

IMPROVING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION THROUGH TEAMS-GAMES-TOURNAMENTS (TGT) IN GRADE VIII STUDENTS OF SMP NEGERI 2 MAOSPATI

Nurdani Yulian Ahmad

Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Universitas Doktor Nugroho, Magetan, Indonesia

nurdaniyulianahmad@udn.ac.id¹

Author Coresponding: nurdaniyulianahmad@udn.ac.id

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Abstract

This research aims to improve the reading comprehension of grade VIII students of SMP Negeri 2 Maospati through the application of the Teams-Games-Tournaments (TGT) learning model. The research uses the Classroom Action Research (PTK) method which is carried out in two cycles. The subjects of the study were 29 students of grade VIII. Data was collected through reading comprehension tests, observation of student activities, and documentation, then analyzed descriptively, quantitatively, and qualitatively. The results of the study showed that there was an increase in reading comprehension in each cycle. The initial average score was 63 with 28% completeness, increased to 72 with 56% completeness in the first cycle, and reached 81 with 88% completeness in the second cycle. This increase was influenced by the implementation of TGT measures involving group work, academic games, and tournaments, thereby creating active, fun, and competitive learning in a healthy manner. It can be concluded that the TGT model is effective in improving reading comprehension while encouraging student activity and motivation. Therefore, TGT can be used as an alternative to Indonesian learning strategies, especially to improve reading comprehension skills at the junior high school level.

Keywords: *Reading Comprehension, Teams-Games-Tournaments, Cooperative Learning, Junior High School.*

INTRODUCTION

Education is the main foundation in the formation of quality human resources (Marsini, 2023a). Through education, one gains not only knowledge, but also the skills and attitudes necessary to face life's challenges (Marsini, 2023b). In this context, language has a central role because it is a means of communication, thinking, and understanding information that develops so quickly. Indonesian as a compulsory subject in schools has four main skills that students must master, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These four skills are interrelated and supportive of each other. However, reading skills are often the basis for mastering other language skills, because it is through reading that one gains new information, insights, and knowledge (Susanto, 2016). Reading is not just reciting a text, but is a thought process to understand the meaning contained in the reading. Anderson (Syahid et al., 2022) states that reading is a process to obtain the message that the author wants to convey through the medium of words. Therefore, reading comprehension is the main key to students' success in learning various fields of study. Facts in the field show that the reading comprehension ability of junior high school students is still relatively low. The results of initial observations at SMP Negeri 2 Maospati showed that most of the students in grade VIII had difficulty in understanding the content of the reading, finding the main idea, and drawing conclusions from the text read. This condition certainly hinders the achievement of basic competencies required in the curriculum.

Low reading comprehension can be caused by various factors, including lack of motivation to learn, less varied learning methods, and lack of opportunities for students to be actively involved in the learning process (Susanto, 2014). Teacher-centered learning often makes students passive and less interested in the material being taught (Marsini, 2025) (Samadun et al., 2023). To overcome these problems, learning innovations are needed that are able to increase student participation while motivating them to learn more enthusiastically. One cooperative learning model that can be used is Teams-Games-Tournaments (TGT). The TGT model was introduced by (Slavin,

2009) as a type of cooperative learning that combines teamwork, games, and tournaments to achieve learning goals. Through this model, students are invited to work together in groups, compete healthily, and learn in a fun atmosphere. TGT consists of several main steps, namely the formation of heterogeneous groups, the presentation of materials, academic games, tournaments, and the awarding of awards. This process is believed to increase students' motivation and understanding as they not only learn for themselves, but also for the success of the group (Slavin, 2015). In addition, cooperative learning such as TGT has a theoretical basis in constructivism, which emphasizes that knowledge is built through social interaction and learning experiences. (Cole & SCRIBNER, 1978) explains that interaction with peers can improve cognitive development through the zone of proximal development. In the context of reading learning, TGT is expected to help students understand reading more deeply. Group discussions allow students to exchange information and comprehension strategies, while games and tournaments provide challenges that spur them to read more carefully. The results of previous research showed that the implementation of TGT was able to improve student learning outcomes. Research conducted by (Rusman, 2014) concluded that TGT is effective in improving reading comprehension skills because students are more active and motivated during the learning process.

