J-LATEST
Journal of Language Testing and Studies
1, 1 (2025): 30-44
Website: https://e-jurnal.pnl.ac.id/JLATEST/

Enhancing Reading Comprehension Through Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR): A Quasi-Experimental Study at SMAN 3 Takengon

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Keyword: Collaborative Strategic Reading; Cooperative learning; high school students Reading comprehension; EFL;

Abstract

This study investigates the effectiveness of This study investigates the effectiveness of Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) in enhancing students' reading comprehension in an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) context. The research was conducted at SMAN 3 Takengon using a quasi-experimental design involving 34 eleventh-grade students, divided into experimental and control groups. The experimental group received instruction through the CSR strategy, while the control group was taught using conventional reading methods. CSR is a cooperative learning technique that integrates four key strategies: Preview, Click and Clunk, Get the Gist, and Wrap-Up. These strategies are applied before, during, and after reading to help students activate prior knowledge, monitor understanding, extract main ideas, and reflect on key points. CSR also assigns specific roles to students in small groups, promoting peer collaboration and responsibility in the learning process. Data were collected through pre-tests and post-tests composed of multiple-choice questions to assess reading comprehension. The results were analyzed using an independent samples t-test. The findings revealed that students in the experimental group showed significantly greater improvement than those in the

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control group (tcount = 7.2 > ttable = 1.70, α = 0.05). This indicates that CSR had a substantial impact on students' reading comprehension performance. In conclusion, CSR proves to be an effective instructional strategy to foster reading skills, encourage active learning, and increase engagement among EFL students. The findings support the integration of CSR in English language classrooms to enhance reading outcomes, especially in contexts where reading motivation and comprehension levels are relatively low.

1. INTRODUCTION

English as a foreign language or a second language. In indonesia, English has become the first foreign language that must be learnt by student from elementary school level up to senior high school level, it is because the government considers that mastering English is one way to absorb the sciences and technology in order to create great human resources. And it is no doubt that great human resources are very important for national development and existences toward other nations. Besides, English has become a medium instruction in teaching-learning activity especially for farticular language lesson in certain school.

In English there are four important basic skills, they are; listening, speaking, writing, and reading. Especially in reading. Reading is an activity that is full of benefits and very important in our lives. Reading interest is directly proportional to the level of educational progress of a nation. Parameter quality of a nation can be seen from the condition of education. Education is always related to learning activities. Learning is always synonymous with reading activities because by reading will increase knowledge, attitude and skills of a person. Education without reading like a body without soul. The phenomenon of "intellectual unemployment" will not happen if society has a burning spirit of reading. Unfortunately, in Indonesia there is still a phenomenon of "intellectual unemployment" because the interest of reading the community is still said to be low.

Teachers in the educational process play a very important role. Especially in the effort to shape the character of the nation through the development of student personalities. The role of teachers in teaching and learning process is more emphasized to design various sources and facilities in order to be utilized by students to deepen knowledge. Teachers are expected to have the right strategy so that students can learn conducively and understand the purpose of education.

Learning strategy is a presentation technique that must be owned by teachers to teach or present learning materials to students with the purpose of the lesson delivered can be easily understood well by students. Choosing a learning strategy needs to be done based on the suitability of the material to be delivered. So it can help improve the activity and creativity of student learning during the learning process takes place and achieve goals that have been designed.

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One effort that can be done by teachers to increase student activity and creativity is to modify the learning process with certain strategies. The existence of learning strategies given by teachers to students then students will not feel bored, and teachers can improve student achievement in learning. With the implementation of strategy, learning process will be more effective. A strategy can also improve the aspiration of students so that they understand the learning objectives. Strategies can also support the maximum quality of learning outcomes.

As the result of field observation conducted by the author at the time of undergoing PPL activity for approximately 2 months. Conditions of teaching and learning process conducted in SMAN 3 Takengon can be said is still less than the maximum. Lack of strategies and methods used in the learning process. Cause the quality of learning outcomes of students in the school to decline. Therefore, to improve the quality of learning outcomes of SMAN 3 Takengon students need to be modified teaching and learning process with an effective strategy and in accordance with certain fields.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Reading and Reading Comprehension

Reading is a complex cognitive process that involves decoding symbols to derive meaning. It is foundational to learning and academic success, especially in second language acquisition. According to Grabe and Stoller (2011), reading comprehension integrates word recognition, vocabulary knowledge, background knowledge, and textual processing into a single fluent operation. Reading, therefore, is not merely a passive act but an active engagement with a text, requiring the reader to interpret, analyze, and synthesize information.

