies are a common cause of language acquisition (Baiq-sumarni et al., 2022; Dolba et al., 2022; Firman et al., 2021). In reading comprehension, ignorance of vocabulary can make it difficult for learners to understand reading, especially to obtain information from it. Khattala & Bouali (2019) revealed in their research that comprehension of written messages remains the purpose of reading and that it is a complex skill that calls on at least two fundamental skills: word identification and listening comprehension. This problem was also expressed by Morais & Robillart (1988) that young adults with reading difficulties have insufficient ability to identify words [...], it is therefore important that special attention be paid to ensuring that all pupils learn to identify words effectively by combining speed and accuracy.

At this point, we can claim that reading in a foreign language makes it less artificial and that they are closer than possible to reading in a mother tongue (Mehrabi et al., 2016; Habibi et al., 2022). Understanding the text, especially in the French language, is still a difficult activity to carry out since the French language is not the learners' mother tongue. Students need to develop their ability to build inferences to get explicit information from texts. The inference needed is cohesion inference, inferences needed to establish text coherence at the local level, by linking textual information together, whether sequential or not (Potocki et al., 2014; Hidayatullah et al., 2022). But still, they take longer to understand what the author of the text is conveying, thus, it is not uncommon for learners to have access to translation tools to be able to understand the text.

The difficulty that is often found in reading comprehension learning is the student's comprehension of texts, especially French texts. This happens because students are used to translating readings using Google Translate, so they don't have the development of

vocabulary mastery as a result of instant translation. The low ability to read and understand French students cannot be separated from the traditional delivery of material, such as lectures and reading in general. Delivery of material traditionally tends to be centered on teachers and makes students less active, causing students to get bored quickly and pay less attention to lessons (Fitriani & Hasmawati, 2018). Besides, the time allocation provided for learning is still very minimal. As a result, the training provided by the teacher for students' reading training is not optimal. For that reason, teachers need to present learning activities with various methods and approaches to increase students' motivation in understanding a text.

In the Advanced Written French or *Français Écrit Avancé* class, students are expected to be able to understand and create various complex texts which include arguments, and hypotheses, evaluate the quality of things, adapt to certain linguistic situations, understand instructions, create questionnaires, comment on blogs, describe events and statistical data. This subject is given in the fifth semester as an advanced subject of the previous level of reading ability. The learning outcome expected from this subject is that students are proficient in the French language, especially in writing language in general, everyday, academic, and professional contexts.

In the class, the situation occurs in that students have not been able to understand the text simply by only reading it. They are used to using online translation, such as Google Translate, to translate the entire text instantly after the teacher asks them to explain the text studied. The cooperative approach that has been implemented does not make students faster and more accurate in their reading comprehension. Learning that involves the concept of Team-Based Learning (TBL) in this class is carried out using a grouping system where each group has a text to discuss and then conclude the contents of the text, but it rather makes them dependent on a smarter group member to take on the responsibility in conveying text information. To prevent this dependence from happening again, the cooperative we use then is to work together simultaneously throughout the class to determine in advance the vocabulary that is difficult to understand in order to understand the content of the reading. This is the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Computation (CIRC) model, which is a cooperative learning model that integrates a thorough reading and then composes it into important parts (Nurhidayah et al., 2017).

To develop reading skills, teachers must innovate and be creative in using learning approaches so that learning activities for reading skills take place optimally. Oktafiani et al. (2018) mentioned that the CIRC learning model is a learning model that emphasizes group work in mastering the ability to understand the reading. The CIRC model is defined as a cooperative learning model to assist teachers in improving reading practice (Ariawan et al., 2018). CIRC is a familiar model to be applied in reading classes, mainly for the Indonesian language. According to Huda (2011), the CIRC learning model was developed to accommodate various levels of student abilities, both heterogeneous and homogeneous groupings. Students are placed in small groups and then they follow a series of teacher instructions on reading and writing skills, then practice, then pre-assessment, and quizzes. Students who are placed in cooperative groups cannot simply give and receive instant assistance to one another, they are trained to provide constructive assistance to their group mates. The use of cooperative learning model was chosen because there are many advantages compared to the conventional model (student-oriented learning), while the cooperative learning model prioritizes cooperation and reduces feelings of inferiority in slow students, and can train communication. It is based on the idea or thought that students work together in learning, and are responsible for their group learning activities as they are for themselves.

