# Applying an Audiobooks Application and the Literature Circle Strategy in an Online Class to Teach Reading: How?

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## Abstract

The corona virus outbreak has encouraged educators to switch from face-to-face learning to online learning. This article discusses how to apply the literature circle strategy and audiobooks application in an online classroom to teach reading. This article outlines procedures for assuring interaction between students, students with learning materials, and students with lecturer in an online classroom. In addition, the advantages of using the literature circle strategy and audiobooks application are also highlighted in this article.

Keywords: Literature Circle Strategy; Audiobooks application; Online learning

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## A. Introduction

Reading comprehension is important not only for EFL students (Durkin, 1993), but also for academic learning in all subject areas (Pritchard et al., 1999), professional performance, and lifelong learning (Renandya, 2002). Additionally, EFL students must master reading comprehension not only in learning English, but also in any content class that requires English reading. As a result, students will profit from their reading in terms of language acquisition and in terms of knowledge gaining as well.

However, national and international surveys reveal that Indonesian students' reading literacy is still low. According to the Progress in International Reading Proficiency Study (PIRLS), Indonesian students' reading literacy ranked 41st out of 45 countries surveyed in 2011 (PIRLS, 2011. Additionally, according to a survey performed by the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), Indonesian students' literacy levels were still below the international average (PISA, 2018).

It is critical to employ effective strategies when teaching reading (Hewit, 2008) in order to promote students' enthusiasm in learning (Wang, 2007) and improve their reading comprehension skills (Long & Richards, 1987). In this article, the literary circle is presented in depth as a teaching strategy that can assist students improve their reading comprehension skills in an online class. When students are reading, the literature circle strategy can help them focus on extracting information so that they can understand what they are reading (Blum, Lipsett, & Yocom, 2002; Avci & Yuksel, 2011).

Furthermore, the use of the literature circle strategy is integrated with an android-based app called Audiobooks. Audiobooks application is simple to employ in the classroom (Melani, 2018), and it can help students improve their reading comprehension skills as well as their enjoyment of reading (Wagar, 2016). Students can read a selection of English-language reading materials that can be downloaded for free through the Audiobooks

app. Interestingly, this application includes audio from a variety of native speaker readings.

Based on the explanation above, this article aims to describe the use of the literature circle strategy and audiobooks application in an online classroom to teach reading.

## B. Discussion

### Teaching Reading

There are two types of emphasis when it comes to teaching reading (Anderson, 2003). The first stage is to provide individuals who are beginning to read for the first time. Second, the course is intended for students who are already proficient readers in their first language. The focus of this article is on the second portion, as students are no longer taught to read in English. Using the literary circle strategy and audiobook application, students are appropriately trained to transfer their existing skills to understand the meaning of reading in English.

Furthermore, since English is considered a foreign language in Indonesia, students seem to have more difficulty understanding English-language texts than Indonesian-language texts. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to the following concepts when learning to read (Nation, 2009): 1) Meaning-focused Input; Reading for specific knowledge, reading for learning purposes, reading for entertainment purposes, reading to relate different information, reading to critique the reading text, and reading to add information while writing are all goals that must be met while learning to read. Furthermore, students are led to read texts based on their proficiency level while simultaneously improving their English proficiency. 2) Meaning-focused Output; Other language skills must be related to reading practices (listening, speaking, and writing). 3) Language-focused Learning; Students must be properly trained in order to successfully improve their reading skills. Learners are also taught how to use specific techniques when

reading. 4) Fluency Development; Students must be assisted in being fluent in reading, comfortable when reading, encouraged to continue reading, and familiar with a variety of reading materials.

In addition, Anderson (2003) proposes the following principles to acknowledge when learning to read: students must be able to apply their prior knowledge to comprehend the text they are reading or will be reading; Students must be taught to expand their vocabulary when reading; Students are taught to comprehend the entire text; Students must be taught to improve their reading speed; Students must be taught how to use a variety of reading techniques, as well as how to apply those strategies automatically.

Based on the principles outlined by Nation and Anderson above, it can be inferred that teaching reading requires a strategy that encompasses all of the aforementioned principles.