In addition to the cognitive aspect, TGT also supports the development of students' affective and social aspects. Through teamwork, students learn to appreciate differences, take responsibility for group tasks, and develop sportsmanship in competition. SMP Negeri 2 Maospati as one of the junior high schools has challenges to improve the quality of learning, especially in reading comprehension skills. The application of innovative learning models such as TGT is expected to be a solution to improve the learning outcomes of grade VIII students. The applicable curriculum requires students to be able to understand various types of texts, both narratives, descriptions, expositions, and other texts. This skill requires an effective learning strategy so that students can develop critical and analytical thinking skills through reading activities. Based on the observations of Indonesian teachers, grade VIII students at SMP Negeri 2 Maospati showed low interest in reading. They tend to get bored quickly when faced with long texts, and often have difficulty answering questions that measure comprehension of the content of the reading. By applying the TGT model, it is hoped that reading learning can take place more interesting and challenging. The elements of games and tournaments can motivate students to actively participate, while teamwork helps them support each other in understanding the material. This research is focused on improving reading comprehension of grade VIII students of SMP Negeri 2 Maospati through the application of the Teams-Games-Tournaments (TGT) model. This focus was chosen because there is an urgent need to improve reading skills as the foundation of student learning success. Theoretically, this research is expected to contribute to the development of innovative Indonesian learning strategies. Practically, the results of the research can be a reference for teachers in choosing appropriate learning methods to improve students' reading comprehension.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research method uses a classroom action research (PTK) approach because it aims to improve and improve the quality of learning in the classroom through the application of the Teams-Games-Tournaments (TGT) model (Arikunto, 2021). PTK was chosen because it is in accordance with the characteristics of research that focuses on solving real problems in the classroom and is carried out collaboratively between researchers and Indonesian teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Maospati. The research was carried out at SMP Negeri 2 Maospati, precisely in grade VIII students who were selected because based on the results of initial observations, it showed that reading comprehension ability was still low. The subject of the study is one class with a sufficient number of students to form several heterogeneous groups as per the needs of the TGT model. The research procedure follows the stages of PTK which consists of planning, implementation of actions, observation, and reflection which are carried out in two cycles. In the planning stage, the researcher prepared learning tools that included Learning Implementation Plans (RPP), reading text teaching materials, reading comprehension evaluation instruments, and supporting tools for the implementation of TGT such as game cards and tournament formats.

The implementation of actions is carried out by applying the TGT model to the learning process of reading comprehension. Students are divided into heterogeneous groups based on academic ability, then the teacher presents reading material to be understood. Next, students take part in an academic game designed to test their understanding of the text, then take part in a tournament that brings together members of different groups to obtain individual and group scores. Observation is carried out in conjunction with the implementation of actions to monitor student engagement, classroom atmosphere, and obstacles that arise during learning (Kusumah, 2012). Observation data was obtained through student activity observation sheets and field notes. Reflection is done after each cycle to analyze the results of the action and plan improvements in the next cycle. Research data was collected through reading comprehension tests administered at the end of each cycle, observation of student activities, and

documentation of the learning process. The test was used to determine the improvement of reading comprehension, while observation provided an overview of student engagement during the implementation of TGT. Documentation in the form of photos, recordings, and teacher notes supports the validity of the research results. Data analysis was carried out descriptively, quantitatively, and qualitatively. Quantitative data in the form of test results were analyzed by calculating the average score and percentage of student learning completeness. Qualitative data from observations and field notes are analyzed by reducing data, presenting data, and drawing conclusions to describe changes in student behavior and activity (Retnawati, 2017). The success of the research is determined by two main indicators. First, there is an increase in students' reading comprehension as shown by an increase in average test scores and the percentage of learning completeness from cycle to cycle. Second, there is an increase in student activity in learning which can be seen from their participation during group discussions, games, and tournaments.

RESULTS OF RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

1. Early Conditions of Students' Reading Comprehension

Before the action was taken, the researcher gave an initial test to determine the level of reading comprehension of grade VIII students of SMP Negeri 2 Maospati. The test results show that most students have not reached the Minimum Completeness Criteria (KKM) set by the school, which is 75. The average reading comprehension score of students only reached 63, with a learning completion percentage of 28%.

Table 1. Early Conditions of Students' Reading Comprehension

Category	Number of Students	Percentage
Finished (≥ 75)	8 students	28%
Incomplete (< 75)	21 students	72%
Average	63	-

The data shows the need for action to improve students' reading comprehension through the implementation of more effective learning models, one of which is with Teams-Games-Tournaments (TGT). The results of the initial test showed that the reading comprehension of grade VIII students of SMP Negeri 2 Maospati was still low, with an average score of 63 and learning completeness of only 28%. These conditions support the findings (Susanto, 2016) which emphasizes that reading is not just reciting the text, but requires a deep understanding of the content of the reading. This low yield is also in line with the opinion (Widowati et al., 2013), which states that students' reading ability can be affected by low learning motivation and less varied learning methods. In addition, the results of observations show that learning that was previously more teacher-centered makes students less active. This is in accordance with the theory of constructivism (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978), which emphasizes the importance of social interaction in building understanding. Without the active involvement of students in learning, the process of internalizing the meaning of reading becomes less than optimal.

