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Implementing Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition
(CIRC) technique to improve tenth-grade students' reading
comprehension

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Resumen

El presente estudio de investigación examinó el efecto de la técnica de Lectura y Composición Cooperativa Integrada (CIRC) en estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera de décimo grado de la escuela secundaria "La Inmaculada". Se emplearon herramientas cuantitativas y cualitativas para recopilar datos a través de un estudio de Investigación Acción Exploratoria, que incluyó una prueba de lectura Cambridge A2 (examen KEY) como prueba diagnóstica y sumativa al principio y al final del estudio, así como reflexiones escritas y cuestionarios administrados antes y después de la intervención con la técnica CIRC. Los resultados demostraron claramente una mejora notable en las habilidades de lectura de los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera como resultado de la implementación de la técnica CIRC, destacando su efecto positivo en las habilidades de comprensión de lectura de los estudiantes de décimo grado. Además, los estudiantes instruidos con la técnica CIRC mostraron actitudes positivas y mayor motivación en sus clases de inglés. A pesar de algunos desafíos encontrados durante la intervención, como compañeros de clase que no cooperan, preferencias laborales individuales, actividades que consumen mucho tiempo, dominio limitado del idioma y dificultad para comprender las instrucciones del maestro, los métodos cooperativos, como la técnica CIRC, pueden mejorar significativamente la capacidad de los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera para comprender lo que ellos leen.

Palabras clave: Aprendizaje Cooperativo, Comprensión Lectora, Investigación Acción Exploratoria



Abstract

The present research study examined the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) technique's effect on tenth-grade English language learners at "La Inmaculada" high school. Quantitative and qualitative tools were used to gather data through an exploratory action research study, including a Cambridge A2 reading test (KEY exam) as a diagnostic and summative test at the beginning and end of the study, as well as written reflections and questionnaires administered before and after the CIRC intervention. The results clearly demonstrated a noticeable improvement in EFL learners' reading abilities as a result of implementing the CIRC technique, highlighting its positive effect on reading comprehension abilities. Additionally, students taught by the CIRC technique displayed positive attitudes and higher motivation in their English classes. Despite some challenges encountered during the intervention, such as uncooperative classmates, individual work preferences, time-consuming activities, limited language proficiency, and difficulty understanding teacher instruction, cooperative methods, such as the CIRC technique, can significantly enhance EFL students' ability to comprehend what they read.

Keywords: Cooperative learning, Reading comprehension, Exploratory Action Research



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1. INTRODUCTION

In Ecuador, there is a significant lack of reading culture among Ecuadorians, both in English and their native language. According to the Instituto de Estadísticas y Censos (INEC, 2012), most Ecuadorians do not read, do not have interest in reading, or the information claim a lack of time for reading in their native language. As a result, reading comprehension in L1 remains a challenge in Ecuador, as various studies have demonstrated low levels of comprehension among learners. For instance, in 2016, the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) evaluated the reading comprehension skills of about 500,000 fifteen-year-old students worldwide, including those of Latin America and the Caribbean. The average score for third- and sixth-grade students was 493 out of 1000 (OECD, 2016). Unfortunately, Ecuador and other Latin American countries scored below the international average. Specifically, Ecuadorian third and sixth-grade learners achieved level I and II in L1 reading comprehension, meaning that they could only identify repeated and isolated information in texts and basic information in short texts. In this vein, Anilema et al. (2020) also found that students in Colta, Ecuador, had poor reading comprehension skills in their first language and did not meet the expected average for their educational level. They noted that vulnerability and sociodemographic conditions influenced the results.

Regarding EFL, most Ecuadorian EFL learners cannot read in English, with only a few students reading for class purposes or assignments because it is mandatory. (Jaramillo et al., 2019). For example, in 2015, the British Council conducted research that revealed that



Ecuadorian EFL learners have limited reading skills due to infrequent English reading (45%), short duration of English study (28%), and other factors related to the educational system (British Council, 2015). Jaramillo et al. (2019) conducted another research to examine the reading behaviors of teenage learners in public secondary schools who studied English as a foreign language in Ecuador. The study involved 1300 EFL learners aged between 11 to 14 years old, from eighth to tenth grade in the Coast, Highlands, and Amazon regions of Ecuador. The authors concluded that most of the participants (62.19 %) struggled with English reading due to poor comprehension. Similarly, Education First (EF, 2022) conducted a study that ranked Ecuadorians' English proficiency 18th out of 20 Latin American countries. Consequently, many Ecuadorians struggle with low English proficiency and poor L1 and L2 reading comprehension abilities.

It is of utmost importance for students to develop their reading comprehension skills, as it allows them access to primary sources and aids in achieving future academic goals. As a result, EFL teachers must prioritize improving their students' reading abilities to improve their proficiency in the English language. By improving their comprehension, learners can expand their vocabulary in L2, deepen their understanding of the language, and grasp how it is used in real-life situations. In this sense, collaborative and cooperative group work is highly emphasized in the Ecuadorian EFL curriculum (2016) for high school students. This approach allows students to take charge of their own learning, instead of solely relying on direct instruction. According to the Ecuadorian curriculum, reading should be taught utilizing strategies that enhance comprehension and understanding of primary points in short,

uncomplicated texts on familiar topics that share vocabulary between the student's native language and English.

Problem statement

During the eighth semester's pre-professional practicum at a public school in Cuenca, Ecuador, the low proficiency in reading skills and the absence of collaborative activities were evidenced. This school is called "La Inmaculada" high school. Specifically, in the tenth grade of high school, the participant observation and daily journal observations allowed the researchers to observe that the interaction of learners was limited since the English teacher did not implement any cooperative learning tasks in classes. The activities used by the teacher mainly focused on doing activities where students work individually with no peer interaction. Similarly, the teaching-learning process was mainly focused on teaching grammar and vocabulary.

In addition to limited cooperative learning, it was observed that some tenth-grade students struggled to identify the main idea, locate specific information, and understand the vocabulary. They also had trouble comprehending reading material, drawing conclusions, and making connections between their experiences and the content of the text, resulting in confusion and a limited vocabulary. It was also noted that nearly all students encountered difficulties in reading comprehension skills. Specifically, they faced challenges in identifying the main idea or stated in the text. Additionally, expressing themselves and highlighting vital points in the text was a problem. In response to questions asked by the teacher on the text,

the students could not provide answers. The students also had limited vocabulary and struggled to understand the meaning of the text without a dictionary. Furthermore, the students' motivation to learn English was low; they found the language challenging and preferred Spanish.

Despite the EFL curriculum in Ecuador promoting the use of cooperative learning activities as they have proven to be effective in improving overall English proficiency, "La Inmaculada" high school's tenth graders lacked a variety of grouping strategies to interact with different classmates and promote participation through topics of interest. As a result, there was no meaningful, active and collaborative learning; therefore, there was a lack of student participation in reading activities in class. Consequently, this was reflected in poor reading performance.

Additionally, during English classes, three challenging situations emerged. First, there was limited active, collaborative, and cooperative learning. Second, there was a limited number of reading activities. Third, there was a lack of genuine reading resources. All of this seemed to have a negative impact on students' reading abilities, leading to low student performance in reading comprehension. According to Burgin and Daniel (2017) and Alvarez and Guevara (2021), these situations occurred because EFL teachers in Ecuador tend to use conventional teaching techniques and activities based on individual exercises found in standard textbooks. In this vein, Sevy-Biloon et al. (2020) report a significant risk of English language educators needing more resources and expertise to properly support their students

in improving their English proficiency. This deficit may be due to inadequate training in the specific pedagogical domains outlined in the Ecuadorian EFL curriculum and insufficient time allocated for lesson planning. Lastly, Alvarez and Ha (2022) found that English teachers in Ecuador typically rely on traditional language classes with outdated practices and limited use of active teaching methodologies and activities.

Justification

As mentioned above, at “La Inmaculada” high school, it was observed that the EFL teacher tends to follow a teacher-centered approach mainly focused on teaching vocabulary and grammar. As a result, three challenging situations were identified during English class: limited active, collaborative, and cooperative learning; a limited number of reading activities to enhance reading comprehension; and a shortage of authentic reading resources. Reading comprehension abilities of tenth graders at "La Inmaculada" high school were hindered by these challenges. Therefore, a comprehensive approach is required to address these issues faced by tenth graders at “La Inmaculada” high school. This comprehensive approach involves three vital elements, such as 1) increasing the use of active, collaborative, and cooperative learning activities in the class, 2) providing more reading activities to promote reading comprehension, and 3) choosing suitable and engaging reading materials.

First, active, collaborative, and cooperative learning activities must be prioritized in the classroom. According to Rodríguez-Sabiote (2022), this approach places learners at the

center of the learning process, fostering participation, knowledge construction, and interpersonal skills development, promoting a robust language acquisition process.

Secondly, reading activities must be incorporated and enhanced to improve reading comprehension skills. Ali et al. (2022) found that reading is crucial to the development of language proficiency and that using various texts allows learners to engage with diverse linguistic structures and content genres. They also claim that exposure to various texts sharpens language skills, nurturing the ability to identify nuances, infer meanings, and extract valuable information from written discourse.

Lastly, selecting suitable and captivating reading materials offers several advantages for EFL learners. Shilnov et al. (2020) indicated that choosing texts that resonate with learners' interests, cognitive development, and proficiency levels is crucial to maintaining participation and fostering a positive learning environment. They also mentioned that authentic, relevant, and culturally diverse materials motivate learners and help them connect with the subject matter, ultimately leading to increased linguistic competence, cognitive understanding, and ongoing enthusiasm for learning English.

At "La Inmaculada" high school, it is crucial to include active and collaborative learning, suitable reading exercises, and interesting materials when teaching English. These three components are essential to achieve optimal reading comprehension results, improve cognitive abilities, and encourage lifelong learning. According to Yassin et al. (2018), cooperative learning can encompass all these three components and is essential in learning



English as a foreign language. Consequently, it is crucial to implement cooperative instructional techniques such as Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) in EFL classes to achieve the best outcomes for tenth-grade learners at "La Inmaculada" high school.

CIRC aims to strengthen reading comprehension and writing skills through cooperative and group work activities. Using CIRC, students can enhance critical thinking, communication, coding and decoding skills, study skills, and the ability to extract information from text. Studies by Asrifan and Octaberlina (2021) and Mahdahera and Ridwan (2023) have recently shown the effectiveness of the CIRC technique in the context of EFL. These studies demonstrated that students in the CIRC intervention significantly improved their reading comprehension scores on the post-intervention reading tests. Additionally, the students' perceptions indicated that they enjoyed the CIRC activities and found them to help improve their reading abilities. Therefore, the researchers in the present study chose the CIRC technique as an intervention to improve reading comprehension skills due to its effectiveness.

The present study involved thirty-six tenth-grade students aged 15-16 years old. The research methodology utilized a combination of quantitative and qualitative tools to gather and analyze data through exploratory action research. These tools included an observation journal, questionnaire, summative and diagnostic reading tests, and written reflections. Thus, the present research study aimed to establish how the reading comprehension of EFL learners



can be improved using the cooperative integrated reading and composition (CIRC) technique.

For this reason, the following research questions were proposed:

Main research question

- How does the CIRC technique improve EFL students learning of reading comprehension?

Sub-questions

- What effect does the CIRC technique have on students' reading comprehension skills?
- How do students perceive their English classes before and after implementing the CIRC technique?

General objective

- To implement the CIRC technique to develop tenth-grade learners' English reading comprehension.

Specific objectives

- To determine the differences in learners' reading comprehension skills before and after implementing the CIRC technique
- To analyze learners' perceptions towards English reading classes before and after implementing the CIRC technique.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Previous studies

According to Mahdahera and Ridwan (2023), they point out that the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) technique has gained popularity in the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education since it diverges from conventional reading techniques by highlighting group collaboration. Under CIRC, learners form small groups that collectively read and analyze texts, deliberate on their importance, and express written responses (Azhari et al., 2019). Numerous studies have explored the efficacy of CIRC in developing EFL learners' reading comprehension, speaking skills, engagement, and ability to work in groups (Ghasemi & Baradaran, 2018; Mahdahera & Ridwan, 2023; Asrifan & Octaberlina, 2021; Azhari et al., 2019). Therefore, in the following paragraphs, the effectiveness of the CIRC technique in the EFL context will be discussed.

Studies recently conducted by Ghasemi and Baradaran (2018), Azhari et al. (2019), Asrifan and Octaberlina (2021), and Mahdahera and Ridwan (2023) have explored the effects of implementing the CIRC strategy on the language abilities of EFL students. For instance, an investigation was carried out by Ghasemi and Baradaran (2018) to determine how effective the complexity acquisition approach is in improving intermediate EFL learners' speaking complexity. The study involved a group of 60 EFL female learners chosen from Zabansara Language Institution based on their results from a PET test. Sixty pupils were divided into two experimental groups, one group being instructed through the STAD

(Students Team Achievement Divisions) cooperative method and the other using the CIRC method. Throughout the 10-session treatment, the groups focused on complexities by utilizing designated collaborative approaches, and a post-test was administered upon completion of the sessions. Ghasemi and Baradaran (2018) discovered that the CIRC technique significantly impacted the acquisition of complexity in learners, highlighting the significance of appropriate levels of complexity in the EFL setting to enhance the naturalness of speech.

Ghasemi and Baradaran (2018) also indicated that, although their study only investigated the impact of CIRC on speaking complexity, parallels can be drawn to the CIRC technique for reading comprehension. Both approaches emphasize cooperative learning, the importance of selecting appropriate complexities in language learning, and the potential benefits of enhancing the understanding of language expression skills.

Mahdahera and Ridwan (2023) conducted another recent study on the effectiveness of the CIRC technique in improving EFL students' reading comprehension abilities, engagement, and understanding. Tenth graders from an Islamic Senior High School in Karawang were the participants in the study that utilized a qualitative research design. The study utilized observation and interviews to collect data and identified three types of engagement that arose from students' use of the CIRC method: behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement. Student behavioral engagement involves participating in class discussions and following the teacher's instructions. Emotional engagement is demonstrated



by expressing their feelings during reading comprehension activities. On the other hand, cognitive engagement is about their capacity to accomplish tasks using different methods to achieve the same outcome.

According to Mahdahera and Ridwan (2023), educators should try different teaching techniques to design more engaging learning activities that effectively captivate students' attention. These authors also suggest that teachers can use the CIRC technique since it promotes a student-centered approach to reading comprehension through active engagement and collaboration. Incorporating cooperative learning methods and creating opportunities for behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement, the CIRC technique can significantly enhance students' reading comprehension skills and overall learning experience.

Similarly, a pre-experimental study conducted by Asrifan and Octaberlina (2021) aimed to demonstrate the efficacy of the CIRC technique. The study was conducted with 30 students who took pre--and post-tests to evaluate their reading proficiency before and after using the CIRC technique. According to the results, the reading comprehension of the participants was classified as poor and very poor before applying the CIRC technique. After implementing the CIRC technique, participants' reading comprehension was classified as fair and good. Thus, after undergoing CIRC treatment, it was determined that the student's reading comprehension abilities had improved.