**Literature circle strategy**

Smith, an elementary school teacher in Phoenix, Arizona, was the first to introduce the Literature Circle strategy in 1982. Smith exposed fifth-grade students to a variety of reading content, including novels. Smith was taken aback when the kids started showing interest in the different reading materials. Without having Smith's request, the kids sat down to discuss what they had read (Daniels, 1994).

Reading, researching, and sharing different forms of reading materials are all part of the literature circle strategy (Noe & Johnson, 1999). Furthermore, Fall et.al (2000) discovered that group practices had a beneficial impact on students' learning processes and outcomes. Students can channel their ideas from the text they're reading, respond to ideas from friends, select their own reading material, and communicate with friends to understand what they're reading through the literature circle strategy. These activities help students develop critical thinking skills as well. Therefore, the literature circle strategy is appropriate when applied to college students

who have been taught to collaborate and analyses.

Previous research regarding the application of literature circles has been carried out by many researchers. In general, the findings resulting from previous research mutually confirm that the literature circle strategy is very suitable to be applied in student-cantered-based reading learning Daniels (2004), students find it easier to understand text in collaboration (Hill, et al., 1995), this strategy can create students' habit of reading independently, and students are also trained to respond and criticize the text they read (Hill, et al., 2001).

Due to the collaborative design of the literature circle strategy, students are divided into groups of five members, each with a different role. According to Daniels (1994), these roles are described as follows: 1) The Discussion Director makes a list of open-ended questions about the section of the reading that will be discussed. The concerns raised must be able to elicit responses from all members of the group, according to their interpretations, to enliven the initial discussion atmosphere. For example, "What comes to mind when you read the title of this passage?"; 2) The connector describes the connection between the events, messages, or situations in the reading and real-life situations; 3) The vocabulary enricher scans the text for important and interesting words or phrases, notes them, and interprets them; 4) Illustrator creates a drawing or sketch of a situation from the reading and describes it; 5) The summarizer provides a summary of the reading that includes the main idea, major events, major characters, and the story's ending.

**Audiobooks application**

Technology has advanced to the point that readers can now enjoy a book by reading it as well as listening to it. The audiobooks application, which combines reading and listening, is generally regarded as a valuable strategy for improving comprehension (Gilbert, William & Mclaughlin,

1996), as well as a good media and a simpler way to address language learners' difficulties in learning a foreign language (Khairul, et.al, 2016).

Students may get a free download of the Audiobooks application from the Google Play store. Students can read and listen to various genres of reading on their smartphones at any time and from any place. The audiobooks application will be especially useful in learning English, as it will help students expand their vocabulary, gain more knowledge, and learn how to pronounce English words correctly (Serafini, 2004). The audiobooks application's appearance and features are presented in figure 1.
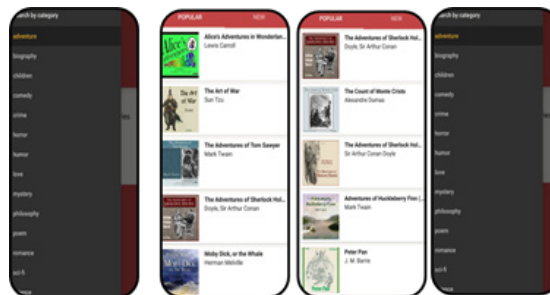


Figure 1. Views and features of the Audiobooks application

Students can select from 14 different types of reading material in the Audiobooks application, based on the needs. Adventure, Biography, Children, Comedy, Crime, Horror, Humour, Love, Mystery, Philosophy, Poem, Romance, Sci-fi, and Science are among the categories available. With a total of over 10,000 book titles, each category contains several books according to the selected category. Students can download the book and its audio after selecting a book. After the books and audios have been successfully downloaded, students can access them at any time and from any place, even when they are not connected to the internet.

