

## **Improving Reading Skill Through Cooperative Learning Method: Student Teams-Achievement Divisions (Stad) And Team Games Tournament (Tgt)**

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**Abstract:** This study aims to find out whether Students Team-Achievement Division (STAD) and Team Games Tournament (TGT) improve the students' reading skill and to identify the challenges of the implementation of STAD and TGT in teaching reading. The data of the research are collected through observation, interview, documents and test. The data were analyzed through descriptive analysis which consists of assembling the data, coding the data, comparing the data, building interpretation, and reporting the outcomes for the qualitative data and descriptive statistics for the quantitative data. The result findings shows that cooperative learning, especially STAD and TGT, are able to improve the students' reading skill to find main idea, literal and implied meaning of word, specific information about the text, identify inference, and identify reference. Four challenges in implementating this research are high-achiever students' domination, preparing different teaching style in every meeting, the way to keep student concentration, and time management.

**Keywords:** *reading, cooperative learning, STAD, TGT*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Reading is an essential factor in the learning process. Carrel (1996) states that for many students, reading is the most important of four skills, which are listening, reading, speaking, writing. According to Seeravallo (2010), reading is process of thinking and understanding the text to obtain the meaning behind the text. In addition, National Accessible Reading Assessment Projects (2006) also defines reading as a complex process of understanding text, developing, interpreting, and using meaning as appropriate to type of text, purpose and the situation. Furthermore, Shah (2010) also adds that reading is a complex process of receiving information through the eyes, discriminating letter shapes, associating the

letter with language, and associating the text with meaning that involves several factor, element, and skill. Moreover Varaprasad (2006) states that reading is a constructive process to build the readers representation by selecting, connecting and organizing ideas.

Reading extensively enable students to have information of the text or writer's opinion, they also enable to explore all aspect of knowledge, studying specific subject, or learning how to do something. As Hood in Tindale (2003: 12) states that "the ability to read well in English will influence learning potential in all other areas in which the student engages, not just in learning language", then, I conclude that reading is an active and complex process that involves

several factors, elements and skills such as understanding written text, developing and interpreting meaning, and using meaning according to the purpose and the situation by selecting, connecting and organizing ideas.

In this research, the reading problem indicators are identified through pretest, interview, and observation. Through the observation, I found that the students' reading skill is low which is indicated as follows: (1) When the teacher asked the student about the main idea of the paragraph, the students thought that main idea is located in the first paragraph or the end of the paragraph. They could not differentiate main idea from supporting details; (2) They were busy looking for dictionary to find the meaning of unfamiliar word they encountered, they could not make use of context clues to find guess meaning of words; (3) The students did not know how to find implicit information in the text. To answer the question they made random guess or cheated from their friends' works; (4) When the teacher asked the students about the reference of certain pronoun, they did not know how to find reference and the students asked their friends to answer of the question; and (5) The students needed long time to answer questions. The students also gave the wrong answers to the questions.

Based on the interview, it was found that the students encountered difficulties in reading skill especially in finding literal and implied meaning, identifying inference and identifying reference. The teacher teaching strategies also made students difficult to understand the lesson. Then, the pretest was held in order to reveal the detailed problems of students' reading skill. From the pretest result, it was found that the mean of the reading skill score in the pretest was 43.77 whereas the minimum score of English is 70.00.

The observation, interview and the pre-test showed that the students' low reading skill is caused by some factors. The students had difficulties to find: main idea, references, inference and specific information about the text because they do not know the strategies. Moreover, the students found it quite hard to understand the text because they did not know the meaning of the words, in other words they lack of vocabulary. In a nutshell the roots of the problems are the students' lack of reading experience and reading strategies.

To overcome the problem above, I bring forward the cooperative learning as a method in teaching students' reading strategies and in enhancing students' reading experience. According to Balkcom (1992) cooperative learning method is a teaching strategy in which small teams, each with students of different levels of ability, use a variety of learning activities to improve their understanding of a subject. Each member of the team is responsible not only for learning what is taught but also for helping teammates learn. Similarly, Mandal (2009) says that cooperative learning is teaching strategy which the students work in small teams, each teams composed of different ability level students, using a variety of learning activity to improve their understanding of a subject. In line with Mandal, Johnson & Johnson (1998) also defines cooperative learning as grouping students together to accomplish shared learning goals. In cooperative learning, students work in small group of three or four to get the most out of their own and each other's learning. They encourage and support each other to learn and responsible for their own as well as their teammates' learning.