Another recent study conducted by Azhari et al. (2019) aimed to demonstrate the effectiveness of the CIRC technique in improving pupils' reading comprehension abilities.



The methodology employed in this study was a classroom action research and implemented over two cycles. There were 28 students who took part in this research study, with 13 of them being male and 15 of them being female. In the first cycle, 57.68% of students were categorized as quite good; while in the second cycle, 73.93% of students were categorized as good. Thus, learners' reading comprehension skills improved with the implementation of the CIRC technique.

The efficacy of the CIRC method in improving pupils' reading comprehension skills has been supported by evidence from previous studies. The research shows that implementing the CIRC technique results in substantial improvements, demonstrated by the positive shift from poor/very poor to fair/good classification in participants' reading comprehension. The studies provide further evidence that the collaborative and integrated approach of the CIRC technique contributes to improved comprehension abilities by promoting engagement, interaction, and active participation in reading activities. Thus, the CIRC technique is an educational method that goes beyond learning language skills. Its main goal is to develop learners' thinking abilities. A study in 2015 by Gonzales and Torres explored the CIRC technique and its effects on reading comprehension. The study found that the technique promotes three levels of comprehension, which can help learners engage with the text.

The first stage of text analysis involves carefully examining the written material, commonly called "reading the lines." During this phase, according to Gonzales and Torres (2015), individuals focus on identifying explicit information contributing to their



understanding of the topic and the author's intended message. The primary objective of this step is to look for factual and specific details that aid in comprehension and enhance the ability to implement the information obtained. This process is crucial in gaining a thorough insight into the subject matter and interpreting it accurately.

As readers progress in their comprehension skills, they encounter a more advanced level known as "reading between the lines." At this stage, learners rely on their critical thinking abilities to uncover implied meanings, underlying intentions, and overarching themes within the text (Gonzales and Torres, 2015). To facilitate this process, the CIRC technique encourages learners to engage in collaborative discussions and share their diverse interpretations of the material. This level of comprehension fosters the development of analytical skills and enables learners to establish connections between different ideas presented in the text.

When individuals reach the final level of understanding, they are said to be "reading beyond the lines." During this phase, individuals establish a connection between the provided text and their personal experiences, knowledge, and viewpoints. This process, as explained by Gonzales and Torres (2015), aids in the comprehension and retention of the information presented. Learners have the opportunity to gain a deeper and personalized comprehension of the topic through this level. The CIRC technique encourages learners to express their opinions and relate them to the text, establishing a connection between their background and

the material being studied. This method promotes a more comprehensive and meaningful learning experience.

As mentioned above, the CIRC technique is an innovative approach to learning that goes beyond traditional language learning methods. Gonzales and Torres's (2015) explanation of the three levels of comprehension within the CIRC technique provides a great understanding of how learners think. The CIRC technique helps learners engage with the text deeper, improving their thinking abilities. Lastly, according to Gonzales and Torres (2015), teachers can use the CIRC technique to help learners understand language and content better and to help them improve their comprehension skills.

Despite these positive outcomes, some researchers express concerns over the potential limitations of CIRC. For example, in 2019, Arisman conducted a research study with the objective of comparing the efficacy of CIRC and Jigsaw techniques in improving EFL reading comprehension abilities. Data was collected during the 2018/2019 academic year from two eighth-grade classes at SMP Negeri 3 Baubau in Southeast Sulawesi using a quasi-experimental method with a quantitative approach. The author collected data from the two classes using pre and post-tests. The data analysis revealed no notable variation in EFL reading comprehension between the two groups under consideration. However, the Jigsaw method resulted in a higher average score compared to the CIRC group. The author argued that Jigsaw's effectiveness may depend on students' motivation to support each other in the

learning process. The author emphasizes the significance of effective communication, support, and meaningful interaction in improving learning outcomes through Jigsaw.

Considering these previous results, Arisman (2019) highlighted that it is crucial to recognize that the effectiveness of various teaching methods depends on multiple factors, such as student motivation, context, and individual learning styles. Although the study found that the Jigsaw method had a slightly higher mean score, this should not discount the value and effectiveness of the CIRC technique. The CIRC method, which prioritizes cooperative learning, active engagement, and interactive reading activities, can still offer substantial benefits for students' reading comprehension when implemented effectively.

2.2. The importance of reading skills and its role in learning English as a foreign language

Comprehending written texts requires readers to utilize their prior knowledge, linguistic abilities, and vocabulary (Hirsch, 2003; Ningsih et al., 2019). Comprehension is the most important aspect of reading for individuals, making this skill highly valuable. According to Nunan (2003) and Wallot (2014), reading is a fluent process where the readers combine what they read with what they already know to make sense of it. Other authors defined the importance of reading skills in similar terms. For example, the significance of reading skills has been emphasized by Cahyono and Widiati (2011), Cahyono and Kusumaningrum (2011), Meira and Prates (2019), and Al-Ahdal and Alolaywi (2022). They have all highlighted reading as a way to transfer information effectively between the writer

and the reader. Additionally, reading is an activity that enables the reader to understand and extract messages from the text by interpreting the information presented.

In other words, reading is not simply about word recognition; instead, it involves understanding the text and using that understanding to acquire new knowledge and insights. Numerous scholars, such as Patel and Jain in 2008 and Ali et al. in 2022, have recognized a range of reading techniques, including intensive reading, extensive reading, reading aloud, and silent reading. In a classroom setting, intensive reading involves closely analyzing reading materials to actively utilize language skills, whereas extensive reading enhances knowledge and builds vocabulary. Reading aloud requires the use of both eyes and brain to comprehend text, involving lip movement. Silent reading, however, involves understanding text by reading without speaking.

The reading process can be divided into three main stages, namely, the recognition stage, the structuring stage, and the interpretation stage, as explained by Patel and Jain in 2008. As per the findings of Song et al. (2018), learners must recognize spoken words in their written form during the recognition stage. Moving on to the structuring stage, learners need to identify the syntactic relationship between items and understand the structural meaning of syntactical units. Finally, in the interpretation stage, as Mak et al. (2021) highlighted, learners must comprehend the significance of words, phrases, or sentences in the broader context. These stages are crucial in the reading process and must be given due importance. These stages are interconnected, with each stage building upon the preceding one. For instance,

learners need to recognize words before they can structure a text, and they must structure the text to interpret it effectively.

Finally, when reading, different levels of comprehension occur. According to Molina Ibarra (2020), these levels include the literal, inferential, and critical levels. First, the literal level involves recognizing explicit information in the text, such as important ideas, the central idea, and the order of events (Guaita, 2022 & Molina Ibarra, 2020). Second, the inferential level goes beyond explicit information and requires the reader to make inferences and deductions based on their own knowledge and experiences (Sari, 2016). This level involves inferring main ideas that may not be explicitly stated, predicting events, and understanding sequences of events. The evaluation of the writing and the writer's perspective in terms of quality and values is the final level, which involves the reader's own knowledge and experience, according to Sari (2016). Readers at this level are capable of distinguishing between factual statements and opinions, as well as evaluating the precision of the information conveyed in the text.

2.3. Cooperative learning and the development of learners' language skills

Through collaboration, individuals can reach objectives that they would not be able to attain on their own. Higher-order thinking skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and team-working are improved through teamwork, leading to enhanced knowledge and language learning (Singh & Agrawal, 2011; Rodríguez-Sabiote, 2022). Research indicates that learning in a cooperative setting offers superior learning opportunities. For example,

participants benefit from increased language practice opportunities, contributing to a positive affective climate and motivating learners (Olsen & Kagan, 1992; Monzoque, 2019; Shammout, 2020; Abuhamda et al., 2021). For these reasons, the role of cooperative learning in the educational field will be discussed in the following section.

Cooperative learning involves more than having students sit together and work on their assignments separately or engaging in a competition to achieve the highest grade (Dewi & Anasy, 2014 & Yassin et al., 2018). Instead, in the cooperative learning model, students work together to achieve shared objectives by exchanging information in a socially structured manner and assisting each other (Slavin, 2005; Ronalto et al., 2021). In the educational field, cooperative learning involves classroom activities in small groups of students, where they interact and share information or knowledge to complete tasks assigned by the teachers (Gillies & Boyle, 2010; Fang, 2022). In a cooperative learning setting, students work together to achieve outcomes that are advantageous for themselves and their group members.

Cooperative learning is recognized for 1) improving students' academic performance, 2) developing positive attitudes towards the learning process, 3) teaching social skills, such as communication, cooperation, and problem-solving, 4) developing a sense of belonging and community, and 5) promoting positive relationships and interactions among learners and the teacher (García & Cazaluade, 2022). The implementation of cooperative learning has been shown to positively impact academic performance by fostering an environment that promotes active engagement and participation among students. This approach has been



recognized as an effective method to enhance the learning experience and promote academic success, as per Jumbo Obaco (2019). According to Chen (2022), a primary goal of cooperative learning in language instruction is to offer genuine opportunities for second language acquisition. Teachers should apply this approach in a variety of curriculum settings and should concentrate on particular lexical items, language structures, and communicative functions. Additionally, according to Dewi and Anasy (2014), cooperative learning should foster a supportive classroom environment that boosts learners' motivation and reduces their stress levels when learning a new language.

When incorporating cooperative learning into classroom practices, according to Jakavonytė-Staškuvienė et al. (2021), there are some essential elements that the teacher must take into consideration when doing so. There are five key factors that contribute to successful group work. These factors were also identified by Felder and Brent in 2007. The first is positive interdependence, where the group's achievement of goals is equally important to each individual member. The second is individual and group responsibility, where each member knows their tasks and is accountable for completing them. The third is motivational interaction, where members support and encourage each other to promote overall success. Fourth, interpersonal and team skills are crucial for effective communication and cooperation within the group. Finally, group and individual evaluation should be encouraged to facilitate self-reflection and open discussion about progress.

2.4. The use of the CIRC technique in the development of reading skills



The upcoming discussion will focus on the cooperative integrated reading and composition (CIRC) technique, which is a cooperative learning-based teaching approach commonly used in language instruction. CIRC is a tool that employs cooperative learning, with specific steps to improve reading comprehension (Slavin, 2005). According to research by Rahma (2017) and Susilo et al. (2021), CIRC involves students being grouped together in small and mixed teams both inside and outside of class. By working together towards a common objective, students can develop important skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, social interaction, and self-esteem through active participation in the teaching-learning process.

CIRC is a teaching method where students work in teams to improve their understanding of written materials, as Gupta and Ahuja (2014) described. Teamwork involves various reading activities such as predicting outcomes, identifying characters and settings, and summarizing content. These activities help learners expand their vocabulary, practice spelling, and enhance reading comprehension. The ultimate goal is to understand and summarize the story by decoding its main idea. According to Felder and Brent (2007) and Legiawati (2017), the CIRC technique follows a cycle that includes teacher presentation, team practice, independent practice, peer pre-assessment, additional practice, and testing

As described by Legiawati (2017), the CIRC technique incorporates grouping learners based on their reading level, including them in mixed reading groups, pairing them with other students in their group, and forming teams from two different reading levels or

groups. The teacher guides the reading groups, where stories are introduced and discussed, and new vocabulary is introduced and discussed after the reading session. Students complete reading activities, and their partners assess them. Students then take a comprehension test and write sentences with new vocabulary. Finally, learners receive direct instruction in reading comprehension and create a draft composition incorporating teammates' and teachers' recommendations and grammatical and mechanical correctness.

When teaching reading, the CIRC technique creates a classroom environment that facilitates effective collaboration and improves language development. Matthew (2006) notes that this technique encourages EFL learners to be more involved in the language classroom and to use language in new ways. The CIRC technique involves assigning different roles to both teachers and students (Mubarak & Rudianto, 2017). As an instructor, the teacher guides the students in their group work activities. As a resource, the teacher offers support and guidance to the students when needed and encourages them to participate actively in discussions (Aslan Berzener & Deneme, 2021). The teacher also closely monitors the student's progress in each group as a supervisor. Meanwhile, the student's role involves being accountable, cooperative, and actively contributing to their team to accomplish group goals (Indiyani, 2018).

The CIRC technique involves collaboration between teachers and students to develop reading abilities. Studies by Slavin (2013), Hapsari (2013), Zainuddin (2015), Varisoglu (2016), and Ayu et al. (2017) have examined the effectiveness of this technique. The authors

found that using CIRC has several strengths in EFL classrooms. Firstly, the pragmatic activities used to solve problems in the learners' context make all learning activities more relevant. Secondly, integrated learning can increase motivation and social interaction among students through cooperation, tolerance, and respect for each other's ideas. Thirdly, integrated learning can improve students' creative thinking abilities. Furthermore, CIRC enhances learners' problem-solving skills by giving them significant opportunities to share their experiences with their teammates. It also effectively boosts motivation in conducting reading comprehension activities and encourages the utilization of different reading comprehension levels, such as literal, inferential, and critical.

Recent research studies have supported the effectiveness of the CIRC technique. For example, Asrifan and Octaberlina (2021) conducted a pre-experimental study that demonstrated the efficacy of the CIRC technique. They found that students' reading comprehension skills improved by measuring students' reading ability before and after implementing the CIRC technique. Other recent studies have also shown the effectiveness of the CIRC technique in enhancing students' reading comprehension, including Azhari et al. (2019), Nanda (2019), Maruf & Anjely (2020), and Umar et al. (2020). The results of these studies indicate that the CIRC strategy can significantly improve students' reading achievement. Teachers can therefore use the CIRC strategy to help learners enhance their reading abilities.

In addition to improving reading comprehension, the CIRC technique also has a number of other benefits for students. For example, it can help to strengthen peer connection, improve communication skills and enhance socialization Sirajuddin et al. (2022). CIRC emphasizes small group interactions and collaboration, creating an environment where students actively engage with one another to achieve common goals (Umar et al., 2020). Thus, CIRC is effective in strengthening peer connections. According to Sirajuddin et al. (2022), students participating in CIRC groups develop a sense of camaraderie and shared purpose by analyzing and discussing reading materials. This collaborative work fosters a sense of belonging and mutual support, positively contributing to students' learning experiences.

Similarly, Maruf and Anjely (2020) state that the CIRC technique is an effective and adaptable method that enhances student interaction and enthusiasm in education. It has been proven to be highly effective in promoting socialization and teamwork among students, allowing them to collaborate and share ideas to accomplish tasks as a team. Feedback from students indicates that CIRC fosters a strong sense of teamwork by allowing them to pool their strengths, support each other, and work harmoniously towards common goals (Nanda, 2019). This approach enhances the learning experience and cultivates essential interpersonal skills valuable in both academic and real-world contexts.

Apart from strengthening peer connections, CIRC is also an excellent platform for improving communication skills (Sirajuddin et al., 2022). Collaborative discussions in CIRC



groups encourage effective communication, allowing students to express themselves confidently and engage in thoughtful debates (Matthew, 2006). As a result, students refine their ability to convey complex concepts and participate in meaningful dialogue. According to a study by Sirajuddin et al. (2022), CIRC groups necessitate effective communication among students to accomplish tasks and attain objectives successfully. This, in turn, aids in enhancing students' speaking, listening, and critical thinking abilities.