Several previous studies have shown that reading and listening to audiobooks has a positive impact. According to Chang (2011), there was an improvement in the amount of reading done by students since the Audiobooks application was introduced, and students also became more involved in reading texts with a higher degree of difficulty. Furthermore,

using audiobooks in the classroom improves students' reading skills while also growing their interest (Whittingham, et at., 2012). Additionally, Wagar (2016) reported that using the audiobooks application improved students' comprehension of the text being read and that they enjoyed reading more. The idea that this study combines the use of audiobooks with the literature circle strategy sets it apart from previous studies. Furthermore, this study could be extended to online learning by allowing students more flexibility in their discussions.

**Applying Literature Circle strategy and Audiobooks application in online learning**

The following are the steps that I used to apply the literature circle strategy and audiobook applications using Google Classroom media in Reading class.

Creating a class in google classroom. I created and arranged a class in Google Classroom as the first step. The class link was once shared to all students, inviting them to join the class.



Figure 2. An example of a Google Classroom class

Grouping students. Due to the collaborative nature of the literature circle strategy, students were divided into groups of five people, each with a different role. The students were then asked to discuss in the google classroom how roles were assigned in their groups.
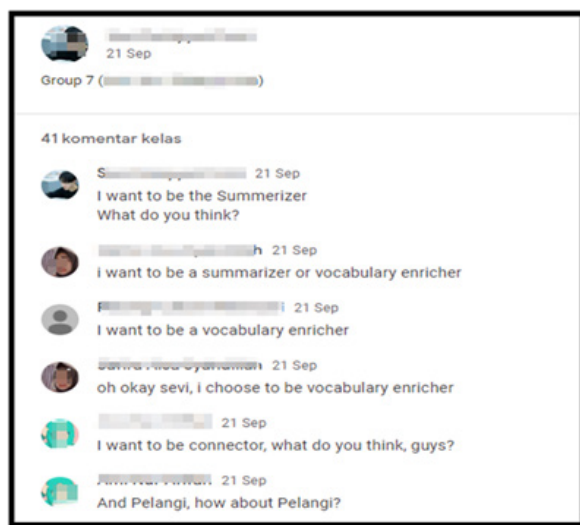
Figure 3. Students discuss determining roles in the group

Determining reading material. Students were directed to download and install the audiobooks application on their phones. Then they discuss about how they would choose what they were going to read. The reading material were adjusted to the interests and English proficiency levels of the students.



Figure 4. Students discuss determining reading material

Discussing the results of readings in each group. After students choose their reading material, I gave them a period of time to read and comprehend it. The students were then asked to decide on a time for group discussion based on their roles. Students began by discussing the role of the discussion director, vocabulary enricher, connector, illustrator, and summarizer in the order listed. The discussion should be presented in the google classroom.
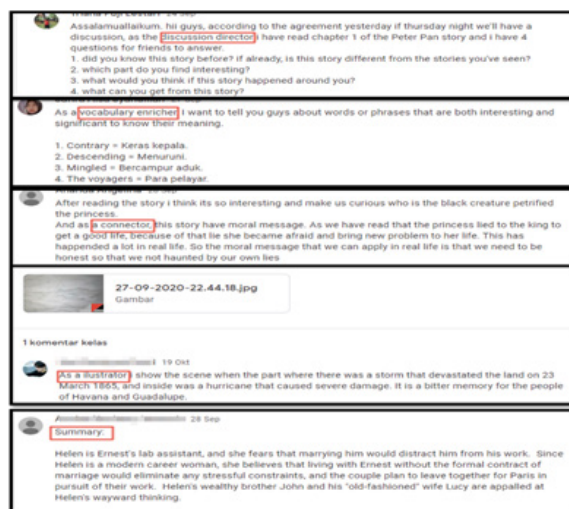


Figure 5. Role-based group discussion

Providing feedback. As students discuss in Google Classroom, I kept track of each student's activity and paid careful attention to any comments they posted. During the discussion I gave advice or feedback. As a result, students continue to feel appreciated and would increase their performance in subsequent meetings. Additionally, I used Google Meet to provide oral feedback to students and to enable them to ask questions, make a comment, or make suggestions about the outcomes of their group discussions. Finally, I either formed a new group for the next meeting or asked students to stay in the same group but try a different role.