Lyle Bachman (2000) emphasized reading as a gateway to accessing knowledge and understanding the world. Meanwhile, Urquhart and Weir (1998, in Liu) described reading as a cognitive skill that enables interaction with text through meaning-making strategies. The RAND Reading Study Group (2002) defined reading comprehension as “the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language,” emphasizing the dynamic nature of this activity.

Goodman (1996) introduced a psycholinguistic model, suggesting that reading is a guessing game where readers use contextual clues to construct meaning. Gough and Tunmer’s (1986) formula—RC = D×LC—further asserts that comprehension depends on both decoding ability and language comprehension, indicating that a deficiency in either impairs understanding.

2.2 Challenges in Reading Comprehension

Students often face challenges in understanding written texts. These include limited vocabulary, lack of background knowledge, and underdeveloped inferencing and analytical skills. Nation (2001) noted that vocabulary knowledge is one of the strongest predictors of reading comprehension success. Moreover, poor readers tend to approach reading mechanically rather than critically, reducing their ability to make inferences or evaluate arguments (Kintsch, 1998).

Reading comprehension requires active participation and critical thinking. Paul and Elder (2014) argued that teaching reading should include critical thinking components that push students beyond surface-level understanding. When students are trained to question, predict, and summarize, they process information more deeply and retain it more effectively.

2.3 Comprehension Skills

Effective comprehension requires mastery of various skills:

- **Previewing**: Anticipating content and structure of the text.
- **Inferring**: Reading between the lines to understand implicit meanings.
- **Identifying main ideas**: Distinguishing between main points and supporting details.
- **Recognizing textual organization**: Understanding how arguments or information are structured (chronological, cause-effect, compare-contrast).
- **Skimming and scanning**: Rapid techniques to locate general or specific information.
- **Summarizing**: Condensing information in one's own words to confirm understanding.

Grabe (2009) emphasized that comprehension requires integrating these skills into fluent reading practices, especially when dealing with academic texts.

2.4 Reading Strategies

Reading strategies are deliberate actions taken to facilitate understanding. Paris, Wasik, and Turner (1991) distinguished between cognitive strategies (e.g., summarizing, predicting) and metacognitive strategies (e.g., monitoring comprehension, planning). These strategies help students regulate their reading, clarify meaning, and adjust reading approaches based on text difficulty.

Roe (2012) explained that skilled readers adjust their strategies based on purpose, text type, and complexity. Skimming and scanning are useful for efficiency, while note-taking and re-reading support deep comprehension. Collaborative reading strategies further enhance comprehension through peer discussion and social negotiation of meaning.

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2.5 Purpose of Reading

Reading with purpose significantly enhances engagement and comprehension. Readers who set goals—whether to find specific facts or evaluate an argument—activate relevant schemas and adopt strategies suited to their task. Anderson (2003) emphasized that reading purpose influences not only comprehension outcomes but also the level of engagement and retention. In academic contexts, reading purposes typically fall into three categories: gaining knowledge, critical evaluation, and enjoyment.

Teachers play a key role in helping students define their reading purpose. Roe (2012) noted that students benefit from structured guidance and scaffolding, particularly in ESL or EFL contexts, where purpose-driven reading can be challenging due to linguistic barriers.

2.6 Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR)

Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) is a cooperative learning model developed to enhance reading comprehension among diverse learners. Initially introduced by Klingner and Vaughn (1996), CSR integrates proven comprehension strategies into a peer-learning environment. It includes four key components:

1. Preview – Activates prior knowledge and sets the purpose.
2. Click and Clunk – Monitors comprehension and identifies breakdowns.
3. Get the Gist – Extracts the main idea in a section.
4. Wrap-Up – Summarizes content and generates questions.

CSR is aligned with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which emphasizes the role of social interaction in cognitive development. In CSR, peers support each other's learning, promoting both academic achievement and social cooperation. Klingner, Vaughn, and Schumm (1998) found CSR to be particularly effective in inclusive classrooms where students vary in language proficiency and cognitive ability.

Studies show that CSR improves vocabulary acquisition, fosters critical thinking, and increases motivation to read (Boardman et al., 2010). It is especially effective for English language learners (ELLs) and students with learning disabilities, as it combines scaffolding, social interaction, and strategy use.

2.7 Role of Teachers and Students in CSR

Teachers introduce CSR strategies through direct instruction, modeling, and guided practice. Once strategies are internalized, students work in cooperative groups to apply them independently. Teachers then serve as facilitators, offering support, clarifying misunderstandings, and encouraging participation (Klingner et al., 2012).