Moreover, CIRC also provides ample opportunities for enhanced socialization. Through working together to complete tasks and achieve shared goals, students develop a sense of teamwork and interdependence (Sirajuddin et al., 2022). This collaborative spirit fosters a positive social dynamic that encourages inclusivity and peer support, contributing to a vibrant and engaging classroom atmosphere (Gupta & Ahuja, 2014). Moreover, according to Sirajuddin et al. (2022), CIRC groups provide students with the opportunity to interact with different peers from different backgrounds, helping to promote understanding, tolerance, and social skills such as teamwork and cooperation.

In addition to its social benefits, the CIRC technique has a motivational aspect. Helping fellow team members achieve a common goal is a powerful motivator that instills a sense of purpose and accomplishment within students (Umar et al., 2020). According to Sirajuddin et al. (2022), this intrinsic motivation comes from the satisfaction of contributing to group success and kindles enthusiasm that drives students to engage more deeply in the learning process.

However, it is important to note that potential challenges are associated with using the CIRC technique. Some students may exhibit reduced motivation when engaging in CIRC activities, particularly regarding external factors such as group cooperation (Sirajuddin et al., 2022). This extrinsic motivation can negatively affect learning achievement, reducing group task submissions and limiting interaction among group members. Therefore, educators must remain vigilant to decrease motivation and implement strategies to mitigate these occurrences. Despite these challenges, the CIRC technique is an invaluable pedagogical tool that transcends traditional learning paradigms. Its ability to foster socialization and teamwork and its potential to motivate students make it an effective tool for nurturing comprehensive student development (Sirajuddin et al., 2022).

In conclusion, the CIRC technique is an effective and valuable educational approach that can benefit students in multiple ways. Not only does it improve reading comprehension, but it also strengthens peer connections, enhances communication skills, and promotes socialization. The cooperative nature of CIRC also fosters critical thinking and academic abilities, effective collaboration, and positive peer interactions. To enhance collaboration, motivation, and academic performance among students, educators need to leverage the potential of the CIRC technique within their teaching environment (Sirajuddin et al., 2022). By utilizing this approach, educators can tap into a range of strengths that can contribute to a more effective and engaging learning experience for students. Consequently, CIRC is

essential for educators seeking to develop well-rounded, socially adept, and intellectually engaged learners.

2.5. The use of authentic materials in teaching reading

In the traditional reading class, teachers teach through textbooks, which are usually not interesting for students and do not represent the real target language use (Gilmore, 2007; Shilnov et al., 2020). To improve reading skills, incorporating genuine materials into the learning process is an effective technique that can significantly enhance pupils' comprehension. Richards (2001) emphasized the importance of using language in the classroom that reflects everyday usage. Authentic material is considered the kind of material that was not designed to be applied in teaching but for real-life use. Native speakers or writers create content intended for genuine audiences with the objective of fulfilling a social function within the language community, as stated by Mohammad et al. (2018). When teaching reading, it is important for teachers to not only use genuine materials and activities but also take into account the needs and interests of students to involve them in practical, real-world tasks (Ryandani et al., 2018).

To successfully acquire a foreign language, learners must maintain motivation and engagement throughout the learning process. In order to captivate learners, educational materials must be compelling, intriguing, pertinent, and captivating, as indicated by Ryandani et al. (2018). Arianie (2017) and Mara and Mohamad (2021) propose that the utilization of genuine materials can aid learners in comprehending the language more



effectively by closing the distance between the language taught in the classroom and the language utilized by actual individuals in real-life situations. Likewise, Richards (2001) proposes various advantages of incorporating authentic materials in teaching language development in his book *Curriculum Development in Language Teaching*. He asserts that authentic materials can aid learners in preparing for real-world scenarios, cater to their requirements, enhance their drive, prompt teachers to adopt efficacious teaching techniques and impart genuine cultural knowledge.

As mentioned, genuine materials prepare learners for real life. Alina and Lavinia (2018) suggest that educators can assist students in acquiring the necessary abilities and techniques to handle authentic scenarios by exposing them to materials and duties they may encounter beyond the schoolroom, such as news articles, advertisements, podcasts, or menus. By doing this, people can improve their communication skills in real-life situations. For example, learners can practice ordering food in a restaurant using a real menu and role-playing a dialogue with a waiter (Richards, 2001).

Moreover, authentic materials meet learners' needs. Teachers can select relevant and interesting materials to their learners' goals, preferences, and backgrounds (Alina & Lavinia, 2018). For instance, if the pupils are interested in sports, the teacher can use sports magazines or websites as reading or listening materials sources. By doing this, the teacher can also personalize the materials and make them more engaging. Authentic materials can also be used to address specific learning objectives. For example, if learners are working on their

grammar skills, teachers could find authentic materials containing examples of the grammar structures they teach (Richards, 2001). By incorporating materials that align with learners' interests, goals, and backgrounds, educators can create a more personalized and engaging learning experience (Akbari & Razavi, 2016)

Additionally, authentic materials affect learners' motivation positively. Belaid and Murray (2015) point out that learners tend to be more motivated when they use meaningful and challenging materials. Authentic materials can provide such motivation because they relate to real life and reflect current issues and trends. Moreover, authentic materials can increase learners' confidence and satisfaction when they realize they can understand and use real language. For example, learners may be more motivated to read an English newspaper article about a topic they are interested in than reading a textbook chapter about English grammar (Richards, 2001). Authentic materials can also help to increase learners' self-confidence because they see that they can understand and use the target language in real-world contexts. Lastly, Belaid and Murray (2015) claim that the relevance and authenticity of these materials ignite a sense of purpose and urgency as learners recognize the practicality and value of acquiring language abilities that they can immediately apply in their everyday activities.

Furthermore, using authentic materials facilitates educators' adoption of efficacious teaching methodologies. When using genuine resources, teachers must design tasks appropriate to their learners' level and objectives (Soliman, 2013; Akbari & Razavi, 2016).



They also need to provide support and feedback to help learners deal with the difficulties and complexities of authentic language. For example, when teachers use authentic materials, they often focus on meaning rather than form. Incorporating authentic materials into their lesson plans, educators can facilitate role plays, debates, and other activities that enable students to apply the target language in practical situations. This can help learners to develop their communicative skills more effectively (Richards, 2001). Therefore, teachers must use learner-centered, communicative, and interactive methods, such as task-based or cooperative learning (Akbari & Razavi, 2016).

Lastly, authentic materials present authentic information about culture. Authentic materials can provide valuable insights into the cultural elements of language use, as language and culture are closely intertwined (Soliman, 2013). By using authentic materials, teachers can expose learners to different varieties and styles of language, as well as different values, beliefs, and customs of the target language community. According to Alina and Lavinia (2018), when learners understand the target language's culture, they can better understand the language itself. For example, learners can learn about the etiquette of greeting people in different situations by watching videos of native speakers. Learners can also learn about English culture by watching movies, reading newspapers, and listening to English music. They can also learn about English culture by interacting with native English speakers (Richards, 2001). This exposure broadens learners' horizons and cultivates a sense of cultural sensitivity and empathy (Alina & Lavinia, 2018).



In the language classroom, Richards (2001) argued that it is beneficial to use genuine resources. There are several reasons, including that authentic materials can help learners prepare for real-life situations, cater to their individual needs, provide positive motivation, encourage effective teaching methods, and offer genuine cultural information. Therefore, teachers should consider these benefits when selecting and designing class materials. Utilizing real-world resources such as newspapers, videos, podcasts, and authentic educational scenarios has proven to be a highly effective strategy in increasing student engagement and motivation (Alina & Lavinia, 2018). When students interact with these materials, they become more interested and enthusiastic about learning, making the subject more relatable and captivating.

Including genuine materials can lead to increased motivation, inspiring students to take on a self-driven learning experience outside of the classroom environment (Akbari & Razavi, 2016). This vast source of knowledge is readily accessible in their everyday lives, empowering them to explore and comprehend the subject matter uniquely. Through authentic materials, students are intrinsically motivated, allowing them to gain insights and information easily (Richards, 2001). Encouraging students to take ownership of their educational pursuits motivates them to engage actively in their learning journey. This fosters a strong desire to explore, question, and absorb knowledge from diverse real-world contexts.

Finally, the combination of heightened student excitement and enthusiasm and the intrinsic motivation fostered by authentic materials creates a dynamic and engaging learning

environment (Alina & Lavinia, 2018). Utilizing authentic materials in teaching provides a vast array of educational benefits for educators. It enhances students' comprehension of the subject matter and fosters their curiosity and passion for learning (Soliman, 2013). Therefore, incorporating authentic materials into the educational environment is essential for providing students with the best learning experience.

2.6. Critical thinking and reading comprehension

Having the skill to think critically is immensely important, as it enables individuals to resolve issues, arrive at informed choices, draw logical conclusions, and accurately assess probabilities. This entails utilizing, scrutinizing, combining, and appraising information obtained through observation, encounter, contemplation, logic, or communication (Heard et al., 2020). Unfortunately, according to Fahim and Sa'epour (2011), the traditional educational system often emphasizes lower-order thinking skills, where students merely memorize and retain the content of a class without questioning its validity.

In order to become well-informed and knowledgeable individuals, it is essential to possess critical thinking and reading comprehension skills. These skills are fundamental and play a crucial role in personal development. According to Ghiasian and Rad (2019), critical thinking entails a deliberate and impartial analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information. They also indicated that critical thinking enables readers to engage deeply with texts by questioning content and creating logical connections between ideas when applied to reading

comprehension. Competent critical thinkers approach reading with an open mind, seeking to understand the author's viewpoint while examining the evidence and reasoning presented.

Moreover, reading comprehension is closely intertwined with critical thinking since reading is a cognitive process that readers engage in to construct meaning (Ghiasian & Rad, 2019). Developing critical thinking skills in English as a foreign language (EFL) settings can enhance pupils' proficiency in the language rather than solely focusing on knowledge acquisition. The cognitive abilities of inference, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, which are the building blocks of critical thinking, are also fundamental for reading comprehension.

As indicated by Mohseni et al. (2020), effective reading comprehension demands more than just decoding words and sentences. It requires constructing meaning from the text, encompassing literal and inferential comprehension. Likewise, Mohseni et al. (2020) claim that critical thinking aids readers in identifying the principal ideas, distinguishing between evidence and opinions, and evaluating the reliability and credibility of sources. This analytical approach enables readers to recognize bias, fallacies, and assumptions, ultimately leading to a thorough understanding of the subject matter.

Additionally, Sirajuddin et al. (2022) point out that critical thinking strengthens reading comprehension by stimulating readers to consider alternative perspectives and engage in reflective thinking. By asking probing questions and linking prior knowledge and experiences, readers can better connect with the text and internalize the information

presented. Readers can also identify gaps in arguments and recognize underlying assumptions, empowering them to approach texts more critically and thoughtfully.

As mentioned, critical thinking and reading comprehension are advantageous in both academic and daily situations. Those who have these abilities are more capable of handling the overwhelming amount of information that is accessible in the modern world. They can differentiate between reliable sources and misinformation, allowing them to make well-informed decisions and avoid being manipulated (Ghiasian & Rad, 2019; Sirajuddin et al., 2022).

Furthermore, comprehending written material and possessing strong critical thinking skills are essential components for becoming an intelligent and discerning reader. When incorporating critical thinking while reading, learners can gain a deeper understanding of the text and develop a more comprehensive perception of the world (Mohseni et al., 2020). Both educators and students must recognize the immense value of these skills and foster a culture of critical thinking in the classroom. In this sense, Sirajuddin et al. (2022) highlight that such an approach will cultivate thoughtful, informed individuals who can thrive in any environment.

Educators must select appropriate techniques, materials, and methods for reading instruction to ensure learners are engaged and attentive (Saadati et al., 2010). This approach must foster critical thinking and reading comprehension skills, which are vital for succeeding in today's ever-evolving world. Fahim and Sa'eepour (2011) state that the right approach must

also promote higher-order thinking skills, which are crucial for success in today's complex and dynamic world. By employing the right approach, educators can ensure that their learners are equipped with the necessary tools to navigate the vast sea of information and ideas they will encounter in their academic and personal lives.

As indicated, to create a stimulating and engaging learning environment, educators should select an approach that promotes the development of critical thinking and reading comprehension abilities. In the present exploratory action research study, researchers used the CIRC technique to enhance critical thinking, reading comprehension, communication, and teamwork abilities. A dynamic learning environment encourages cognitive and social development when critical thinking and CIRC are combined (Simarmata, 2023). Critical thinking involves analyzing, evaluating, and applying information to make logical judgments. The CIRC technique encourages cooperative interaction among students in small groups to enhance their reading and writing abilities. According to Nanda (2019) and Simarmata (2023), when educators merge these two approaches, they can establish a dynamic learning environment that encourages cognitive and social growth.

Moreover, the CIRC technique encourages active engagement with the material by having students collectively read and analyze a text (Simarmata, 2023). Through collaborative discussions, students share their interpretations, question the content, and challenge one another's perspectives. This process enables learners to examine texts from multiple angles, promoting critical thinking. Students refine their analytical abilities and



develop the skills necessary to comprehend complex concepts by engaging in constructive debates and conversations (Nanda, 2019). In addition, the utilization of the CIRC technique promotes the development of advanced cognitive abilities, including but not limited to analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Encouraging critical thinking in collaborative environments involves students considering how the text relates to their existing knowledge and the potential real-world implications of its content, as stated by Simarmata (2023). Composing written responses or reflections within the group setting also stimulates critical thinking, as students must organize their thoughts logically and defend their ideas persuasively.

In addition to promoting critical thinking, the CIRC technique nurtures teamwork and communication, which are essential components of intellectual growth (Simarmata, 2023). Students learn to respect diverse perspectives, actively listen to their peers, and communicate their ideas clearly and coherently (Nanda, 2019). Such collaborative experiences build essential interpersonal skills and promote a positive classroom environment conducive to critical inquiry and intellectual growth. Furthermore, according to Simarmata (2023) through critical thinking, students can evaluate the material presented in CIRC activities. They can also identify areas where their understanding might be incomplete and seek additional information to fill those gaps. In turn, the CIRC technique can support the development of critical thinking by providing a structured framework that encourages active participation and empowers learners to seek more profound insights into the subject matter.



To sum up, educators can provide a highly effective educational strategy that promotes intellectual and social development by incorporating critical thinking and the CIRC method. The CIRC method encourages cooperative learning, which hones critical thinking skills and fosters teamwork and communication. This mutually beneficial relationship helps students become more engaged, thoughtful, and collaborative learners, equipping them with the crucial skills required for lifelong learning and success. By leveraging the connection between critical thinking and the CIRC method, educators can create enriched educational experiences that stimulate curiosity, innovation, and a profound appreciation for the importance of collaborative learning in pursuing knowledge.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Type of research

The present study was an exploratory action research (EAR), which employed quantitative and qualitative tools to collect and analyze data (Mertler, 2016). EAR was selected since it provides the opportunities to solve problems inside the classroom settings where the researcher is involved. Furthermore, according to Villalobos (2015), action research is a cyclical process that allows the researcher to implement actions, observe, and analyze their impact when trying to solve a problem inside the classroom. Likewise, according to Smith & Rebolledo (2019), an exploratory action research study starts with creating the plan of exploration and later exploring, analyzing, and reflecting on the problems that emerged during this phase. This reflection was used as the basis to make the action plan.