As described above, although the materials were delivered online, by applying the literature circle strategy and audiobooks application, teacher

can provide an interaction between students, students with learning material, and students and lecturers. This is very essential because to encourage learning experiences in online learning, interactions must be created and maintained (Siemen & Tittenberger, 2009) and students' interactions contribute positively to their learning (Laurillard, 1993; Moore, 1993; Ramsden, 1992). In this study, students interact in Google Classroom during the learning process by discussing in groups. They had the opportunity to ask questions, offer suggestions, and express their opinions. Additionally, since the learning materials were accessible on their smartphone, students had easy access to them. Furthermore, the I provided feedback on students' presentations and students could ask questions directly to me through a video conference using Google Meet.

Additionally, the online learning activities used in this study were combined asynchronous and synchronous. Text messaging features in Google Meet application enabled students and I to ask and answer questions during a video conference. This method gives students access to immediate assistance when they need it. Students can experience a strong sense of connection to their teachers and peers by participating in synchronous online whole class meetings and well-structured small group meetings (Yamagata, 2014). Furthermore, asynchronously, students should read independently and have discussions with group members before directly presenting the results of their discussion about the text they have read. In this case, without pausing to worry about scheduling problems, a student could follow the learning process at their speed. Students would then take advantage of a variety of delivery formats, regardless of their preferred timetable or learning process.

In the literature circle strategy, students must collaborate in groups of five, each with a different role, such as the discussion director, the connector, the vocabulary enricher, the illustrator, and the summarizer (Daniels, 1994). Since comprehension a text requires collaboration, students can work together to comprehend the text as a whole (Johnson & Johnson,

2008). Furthermore, each of the five roles in the literature circle strategy is considered to help students improve their reading comprehension skills.

The discussion director's list of open-ended questions will assist students in predicting the details they will find in the text. Predicting as a pre-reading activity will trigger students' prior knowledges and allow them to anticipate when they read, and therefore comprehend and enjoy what they read (Smith,1994). Background knowledge is one of the aspects that should be noticed when teaching reading (Ur, 1996; Anderson, 2003). Students can make assumptions and look for details in the text to affirm or deny their predictions. This practice will help students understand the passage even though they do not understand all of the words in the text (Anderson, 2003).

Next, when the connector describes the connection between the events, messages, or situations in the reading and real-life situations, this is in line with what Nation (2009) suggested about meaning focus input. Reading instruction should encourage students to apply what they learn in the text to real-life situations. Additionally, reading is an ability to draw meaning from the printed page and interpret the information appropriately (Grabe & Stoller, 2002).

Additionally, as the vocabulary enricher scans the text for interesting and unique words or phrases, notes them, and interprets them, he also contributes greatly to reading comprehension. Strong vocabulary base and structural awareness are important in comprehending a text (Anderson, 2003; Alyousef, 2006).

Moreover, the illustrator has reached the inferential stage of reading comprehension when he can create a picture or sketch of a situation from the reading. This implies that students can perceive meaning in situations where they must use overt knowledge, intuition, logic, and experience to reach a higher level of thought (Dagostino, et al., 2014). According to Grabe and Stoller (2002), reading is the ability to extract knowledge from a written page and interpret it correctly.

Furthermore, when it comes to the summarizer, students can completely comprehend the text by making a description of the reading that includes the main idea, important events, major characters, and the story's conclusion. Reading comprehension, according to Scott and Ytreberg (2000), is the process of constructing meaning by coordinating some dynamic processes such as word reading, world understanding, and fluency. Furthermore, according to Anderson (2003), measuring students' comprehension is vital when teaching reading. It can be inferred that teaching reading has the aim of assisting students in comprehending or understanding what they have read.

## C. Conclussion

Several conclusions can be drawn based on the discussion in this article. To begin with, combining the literature circle strategy with the use of audiobooks in online learning can help to improve students' reading comprehension achievement. Additionally, the literature circle strategy and audiobooks can help teacher to provide interaction between students and students, students and materials, as well as students and teacher. Lastly, the audiobooks application can enhance students' enjoyment of reading by allowing them to choose any reading materials that interest them.

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