Students take on rotating roles—Leader, Clunk Expert, Announcer, Encourager, and Reporter—each with defined responsibilities to ensure equitable participation. This structure supports cooperative accountability and peer teaching, which are critical for maintaining engagement and fostering social skills.

Related Studies

Previous research has demonstrated the effectiveness of CSR and similar cooperative learning models:

- Marwiyah (2015) found that identifying difficult vocabulary significantly improved comprehension in narrative texts among high school students.
- Maimunah (2014) showed that the Student Team Achievement Division (STAD) model enhanced comprehension and teamwork in Islamic junior high schools.
- Wichadee (2011) reported that cooperative learning improved both reading proficiency and learner attitudes in university-level English classes in Thailand.
- Klingner and Vaughn (2000) found that CSR significantly increased reading comprehension among middle school students with learning disabilities.

These findings suggest that collaborative models such as CSR are particularly beneficial in language learning contexts where comprehension difficulties are common.

3. METHODS

3.1 Research Approach

This study employed a quantitative approach to examine the impact of the Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) technique on students' reading comprehension. As a quasi-experimental design, the research sought to determine causal relationships by comparing the reading comprehension outcomes between an experimental group and a control group. The quantitative nature of this study enabled the measurement of student performance through numerical data obtained from reading comprehension tests administered before and after the intervention.

3.2 Research Setting and Schedule

The research was conducted at SMA Negeri 3 Takengon during the even semester of the 2018/2019 academic year. Data collection took place from April 3 to April 26, 2018. Both the experimental and control groups participated in pre-tests, four treatment sessions, and post-tests over the course of the research period. Each treatment session lasted between 45 and 90 minutes, depending on the stage of the intervention. The structured implementation ensured consistency in data collection and instructional delivery.

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3.3 Population and Sample

The population for this study included all students enrolled at SMA Negeri 3 Takengon across grades X, XI, and XII. A total of 360 students from various science and social studies classes constituted the overall population. A simple random sampling technique was used to select participants for the study, ensuring that each student had an equal probability of selection. Two classes were randomly selected: class XI IPA 1 (20 students) was assigned as the experimental group, and class XI IPS 2 (14 students) served as the control group. This sampling method was intended to minimize selection bias and increase the generalizability of the findings within the school context.

3.4 Research Design

The research utilized a quasi-experimental design featuring a pre-test and post-test with non-equivalent control groups. The experimental group received the CSR treatment, while the control group was taught using conventional reading strategies. The design can be represented as follows:

- Experimental Group: O_1 — X — O_2
- Control Group: O_1 — — O_2

Where **O_1** and **O_2** denote pre-test and post-test measures, respectively, and **X** represents the treatment using CSR. This design enabled the researcher to measure the effectiveness of CSR by comparing the improvement in reading comprehension scores between the two groups.

3.5 Operational Definitions

Reading is defined as a fluent process of constructing meaning from text by integrating prior knowledge and textual information. As Bachman (2000) suggested, reading offers access to knowledge, imagination, and critical thought.

Reading comprehension refers to the ability to understand and interpret written texts. It involves decoding words, making inferences, and critically engaging with content. Challenges to reading comprehension often stem from limited vocabulary and insufficient critical thinking skills, both of which CSR seeks to address.

Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) is a multistage instructional strategy that promotes comprehension through cooperative learning. As outlined by Palincsar and Brown (1984), CSR encompasses four core strategies:

1. Previewing: Activating background knowledge and predicting content before reading.
2. Click and Clunk: Monitoring comprehension and identifying unfamiliar words or confusing ideas.

3. Getting the Gist: Summarizing the main idea of each paragraph or section.
4. Wrap-Up: Generating questions and reviewing key points after reading.

These stages foster metacognitive awareness and peer interaction, which enhance understanding and retention of reading material.

3.6 Techniques and Instruments of Data Collection

Data were collected using reading comprehension tests in the form of multiple-choice questions. Two tests were administered to both groups: a pre-test to assess prior knowledge and a post-test to evaluate the impact of the instructional method. The test consisted of 10 items aligned with core reading comprehension competencies, including identifying themes, extracting detailed information, and understanding narrative texts. The instrument was developed according to curriculum standards and validated prior to use.