Then the action stage started with planning the intervention, acting, observing, reflecting, and interpreting what had occurred.

3.2. Research method

This study employed qualitative research methodology to gain insights into the perceived importance that individuals or groups assign to social or human concerns (Fletcher, 2017). Collecting data through techniques like interviews, focus groups, and observation and then analyzing the data through coding and thematic analysis is the essence of qualitative research methodology, as stated by Mohajan (2018). Thus, qualitative research aims to provide a detailed understanding of a phenomenon and process rather than to test a hypothesis or measure variables (Fletcher, 2017)

3.3. Techniques and instruments for data collection

3.3.1. The observation

The observation technique was used to identify a problem, diagnose it, explore the initial situation, and find a possible solution. The teacher monitored the students' behavior and participation, as well as the progress of the reading class, through classroom observation. As a tool, an observation guide was used during the exploratory stage (see Appendix 1). The observation guide assessed students' eagerness to participate in classroom activities. This includes their enthusiasm in following reading classes, readiness to work collaboratively, and activeness in asking and answering questions related to the provided reading materials (Khumaidah, 2017).



3.3.2. *The survey*

A survey was conducted to gather learners' opinions and gain insight into cooperative activities' effectiveness in enhancing reading abilities. Additionally, the survey aimed to uncover any difficulties learners encountered and the extent of their progress in reading classes. A survey was given to tenth-grade high school students as part of the exploratory phase of an action research study. The survey served as a tool for the research (see Appendix 2). After finishing the action stage and when the study was completed, the participants were administered a questionnaire to gather their thoughts on utilizing the CIRC strategy during their English lessons. The questionnaire can be found in Appendix 3.

3.3.3. *Reflective writing*

Reflective writing is aimed at examining an experience, contemplating both its favorable and unfavorable elements, and devising strategies to enhance the experience or outcomes of the activity in the future, as per Tahmasbi et al. (2022). There are numerous advantages to engaging in reflective writing. It can prompt learners and educators alike to analyze their learning experiences critically, aiding in identifying areas for improvement and developing effective strategies to enhance their teaching or learning. It can provide a safe space for learners to express their thoughts and emotions regarding their classes. Additionally, teachers can utilize reflective writing to evaluate their performance, teaching approaches, and language skills in EFL classrooms (Avarzamani & Farahian, 2019; Jumpakate et al., 2021). Considering all these benefits, the present study employed written

reflection journals before and after the intervention. The written reflection journals were used to encourage learners to think critically about their teaching-learning experiences, identify areas for improvement, and develop strategies to enhance their learning (see Appendix 4 & 5).

3.3.4. The diagnostic and summative reading tests

The present study employed a diagnostic and summative test to understand the initial situation of students before the intervention and evaluate the intervention. For this reason, at the beginning of the action stage, a diagnostic test was applied to diagnose the initial situation. After that, the intervention was applied to the students in tenth grade. Finally, a final diagnostic test was given upon completion of the study to assess the effectiveness of the CIRC intervention. Therefore, the Cambridge A2 reading exam, from parts one to five, was used as a diagnosis and summative test, and students were evaluated following the same protocol as the international exam (see Appendix 6).

3.4. Participants

A total of thirty-six tenth-grade students, aged 15-16, from “La Inmaculada” high school took part in the present exploratory action research study. During their 8th semester practicum, the researchers administered a contextualization journal. The results revealed that the students in this particular group had similar ethnicities, native languages, English exposure levels, and educational and cultural backgrounds. Concerning the exposure to



English, all participants were provided with three hours of regular English instruction per week.

In addition, the researchers obtained permission from the school principal and informed all students and their representatives about the objectives and purposes of the research study. The students' representatives signed an informed consent form outlining the study and student involvement. The approval allowed the researchers to begin the exploratory action research study and use all collected data as evidence. Lastly, participants were informed that confidentiality and anonymity would be maintained.

3.5. Stages of the research

Smith and Rebolledo (2019) emphasize the significance of understanding EFL classroom dynamics comprehensively before implementing effective interventions. This requires meticulous planning during the exploration phase, which entails devising specific questions and data collection methods that align with the main inquiry: "What is the current classroom situation?" By recognizing the importance of assessing the situation before and after interventions, researchers can better navigate the complexities of educational improvement and ensure that their actions are relevant to the context and contribute positively to the EFL learning environment. By doing so, educators and researchers can make informed decisions that enhance the learning experience of EFL students. Thus, the following paragraphs explain the phases that researchers went through to conduct the present study.



Phase 1- Plan to explore: During this stage, the researchers evaluated their practices and identified an area of focus. The researchers explored the educational context and got to know the students and reviewed the practice of teaching reading by observing and reflecting about on them. They observed that learners were facing difficulties in reading activities and decided to concentrate on improving it. After that, the researchers reviewed the literature to plan and explore how to change or improve students reading comprehension in the classroom.

The researchers also planned how to gather information to answer the questions that addressed the problems students were dealing with. This involved addressing exploratory questions such as how students feel about reading activities in class, their opinions on cooperative learning, the reading material used by teachers, the strategies students use to comprehend texts, and their perception of English classes. To gather data and to answer the exploratory questions, the researchers decided to apply classroom observations (daily journal observations), questionnaires, and students' written reflection

Phase 2-Explore: During this phase, in order to collect data and evidence about common problems students have in reading, the researchers observed students during class sessions in order to identify a problem and find a possible solution. The researchers collected data to clarify the situation they identified. The data was gathered systematically and later analyzed and interpreted. It was done through an observation guide provided by the PINE major for practicums of 8th semester (see Annex 1). This tool addressed the students' performance in English classes. Furthermore, the questionnaire and written reflection were

applied to gather data regarding learners' attitudes towards reading, cooperative work, and English classes (see Annex 2).

Concerning the journal observation findings, in the tenth grade at "La Inmaculada" high-school, the participant observation and daily journal observations allowed the researchers to note that interaction among tenth-grade EFL learners was minimal. The students had minimal interaction due to the English teacher's failure to create opportunities for engagement and group activities. First, the actual English teacher did not create spaces where students ask and answer questions and use a variety of group activities so that students can interact with different classmates. Second, the EFL teacher did not promote student participation through topics of interest and promote critical thinking by opening debates, discussions or arguments with the students. Finally, the English teacher did not do activities where students can interact and move around, encourage student questions, and prepare material related to the topic.

On the other hand, many students stated in the survey and their written reflections that they learned through conventional and text-focused methods, which impacted their language learning and comprehension abilities. As Alvarez and Ha (2022) pointed out, this is due to various contextual and practical limitations that prevented EFL teachers from fully implementing cooperative learning suggested by the Ecuadorian EFL curriculum. These challenges included large class sizes, insufficient teacher training and professional development, and a demanding workload due to mandatory extracurricular activities.



Furthermore, students reported struggling with reading in English due to various challenges. Despite this, they had a favorable view of cooperative learning, believing it could improve their learning experience. Students expressed a desire for interactive, collaborative, and participatory learning that emphasizes vocabulary acquisition and the use of technology.

Phase 3- Analyze and reflect: After gathering information on students' thoughts regarding reading, the implementation of collaborative activities, and the typical difficulties they faced while reading, the researchers analyzed and reflected on the data. The researchers analyzed the entire process and reflected on what happened, and they clarified the challenging situation they identified to make an action plan later. Each item in the questionnaire, survey, and written reflection was examined to understand the students' perceptions and opinions about cooperative learning, reading comprehension, and English classes. The result of the analysis was used to reflect on what occurred, and this reflection was used as the basis to make the action plan. Thus, the themes that emerged from the exploratory phase were used to implement the necessary classroom changes for improving learners' reading comprehension.

To sum up, most students indicated that their classes did not incorporate cooperative learning. However, they expressed that cooperative learning would benefit their learning process. Regarding how students perceived their reading comprehension abilities, most disagreed when making inferences about things not explicitly stated in the text or reading

critically. The individuals expressed uncertainty in inferring unknown vocabulary definitions through context and identifying specific details in written material.

In classes, students felt that descriptive and literary texts were commonly used. They also shared that most activities were completed independently, which caused them to become disinterested. In addition, most learners believed that their teacher only encouraged re-reading texts, using dictionaries to clarify unknown words, identifying the main idea, and determining the meaning of unfamiliar words based on the context. Additionally, they believed they only understood very little of texts used in classes, indicating their reading performance was low or inadequate. Overall, students reported that their EFL teacher primarily used texts from the textbook provided by the Ministry of Education, with most activities being completed alone, leading to disengagement. They also noted that teachers only promoted basic comprehension strategies, such as re-reading, dictionary use, and identifying the main idea, resulting in poor reading performance. To improve their academic performance, they believed that working and learning in small groups with their peers would be beneficial.

The action research process is shown through the below steps. For ten weeks, the action research stage was conducted. The researchers integrated the themes identified during the exploratory phase to enhance the students' reading comprehension. According to Smith and Rebolledo (2019), during the action stage, the teachers must aim to answer the question: "What are the effects of the change they attempted?" To accomplish this in the present study,



the researchers planned the change and its implementation. After making the change, the researchers observed the outcome, evaluated it, and reflected on their next steps.

Phase 4- Plan to change: The researcher prepared an action plan based on the themes that emerged from the exploratory phase and defined the strategy and activities to be used to develop learners' reading comprehension. In this stage the researchers decided what to change and plan how to collect further data to see what happened. After gathering, analyzing, and interpreting the data during the exploratory stage, the researchers noticed that there was a need for implementing cooperative learning in English classes. There was limited active, collaborative, and cooperative learning which was affecting the development of learners' language and reading comprehension abilities. Thus, the researchers decided to implement a cooperative learning technique that was mainly focused on enhancing vocabulary and reading skills since learners believed cooperative learning would help them improve those abilities. Therefore, the activities and lesson plan that the researchers employed to develop learners' reading comprehension, during the action phase, were related to cooperative integrated reading and composition (CIRC) technique (see Annex 5).

Before implementing the cooperative (CIRC) technique, the researchers decided to take a reading test, which later helped researchers have a starting point for the research process by comparing and evaluating how the intervention affected the students' learning process. The teachers evaluated high school students' reading comprehension skills by examining the five components of a KEY reading exam. These components included

comprehending different types of texts, finding specific information through quick reading and comprehending details through careful reading, comprehending main ideas and some details of longer texts, understanding vocabulary in context, and comprehending grammatical structures.

The researchers selected the KEY reading exam as it is a reputable assessment tool recognized for evaluating students' reading abilities at the A2 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). This exam is designed to be challenging yet attainable for students at this level, offering an accurate measure of their progress. The KEY reading exam includes a multiple-choice section and a gap-fill section, testing students' comprehension of key information in different texts, including short stories, articles, and advertisements. Additionally, the gap-fill section assesses students' ability to comprehend the meaning of words and phrases in context. In addition, the value of the KEY reading exam lies in its ability to evaluate students' reading abilities in a manner that is pertinent to their needs, suitably challenging yet feasible, and widely acknowledged.

Pertinent to students' requirements: The purpose of the exam is to evaluate the reading skills necessary for everyday life, including understanding directions, interpreting signs and notices, and reading newspapers and magazines.

Challenging yet attainable: The exam is demanding enough to inspire students to enhance their reading skills while still being within reach for those at the A2 level.

Widely recognized: Employers, educational institutions, and government agencies recognize the KEY reading exam globally. This implies that learners who attain certification in the exam can demonstrate their English reading abilities to a broad range of audiences.

Overall, students who took the KEY reading exam received helpful feedback on their reading abilities. This feedback assisted them in improving their skills and reaching their English language learning objectives. The exam was a valuable resource for assessing students' reading aptitude and providing updates on their advancement. Lastly, the KEY reading exam was beneficial for teachers seeking to enhance learners reading proficiency.

Moreover, it is worth mentioning that the researchers used a scoring sheet that indicates a rating scale where 9 to 10 means that the learners had a pre-intermediate reading level (B1), 7 – 8.99 means they had an elementary reading level (A2), 4 – 6.99 means they had a beginner reading level (A1), and less than 3.99 points means they had a minimal reading level (Pre-A1). Concerning the test results before the intervention, all five parts were graded over 30 points and then employed the cross multiply method to get the students' scores over 10 points.

The reading test was divided into five rating scales, with each part having a different score range. The fourth part of the test had an average score of 6.34 and a standard deviation of 1.31, indicating a beginner reading level (A1) on the scoring sheet. Similarly, the fifth part had an average score of 5.97 with a standard deviation of 1.19, indicating a beginner reading level (A1). The first part of the test had an average score of 4.07 with a standard deviation of



1.80, also indicating a beginner reading level (A1). The third part had an average score of 4.00 with a standard deviation of 2.28, equivalent to a beginner reading level (A1). Finally, the second part had an average score of 3.61 with a standard deviation of 1.88, indicating a low elementary reading level (Pre-A1). Therefore, it was concluded that tenth-grade students at “La Inmaculada” high school had some problems in reading skills related to understanding main ideas, words in context, grammatical forms, and locating specific information in texts. Consequently, there was a need to improve learners’ reading abilities.

Phase 5- Act: The CIRC technique was integrated into classroom practices. This process was the implementation of the action research study, and it was carried out for ten sessions. In CIRC sessions, students were given roles including Captain, Investigator, Recorder, and Checker, each with unique responsibilities. The Captain directed the reading and discussion while the Investigator located answers within the text. The Recorder was responsible for documenting the group's responses, and the Checker verified the responses and offered feedback. The CIRC technique was implemented every Monday for ten weeks, with each session lasting 80 minutes and including various activities such as games and group discussions. Student progress was evaluated through activities such as reading comprehension, discussions, and presentations, allowing them to demonstrate their understanding of the material differently.

Phase 6- Observe: In this phase, the teacher collected data regarding what occurred during the implementation of the CIRC technique. During the final week of the intervention,



students took another Cambridge A2 reading exam to see the effects of the CIRC intervention. Furthermore, a written reflection and a questionnaire were applied to gather students' perceptions towards English classes and the use of the CIRC technique.

Phase 7- Reflect: In this final step, the researchers analyzed, interpreted, and reflected on the results of the written reflections, questionnaires, and the diagnosis and summative test to come up with the findings of the study. Thus, the researchers evaluated the results of using the CIRC strategy for developing learners' reading comprehension.

3.6. Data analysis

When conducting qualitative research, data analysis follows a rigorous and deliberate process. According to Fernández and Baptista (2013) and Creswell and Poth (2016), the data must be meticulously prepared and organized, whether textual or visual. This sets the stage for subsequent phases of analysis. The researcher then reduces the data by systematically coding, identifying, and labeling recurring themes, concepts, or elements. These codes build blocks for synthesizing overarching themes and concepts, leading to a deeper understanding of the subject being investigated. After that, the researcher condenses and refines the identified codes to extract the essence of each theme, helping to create a cohesive narrative from the data. This enables the researcher to construct a meaningful representation of their findings, often through figures, tables, or discussions. This transformative journey from raw data to comprehensive insights is a rigorous process, offering a profound exploration of the research subject from a qualitative perspective, as described by Creswell and Poth (2016).