The selection of this model was based on the results of previous research that applied the CIRC model to high school students' reading comprehension skills in the German language. In their research, Fitriani & Hasmawati (2018) indicate that the application of the

CIRC learning model is effective in improving the reading comprehension skills of class XI MAN 1 Makassar students in the German language. Rahmi & Manola (2020) in their study also concluded the same thing that reading comprehension learning using a cooperative approach of the CIRC model can improve students' ability to understand the contents of the reading in the Indonesian language. These two studies became the basis for the writer's interest in applying the CIRC model to French reading comprehension learning. Its application to help students understand French texts is based on the idea or thought that students work together in learning and are responsible for their learning activities.

The application and effectiveness of this model in the reading comprehension classroom are the issues that can be posed in the writing of this article. The associated goals are to describe the application and explain the effectiveness of the CIRC model to help students better understand the French text in French reading comprehension learning.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This study used a qualitative research method with a classroom action research design based on Arikunto et al., (2015). We use a qualitative method because it can decipher the data obtained. Qualitative is a research model whose procedures and methodology are very specific, researchers are more focused on interpreting phenomena or events (Rosyada, 2020). In simple terms, Sidiq et al., (2019) say that the purpose of qualitative research is to find answers to a phenomenon or question through the systematic application of scientific procedures using a qualitative method. In line with the objectives of the qualitative method, classroom action research is implemented to improve the quality and productivity of the learning process where the researcher is the first instrument in data collection.

The effort to obtain useful information in improving the quality of something interesting and important (Arikunto et al., 2015) is part of the definition of classroom action research which is the reference for the research design in this article. Classroom action research is research that refers to actions that can be performed directly to improve the learning process (Fauziah et al., 2021). It is linked to reading comprehension, which helps students to understand the French text well without depending on Google Translate. The use of the CIRC model for reading skills aims to improve the quality of students' comprehension in obtaining French textual information, which takes a lot of time during learning activities to determine the meaning of the difficult vocabulary encountered. This parameter is in line with the opinion of Kurniawan (2017) who also stated that classroom action research is research conducted by educators in their classrooms through self-reflection to improve the quality of the classroom learning process so that students' learning outcomes can be improved.

The data collection techniques used are observation, interviews, and tests. The observation technique is a collection of data by conducting direct observation of a subject or research object. Through the observation, we immediately went into the field to observe the behavior and activities of the subjects at the research location regarding the application of the CIRC model to improve French reading comprehension. Furthermore, the interview is a question-and-answer activity carried out to obtain more in-depth information. We used unstructured interviews to collect research data by asking various open-ended questions orally. And the last is tests that are used to measure student learning outcomes after learning activities, which were carried out in the middle before the application of the CIRC model and at the end of learning after the application of the model. Each occurs in one cycle.

### **Subject of the Study**

The CIRC model is applied in the class of *Français Écrit Avancé*, at the French Pedagogy Section, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Semarang. We do the research as the lecturer in class A for the *Français Écrit Avancé* subjects with the number of

students as many as 28 students as the subject of this research. They are students in the fifth semester that participated from the beginning to the end of the semester. Classroom action research is an important part of the qualitative research paradigm with a natural setting, which provides an important role for researchers where teachers or lecturers are the main instruments facing changing situations, such as situations and conditions of the learning process in the classroom (Iskandar, 2012). As the main instrument, we perform data processing in the form of analysis.

### Data Analysis

We perform data analysis by enriching the information and through comparative analysis as long as it does not eliminate the original data. We can find out the problems in the classroom and be described descriptively accompanied by words that reinforce the existing findings. The results of observations, interviews, and tests were then analyzed through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion.

We reduce the data by simplifying the data that emerges from the observations, interviews, and tests so that the data is organized and easy to understand to then conclude. Conclusions are drawn to reflect on the actions that have been taken so that further actions can be planned or summed up on the overall research results (Sugiyono, 2015).

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Research Findings

In language didactics, reading is appropriating the meaning of a message. For this, the reader must justify both knowledge (represented by all his linguistic and extralinguistic knowledge) and know-how (consisting of strategies allowing the realization of the three fundamental operations of the reading act: anticipate, identify, verify) (Robert, 2002). These three basic operations are a common process when someone wants to understand reading, but this does not happen in a reading classroom, even though teachers use different types of text to make it easier for students to understand.

