

# The Effect of the Literature Circle Method on the Vocational High School Students' Reading Comprehension Achievement

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**Abstract:** This study was conducted to investigate the effect of Literature Circle on the tenth grade students of a Vocational High School in Jember. A Quasi-Experimental research design was used in this research by involving two selected classes, the experimental group and the control group based on the homogeneity test results. A post-test was administered to both classes to collect the data needed. The test used multiple-choice questions to measure the students' reading comprehension achievement of Narrative Text: Fairy Tale. The collected data were analyzed by using T-Test formula with SPSS. The research result showed that there was a significant effect of using Literature Circle on the students' reading comprehension achievement on the tenth-grade students of a Vocational High School in Jember. Therefore, it is suggested for English Teachers to use Literature Circle in teaching reading.

**Keywords:** Literature Circle, Reading Comprehension, Narrative Text, Fairy Tale

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Reading has a significant impact on both the learning process and social life. Everyone must master reading as one of the four fundamental language-learning skills to comprehend the lesson. According to Durkin (1993), reading's essence is comprehension. This statement implies that students are crucial as text readers who must comprehend the reading material. Additionally, Healy (2002) stated that reading comprehension is constructing the meaning of a text's written form and content while reading. In addition, Healy (2002) noted that reading plays an essential role for students because, with the help of the implied information in the text, they not only learn to read but also read to learn. They had read the text and comprehended and assimilated the author's message.

According to a 2019 survey conducted by the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) and published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Indonesia ranked 62nd out of 70 countries. In addition, in a post by BPKM (Badan Koordinasi Penanaman Modal) on their Instagram account @bpkm id on World Book Day, UNESCO stated that out of 1,000 Indonesians, only one is devoted to reading, indicating that Indonesia has a low literacy rate. Problems confronting Indonesian education: in addition to a low interest in literacy, capturing comprehension is a challenge, and

familiarising ourselves with reading is essential for training, particularly for EFL students. Aside from that, the choice of method or medium significantly impacts students' interest and achievement in reading learning activities.

Based on the preliminary research conducted at one of the vocational high schools in Jember, teachers tend to use textbooks provided by the school. Then students were required to read the passage and answer questions already included in the textbook. Sometimes, each student reads a small portion of the text before passing it on to the next. It is less effective since there are no changes or new models to increase students' interest in performing well in class. According to the results of interviews conducted by Aldrich (2007), in some schools, students claim that their school readings could be more interesting and that they need to learn the most basic facts about the books they read. The students stated, however, that the Literature Circle Method inspired them to develop an interest in reading. It was because they had a distinct learning model.

## 2. AIM

### 2.2 Research Question

Based on the problem in the research background, the research question guiding this research: Is there any significant effect of using Literature Circle Method on the tenth-grade students' reading comprehension achievement of a Vocational High School in Jember?

### 2.2 Research Objective

This research aims to investigate whether Literature Circle Method method has a significant effect on students' reading comprehension achievement at one of the vocational high schools in Jember.

### 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 3.1 Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is the process of understanding, analyzing, and integrating information in a written text (Dalmann, 1982). Reading should not be called reading if it does not involve comprehension. Reading is the act of recognizing and comprehending written or printed text. On the other hand, comprehension involves knowing the meaning of what has been read and the mental processes that lead to comprehension. Prior knowledge or experience can significantly improve reading comprehension (Pearson & Johnson, 1978). Students can use their background or prior knowledge to connect with the text and enhance their comprehension. Furthermore, comprehension is an essential component of reading that involves more than just word recognition. Additionally, critical thinking skills are essential for reading comprehension; students can draw inferences and evaluate arguments from the text (Greene, 1984). In addition, Stahl and Fairbanks (1986) found a positive correlation between an extensive vocabulary and reading comprehension. As understanding the meaning of words is a crucial aspect of text comprehension, a lack of vocabulary can hinder reading comprehension.

According to the researcher's preliminary research, the most common learning method in the classroom involved using a textbook provided by the school and then asking students to read the passage and answer the questions in the textbook. In contrast, the most recent Indonesian Curriculum for Vocational High School mandates that students in the tenth grade comprehend diverse English texts such as descriptive, recount, narrative, and report texts effectively. Repetition of the same learning model for various English texts tends to demotivate students toward learning activities; furthermore, Jayanti (2016) concludes that students' motivation and strategy are several factors that inhibit the effectiveness of Indonesian students' reading comprehension. Therefore, English teachers find an appropriate learning method, and the Literature Circle Method is one of the proper learning methods for teaching classroom reading comprehension.