In addition, analyzing data involves preparing and organizing text or images, such as transcripts or photographs, for analysis. The data is then condensed into themes through coding. The researcher ultimately presents the data in figures, tables, or a discussion, as outlined by Creswell and Poth (2016). The coding process consists of two primary stages. In the initial coding stage, the researcher reads the data multiple times, analyzing each story, event, sentence, and word for relevance to their research question. The researcher identifies data segments that could help address their research question through this open coding process. These segments may be words, statements, or interactions that are not overtly related to the research question but could still provide insights. During the second coding phase, the researcher utilizes the prevalent and noteworthy codes obtained from previous rounds to sort through vast data. The aim is to identify any patterns or groupings that may arise from the data, taking into account its contextual origin. These patterns and categories represent interconnected understandings of the study's context and can aid the researcher in addressing their research question.

For the data analysis process, since Smith and Rebolledo (2019) highlight that collecting information from multiple sources provides a more accurate and reliable picture of a situation, the present study used qualitative research method that involved both qualitative and quantitative tools. Thus, a qualitative approach was taken to analyze the students' diagnostic and summative test results, questionnaires, and written reflections.



Before utilizing the CIRC method, students underwent a diagnostic examination to evaluate their reading ability. After implementing the CIRC technique in English classes, a summative assessment was conducted to evaluate how it improved the students' reading competence. An established diagnostic and summative rubric was utilized to evaluate the outcomes of the diagnostic and summative tests. This assessment helped ascertain the students' reading levels before and after the intervention.

The researchers developed a rubric to evaluate the reading comprehension level of the participants by analyzing their results in the diagnostic and summative tests, explicitly focusing on the number of accurate responses. In addition, since both summative and diagnostic tests were graded over thirty points, the cross multiply method was employed to get grades over 10 points. This rubric used different levels of qualification, such as excellent, acceptable, fair, and needs improvement, to determine the learners' reading comprehension abilities, as shown in Table 1.



Table 1

Diagnostic and Summative tests rubric.

CEFR	Qualification	Description
B1 (pre- intermediate)	Excellent (9-10 points)	Students exhibit a high level of proficiency and mastery in the language, displaying an exceptional ability to comprehend straightforward informational texts on their academic pursuits and personal interests.
A2 (elementary)	Acceptable (7-8.99 points)	Users exhibit a commendable understanding and proficiency in the language. They can comprehend concise and easy-to-read passages that contain the most commonly used words.
A1 (beginner)	Fair (4-6.99 points)	Individuals exhibit a certain level of understanding and proficiency in the language, as they can comprehend concise and uncomplicated texts, one sentence at a time, and recognize common terms, names, and fundamental expressions.
Pre-A1 (Foundation)	Needs improvement < 3.99 points	Learners' language proficiency is at a basic level, with limited vocabulary and expressions. They have only achieved around half of the A1 level.

Note. Qualitative rubric to analyze the level of participants' reading comprehension.

Regarding questionnaires, researchers gathered the perceptions of all the tenth-grade students. Then, all students' answers were compared by counting to decide what most



students thought about their English classes before and after the intervention. Numbers and percentages from the questionnaires provided some information but could not fully explain the meaning of the findings. Thus, since quantitative data, like qualitative data, needs interpretation, visual representations were used to help the researchers understand it.

To analyze the students' written reflection, on the other hand, student responses were transcribed, coded, and categorized to understand students' perspectives toward English classes before and after the intervention. The qualitative analysis followed an inductive process, moving from specific analysis to general understanding. The process involved organizing information into codes, themes, and categories, identifying connections, relationships, and patterns, and ultimately describing and explaining the central issue (Fernández and Baptista, 2013; Smith and Rebolledo, 2019). Thus, the researchers systematically arranged the data by categorizing and simplifying the codes. Finally, the obtained information was presented as visually appealing, utilizing charts and graphs for better comprehension and interpretation.

4. DESIGN OF TEACHING PROPOSAL

The objective of the present implementation proposal was to introduce the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) technique to improve tenth-grade learners' English reading comprehension.

When learning English as a foreign language (EFL), one of the most important skills to develop is reading comprehension. This skill allows learners to access information and

knowledge, build their vocabulary and language abilities, transfer what they have learned to other areas, achieve academic success, and continue to learn and grow throughout their lives (Saeedi et al., 2016; Brooks et al., 2021; Ruipérez, 2022). However, learning a new language can be challenging, especially for EFL students. Many students struggle to understand and remember much information presented in class due to limited vocabulary, lack of background knowledge, and ineffective reading strategies (Burgin & Daniel, 2017; Nanda & Azmy, 2020; Hezam et al., 2022). To address these challenges, teachers and students must use effective study strategies that make it easier to process and remember information.

Even though the EFL Ecuadorian curriculum encourages active strategies and cooperative learning activities, it has been observed that Ecuadorian EFL teachers tend to focus on traditional instruction techniques and activities, as noted by Burgin and Daniel (2017) and Alvarez and Ha (2022). This limited use of active and cooperative strategies could be why learners' English reading comprehension skills still need to improve. Therefore, it is important to enhance students' reading skills by implementing cooperative instructional techniques and activities, such as Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC). CIRC seeks to improve students' reading comprehension and writing skills through group work activities, making it an effective and engaging teaching approach for EFL classrooms, as highlighted by Mahdahera and Ridwan (2023) and Nanda (2019). The CIRC strategy combines reading comprehension with collaborative learning, encouraging active participation and interaction among students, leading to a better understanding of the text, as stated by Mulyawati (2021).



During CIRC sessions, students worked in small groups and were given specific roles. These roles included the Captain, Investigator, Recorder, and Checker, each with different responsibilities within the group (Sanita, 2019). The Captain guided the reading and discussion process while the Investigator located answers in the text and the Recorder wrote down the group's responses. The Checker verified the responses and provided feedback. By assigning these roles, students took ownership of their learning, developed critical thinking skills, and engaged in peer-to-peer interactions, encouraging collaboration towards a common goal.

CIRC also effectively promotes language acquisition and enhances reading comprehension skills, fostering a structured and cooperative environment that promotes active engagement and meaningful learning. Therefore, the researchers used the CIRC technique as an intervention in English classes to improve students' reading comprehension skills (see Appendix 7). To enhance EFL learners' reading comprehension at "La Inmaculada" high school, the researchers proposed implementing the CIRC technique in the tenth grade through various reading activities, as explained below.

4.1. Procedure

From March 20th, 2023, to June 5th, 2023, ten sessions of the CIRC implementation were conducted. Due to the limited English instruction time of only three hours per week in Ecuadorian public schools, the researchers chose to apply the technique on Mondays, when learners had two hours of English instruction. Each CIRC implementation lasted 80 minutes,

and the entire process spanned ten weeks. A brief explanation of the ten implementation sessions is provided in the following paragraphs.

The researchers decided to use reading texts with different topics, such as hobbies, technology, and health each week. The selection of reading materials was based on the preferences and interests of the learners. Prior to each session, the researchers provided learners with a choice between two topics and requested that they indicate which one they would like to read about in the following session. Once having the reading topics, the researchers adapted these readings into the CIRC technique. The primary components of the CIRC technique involved introducing new vocabulary, dividing students into small groups, assigning each group member a role (captain, investigator, recorder, checker), distributing a reading text for silent reading, providing a set of comprehension questions for group discussion and answering using their designated roles, asking learners to summarize the text in their own words and with the vocabulary they learned, and selecting one group member to present the summary to the class (see Annex 6).

During the CIRC intervention, the classes were structured to introduce students to various topics, including personal experiences, hobbies, technology, and health. The lessons included new vocabulary related to travel and entertainment, occupations, food, technology, and the use of superlatives to make comparisons. The students were taught about the most popular tourist destinations, hobbies among teens, and websites for young people. They also learned how to use superlatives to compare different types of technology or snacks. Along

with expanding their vocabulary, students were instructed in grammar structures such as the simple past and the first conditional. These structures were utilized to discuss hypothetical situations, discuss past experiences, and plan for the future.

The classes were planned considering various activities designed to enhance student learning. The students worked in groups, played games, and participated in discussions. For example, one group activity involved discussing peoples' abilities, hobbies, leisure activities, and entertainment, while another group discussion required students to describe their past experiences using the simple past tense. Various methods were utilized to evaluate students' progress, such as reading comprehension activities, discussions, and presentations. Students were allowed to showcase their understanding of the material in different ways, such as summarizing the reading texts with their own words and presenting their summaries orally in front of the class.

At the end of the intervention, students possessed the skills necessary to read, understand, and discuss various topics concerning personal experiences, hobbies, technology, and health. They developed their vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension abilities. Additionally, they enhanced their critical thinking, communication, and teamwork skills. Overall, the CIRC lessons facilitated valuable learning experiences for students, as they had the opportunity to expand their linguistic capabilities and learn about topics relevant to their lives.



5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

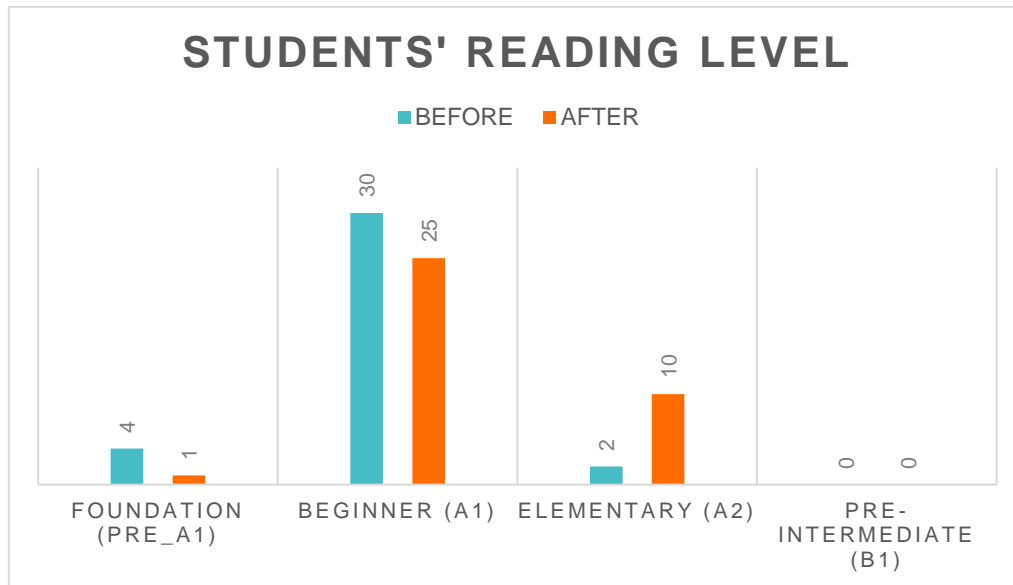
By applying a qualitative research method, the present Exploratory Action Research (EAR) study sought to establish how EFL learners' reading comprehension can be improved by using the Cooperative Integrated Reading and composition (CIRC) technique. The qualitative and quantitative instruments provided information to answer the two following research questions.

5.1. Learners' reading comprehension before and after the CIRC intervention

The first research question sought to determine the differences in learners' reading comprehension skills before and after implementing the CIRC technique. In this regard, the results obtained from the diagnostic and summative tests showed significant results (see Appendix 8 & 9). To analyze students' reading comprehension ability, the teachers took into account the five parts of a KET reading exam (for schools). Utilizing the diagnostic and summative tests rubric, from Table 1, the researchers analyzed the students' reading level before and after the intervention.

Figure 1

Students' reading level before and after the CIRC implementation



Note. Differences in learners' reading comprehension skills before and after implementing the CIRC technique.

Based on the data presented in Figure 1, it can be inferred that most learners had either beginner or fair English reading skills before the intervention. Out of thirty-six students, thirty were classified as beginners, and they were able to understand simple, concise texts phrase by phrase and recognize familiar names, words, and phrases. Only two students got acceptable or elementary reading skills, meaning they could understand short, simple texts with high-frequency vocabulary. Last, four students had minimal reading skills and struggled

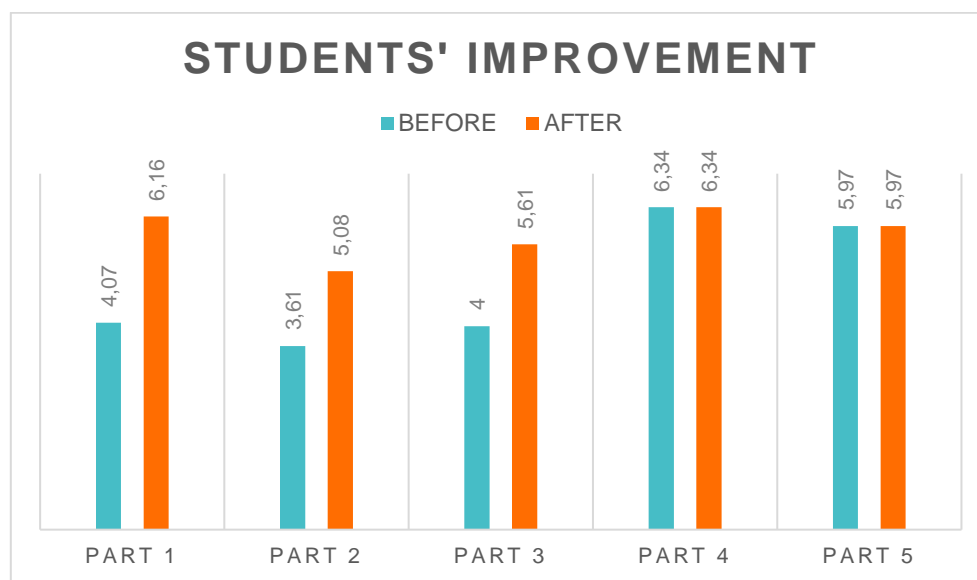
a lot to comprehend essential texts and required further reading skills and assistance in comprehending reading texts.

Conversely, Figure 1 demonstrates an improvement in most learners' English reading comprehension skills after ten weeks of CIRC implementation. Students with acceptable or elementary English reading comprehension levels increased from two to ten. Meanwhile, the number of students with fair or beginner English reading comprehension performance decreased from thirty to twenty-five. Additionally, the number of students with minimal reading comprehension abilities decreased from four to one

After analyzing the data and based on the results after the CIRC implementation, it can be claimed that the CIRC technique effectively improved learners' reading comprehension skills. In this sense, the results show that the number of students who got an acceptable or elementary English reading level (A2) increased, and the number of students with a beginner (A1) and poor (Pre-A1) English reading level decreased. These results are consistent with Hayatina and Fajrina (2018), who claim that since the CIRC technique is based on cooperative learning, this learning model is more effective for enhancing learners' reading comprehension achievement than traditional methods. Furthermore, Anaguano and Zurita (2022) support and explain the previous claim, as they mention that the reading improvement could be related to the fact that cooperative learning mainly helped improve language skills by allowing learners to demonstrate their own knowledge complementing each other.

Figure 2

Students' improvement after the CIRC implementation.



