



Digital literacy innovation: through the CIRC model assisted by the BukuAku application on fifth grade students' writing skills

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Received 28 February 2026; First Revised 20 March 2026; Accepted 8 April 2026

First Available Online 1 June 2026; Publication Date 1 June 2026

Abstract

This study was motivated by the low writing skills of fifth-grade elementary school students, particularly in composing systematic and creative descriptive texts, which is attributed to the dominance of conventional teaching methods and the limited use of adaptive digital literacy media. The study aims to analyze the effect of the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) learning model assisted by the BukuAku application on students' writing skills. This research employed a quantitative approach using a quasi-experimental method with a Non-equivalent Control Group Design. The sample consisted of 60 students divided into an experimental class (30 students) and a control class (30 students) at SDN Dukuh 01. The instrument used was a descriptive text writing test assessed based on structure, content, object relevance, language use, and paragraph coherence. The results showed that the average posttest score of the experimental group (81.73) was significantly higher than that of the control group (70.93), and the Independent Sample t-test yielded a significance value of 0.001, indicating a statistically significant difference between the two groups. In conclusion, integrating the CIRC model with the BukuAku application is effective in improving students' writing skills and reducing the ability gap within the classroom, although the study was limited by the restricted accessibility of certain book collections in the application.

Keywords: Writing Skills; CIRC Model; BukuAku Application; Descriptive Text; Digital Literacy.

INTRODUCTION

Writing skills are one of the essential components of basic literacy for students (Guo et al., 2025). At the elementary school level, particularly in Grade V, the ideal condition expected is that students are able to express their ideas, thoughts, and feelings in written form as simple narratives with clear structure, nearly correct spelling, and varied vocabulary. The Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes the achievement of Phase C writing elements in Grade V, where students are expected to independently compose imaginative and informative descriptive texts by paying attention to linguistic features (Kementerian Pendidikan, 2024). This view is in line with (Putrayasa et al., 2024), who assert that in the digital era, writing skills remain a foundation for academic and social participation and need to be developed through authentic and meaningful writing experiences.

Based on Government Regulation of the

Republic of Indonesia Number 19 of 2005 concerning National Education Standards Article 21 Paragraph (2), the implementation of the learning process must develop a culture of reading and writing. This means that in the learning process, especially in Indonesian language instruction, students are expected to actively sharpen their abilities through reading and writing activities (Utami, 2023).

In Vygotsky's 1978 social constructivism theory, as cited by (Wibowo et al., 2025), Optimal cognitive development occurs through social interaction and the use of cultural tools, "tools of culture." In the context of writing instruction, the absence of collaborative interaction and relevant learning media as cultural tools will hinder students from reaching the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where they should be able to develop writing skills with assistance from peers or teachers. This situation is exacerbated by the digital divide, where students should ideally be accustomed to

utilizing technological devices for productive and creative purposes (Febriyanto et al., 2023).

Based on observations conducted in November 2025, using non-participant observation and unstructured interview methods at SDN Dukuh 01, it was found that the learning outcomes in the Indonesian language, particularly in the competency of writing descriptive texts, still require optimization to achieve the ideal mastery standard. This condition indicates that the instructional process in the classroom is still dominated by a theoretical approach focusing on mechanistic cognitive reinforcement, thus limiting opportunities for students to creatively experiment in composing written works. On the other hand, the utilization of educational technology in Indonesian language learning has not been fully integrated, and students tend to be unfamiliar with exploring the use of digital books as interactive literacy media.

This phenomenon is consistent with the findings of Mahfudhoh dan Nuroh (2024), who highlight students' difficulties in expressing written ideas due to the limited use of innovative learning media. The study emphasizes that the integration of digital media significantly optimizes writing skills and creates a more creative and conducive learning climate. Through the use of interactive digital instruments, instructional activities become more engaging, transforming previously mechanistic learning processes into more exploratory experiences for students (Syafitri et al., 2021).

As a solution to these problems, digital literacy innovation is required through the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) learning model assisted by the BukuAku application. The CIRC model is a cooperative learning model developed by Slavin and specifically designed to improve students' reading and writing skills (Nasim et al., 2024). In this model, students work in small heterogeneous groups, where each member helps one another understand reading content and compose texts based on shared understanding (Nazla et al., 2024).

The cooperative learning model encourages collaboration and synergy among students, improving efficient learning processes (Ngema & Phala, 2026). Through these collaborative activities, students not only practice critical reading but also learn to develop ideas and express them in written form with guidance and support from group members (Andira et al., 2025).