There were two cycles in this study, Cycle 1 was a research procedure before the CIRC model was applied and Cycle 2 was after the model was applied. Direct observations were made in the classroom during the RC learning process with the results in the following table.

Table 1  
Comparison of Student Learning Outcomes Success

| Cycle 1                        | Cycle 2                        |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Process value average 71       | Process value average 83       |
| Evaluation value average 76.96 | Evaluation value average 82.10 |

From the table above, we can see that reading comprehension has improved. In Cycle 1, students have a process value average as much 71 while in Cycle 2 they achieve an increase of process value average as much 83. Then for the evaluation value average, after we give them the tests, they have 76.96 as an average score in Cycle 1, and 82.10 in Cycle 2. If we look at the achievement of completeness in learning outcomes, reading comprehension skills achieve an almost perfect increase. The increase of 5% between those scores shows the success of the CIRC model application in improving the student's understanding of French text.

### Discussion

In the *Français Écrit Avancé* class, to avoid the boredom of students in learning activities, the texts studied are given variably. The textbook used is *le Nouveau Taxi 3 Méthode de Français* which presents thematic learning with a set of varied texts to learn as

well as questions of deepening reading. This book is adapted to the learning level of students, namely B1 (threshold level) where they can understand the essential points when clear and standard language is used and whether it is about familiar things in work, school, leisure, etc. (de l'Europe, 2020). Unfortunately, most students still have difficulty understanding B1-level texts.

The results of this study indicate that students' reading comprehension skills can be categorized literally and inferentially. Literal understanding is related to understanding information explicitly in the text, while inferential understanding is related to the general information in the text. Both have not been developed by students in Cycle 1 because the level of understanding of students has not been maximized. Students still need guidance in the process of reading comprehension because they are not used to reading regularly so their reading ability has not indicated maximum improvement.

The effectiveness of the CIRC learning model can be seen from the difference in scores between Cycle 1 and Cycle 2. Learning outcomes in Cycle 2 have increased compared to the previous cycle before the CIRC model steps were implemented. This happens because the CIRC learning model prioritizes collaboration and expects smart students to be able to help less intelligent students so that each student can understand the learning materials through interaction and discussion. It is in line with Llinares (2021) who argues discussion and interaction can facilitate students to train their thinking to generate their ideas. Each student works on material appropriate to their level of reading ability. Teachers can direct students who tend to be quiet or passive and students who are aggressive to be able to work together in learning so that students who are weak both in terms of academic intelligence and social intelligence can adjust through their collaboration so they can be motivated to learn. This received a positive response from students in the form of student's enthusiasm for the teaching and learning process so that there was a spirit of competition between students to get high points in text discussions.

### **Discussion of Cycle 1**

The results of research in Cycle I is that learning activities are not going well because the learning steps that are applied do not involve the application of the CIRC model. In this cycle, we involve Team-Based Learning based on the curriculum set by the university. Team-based learning is an active learning and small-group instructional strategy that provides students with opportunities to apply conceptual knowledge through a sequence of activities that includes individual work, teamwork, and immediate feedback (Parmelee et al., 2012). It is used with large classes (>100 students) or smaller ones (<25 students), incorporating multiple small groups of 5–7 students each, in a single classroom.

Specifically, these steps were carried out cooperatively. Students are divided into five groups with several members in each group of about 5 people. In groups, they are confronted with a paragraph of the same text for a class. Then students have about 10 minutes for reading exercises with proper pronunciation, and each member reads it aloud afterward. After this activity, they discussed again for a few minutes to understand the textual information and convey their understanding in front of the class through the group representatives. For the other members to be involved in the understanding of the text, they answer orally the questions related to the text contained in the book.

Based on observations made during several meetings almost a semester in Cycle 1, students take more than 10 minutes to be able to conclude their understanding of text paragraphs, with the help of Google Translate. The resulting understanding is not yet correct according to the content of the text. Some groups are even seen hanging the result of their hard work from only one of the members who is considered the smartest. The resulting process value in this cycle is about 76.96, which is almost the standard passing value of 80.