Note. Students' reading comprehension enhancement after the CRIC intervention.

Concerning the students' improvement, Figure 2 displays that before the intervention, most students struggled a lot with locating specific information and understanding detail (Part 2), understanding the main ideas and some details of longer texts (Part 3), as well as understanding various kinds of texts (Part 1). Nevertheless, most students performed well in understanding vocabulary words within a context (Part 4) and understanding and knowing grammatical forms (Part 5). It is worth noticing that before the intervention, the general reading performance of all tenth-grade students was categorized as a fair or beginner (A1)



English level. Learners at this level can demonstrate some knowledge and command of the language; thus, they can only understand concise, simple texts, a single phrase at a time, picking up familiar names, words, and essential phrases.

In contrast, most students enhanced their reading comprehension after the intervention. Specifically, there was notable progress in their ability to comprehend various types of texts (Part 1), grasp main ideas and some details in longer texts (Part 3), and locate and understand specific information within texts (Part 2), as depicted in Figure 2. However, performance in understanding vocabulary words within a given context (Part 4) and knowledge of grammatical forms (Part 5) remained relatively the same, as illustrated in Figure 2. It is important to note that despite these improvements, general tenth-grade learners' reading comprehension performance was still considered to be at a beginner or fair (A1) English level, where they can only comprehend simple texts and phrases.

These previous findings are in line with Hayatina and Fajrina (2018) who mentioned that the student's reading comprehension improvement could occur due to the collaborative and supportive learning environment instituted by the CIRC learning model and the teacher's guidance during the learning process. Regarding the teacher's guidance, both authors mention that since the CIRC learning model emphasizes pair-work, discussion about the story, pronouncing difficult words, finding the word meanings, and making inferences, all these could contribute to the learners' reading comprehension enhancement. This reading comprehension enhancement allows learners to read long paragraphs, organize words, and



understand various vocabulary words in context leading to an enhanced understanding of reading texts.

According to these findings, CIRC is a trustworthy technique that promotes reading comprehension significantly. This statement is supported by Nanda and Azmy (2020), who claim that since CIRC has a strong emphasis on a student-centered approach that encourages students to collaborate and share their ideas, it is effective in improving the teaching and learning process of reading and EFL students' involvement, problem-solving abilities, and reading comprehension skills. In addition, the positive effect of the CIRC technique on tenth-grade learners' reading comprehension skills is aligned with the findings of the study conducted by Umar Al Faruq et al. (2020). These authors state that the correlation between the CIRC strategy and students' reading comprehension is significantly positive. A positive correlation suggests that if the level of the CIRC strategy is high, the level of learners' reading comprehension is also high, and vice versa.

5.2. Learners' perceptions toward English classes before and after the CIRC intervention

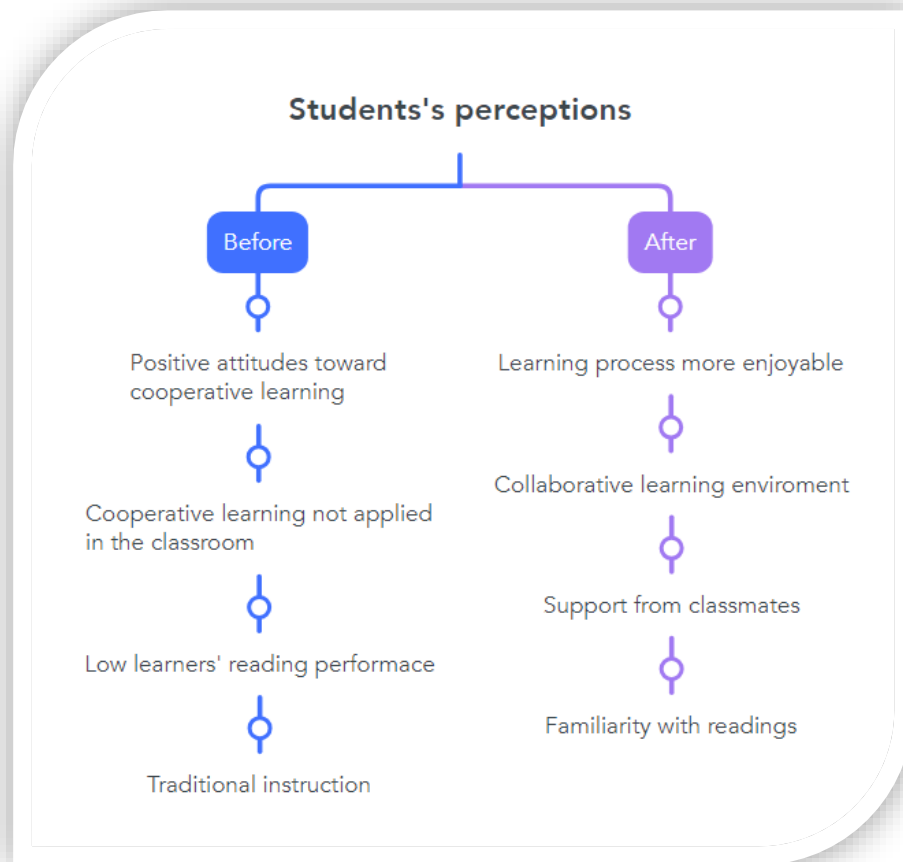
On the other hand, a questionnaire and a written reflection were administered to answer the second research question that sought to analyze learners' perceptions toward English reading classes before and after implementing the CIRC technique. The questionnaire sought to gather learners' perceptions toward cooperative learning and their



reading comprehension abilities, while the main objective of the written reflection was to gather learners' experiences and thoughts toward the English classes.

Figure 3

Learners' perceptions before and after the CIRC intervention



Note. Students' perceptions toward English classes before and after the CIRC implementation.

Figure 3 displays a brief summary of learners' perception before and after the CIRC technique was implemented in tenth-grade. After analyzing the questionnaires and before the implementation, most learners consider that students who work together can achieve more than the ones who work alone. Second, they also consider that cooperative learning can promote class participation and makes the learning experience much easier. Finally, they consider that cooperative learning is not applied in the classroom, and they are unsure about the benefits that cooperative learning can bring to their vocabulary and reading skills, as shown in Figure 3.

Since questionnaires only contain closed-ended questions, the researchers decided to apply a written reflection because it gives learners the opportunity to write freely, in their own words, about their perceptions. Thus, analyzing students' written reflections (qualitative data) basically involved coding learners' responses into keywords or codes and later into categories (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The student's written reflections can be summarized by saying that students expressed a preference for engaging and interactive activities, such as conducting diverse and interesting activities, and making classes more enjoyable and entertaining, as shown in Figure 3. In addition, learners emphasized the importance of actively using English in class and practicing and applying the language in various activities. Group work and collaboration were also highlighted, including learning and working together in groups, participating and supporting classmates, and receiving peer support for comprehension and learning English.

Additionally, the application of learned knowledge was identified as a significant aspect. In this regard, students expressed a desire to use what they had learned in class, apply vocabulary and language skills, and read extensively to develop their vocabulary and language skills. Creating a supportive and interactive learning environment was also emphasized, including encouraging participation in class activities, creating an engaging and supportive learning environment, and fostering support and teamwork among classmates. Finally, students expressed the importance of incorporating entertaining topics and materials to increase their motivation and interest in learning English.

The findings of Mahdahera and Ridwan (2023) support the previous results indicating that EFL students need help understanding English texts due to difficulties identifying the main idea, limited vocabulary, low motivation for reading comprehension, and unengaging teaching methods. However, Sholeh et al. (2019) suggest that EFL teachers can address these challenges by implementing effective reading strategies that promote student motivation, interest, and attention, leading to improved reading comprehension. Within several reading strategies that EFL teachers can use to encourage reading comprehension, the CIRC technique was chosen since this technique involves students working in teams on a variety of cooperative activities, including partner reading, identification of the main story, and summarization of the text, as indicated by Arisman, R. (2019).

After the ten weeks of CIRC implementation, students' perspectives toward English reading class changed significantly. Students enjoyed dynamic and interesting activities,

working in groups, receiving support from classmates, familiarity with readings, and having vocabulary explanations before reading, as shown in Figure 3. Based on feedback from tenth-grade students, engaging and interactive activities and interesting assignments effectively kept them interested and made the learning experience more enjoyable. Moreover, it was pointed out that the opportunity to work in groups and choose their partners fostered collaboration and created a positive learning environment. Some other students highly valued the support received from classmates both in terms of task assistance and explanations of concepts. Likewise, other learners mentioned that they preferred readings that were familiar and connected to their existing knowledge. They found it more manageable to understand and connect with reading materials they already knew about. Finally, students highlighted the importance of vocabulary explanation before reading as it prepared them and facilitated their understanding of the reading texts.

The previous findings are consistent with the results from Mahdahera and Ridwan's (2023) study. They discovered that EFL students who used the CIRC technique for reading comprehension exhibited three types of engagement: behavioral, emotional, and cognitive. Firstly, behavioral engagement is demonstrated by students who participated actively during group reading assignments, communicated politely with their classmates, contributed to class discussions, and followed all teacher instructions. Secondly, emotional engagement is characterized by learners displaying positive emotions such as fun, ease, happiness, and enjoyment when working in groups and completing reading assignments. Lastly, cognitive

engagement is shown by learners who use different ways to complete tasks and achieve the same result.

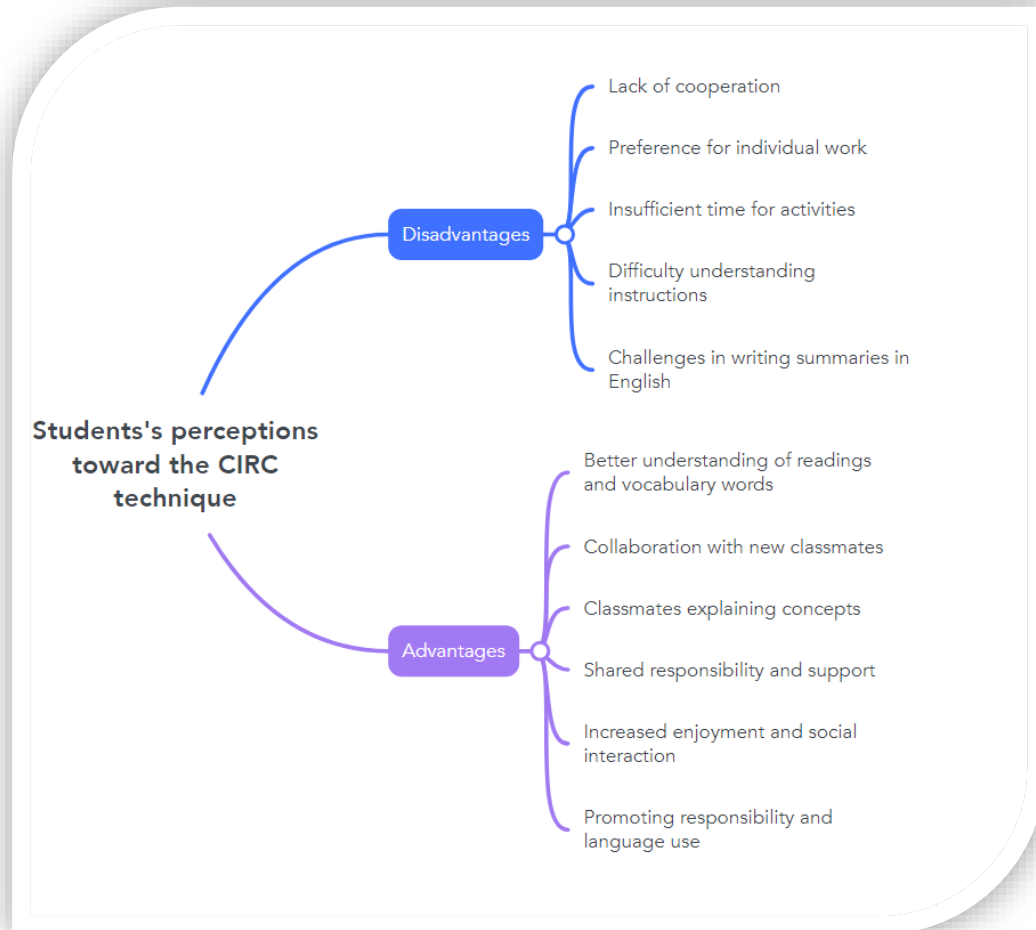
5.3. Learners' perceptions toward the CIRC intervention

It is worth mentioning that after the ten weeks of CIRC implementation, the written reflection had two specific questions that sought to capture learners' perceptions toward the CIRC technique. After analyzing these two questions of the written reflection, students' responses were categorized into several main areas, such as advantages and disadvantages, as seen in Figure 4.



Figure 4

Students' perceptions toward the CIRC technique.



Note. Advantages and disadvantages toward the CIRC technique perceived by the tenth-grade learners.

Regarding the benefits perceived by the tenth-grade learners, some students indicated that the CIRC activities helped them better understand the readings and words used in texts, enhancing their comprehension skills. They also valued the opportunity to collaborate with new classmates and benefit from their knowledge and explanations. Meanwhile, some other students indicated that the shared responsibility within the groups fostered a sense of teamwork and support among students. It was also stated that engaging in group work made classes more enjoyable and allowed for social interaction with peers. Furthermore, some other tenth-grade learners felt that the activities promoted a sense of responsibility towards the tasks and encouraged using English language skills during presentations, as shown in Figure 4.

Based on the previous findings, the CIRC implementation brought some benefits to the tenth-grade learning process, such as enhancing learners' collaboration, comprehension skills, and accountability. This is supported by the research conducted by Rahmasari and Swasti (2022), who stated that using the CIRC method in teaching reading has some advantages, such as making it easier for students to understand the reading material, motivating them to read and learn more, making English classes more enjoyable, and improving students' focus and attention in learning. Regarding the learners' comprehension skills enhancement, Ayu et al. (2017) indicated that the CIRC technique enhances learners' reading comprehension skills by determining the main idea, finding specific information, making inferences, determining references, and understanding vocabulary.

In contrast, concerning the disadvantages perceived by the tenth-grade students, some of them highlighted the importance of addressing cooperation among students, considering individual work preferences, ensuring adequate time allocation for activities, providing clear instructions with examples, and offering support for English writing skills, as shown in Figure 4. In this regard, students' responses were categorized into five main areas. Firstly, some students experienced difficulties with uncooperative classmates who were unwilling to assist with assigned tasks. However, some students preferred individual work and felt more productive in that setting. Moreover, it was mentioned that the time allotted for activities during class was insufficient to complete all tasks. Some students expressed challenges in understanding instructions due to explanations without clear examples. Lastly, writing summaries in English posed difficulties for some students, primarily because they faced challenges understanding the readings.

While the CIRC technique has its benefits, there are also some potential disadvantages to using it in EFL classes. In this regard, some tenth-grade students highlighted weaknesses, such as uncooperative classmates, individual work preferences, time-consuming, limited language proficiency, and challenges understanding teacher instructions. Concerning the latest challenge, Rahmasari and Swasti (2022) indicated that the CIRC method has some drawbacks, including the possibility of students getting confused by the teacher's explanations and instructions. According to Darmayanti (2014), this occurs because the CIRC technique encompasses a variety of activities in the same class, such as partner



reading, summarization, and vocabulary and reading comprehension exercises. In addition, according to Ayu et al. (2017), while the CIRC technique effectively improves students' reading comprehension, its efficiency can be hindered if teachers do not monitor student behavior. This is because not all students contribute equally when working in groups. Some students tend to rely on other students and do not actively participate in group work.