#### 3.2 Literature Circle Method

The Literature Circle Method is one way to foster their critical thinking and creativity. It is a student-led book club that encourages learning ownership and responsibility (Morris & Perlenfein, 2003). Students are accountable for their reading and participation in class discussions. In addition, some questions (guiding questions) help students develop their reading topic and discussions. In addition, according to Daniels (2002), a

"Literature Circle Method" is a small group that meets regularly to share ideas, feelings, questions, connections, and evaluations regarding a book or text they are reading. The roles within the Literature Circle Method can facilitate student participation in the discussion. They are assisted by guiding questions or guiding commands in the role sheets to support critical thinking and communicate their reflection and response to what they have read. According to Daniels (2002), many teachers found using role sheets as media support helpful, particularly for classes implementing peer-led discussion groups for the first time or still learning how to do so. The role sheets aim to help students improve their reading and discussion skills.

Sociocultural Studies and Literature Circle Method are complementary. According to Larson and Marsh (2005), a sociocultural study demonstrates that literacy in small groups must be both cognitive and communicative, with members engaging in conversations or dialogue. Moreover, children live in a society that is constantly evolving and changing; consequently, they must be able to adapt and change as the world around them grows. According to sociocultural theory, children must acquire new skills in numerous ways, including interacting with others, including their classmates (Larson & Marsh, 2005). Literature Circle Method conforms to this theory, which requires group members to interact and express their opinions. This can help them gain new perspectives from their group members and classmates.

#### 3.3 Roles in Literature Circle Method

Literature Circle Method consists of four "basic" roles and several additional roles; however, this can be modified depending on the studied literature type (Daniels, 2002). Teachers can select and combine multiple roles for students by looking at the class's needs or the text to be read. Students will take on specific roles in the Literature Circle Method to help them become more focused and better understand the text under discussion. Each student in the group will assume a role in the Literature Circle Method so that every student can actively contribute to the discussions. During their discussion activities, teachers became facilitators to encourage student interaction and conversation. The teacher can also act as a facilitator to encourage students to draw parallels between the reading text or book under discussion and their life experiences. The Literature Circle Method is, therefore, a student-centered activity.

This research will utilize four roles: discussion leader, connector, vocabulary enricher, and summarizer. Daniel (2002), Morris and Perlenfein (2003), stated that "Discussion Leader" role serves the purpose of posing a question to which the group members must respond orally. The discussion leader should moderate the question-and-answer session, encouraging all group members to participate and share their opinions. According to Mikulecky & Jeffries (2007), reading

comprehension makes sense of what readers read and connects the text's ideas to what they already know. It could also be about experiences comparable to the text they are reading. In the Literature Circle Method, they play the "Connector" role. The primary objective of a connector in a Literature Circle Method is to help a group of friends comprehend the text under discussion by drawing parallels between their own experiences and those of the characters and situations in the text (Daniels, 2002). Most students in Indonesia and other countries whose native language is not English may find it difficult or be unfamiliar with some of the text's words. This is where the word wizard comes in, keeping an eye out for a few special-meaning words in today's reading selection. Students who encounter unclear or unfamiliar words can underline them while reading and then record their definitions from a dictionary or other source. They may also discover words that stand out in the reading—frequently repeated, used in interesting ways, or essential to understanding the text (Daniels, 2002). The last role is summarizer to summarize the text. It summarizes the reading's key points and highlights the text.

Many studies found that using Literature Circle Method positively affected students' reading comprehension. The use of learning activities in this Literature Circle Method positively affected the students' reading activities; it helped them comprehend the text more thoroughly. This is demonstrated by a research titled "Literature Circle Method and Critical Reading Across EYL Learning Strategies" by Rachmajanti (2020). This research used a quasi-experimental design with an experimental group and a control group to improve students' critical reading skills using Literature Circle Method. Thus, it has been demonstrated that Literature Circle Method effectively fosters critical reading in young students. In this research, the experimental group reported that they could comprehend the text well and that the role sheets assisted them in discussing it in an orderly and comprehensive manner. This included locating explicit information, formulating hypotheses, providing commentary, and summarising the text under discussion. Because they worked in a group, expressing opinions and answering the questions was simpler. In addition, the author of this research demonstrated that Literature Circle Method is appropriate for training young students to think critically. Therefore, the author recommends using Literature Circle Method to teach children to think critically at a young age.