Therefore, this stage of Cycle 1 cannot last any longer because, in addition to values, the resulting cooperative activities are not good.

### **Discussion of Cycle 2**

To be a good reader, we must be able to detect our difficulties and remedy them; this implies the implementation of reading comprehension strategies (Cornaire, 1999). The learners are supposed to have a reading strategy in a familiar language, and then they can apply it as a reading strategy either in a foreign language or in a second language. This means that the strategy will act as a crutch when the reader encounters difficulties in understanding foreign language texts.

CIRC is a specific learning model for language subjects to read and find the main idea, main thought, or theme of a speech (Shoimin, 2014). In more detail, Sudiarni & Sumantri (2019) explained that this learning model occurs when students seriously read a reading or story and can understand and retell the content of the reading. Before the learning activities begin, we make a learning design through the stages of the CIRC model for reading comprehension based on Rahmi & Manola (2020) as follows: (1) the Planning phase, (2) the Implementation phase, (3) the Observation phase, and (4) the Reflection phase. These steps help describe the use of the CIRC model in the reading classroom so that the flow of learning activities is visible for later application by other teachers.

Almost the same as the learning stages of Cycle 1, the learning stages using the CIRC model are also cooperative. Not in groups, but students work simultaneously in a class. As a first step, namely (1) the planning stage, the teacher always gives the same material in the form of text contained in the textbook Taxi 3. They practice reading skills with appropriate pronunciation without grouping. Even if it happens independently, students still have discussions with their friends to make sure they are reading the words correctly. After 10 minutes, the teacher asks them in the order of the benches to read aloud with the arrangement of a student for one sentence. This also happens in step two (2) the implementation stage, discussions between friends continue to take place when teachers first ask them to find difficult vocabulary in the text. The teacher gives them 10 minutes to find the meaning of this difficult vocabulary in the printed dictionary. This effort aims to eliminate the habit of relying on digital dictionaries and add to vocabulary mastery. Once the meaning of the difficult words is found, the teacher randomly asks them to deduce the content of each paragraph of the text. This activity will prevent them from being dependent on smarter friends. In the third step (3) the observation stage, the teacher observes the learning process that takes place in steps 1 and 2. At both stages, students seem to be working more actively to find difficult vocabulary, find their meaning, and draw their conclusions about the paragraphs of the text studied compared to before. In addition, observation also occurs when they correctly answer questions related to the text contained in the book. The last step is (4) the reflection stage, the teacher asks the students to conclude the text together as a reflection process on the acquisition of the reading comprehension of the text that has been passed in stages 1 and 2. They complement and prohibit each other by expressing their opinions on the information of the text studied.

The resulting value of this activity is 82.10, an increase of approximately 5% over the value of Cycle 1. This value proves that reading comprehension learning is successfully achieved using the CIRC model because the grades have exceeded passing standards.

### **CONCLUSION**

If we give attention, the learning activities that take place in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 are likely to have been applied to reading courses. Because indeed, cooperative learning is the right solution to bring student interactivity into the classroom. It's just that the teacher didn't make many observations in his classroom as part of the analysis of students' needs to get an understanding of the material. The use of the cooperative approach to the CIRC model in

teaching reading comprehension which is proven to be effective can improve learning outcomes because learning is carried out by the design, implementation, and evaluation. Based on the observations and actions taken, it appears that students in classes taught with the CIRC cooperative learning model work together and help each other between one student and another during the learning process, compared to ordinary Team-Based learning which makes students dependent on their group mates who most active and smart to convey the results of the discussion.

The 5% increase in the value of the learning process to read French texts among students in the UNNES French Pedagogy Section is a certainty to apply the CIRC model to RC class to help learners understand a text well. In addition to the familiar steps when applied in the classroom, the intensity of applying this model can train students to create their strategies when faced with reading texts in French. By beginning to know the meaning of a difficult vocabulary in advance to deduce textual information based on the meaning of difficult words that have been found before, making them independent of digital translation, and of course, adding to the mastery of vocabulary. Finally, from the results of the students' vocabulary improvement, it was concluded that by applying the CIRC model the students' French reading comprehension improves. This research can be used as additional knowledge in improving students' reading comprehension through the CIRC cooperative model, especially in foreign language.

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