The BukuAku application is an interactive digital learning medium in the form of audiovisual storybooks, designed to stimulate students' imagination and creativity before writing descriptive texts. Descriptive text is writing intended to broaden readers' insights and experiences by describing or presenting the original characteristics of an object (Asyifa & Tania, 2024). Through features such as images, sound, and engaging visual stories, the application helps students build story context and develop ideas more concretely.

Its implementation integrates the CIRC model and the BukuAku application as an initial medium to stimulate students' interest and imagination regarding the story theme, while writing activities are conducted collaboratively within CIRC groups.

This combination is believed to have advantages that can influence students' writing skills. The CIRC model theoretically creates a supportive learning environment through its cooperative task structure, which enhances reading comprehension as a foundation for writing and provides more structured writing practice (Nurainun & Nasution, 2024). These advantages are further strengthened by the presence of the BukuAku application as a digital support tool. In line with the research of (Mustainah et al., 2021), The implementation of the CIRC model assisted by visual media has a positive effect on improving elementary school students' writing skills.

Based on the above considerations, this study is directed at examining the effect of the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) learning model assisted by the BukuAku application on the descriptive text writing skills of Grade V students at SDN Dukuh 01. The hypothesis

proposed in this study is that there is a positive and significant effect of implementing the CIRC model assisted by the BukuAku application on improving students' descriptive text writing skills.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research method employed in this study was a Quasi-Experimental design in the form of a Nonequivalent Control Group Design. In this design, both the experimental and control groups are not selected randomly (Sugiyono, 2022). Within this framework, research subjects are administered a pretest prior to the treatment and a posttest after the treatment is implemented. The difference between the pretest and posttest results is used to determine whether there is a change or improvement in ability as an effect of the applied treatment. This study was conducted at SDN Dukuh 01 during the second semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. The research design framework is illustrated in the following table.

Table 1
Quasi Experimental desain Nonequivalent Control Group Design

Group	Pretest	Treatment	Posttest
Eksperiment	O ₁	X	O ₂
Control	O ₃		O ₄

In this study, two classes were selected, namely Class VA as the control group and Class VB as the experimental group, each consisting of 30 students. A pretest was administered at the beginning of the session and a posttest at the end of the session. The pretest was given to both the control and experimental groups. The posttest was administered to the experimental group after receiving instruction using the CIRC model assisted by the BukuAku application. Meanwhile, the control group received the posttest after participating in conventional learning as usually implemented in the classroom.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

The data were obtained from the results of the pretest and posttest administered during the study. The pretest was used to obtain an initial overview of students' descriptive text writing skills in both the control and experimental classes. The posttest was then administered to both groups after the experimental class received treatment through the CIRC model assisted by the BukuAku application, as designed and illustrated in Figure 1, while the control class received conventional instruction. The posttest provided final data regarding students' descriptive text writing skills in both classes.



Gambar 1
CIRC model assisted by BukuAku application on writing skills of descriptive text material in experimental class.

The pretest and posttest data results in the control and experimental classes can be seen in the descriptive analysis below:

Table 2
Writing skills pretest results

Pretest	Control group	Experiment Group
Maximum score	88	84
Minimum score	84	40
Mean	67.87	67.33
Median	68	68
Modus	68	80
Standard Deviation	12.583	10.819

Descriptive analysis was conducted to map the initial writing skills of students in composing descriptive texts in the

experimental group before being given the treatment in the form of the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) model, assisted by the BukuAku application. Based on the data obtained, this group recorded a mean score of 67.33, with a median of 68 and a standard deviation of 10.819. The score range in the experimental group extended from a minimum of 40 to a maximum of 84, with 80 being the most frequently occurring score (mode).

Meanwhile, the pretest results of the control group, which used the conventional learning model, showed a relatively similar distribution pattern. This group achieved a mean score of 67.87, with both the median and mode at 68. The scores in the control group ranged from 44 to 88, with a standard deviation of 12.583, indicating the level of data dispersion.

Compared with the control group (67.87), the mean score in the experimental group (67.33) differed very little. This indicates that both groups had relatively equivalent baseline competence in descriptive text writing skills before the intervention was implemented.

Table 3
Writing skills posttest results

Posttest	Control group	Experiment Group
Maximum score	92	100
Minimum score	44	64
Mean	70.93	81.73
Median	72	82
Modus	84	80
Standard Deviation	12.948	9.780

The posttest analysis of the experimental group was conducted to measure the effect of the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) model assisted by the BukuAku application on students' descriptive text writing skills. Based on the research data, the experimental group demonstrated a significant improvement, achieving a mean score of 81.73. The scores in this group ranged from a minimum of 64 to a perfect maximum of 100. The data distribution

showed a median of 82.00 and a mode of 80, with a lower standard deviation of 9.780, indicating a more consistent distribution of scores after the treatment was implemented.