2. Improvement of Reading Comprehension Through Cycle I

The implementation of actions in cycle I was carried out according to the TGT design. Students are divided into heterogeneous groups and follow the stages of TGT, namely the presentation of materials, academic games, tournaments, and group awards. The results of the reading comprehension test at the end of the first cycle showed an increase in the average score to 72, with a percentage of learning completeness reaching 56%. Despite the improvement, these results have not reached the established success indicators (≥ 75 for the average score and $\geq 80\%$ for learning completion).

Table 2. Reading Comprehension Results in Cycles I and II

Cycle	Grade Point Average	Learning Completeness
Beginning	63	28%
Cycle I	72	56%
Cycle II	81	88%

The application of the Teams-Games-Tournaments (TGT) model in the first cycle began to show a positive impact on improving students' reading comprehension. The average score increased to 72 and learning completeness reached 56%. Although it does not yet meet the success indicators, this improvement suggests that TGT can trigger student engagement in the learning process. These results are in line with the theory (Slavin, 2018), which states that TGT is able to combine group cooperation with healthy competition through games and tournaments, thus encouraging students to participate more. Group discussions help students exchange reading strategies, while academic games create a more enjoyable learning atmosphere. These findings also support research (Rusman, 2014) which concludes that TGT effectively improves reading comprehension skills because it motivates students to learn actively. However, the results of cycle I show that there are still some obstacles, such as students' lack of understanding of the rules of the game and the dominance of certain students in groups. This affects the equitable distribution of participation, which corresponds to the record (Slavin, 2015) that the success of TGT depends on good classroom management and students' understanding of the mechanics of the game.

3. Cycle II Results and Achievement of Success Indicators

Improvements were made in cycle II based on reflections from cycle I, such as clarifying the rules of the game, increasing the variety of questions in tournaments, and providing additional motivation to students. The test results at the end of cycle II showed a significant improvement, with an average score of 81 and a learning completeness of 88%. This improvement shows that the TGT model is effective in improving students' reading comprehension. In addition, the observation of student activities showed an increase in activity and cooperation in the group, as well as higher enthusiasm during games and tournaments. Improvements in cycle II, such as clarifying the rules of the game, varying the questions in the tournament, and providing additional motivation, provide more optimal results. The average score increased to 81 with learning completeness reaching 88%, exceeding the success indicators that had been set. This significant increase shows that TGT not only helps students understand texts better, but also increases activeness and cooperation in the classroom. These findings support the theory (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978), which states that peer-to-peer interaction can accelerate cognitive development through the zone of proximal development. With group discussions, students can help each other understand more complex readings. In addition, the elements of games and tournaments in TGT have been proven to increase students' intrinsic motivation, according to the view (Slavin, 2009) that group rewards can encourage students to work harder for mutual success. The results of this study also strengthen the view of (Kurniawan et al., 2023) That reading is the process of acquiring a message through words, where understanding will be more effective if it is supported by an active and fun learning strategy.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research that has been carried out through two cycles of action, it can be concluded that the application of the Teams-Games-Tournaments (TGT) learning model can improve the reading comprehension of grade VIII students of SMP Negeri 2 Maospati. Initial conditions show that students' reading comprehension skills are still low, with an average score of 63 and learning completeness only reaching 28%. This shows that previous learning has not provided optimal results in helping students understand the content of reading in depth. The implementation of TGT in the first cycle brings positive changes to the learning process. Students began to show more active involvement in group discussions, even though reading comprehension results only reached an average of 72 with 56% learning completeness. This increase shows that the elements of group cooperation and academic games in TGT are able to motivate students to participate more. However, the

implementation of the first cycle still faces obstacles, such as a lack of understanding of the rules of the game and equal participation between group members. Improvements made in cycle II, such as clarifying the game mechanics, varying tournament questions, and providing additional motivation, succeeded in significantly improving learning outcomes. The average reading comprehension score reached 81 with 88% learning completeness, exceeding the established success indicators. In addition, students' activeness and enthusiasm in learning also increased, showing that TGT is not only effective in improving cognitive aspects, but also encourages the development of students' social and affective aspects. Overall, this study supports Slavin's (2005) theory that TGT can combine group work and healthy competition to improve learning outcomes, as well as reinforces Vygotsky's (1978) view of the importance of social interaction in building understanding. Thus, the TGT model can be an alternative to Indonesian learning strategies, especially to improve reading comprehension skills at the junior high school level.

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