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ENHANCING STUDENTS' CRITICAL READING THROUGH LITERATURE CIRCLES IN CLASSROOM READING ACTIVITIES

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ABSTRACTS	ARTICLE INFO
<p>Reading is an essential academic skill that enables students to comprehend, analyze, and evaluate information critically. However, observations at the English Language Education Program of Mandalika University revealed that many students struggled with identifying main ideas, analyzing arguments, and evaluating evidence in texts. One factor contributing to these difficulties was the monotonous method of teaching, which often led to low motivation. This study aimed to improve students' critical reading skills through the implementation of literature circles at the fourth-semester students in the English Language Education Program at Mandalika University of Education. The research applied classroom action research (CAR) with two cycles consisting of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The instruments used in this research were questionnaires and tests at the end of each cycle. The results indicate that literature circles significantly enhanced students' critical reading skills. The use of structured group roles facilitated deeper engagement with texts, encouraged peer collaboration, and improved students' analytical and evaluative reading abilities.</p>	<p>Article History:</p> <p>Received: October 13th, 2025</p> <p>Revised: October 23th, 2025</p> <p>Published: October 2025</p> <p>Keywords:</p> <p>Critical Reading, Literature Circles, Classroom Action Research</p>

INTRODUCTION

Reading is an essential academic skill that enables students to comprehend, analyze, and evaluate information critically. However, observations at the English Language Education Program of Mandalika University revealed that many students struggled with identifying main ideas, analyzing arguments, and evaluating evidence in texts. One factor contributing to these difficulties was the monotonous method of teaching, which often led to low motivation. To address these challenges, this study implemented literature circles, a collaborative learning strategy where students take specific roles in small groups to discuss and analyze texts. The purpose of this study was to investigate how literature circles can enhance students' critical reading skills.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a Classroom Action Research (CAR), following the model of Kemmis & McTaggart, consisting of two cycles. Each cycle included planning, acting, observing, and reflecting stages. The research was conducted at Mandalika University of Education with 20 fourth-semester students of the English Education Program as participants. Data collection techniques involved questionnaires and tests administered at the end of each cycle. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics with percentage calculations.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The pre-test results showed that students' average score was 47.50, with most students categorized as 'less' in critical reading skills. In the first cycle, the average score increased to 62.50, indicating improvement but still below the target. In the second cycle, after refining the implementation of literature circles, the average score rose to 87.50. More than half of the students achieved an 'excellent' category, showing that literature circles effectively enhanced their critical reading skills. The findings suggest that structured roles in literature circles encouraged active participation, improved comprehension, and developed students' analytical and evaluative reading abilities. These results support previous studies that highlight the effectiveness of collaborative learning strategies in improving reading comprehension and critical literacy.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that *Literature Circles* are an effective strategy to improve students' *Critical Reading* skills. By engaging students in collaborative discussions with structured roles, literature circles enhanced comprehension, analysis, and evaluation of texts. The results demonstrated significant progress from pre-test to post-test across two cycles of classroom action research.

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