Cooperative learning which involves the learner in heterogeneous class has some

benefit. Cooperative learning is useful for increasing achievement, encouraging student involvement, and enhancing motivation for learning (Polloway et al in Cohen, 2004). Moreover, Mandal (2009: 98) stated that cooperative learning develops higher level thinking skills, provides to build students skill and practice in and out the classroom activities, creates an environment for active, involved and exploratory learning, and improves the performance of the weaker students when grouped with higher achieving students. Moreover, cooperative learning also addresses learning style differences among students.

Cooperative learning has so many various model, such as Students team Achievement Division (STAD), Jigsaw, Think Pair Share, Teams Games Tournaments (TGT), and Numbered Head Together. In this research, I used Students Team Achievement Division (STAD) and Team based Tournament (TGT) in my attempt to improve the quality of students' reading skills. Slavin in Van Wyk (2012) states that STAD is one of the simplest, effective forms of cooperative learning techniques. In STAD, students are assigned to four or five members in every team. The team consists of high, average and low achiever students. They came from different racial or ethnic background (Balfakih, 2003). In addition, Moryadee in Wichadee (2003) says that the students who studied through STAD have a higher self-ability and English learning achievement than those students who studied through the conventional method. Before the implementation of STAD, I prepared four steps mentioned by Slavin (1995), they are: material, assigning students to team, determining initial base score, and team building.

The other model of cooperative learning is TGT. Van Wyk (2011) explains

that Team Game Tournament (TGT) is identical to STAD except in its use of academic game instead of quizzes, in which students play academic games with members of other teams to contribute points to their team scores. DeVries (1976) describes TGT into 3 elements: 1) Teams, 2) Games, 3) Tournament. Furthermore, De Vries in Van Wyk (2011: 186) also states that "TGT is the most appropriate for teaching objectives with single right answers, such as mathematical computations and applications, language usage and mechanics, geography and map skills, and science concepts".

Moreover, Slavin in Syahrir (2011) also finds that TGT increased students' basic skills, achievement, positive interactions, and acceptance of their classmates and self-esteem. They provide an opportunity for team mates to help one another and avoid one problem of individual games which is that high achiever students might consistently win, all of the students have the same chance to success because they are put on mixed ability teams. So in this research, TGT is employed for teaching English because TGT can increase students' basic skills, achievement, positive interactions, and acceptance of their classmates and self-esteem. TGT also prevent high achiever students' domination.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

The method used in this research is classroom action research. There are some models of action research, the model used in this study is the model developed by Kemmis and Mc Taggart in Burns (1999). There are four steps in action research namely: plan, action, observation and reflection. These four steps are included in procedures of action research. The

procedures of action research in this research.

The first procedure is *identifying the problem*. Identifying the problem is the way to know the students' and the teacher's problem, I collected the data in three ways: those are observation, interview and test. By doing this, I could decide what kind of solution would be appropriate to overcome the problem.

The second procedure is *implementing action research*. Burns (1999) mentions 4 steps in implementing the research. The first step is planning. In this step, I chose a certain teaching technique, STAD and TGT, make lesson plan about certain topic, worksheet, posttest material, observer paper, and interesting strategies to teach the class. The second step is action, in this step I act to implement the plan. This is where I conduct the technique in the class based on the lesson plan. The next step is observing. In this step, I observed the teaching and learning process to know the students' attitude toward English lesson. This is to gain evidence whether implementing cooperative learning, STAD and TGT, can improve the students reading skill. And the last step is reflection, in this step I analyze the teaching and learning process.

The last procedure is *doing evaluation*. In this stage, I evaluate the data which I get from the observation, interview, field notes, diary, and test, and put judgments to reflection. In order to make sure whether or not there is an improvement of the students' reading skill, I give the students tests.