6. CONCLUSIONS

According to the present Exploratory Action Research study, the CIRC technique effectively improves tenth-grade English reading comprehension abilities at “La Inmaculada” high school. Students taught by the CIRC technique showed positive attitudes and higher motivation in their English classes. Diagnostic and summative test results demonstrated a significant effect of the CIRC technique on tenth-grade learners' reading comprehension skills. In this regard, summative test results demonstrated significantly better reading performance in categories such as comprehension of various types of texts, grasping main ideas and details in longer texts, and locating and understanding specific information within texts. In addition, the CIRC activities improve learners' comprehension by enhancing their understanding of texts and vocabulary. The activities also encourage collaboration and teamwork among students, making classes more enjoyable and promoting a sense of responsibility towards tasks.

While the CIRC technique has its advantages, there are potential drawbacks when using it in EFL classes. First, Implementing the CIRC technique requires careful planning



and coordination among students. It may take more time to complete reading and writing tasks in a cooperative setting, which could limit the amount of content that can be covered within a given timeframe. Secondly, students in EFL classes often have different levels of English proficiency, making it challenging for some learners to participate fully in group activities. Third, while the CIRC technique promotes collaboration and peer support, it can limit individual practice opportunities. Some students feel that they may benefit from more individualized practice and feedback to improve their language skills. Lastly, the CIRC technique emphasizes student autonomy and collaboration. While this can be beneficial for fostering independent learning skills, it may also result in less direct control and guidance from the teacher.

Finally, it can be concluded that the CIRC technique is a beneficial and efficient educational method promoting reading comprehension, communication, critical thinking, academic skills, and peer-social connections. Incorporating the CIRC technique in teaching practices can boost collaboration, motivation, and academic performance leading to a more engaging learning experience.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Although the CIRC implementation yielded positive outcomes, it is imperative that future investigations take certain recommendations into consideration when utilizing this technique. First, to improve the accuracy and reliability of results in future studies, it is recommended that the instruments, such as reading passages, questionnaires, written



reflection questions, and summative and diagnostic tests, be piloted with participants before implementation. While most of the instruments used in this study were adapted from existing materials, it would be beneficial to adapt and edit the material to fit the specific context of each study. This would help ensure more reliable results and clarify any unclear statements that students may have.

Second, it is recommended to conduct a second cycle of the Exploratory Action Research study, considering the positive results obtained from the first cycle and considering the pros and cons identified by tenth-grade learners. In this regard, some students reported uncooperative classmates during CIRC activities who relied on smarter students and did not contribute to group work. Other students cited drawbacks such as individual work preferences, time consumption, limited language proficiency, and difficulties in understanding the teacher's instructions.

Finally, the sample size of the present study was smaller than expected, with only 36 students participating instead of the intended 40. This was due to some students dropping out of high school or switching from morning to afternoon sessions. This could have impacted the reliability of the study and increased variability. To improve future studies, it is recommended that researchers aim for a larger sample size to strengthen the results and provide a more accurate estimation of the effect size.

The Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) technique undoubtedly improved tenth-grade students' reading comprehension skills at "La



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Inmaculada” high school. For better accuracy and reliability of the results, future studies should pilot the instruments with participants before implementation, conduct a second cycle of the Exploratory Action Research study considering the pros and cons of CIRC identified by tenth-grade learners, and aim for a larger sample size. By following these recommendations, future studies can further validate the CIRC technique and make it an even more effective tool for educators.

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9. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Journal observation



Daily Basis:

Integrating Axis: Investigación y diseño de estrategias de enseñanza y aprendizaje de inglés con enfoques actuales en la enseñanza comunicativa

Student's name	William Chuquiguanga		
School name			
Class		Entry #	01
Date		Week:	01
Main focus of the lesson	N/A		



	Class/Strategies		Lesson plan		Materials
1	The teacher creates spaces where students ask and answer questions.	X	The teacher prepared a lesson plan for the class.	X	The teacher prepared material related to the topic.
2	The teacher uses dialogues, role plays, describing images, chants, etc.		The lesson plan includes an objective.		The material appeals to the students' needs or learning styles.
3	Use a variety of groupings so that students can interact with different classmates.	X	The teacher included a warm-up activity.		The material includes multimedia resources.
4	X The teacher tries to build rapport with the students.		Curricular adaptations are included in the lesson plan (if needed).		Materials are adapted to cater to special needs students.
5	The teacher promotes student participation through topics of interest.		The teacher paced lesson appropriately	X	Integrates materials (examples, cases, simulations) from "real world".
6	The teacher promotes critical thinking by opening debates, discussions or arguments with the students.	X	The teacher presented topics in logical sequence.	X	Presented material at an appropriate level for students.
7	The teacher actively encouraged student questions.		The teacher related today's lesson to previous/future lessons.		The teacher uses <i>realia</i> , maps, photos, or material that can be freely manipulated.
8	Do activities where students can interact and move around.		Summarized major points of the lesson.		
9			The teacher provides students with feedback.		
10			Active, collaborative, and cooperative learning favored over passive learning.		

Summary Comments

	<i>Describe how all the elements you have checked interacted during the lesson.</i>
Explanation / Description	At the beginning of this practicum, we were introduced to our professional teacher, and she explained to us that there are not enough English teachers in this school. That is why she asked us if we could teach English to some specific courses. In this sense, she explained to us a little bit about what materials (textbooks) was using and how the last English teacher was teaching. Thus, the English teacher has been using the English Modules which are provided by the Ministry of Education. These modules have a well-structured sequence that is why we could say that the teacher presents topics in logical sequence, according to the students' English level, material is prepared according to the main topic as well as every single class the teacher uses a warm-up activity.
Strengths observed	<i>Describe the all the good things/practices you could observe during the class.</i> The very first day we did not attend any English classes. We just received instructions and we were assigned to a specific course. Also, we got in touch with the last English teacher (through WhatsApp) and she told us everything in detail about how and what kinds of materials we must use to teach English to our assigned course.
Suggestions for improvement / Action points	<i>Describe how you think the strategies applied during the class could be improved.</i> After being introduced and getting the instructions by the last English teacher, I realized that there are some strategies that could be improved. For instance, in the English modules there are a great number of reading, writing, and listening activities; however, the communication among students is not fostered. It could be improved just by adding some little or brief activities in the production stage of our lesson plan.



Appendix 2: Student questionnaire before the intervention

Estimados estudiantes:

La información de la siguiente encuesta será utilizada para el estudio titulado "Implementación de la técnica de Lectura y Composición Cooperativa Integrada (CIRC) para mejorar la comprensión lectora de estudiantes de décimo grado" Los datos obtenidos en este instrumento serán tratados con estricta confidencialidad.

Gracias por su participación libre y voluntaria.

NOMBRE: _____

FECHA: _____

1. SURVEY ABOUT COOPERATIVE LEARNING AND READING COMPREHENSION

Instructions: Lea atentamente las siguientes preguntas y coloque una "√" o una "X" en el recuadro que corresponda con las respuestas elegidas.

Pregunta	Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	No seguro	En desacuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo
COOPERATIVE LEARNING					
*Cooperative Learning Esto se puede definir como la colaboración de los estudiantes que trabajan en grupos para lograr un objetivo prescrito.					
1. Considero que el aprendizaje cooperativo se aplica en las clases de inglés.					
2. Creo que el aprendizaje cooperativo facilita la experiencia de aprendizaje.					
3. Considero que el aprendizaje cooperativo potencia la participación en clase.					
4. Creo que el aprendizaje cooperativo mejora las buenas relaciones de trabajo.					
5. Considero que los alumnos que trabajan juntos logran más que cuando trabajan solos.					
6. Creo que mi comprensión lectora y mis habilidades de vocabulario se pueden mejorar a través del aprendizaje cooperativo.					
READING COMPREHENSION					
1. Puedo encontrar el significado de ciertas palabras según el contexto.					
2. Puedo encontrar y comprender información e ideas que se exponen explícitamente en el texto.					
3. Puedo leer entre líneas y hacer inferencias sobre cosas que no se mencionan directamente en el texto.					
4. Puedo usar algunos criterios externos de mi propia experiencia para evaluar la calidad, los valores de la escritura, el razonamiento del autor y las generalizaciones.					



Appendix 3: Student questionnaire after the intervention

Instructions: Read the following questions carefully and place a “v or X” in the box that corresponds with the answers chosen.

Question	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. I think that the CIRC technique has helped to make the learning experience easier.					
2. I consider that class participation has been enhanced after implementing the CIRC technique					
3. I think that using the CIRC technique has helped me enhance good working relationships					
4. I consider that using the CIRC technique has helped me achieve more than the ones who work alone.					
5. I think that my level of reading comprehension has been improved after implementing the CIRC technique.					
6. I consider that using the CIRC technique has helped me understand various kinds of short texts					
7. I consider that using the CIRC technique has helped me locate specific information by reading quickly					
8. I consider that using the CIRC technique has helped me understand details by reading carefully					
9. I consider that using the CIRC technique has helped me understand the main ideas and some details of short texts					
10. I think that I have acquired and developed more vocabulary since the CIRC technique was implemented in classes					
11. I consider that the CIRC technique should be applied/used in classes to improve learners' reading and vocabulary skills					



Appendix 4: Written reflection before the implementation

3. STUDENTS' WRITTEN REFLECTION

Instructions: Lea los siguientes items y responda como corresponde.

- a. ¿Cuáles son las actividades de lectura actuales que utiliza el docente dentro del aula y como usted las describiría?

- b. ¿Cómo describe sus habilidades actuales de lectura y vocabulario en inglés?.

- c. ¿Qué debe ocurrir durante las clases de lectura en inglés para aumentar su participación?

- d. ¿Qué factores/actividades te ayudarían a aprender a leer en inglés de manera eficiente?

- e. ¿Qué opinas sobre trabajar en equipo (APRENDIZAJE COOPERATIVO) durante las clases de lectura en inglés?

- f. ¿Qué te ayudaría a sentirte más comprometido durante las clases de lectura en inglés?



Appendix 5: Written reflection after the implementation

Nombre del Estudiante:
Fecha:

REFLEXION ESCRITA

Instrucciones: Lea las siguientes preguntas y responda como corresponda.

a. ¿Cómo describiría las actividades de lectura actuales que utiliza el docente dentro del aula?

b. ¿Cómo describiría sus habilidades actuales de lectura y vocabulario en inglés?

c. ¿Qué opina sobre trabajar en equipo (APRENDIZAJE COOPERATIVO) durante las clases de inglés?

d. Describa cuales fueron las VENTAJAS de usar la técnica CIRC en las clases de inglés?

e. Describa cuales fueron las DESVENTAJAS de usar la técnica CIRC en las clases de inglés?


f. ¿Qué debe ocurrir durante las clases de inglés para que usted aprenda a leer en inglés de manera eficiente, aumente su participación y se sienta más comprometido?





Appendix 6: Summative and Diagnostic test

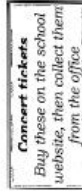
Questions 1 – 6
For each question, choose the correct answer.


Part 1


1  Go upstairs if you want to
 A buy a dress for a party.
 B pay less for something to read.
 C find a game for a teenager.

2  A Gerts has forgotten when the next maths class is.
 B Gerts hopes Fiona will help her find her maths notes.
 C Gerts wants to know what the maths homework is.

3  A Students not going on the trip cannot have a day off school.
 B Students have to decide today if they would like to join the trip.
 C Students going on the trip must come to school first.

4  A Pay for tickets online before picking them up at school.
 B Check the website for information about when tickets will be available.
 C Let the office know soon if you are planning to buy tickets.

5  What should Andy do?
 A invite some friends to play football
 B tell Jake if he can join him later
 C show Tom where Woodside School is


6  A Swimmers at all levels can enter the competition.
 B This competition is for people who can swim over 200 metres.
 C The races in the competition will be 200 metres long.

Turn over ▶




School gardens competition

Amy




Our class has just won a prize for our school garden in a competition – and they're going to make a TV film about it! The judges liked our garden because the flowers are all different colours – and we painted some more on the wall around it. My cousin gave us advice about what to grow – she's learning about gardening at college. We're planning to grow some vegetables next year. I just hope the insects don't eat them all!

Flora



Our teacher heard about the school garden competition on TV and told us about it. We decided to enter and won second prize! There's a high wall in our garden where many red and yellow climbing flowers grow and it looks as pretty as a painting! Our prize is a visit to a special garden where there are lots of butterflies and other insects. My aunt works there and she says it's amazing.

Louisa



The garden our class entered in the competition is very special. The flowers we've grown are all yellow! They look lovely on the video we made of the garden. We also grew bits of carrots and potatoes, and everyone says they taste fantastic. It was an interesting project. Our teacher taught us lots of things about the butterflies in our garden. We also watched a TV programme about them, and did some paintings to put on the classroom wall.

Part 2

Questions 7 – 13
For each question, choose the correct answer.

	Amy	Flora	Louisa
7 Whose class learnt about the garden competition from a TV programme?	A	B	C
8 Whose class grew some vegetables?	A	B	C
9 Whose class won a trip in the school garden competition?	A	B	C
10 Whose class painted flowers on their garden wall?	A	B	C
11 Whose class learnt about the insects in their garden?	A	B	C
12 Whose class got help from someone in a pupil's family?	A	B	C
13 Whose class chose flowers that were the same colour?	A	B	C



Questions 14 – 18
For each question, choose the correct answer.

Part 3

Starting at a new school
By Anna Gray, age 11

I've just finished my first week at a new school and I'd like to tell you about it. Like other children in my county, I went to primary school until I was eleven and then I had to go to a different school for older children. I loved my primary school but I was excited to move to a new school.

It was very strange on our first day. There were some kids from my primary school there, but most of the children in my year group were from different schools. But I soon started talking to the girl who was sitting beside me in maths. She lives near me so we walked home together. We're best friends now.

When I saw our timetable there were lots of subjects, some were quite new to me! Lessons are harder now. They're longer and the subjects are more difficult, but the teachers help us a lot.

At primary school we had all our lessons in one classroom. Now each subject is taught in a different room. It was difficult to find the classrooms at first because the school is so big. But the teachers gave us each a map of the school, so it's getting easier now.

The worst thing is that I have lots more homework to do now. Some of it is fun but I need to get better at remembering when I have to give different pieces of work to the teachers!

14 How did Anna feel about moving to a new school?
A worried about being with lots of older children
B happy about the idea of doing something different
C pleased because she was bored at her primary school

15 Who has become Anna's best friend at her new school?
A someone from her primary school
B someone she knew from her home area
C someone she met in her new class

16 What does Anna say about the timetable at her new school?
A It includes subjects she didn't do at primary school.
B She has shorter lessons than she had at her old school.
C It is quite difficult to understand.