3.7 Instrument Validation and Reliability

The test items underwent rigorous validation and reliability analysis. Using the point biserial correlation technique, all 10 items were found to be valid at a 5% significance level. Reliability was assessed using the Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 (KR-20), which yielded a coefficient of 1.068, indicating very high internal consistency. Additionally, item analysis showed a mix of difficulty levels—ranging from easy to hard—and discriminating power between “enough” and “very good,” confirming the instrument’s effectiveness in measuring student comprehension.

3.8 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using a t-test to compare the mean scores between the experimental and control groups. The t-test formula was applied to determine whether the difference in reading comprehension performance was statistically significant. The hypothesis was tested at a 5% significance level. If the t-value calculated exceeded the t-table value, it was concluded that the CSR strategy had a significant effect on students’ reading comprehension.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) technique has a significant positive effect on students' reading comprehension. The substantial difference between the mean post-test scores of the experimental group (7.45) and the control group (4.57), along with the large effect size (Cohen's d = 2.54), provides strong evidence for the effectiveness of CSR as an instructional approach for improving reading comprehension among high school students.

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4.1 Pre-test Result

The pre-test results showed that the initial reading comprehension abilities of both groups were relatively similar, though with some differences in distribution patterns. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the pre-test scores of both groups.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics for Pre-test Scores of Experimental and Control Groups

Group	N	Mean	SD	Median	Mode	Min	Max
Experimental	20	2.75	1.58	2.5	1	1	6
Control	14	3.14	2.18	2.0	2	1	8

The mean pre-test score for the experimental group was 2.75 (SD = 1.58), while the control group had a slightly higher mean of 3.14 (SD = 2.18). This difference was not statistically significant ($t = 0.61$, $p > 0.05$), indicating that both groups had comparable reading comprehension abilities at the beginning of the study.

The frequency distribution of pre-test scores for the experimental group showed that the majority of students scored between 1 and 4, with scores of 1 being the most frequent (30% of students). In the control group, scores were more widely distributed, with 35.7% of students scoring 2 and 28.6% scoring 4. When categorized into achievement levels based on standard deviation from the mean, the distribution of students in both groups showed some differences, as illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2 *Pre-test Achievement Categories for Experimental and Control Groups*

Group	Low (%)	Medium (%)	High (%)
Experimental	30	55	15
Control	57.2	28.5	14.3

In the experimental group, the majority of students (55%) were categorized as medium achievers, with 30% as low achievers and 15% as high achievers. In contrast, the control group had a higher percentage of low achievers (57.2%), with 28.5% as medium achievers and 14.3% as high achievers. Despite these differences in distribution, the overall performance levels were similar enough to proceed with the experimental comparison.

4.2 Post-Test Result

After the implementation of CSR technique in the experimental group and conventional teaching in the control group, post-test data were collected and analyzed. Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics for the post-test scores of both groups.

Table 3 *Descriptive Statistics for Post-test Scores of Experimental and Control Groups*

Group	N	Mean	SD	Median	Mode	Min	Max
Experimental	20	7.45	0.94	8.0	8	6	9
Control	14	4.57	1.49	4.5	4.5	3	7

The mean post-test score for the experimental group was 7.45 (SD = 0.94), while the control group had a mean of 4.57 (SD = 1.49). This represents a 171% improvement for the experimental group from their pre-test mean, compared to a 45.5% improvement for the control group.

The frequency distribution of post-test scores for the experimental group showed a significant shift toward higher scores, with 45% of students scoring 8, 25% scoring 7, 20% scoring 6, and 10% scoring 9. In the control group, scores were more evenly distributed across the range of 3 to 7, with 29% of students scoring 4, 29% scoring 5, 21% scoring 3, 14% scoring 6, and 7% scoring 7. When categorized into achievement levels, the distribution of students in both groups showed marked differences, as illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4 *Post-test Achievement Categories for Experimental and Control Groups*

Group	Low (%)	Medium (%)	High (%)
Experimental	0	45	55
Control	0	79	21

In the experimental group, 55% of students were categorized as high achievers and 45% as medium achievers, with none in the low category. In the control group, 21% were high achievers and 79% were medium achievers, with none in the low category. This indicates that both teaching methods resulted in some improvement, but the CSR technique led to a greater proportion of students achieving high-level reading comprehension.

4.3 Within-Group Comparisons

Paired samples t-tests were conducted to examine the significance of pre-test to post-test changes within each group. For the experimental group, the mean improvement of 4.70 points was statistically significant ($t = 14.26$, $p < 0.001$) with a large effect size (Cohen's $d = 3.19$). The control group also showed a statistically significant improvement of 1.43 points ($t = 4.08$, $p < 0.01$), but with a smaller effect size (Cohen's $d = 1.09$). These results indicate that while both instructional approaches led to improvements in reading comprehension, the magnitude of improvement was substantially larger in the CSR group.