Irawati (2016) also conducted a research to determine the impact of Literature Circle Method on improving reading comprehension among English department students at IAIN in Samarinda. The result was that experimental groups utilizing Literature Circle Method showed higher results in reading comprehension. The research's results also revealed several factors that contributed to the efficacy of using Literature Circle

Method in the classroom, such as allowing students to select the text they wished to read to feel engaged and inspired. In addition, students can engage in discussions with their peers to express their opinions to their peers. Additionally, this research demonstrated that implementing Literature Circle Method in the classroom positively affects students. Compared to those who had participated in Literature Circle Method, they could identify and state implied main ideas, locate explicit information, and easily draw conclusions. This research concludes that using Literature Circle Method significantly impacts students' reading comprehension.

Sutrisno, Rukmini, Bharati, and Fitriati (2018), in their research titled "Engaging Students in Literature Circle Method on Critical Reading and Text Analysis," intend to enhance the text-analysis skills, reading desires, and also the interests of potential teachers of Indonesian-language Literature Circle Method. This research demonstrated that the Literature Circle Method was effective in enhancing students' text analysis skills, including their ability to identify the main idea, theme, and keywords in the text they read. In addition, the researcher stated in this research that the Literature Circle Method could entertain and make the learning environment more engaging.

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

To see the effectiveness of Literature Circle Method on students' reading comprehension, a quasi-experimental research with a post-test only control group design was conducted in this research. The samples were taken from the population from one of the Vocational High Schools in Jember, consisted of seven classes. Two of the seven classes were homogenous and randomly selected as the experimental and control groups based on the homogeneity test results with Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The procedure of this study: The experimental group was taught using the Literature Circle Method. Meanwhile, reading instruction in the control group did not use the Literature Circle Method. Instead, the researcher used a reading text followed by answering the questions which these reading activities are usually used in the classroom. The reading materials for both groups were the same in terms of the content.

The post-test was initially tried in the Try-out test before being administered to both groups to determine the validity, reliability, difficulty index, and appropriate time allocation for answering questions. This test was given as a narrative text about Narrative Test: Fairy Tales in 40 multiple-choice questions with an allocation time of 50 minutes. The class of participants who underwent the try-out test differed from the experimental and control groups. The validated test instrument was then administered as the post-test to the experimental and the control group.

Hughes (2010) stated, a test had content validity if it had a sample that accurately reflected the language skills, structures, and so forth intended to measure. For the validity test, the test carried out was based on the curriculum used in this school, using narrative text material about Narrative Text: Fairy Tale. Meanwhile for the reliability test was analyzed using SPSS 25 through the Split-Half Spearman-Brown. With decision-making, the research instrument was deemed reliable if it had a value > 0.60.

The collected post-test data were analyzed using the T-Test in the IBM SPSS 25 application with a 5% significant level. The T-Test was used in this research to determine between the means of two independent samples whether the results of the T-Test value from both groups showed significant differences or not (Gay, L. R, 2011). This test aimed to determine if there was a significant effect of using Literature Circle Method on the reading comprehension achievement of students in the experimental class.

## 5. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The researcher conducted the post-test on May 24th, 2023, for both the experimental group (X DPB 1) and control group (X DPB 2) after providing the treatments to both groups as the research participants. The scores of both groups were utilized as the data to determine the effect of using the Literature Circle method on the students' reading comprehension achievement. The researcher utilized the Independent sample T-Test in the SPSS 25.0 computer system to examine the students' scores on the simple past tense. This was done to determine the mean difference between the two groups. Here are the results of the post-test analysis:

**Table 1:** The Output of Group Statistics of Post-Test

Group Statistics					
	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Score	Experimental	33	82.55	5.729	.997
	Control	34	78.94	4.855	.833

The table presented above shows the computation of the scores from the post-test. The mean score of the experimental group was 82.55, with a standard deviation of 5.729. In contrast, the mean score of the control group was 78.94, with a standard deviation of 4.855. The result of the post-test score found that the experimental group had a higher mean score compared to the control group.

**Table 2:** The Output of the Independent Sample T-Test of Post-Test

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-Test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower Upper	
Score	Equal variances assumed	2.113	.151	2.781	65	.007	3.604	1.296	1.016	6.192
	Equal variances not assumed			2.774	62.646	.007	3.604	1.299	1.008	6.201

The Independent Sample T-Test conducted using SPSS found a degree of freedom (df) of 65 for the post-test. The Levene's Test showed a significant column value of 0.151. This signifies that it surpassed the minimum score of the significant degree (0.05). The sig (2-tailed) value was 0.007, and it was less than 0.05. Therefore, it can be inferred that there is a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group.