On the other hand, the posttest results of the control group, which received conventional instruction, showed relatively lower performance compared to the experimental group. The mean writing score of this group was 70.93, with scores ranging from a minimum of 44 to a maximum of 92. The median score was 72, while the most frequently occurring score (mode) was 84. With a standard deviation of 12.948, the data indicate that the control group's writing abilities had greater variability compared to the experimental group.

The comparison between the two groups reveals a considerable difference in the effect of the applied treatment. Although both groups experienced improvement from their pretest scores, the experimental group that applied the CIRC model assisted by the BukuAku application significantly outperformed the control group, with a mean score of 81.73 compared to 70.93. The mean difference of 10.80 suggests that the implementation of the CIRC model assisted by the BukuAku application had a more optimal impact on improving Grade V students' descriptive text writing skills than conventional learning methods.

Table 4
Normality test results

Class	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pretest Experiment	0,122	30	0,200*	0,954	30	0,212
Posttest Experiment	0,163	30	0,041	0,942	30	0,103
Pretest Control	0,138	30	0,153	0,953	30	0,207
Posttest Control	0,110	30	0,200*	0,958	30	0,273

After conducting the descriptive analysis, the next step was to perform a normality test. The normality test was carried out to determine whether the research data obtained were normally distributed or not. Based on the table above, all data from both the experimental and control groups, including pretest and posttest results, showed significance values in both the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests greater than 0.05.

Since all significance values exceeded the threshold of 0.05, it can be concluded that the data on students' descriptive text writing skills across all research groups were normally distributed. With the assumption of normality fulfilled, the data met the requirements for further analysis using parametric statistical tests to examine the research hypothesis.

Table 5**Homogeneity test results**

Variables	Levene Statistics	df1	df2	Sig.
Based on Mean	3,332	1	58	0,073
Based on Median	2,908	1	58	0,094
Based on Median and with adjusted df	2,908	1	56.303	0,094
Based on trimmed mean	3,206	1	58	0,079

The homogeneity test was conducted to determine whether the variance of the data from the experimental and control classes was homogeneous. Based on the table above, the significance value "Based on Mean" was 0.073, which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that the variance of the posttest data in the experimental and control classes is homogeneous. Thus, one of the (non-absolute) assumptions required for the Independent Sample t-test has been fulfilled.

Table 6
Independent sample t-test results

Variable	Variable	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Standard Error	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
Writing skills	Experimental	3,332	0,073	3,646	58	0,001	10,800	2,963	4,860	16,740
	Control	—	—	3,646	53,965	0,001	10,800	2,963	4,860	16,740

The final stage involved conducting an independent sample t-test to compare the mean posttest scores between the experimental and control groups in order to determine the effect of the treatment. Based on the table above, the significance value (2-tailed) obtained was 0.001, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a difference in the average descriptive text writing skills between students taught using the CIRC model assisted by the BukuAku application and those taught through conventional learning.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that the use of the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) model assisted by the BukuAku application has proven effective in improving students' writing skills. The series of statistical tests demonstrated that although both groups started with equivalent initial abilities, the experimental group showed a significantly greater improvement than the control group. This conclusion is supported by the fulfillment of all statistical testing criteria, including normal data distribution and homogeneous variance, which strengthens the validity of the findings that the CIRC model assisted by the BukuAku application is a

superior instructional strategy for optimizing students' writing potential.

DISCUSSION

Writing skills are one of the most complex yet essential language competencies for elementary school students. Writing activities provide students with opportunities to express their ideas and creativity, one of which is through composing descriptive texts (AlSaied & Akhtar, 2021). The results of this study demonstrate that the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) model, assisted by the BukuAku application, significantly improves these skills.

This improvement aligns with the view that writing is a skill that must be continuously developed by students (Sari et al., 2021). Through structured practice and the support of appropriate media, students are able to overcome technical barriers in constructing sentences. This is reflected in the experimental group's posttest mean score of 81.73, indicating the positive impact of the treatment provided.

The use of digital applications offers unique opportunities for both personalized and collaborative learning that may be difficult to achieve through other methods (Shabbar et al., 2025). In this context, the BukuAku application functions as a catalyst that bridges the limitations of conventional learning resources. Students not only learn independently but also interact with dynamic digital materials.

Nevertheless, the ability to compose texts is not easily mastered by students. The main challenges often arise because writing requires a sufficient level of understanding of language, sentence structure, and vocabulary (Zahran, 2024). Without a strong foundation in these aspects, students will struggle to transform object descriptions into coherent written texts (Agustin et al., 2024).