4.4 Between-Group Comparison

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An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the post-test performance of the experimental and control groups. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5 *Independent Samples t-test Results for Post-test Scores*

Group	N	Mean	SD	Median	Mode	Min	Max
Experimental	7.45	0.94	7.2	32	1.70	< 0.001	2.54
Control	4.57	1.49					

The analysis revealed a statistically significant difference between the two groups, with the experimental group outperforming the control group ($t = 7.2$, $p < 0.001$). The effect size (Cohen's $d = 2.54$) indicates a large practical significance of this difference. These results demonstrate that the CSR technique was significantly more effective than conventional teaching methods in improving students' reading comprehension.

4.5 Qualitative Results

Classroom observations provided additional insights into the impact of CSR on classroom dynamics and student engagement. Several key themes emerged from the analysis of observation data:

1. Increased Active Participation: In the experimental group, observations revealed higher levels of student participation compared to the control group. An average of 85% of students in the CSR classroom were actively engaged in learning activities throughout the sessions, compared to 52% in the conventional classroom. This engagement was manifested through active discussion, question-asking, and collaborative problem-solving.
2. Peer Support and Collaboration: Students in the experimental group demonstrated increased peer support behaviors, including explaining concepts to struggling classmates, providing encouragement, and collectively working through difficult text passages. These collaborative behaviors were observed in 78% of group work sessions in the CSR classroom, compared to minimal collaborative interaction in the control classroom.
3. Strategy Use: By the fourth week of the intervention, students in the experimental group were observed spontaneously applying CSR strategies even during individual reading tasks. For example, students were seen making predictions before reading new text sections and identifying "clunks" (difficult words or concepts) independently. This transfer of strategy use was not observed in the control group.
4. Classroom Atmosphere: The emotional tone of the CSR classroom was notably more positive, with students displaying enthusiasm for reading activities and less reluctance to engage with challenging texts. Field notes documented more instances of student laughter, animated discussion, and expressions of satisfaction upon successfully understanding difficult passages.

5. Teacher Role: In the experimental classroom, the teacher's role shifted from primarily direct instruction to facilitation and support. The teacher spent an average of 65% of class time circulating among groups, providing targeted assistance, and prompting deeper thinking through questioning. In contrast, the teacher in the control classroom spent approximately 75% of class time in direct instruction and whole-class questioning. These qualitative findings complement the quantitative results by illustrating the processes through which CSR may have led to improved reading comprehension outcomes

5. CONCLUSION

This study provides empirical evidence that Collaborative Strategic Reading technique significantly improves students' reading comprehension compared to conventional teaching methods. The structured approach of CSR, combined with cooperative learning principles, creates an effective learning environment that enhances students' ability to understand and interpret text.

The findings of this study demonstrate that CSR technique has a significant positive effect on students' reading comprehension. The mean post-test score of the experimental group (7.45) was substantially higher than that of the control group (4.57), indicating that students who received instruction using CSR technique showed greater improvement in their reading comprehension abilities.

Several factors contributed to the effectiveness of CSR technique in enhancing reading comprehension:

First, the structured approach of CSR, which includes preview, click and clunk, get the gist, and wrap-up, provides students with a systematic framework for understanding text. This structure helps students activate prior knowledge, monitor comprehension, identify main ideas, and summarize text content—all essential components of effective reading comprehension.

Second, the cooperative learning aspect of CSR promotes active engagement and peer support. Students work collaboratively in heterogeneous groups, allowing them to share ideas, solve problems together, and learn from each other's perspectives. This collaborative environment fosters deeper understanding and higher-level thinking about text.

Third, the role assignment within groups (leader, clunk expert, gist expert, announcer, and encourager/timekeeper) ensures that all students participate actively and take responsibility for their learning. This approach promotes individual accountability while maintaining positive interdependence among group members.

Fourth, CSR technique addresses vocabulary development through the click and clunk strategy, which helps students identify and understand difficult words or concepts. Since vocabulary knowledge is a critical component of reading comprehension, this focus on vocabulary contributes to improved understanding of text.

In contrast, conventional teaching methods used in the control group were less effective in improving reading comprehension. These methods, which typically involved teacher-centered approaches such as lectures and individual reading assignments, provided limited opportunities for active engagement and peer

interaction. Students in the control group were more passive in their learning and had fewer chances to practice critical reading strategies or discuss text content with peers.

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