Hypothesis verification is crucial to determine whether the null hypothesis (Ho) was rejected or accepted. Therefore, the researcher had to consider the analysis of the post-test result to validate the hypothesis. The independent sample T-Test conducted on the SPSS 25.0 program showed the significant value (2-tailed) was 0.007, which is less than 0.05 ( $0.00 < 0.05$ ). Thus, it could be stated that the null hypothesis (Ho) stated: "There was no significant effect of using the Literature Circle method on the students' reading comprehension achievement of tenth-grade students at one of the Vocational High Schools in Jember" was rejected. On the other hand, the alternative hypothesis (Ha): "There was a significant effect of using the Literature Circle method on the students' reading comprehension achievement of tenth-grade students at one of the Vocational High Schools in Jember" was accepted. Hence, it could be stated that the use of the Literature Circle method in teaching reading significantly impacted the reading comprehension achievement of the experimental groups.

After implementing the Literature Circle method in experimental classes for two meetings, it could be concluded that the students showed interest in reading and learning using this method. The students showed interest due to the student-centred activity, as they actively participated in discussions and shared their opinions on analyzing the chosen reading text critically. Participating in discussions facilitated the students in gaining new insights from their peers regarding the issues presented in the reading text. This was also evidenced by the students finding it easier to find main ideas and explicit information and make decisions.

The questioner/discussion director has been able to ask and lead discussions on the topic of supporting details such as characters, plot, events in the story and the moral

message of the story. Then the connector, they can make connections based on life experiences and experiences with the chosen text. For example, there are students who have been distrusted by their parents, which is connected to the events in the story of the loyal mongoose. There are also those who share their experiences that have been compared based on appearance and even economic status, and this experience is connected to the events in the "Ugly Duckling" story. Afterwards, Vocabulary Enricher can mention vocabulary that they do not understand such as "lectured" because they are more familiar with the use of the word "teach". Some others also mentioned that they never knew some of the vocabulary in the reading because they rarely heard it in their daily lives, so they were not familiar with some of the vocabulary in the story. Lastly, Summarizer, they can mention the keypoints of the story they choose. and from the story and discussion, the summarizer can conclude by giving moral messages from the story. For example, in the story "Rabbit and Wolf", the summarizer wrote that we must listen carefully to parents and teachers. besides that, the summarizer also wrote not to trust strangers easily. This shows that the use of role sheets in Literature Circle Method can help students in discussion.

Furthermore, using role sheets, the students were also required to have a sense of responsibility for their work. This was proven by their ability to work on and complete their role sheets well. The students were also supported to have a better ability in memorizing the role. This was proved in the second meeting when they immediately understood the role they had to work on.

Implementing the Literature Circle method supported the growth of the students' critical and creative thinking skills. This was related to their backgrounds and life experiences, influencing their perspectives on the reading text. Moreover, through role sheets, the students were also required to have a sense of responsibility for their work. This was proven by their ability to work on and complete their role sheets well. The students were also supported to have a better ability in memorizing the role. This was proved in the second meeting when they immediately understood the role they would be working on.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS & SUGGESTIONS

The result of data analysis conducted using the T-Test with the SPSS 25 program found a significant effect of using the Literature Circle method on the tenth-grade students' reading comprehension achievement of Vocational High Schools in Jember. The students who were taught reading comprehension using Literature Circle method achieved higher results in the reading post-test compared to the control group, who were taught reading comprehension through reading text and answering questions. Thus Literature Circle method had a

significant effect on the students' proficiency in reading comprehension.

Recommendations are addressed to English teachers, students and future researchers as follow:

1. First, English teachers are suggested to apply the Literature Circle Method in teaching reading comprehension. The teachers can train the students to do role sheets and experiment with various existing roles sequentially. Furthermore Teachers are suggested to select appropriate reading texts that are suitable for students' comprehension level and relevant to the learning context. In addition, providing clear and easy-to-understand guidelines in the role sheets is also recommended to make it easier for students to understand the chosen role when conducting discussions in group.
2. Second, Students are suggested to participate actively when the teacher applies Literature Circle Method in teaching reading. Students are expected to actively contribute in the form of giving opinions, analysis, and questions that are relevant to the reading text. Students are also expected to carry out the role that has been chosen properly so that the group discussion runs well. This will help students to enhance their reading comprehension.
3. Third, the future researchers can used the findings of this research as a reference to investigate the use of the Literature Circle Method as a teaching method in various areas, such as in conducting Classroom Action Research (CAR) to improve students' reading comprehension skills. In addition, it is recommended that future researchers can arrange more test items for the try-out test. By providing more test items, the researchers can have more options to select the test items used in the post-test. Moreover, by structuring more items in the try-out test, the researchers can identify which questions most effectively measure the variables studied. The results of the try-out test can provide insight into the performance of each question and help researchers choose the questions that best collect the desired data.

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