Field observations indicate that digital writing skills among elementary-level children can present challenges. Without adequate support from their environment, the learning process involving reading materials may not be optimal (Widiyaningsih et al., 2025). Therefore, the presence of the curated

BukuAku application provides the necessary digital learning environment to support students.

Digital media are widely recognized as important and influential elements in education, social media, and efforts to promote social transformation (Novianti et al., 2025). The integration of BukuAku within the CIRC model reflects an educational transformation at the elementary level, where technology is no longer merely supplementary but becomes an integral part of teachers' pedagogical strategies (Turahmat et al., 2025).

Digital literacy plays a crucial role for elementary school educators in facilitating technology-integrated teaching practices (Novianti et al., 2025). Teachers with strong digital literacy skills are better equipped to guide students in maximizing the features of the BukuAku application, making literacy activities more structured and meaningful.

Functionally, writing serves as a means of expressing ideas in a structured manner so that they can be understood by readers (Purba et al., 2024). Through the CIRC model intervention, students are encouraged to develop logical thinking patterns. Through this model, writers can convey messages effectively, construct convincing arguments, and express ideas systematically so that communication objectives can be achieved (Nasiroh et al., 2023).

The implementation of the CIRC model in this study is in line with Mistendeni, as cited in (Pradita et al., 2025), which consists of five systematically arranged stages to integrate reading and writing activities, as illustrated in Figure 2: 1) The teacher conducts an apperception activity and assesses students' prior knowledge regarding the material to be delivered. 2) Students are divided into heterogeneous groups and provided with reading materials. 3) The teacher assigns guided writing tasks; conceptual understanding may be obtained from the teacher's explanation or other media. 4) Students present their findings and written work. 5) Students are given the opportunity to reflect on and evaluate the outcomes of their learning.



Figure 2
CIRC Model Implementation Steps

The weaknesses of the Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) learning model are as follows: (a) the model is less appropriate for students who have limited reading abilities, (b) if implemented too frequently, students may feel bored, and (c) students may experience fatigue if required to read for extended periods (Muliantara, 2021).

To mitigate these weaknesses, the researcher incorporated the BukuAku application, which offers a more dynamic learning experience. Despite its limitations, CIRC has notable strengths, particularly in providing students with opportunities to work collaboratively, which encourages the development of better writing skills. Through interactive experiences, students can enhance their idea development and creativity (Servinta et al., 2025).

The purpose of writing descriptive texts is to enable readers to seemingly see, feel, and directly experience the object being described (Idamansari et al., 2025). Therefore, the presence of BukuAku can stimulate students' imagination. BukuAku is a digital library (e-library) application developed by PT BukuAku Digital Indonesia with the mission of fostering children's interest in reading from an early age. The application provides thousands of books in Indonesian and English, curated by a team of educators and literary experts, making it a broad and rich source of ideas for students. The steps for using the BukuAku application are illustrated in Figure 3.



Figure 3
Steps to Use BukuAku

Based on the entire series of data analysis and discussion presented above, it can be concluded that the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) model assisted by the BukuAku application has a significant effect on improving Grade V elementary school students' descriptive text writing skills. The experimental group's mean score of 81.73 compared to the control group's 70.93, along with the Independent Sample t-test result showing a significance value of 0.001, provides empirical evidence that this digital innovation intervention surpasses the effectiveness of conventional learning models.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) learning model integrated with the BukuAku application has been proven to have a positive and significant impact on improving Grade V students' descriptive text writing skills. This innovation creates a more dynamic learning atmosphere in which reading and writing activities are no longer perceived as burdens, but rather as an enjoyable process of idea exploration. Through collaboration among students in groups, obstacles in sentence construction can be addressed collectively, resulting in writing that is more systematic and meaningful compared to conventional methods.

This success is supported by the interactive features of the BukuAku application, which act as a catalyst in enriching students' digital literacy. The use of digital media provides strong visual and

textual stimuli, enabling students to more easily identify objects and express them in detailed descriptions. Nevertheless, a limitation of this study lies in the fact that not all books within the BukuAku application are freely accessible, which, in certain situations, restricts the variety of reading references available to students. Despite this limitation, the learning model as a whole successfully enhances students' confidence in writing and reduces the gap in writing abilities within the classroom.

In response to the research problem, it can be concluded that integrating a cooperative learning model with a digital library platform is an effective solution for optimizing students' language skills in elementary schools. This model not only improves students' technical writing abilities in accordance with structure and language conventions but also fosters a literacy culture that is adaptive to technological developments. These findings recommend that educators utilize digital platforms to complement group learning models in order to create learning experiences that are more inclusive, creative, and relevant to the characteristics of Generation Alpha.

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