17 Why couldn't Anna find her classrooms?
A She couldn't read a map.
B There was little time between lessons.
C The school building was very large.

18 What does Anna say about the homework she has now?
A She gets more help from some teachers than others.
B She thinks it is the hardest part of school life.
C She remembers everything she's told to do.

6 7 Turn over ▶



Questions 25 – 30 **Part 5**

For each question, write the correct answer. Write **ONE** word for each gap.

Example: 0 for

From: Anita
To: Sasha

Thank you (0) your email. Living in Canada sounds really great! I'm glad that you like (25) new house. What's the weather like? (26) it very cold in Canada? Does it snow every day?

I heard that a (27) of Canadians speak two languages – English and French. Are you having French lessons? Do you watch programmes (28) TV in French too?

How about the students in your new school? Are (29) friendly? And send some photos too – I would like to know more about them.

I've got (30) go now, but I'll write again soon.

Turn over ▶

Questions 19 – 24 **Part 4**

For each question, choose the correct answer.

Wivenhoe hotel

Wivenhoe is a beautiful hotel in the countryside, with many rooms and an excellent restaurant. However, there is a big (19) between Wivenhoe and other hotels. Firstly, Wivenhoe is part of a university, and secondly, its staff are all teenagers.

In fact, Wivenhoe is a hotel school for young people who are (20) to get jobs in the hotel or restaurant (21) The students learn by helping staff in a real hotel, while their teachers (22) them carefully. They do everything, from making beds and cleaning bathrooms to preparing menus and (23) the telephone.

Some British people may think that a hotel run by students is a rather strange idea, but many visitors say that Wivenhoe is the best hotel they have ever (24) at.

19	A change	B variety	C difference
20	A knowing	B hoping	C explaining
21	A business	B work	C career
22	A see	B look	C watch
23	A calling	B answering	C speaking
24	A entered	B stayed	C gone

8



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Appendix 7: Implementation proposal

Link for the implementation proposal: [IMPLEMENTATION PROPOSAL](#)



Appendix 8: Students' reading level before the intervention

Name	Part 1 (6 points)	Part 2 (7 points)	Part 3 (5 points)	Part 4 (6 points)	Part 5 (6 points)	SCORE OVER 30	SCORE OVER 10	CEFR
Student 1	4	4	4	4	5	21	7,00	A2
Student 2	2	5	2	4	3	16	5,33	A1
Student 3	4	2	1	3	3	13	4,33	A1
Student 4	4	2	3	4	3	16	5,33	A1
Student 5	2	2	1	3	4	12	4,00	A1
Student 6	3	1	3	3	3	13	4,33	A1
Student 7	2	3	1	3	3	12	4,00	A1
Student 8	2	3	3	5	4	17	5,67	A1
Student 9	1	3	2	4	4	14	4,67	A1
Student 10	2	2	2	5	4	15	5,00	A1
Student 11	3	3	1	3	4	14	4,67	A1
Student 12	2	2	1	4	3	12	4,00	A1
Student 13	1	1	3	4	4	13	4,33	A1
Student 14	4	3	2	4	4	17	5,67	A1
Student 15	2	3	1	4	3	13	4,33	A1
Student 16	2	5	2	4	3	16	5,33	A1
Student 17	4	2	1	4	2	13	4,33	A1
Student 18	2	3	1	4	3	13	4,33	A1
Student 19	3	0	1	3	3	10	3,33	PRE_A1
Student 20	4	3	1	4	5	17	5,67	A1
Student 21	2	3	3	1	4	13	4,33	A1
Student 22	1	0	1	5	3	10	3,33	PRE_A1
Student 23	1	3	0	3	3	10	3,33	PRE_A1
Student 24	4	2	1	3	4	14	4,67	A1
Student 25	1	2	3	3	3	12	4,00	A1
Student 26	4	4	3	5	4	20	6,67	A1
Student 27	2	5	4	4	5	20	6,67	A1
Student 28	2	4	5	5	4	20	6,67	A1
Student 29	4	4	3	5	6	22	7,33	A2
Student 30	3	3	1	4	3	14	4,67	A1
Student 31	3	1	1	4	4	13	4,33	A1
Student 32	1	2	2	4	4	13	4,33	A1
Student 33	3	1	4	4	3	15	5,00	A1
Student 34	1	0	1	4	2	8	2,67	PRE_A1
Student 35	1	2	2	3	4	12	4,00	A1
Student 36	2	3	2	4	3	14	4,67	A1



Appendix 9: Students' reading level after the intervention

Name	Part 1 (6 points)	Part 2 (7 points)	Part 3 (5 points)	Part 4 (6 points)	Part 5 (6 points)	SCORE OVER 30	SCORE OVER 10	CEFR
Student 1	5	5	4	5	5	24	8,00	A2
Student 2	4	4	3	4	3	18	6,00	A1
Student 3	4	3	3	3	3	16	5,33	A1
Student 4	6	4	4	4	3	21	7,00	A2
Student 5	4	4	3	4	4	19	6,33	A1
Student 6	4	3	3	3	3	16	5,33	A1
Student 7	4	4	3	5	4	20	6,67	A1
Student 8	5	5	4	4	4	22	7,33	A2
Student 9	4	4	3	4	4	19	6,33	A1
Student 10	4	4	3	3	3	17	5,67	A1
Student 11	3	3	2	3	2	13	4,33	A1
Student 12	4	3	3	3	4	17	5,67	A1
Student 13	3	3	2	4	3	15	5,00	A1
Student 14	5	4	4	4	4	21	7,00	A2
Student 15	2	3	2	4	3	14	4,67	A1
Student 16	5	5	4	4	3	21	7,00	A2
Student 17	2	3	2	4	4	15	5,00	A1
Student 18	3	3	2	5	4	17	5,67	A1
Student 19	3	3	2	4	3	15	5,00	A1
Student 20	4	4	3	5	5	21	7,00	A2
Student 21	4	4	3	3	3	17	5,67	A1
Student 22	3	3	2	3	3	14	4,67	A1
Student 23	3	3	3	3	3	15	5,00	A1
Student 24	3	3	1	4	4	15	5,00	A1
Student 25	2	2	2	3	4	13	4,33	A1
Student 26	4	4	4	4	5	21	7,00	A2
Student 27	4	4	3	5	5	21	7,00	A2
Student 28	5	5	3	5	4	22	7,33	A2
Student 29	5	5	4	5	5	24	8,00	A2
Student 30	3	3	2	4	3	15	5,00	A1
Student 31	2	2	2	3	3	12	4,00	A1
Student 32	4	2	2	4	4	16	5,33	A1
Student 33	4	4	4	4	4	20	6,67	A1
Student 34	2	3	2	2	2	11	3,67	PRE_A1
Student 35	4	4	3	3	3	17	5,67	A1
Student 36	3	3	2	3	3	14	4,67	A1



Appendix 10: CIRC implementation



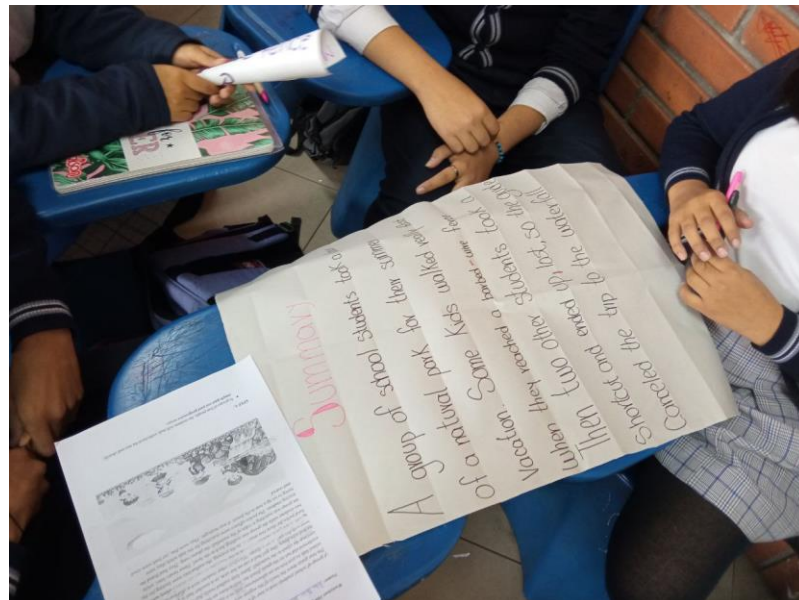
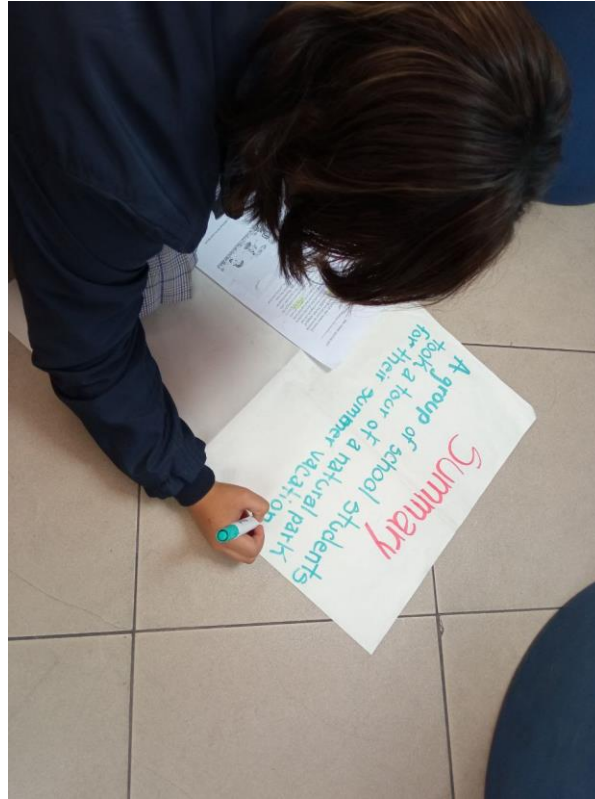


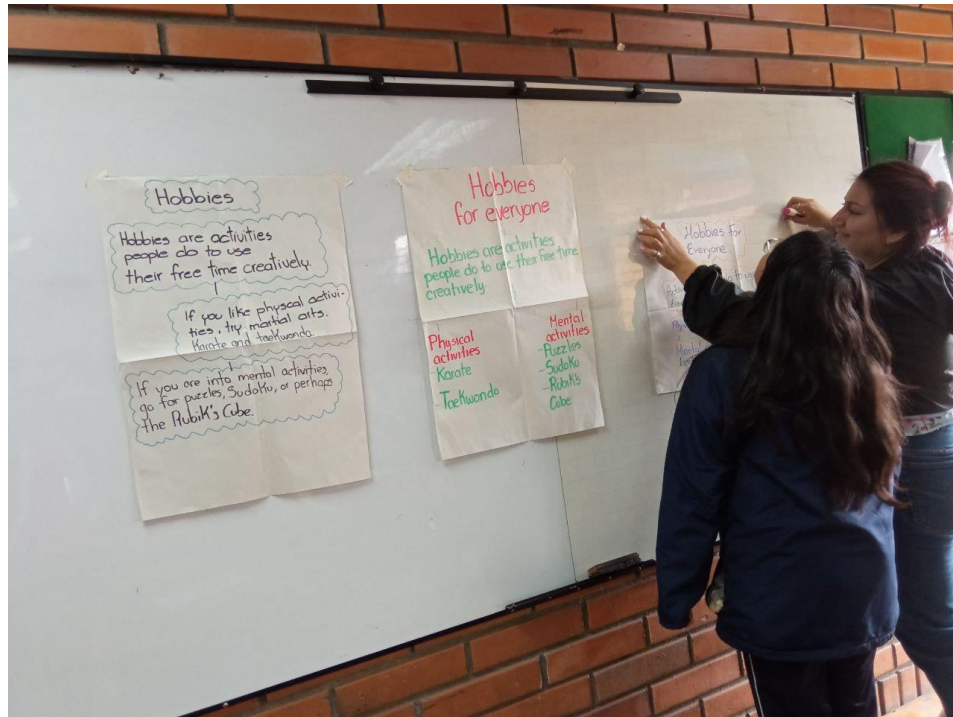
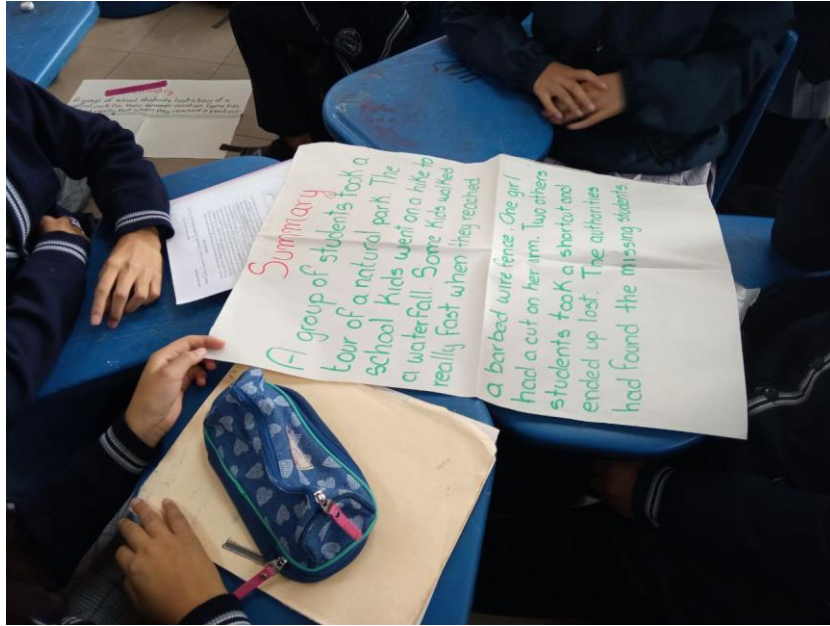
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Implementing Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) technique to improve tenth-grade students' reading comprehension

William Santiago Chuquiguanga Tenesaca
Genesis Milena Bravo Caguana







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DEL TRABAJO DE INTEGRACIÓN CURRICULAR
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Genesis Milena Bravo Caguana
C.I.: 0107949786



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Azogues, 24 de agosto de 2023

William Santiago Chuquiguanga Tenesaca
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Carrera de: Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros

Itinerario Académico en: Pedagogía de la Lengua y Literatura

Yo, Julia Raina Fetima Sevy-Biloon, tutor del Trabajo de Integración Curricular de Carreras de Grado de Modalidad Presencial denominado “IMPLEMENTING COOPERATIVE INTEGRATED READING AND COMPOSITION (CIRC) TECHNIQUE TO IMPROVE TENTH-GRADE STUDENTS’ READING COMPREHENSION” perteneciente a los estudiantes: William Santiago Chuquiguanga Tenesaca con C.I. 0105756001, Genesis Milena Bravo Caguana con C.I. 0107949786 doy fe de haber guiado y aprobado el Trabajo de Integración Curricular. También informo que el trabajo fue revisado con la herramienta de prevención de plagio donde reportó el 8 % de coincidencia en fuentes de internet, apegándose a la normativa académica vigente de la Universidad.

Azogues, 24 de agosto 2023



firmado electrónicamente con:
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