The techniques used for collecting data in this research are observation which is combined with interview, field notes, diaries and tests. Then, the research result which was gathered from several sources of the data such as field notes, diary, observation report, interview report, photographs and

lesson plans are analyzed in five stages that are promoted by Burn (1999), they are : assembling the data, coding the data, comparing the data, building interpretation, reporting the outcomes. Meanwhile, in analyzing the test scores of the written test, a statistical technique is used to find and compared the mean score of the students score. The comparison is to know whether there is any improvement on the students' reading skill.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The research was conducted at class 8E of one state junior high school in Sidorejo. The problems are about the students' low reading skill. I chose cooperative learning, STAD and TGT, to solve it. The research was conducted in one cycle because the school only allowed me to conduct the research in one month because the school will held semester examination. The cycle consisted of five meeting for delivering the material, one meeting for pretest, one meeting for posttest and one meeting for team recognition. There were eight meeting in that cycle. Each meeting took 80 minutes. In all meeting, recount text used as the teaching material.

The research was initialized by observing the situation and condition of the setting before any action was implemented. It was purposed to collect the first data of teaching learning process. The pre-research activity was completely done after the initial data had been collected by observation, interview and pretest. Soon after the initial data had been interpreted, a teaching plan was developed based on it.

Based on the observation, interview, and pretest, I found that the students' reading skill is low. The students had difficulties in finding main idea, literal and

implied meaning of word, identifying inference and reference, and finding specific information about the text. Moreover, in teaching and learning process the students were passive and did not pay attention to the lesson. So, I chose STAD and TGT to

improve it. Referring to the result of the pretest and the posttest, the students' mean score improved 62.3%. After the research, the mean score of the students reading posttest was 71.05. It was higher than the mean score of the pretest (43.77).

Table 1. The improvement of students' achievement

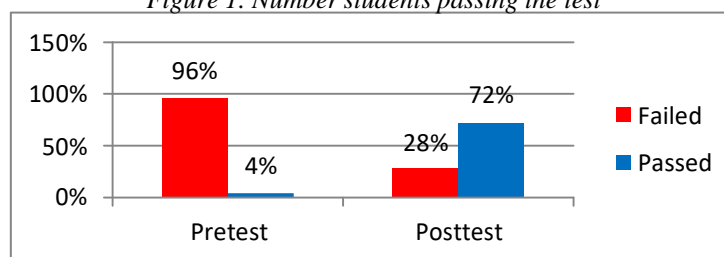
Aspects	M	Mn	I	R	S	Total	Improvement
Pretest	36.36	24.95	43.64	48.3	64.36	43.77	
Posttest	65.9	61.9	68.9	72.2	83.3	71.01	62.3%

M: Main idea    Mn: Meaning    I: Inference    R: Reference    S: Specific information

Table 1 show that the students had a good achievement at the end of the research. Though, there were 3 indicators (finding main idea, finding literal and implied meaning, and identifying inference) that did not significantly improve. Moreover, STAD and TGT also improve the

number of the students who passed the test. Before the action, the student who passed the test was only one student of 22 students in 8E or about 4%. After the action, the quantity of the students who passed the test was improved. In the post test, there were 16 students who passed the test or about 72%.

Figure 1. Number students passing the test



When STAD and TGT were implemented in this research, it seemed that the students more enthusiastic and participated well. The students did not talk to each other outside the topic and the noise that disturbed the class reduced. The students also enjoyed working together as a group. It encouraged students to be responsible to their teammates' learning; there was interaction between the members of the group. In the teaching and learning process, they paid attention to other students and the teacher. Moreover, STAD and TGT make the teacher monitored the students easily because the students work in group. The improvements are presented in Table 2.

However, I found 4 problems during the research. First, the high achiever students were dominating the group. The team task was often only done by high achiever students because they were more capable of directing their own learning and in taking decision. In this research, almost every team had the most dominate member who worked on team. Second, I had to prepare different seating arrangement, material, and teaching style in every meeting so the students do not bored. Third, it was difficult to keep students concentration, attention, and participation in a long period of time, it is also difficult to control the

students' behavior effectively. The last, this research was consuming a lot of time, especially class presentation and team study stage. As stated by Arends (1997) that

cooperative learning lesson take more time than other instructional models because it is depends on small group interaction.

*Table 2. Summary of the research*

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Before research</b>	<b>After research</b>
a. Students Reading skill	The students had difficulty in finding main idea, literal and implied meaning of word, identifying inference and reference, and finding specific information about the text.	Students could identified main idea by skimming, found the meaning by guessing strategies, analyzed inference using skimming, identified pronoun on the text into correct reference, easily found specific information by scanning strategies
b. Students' test score	The mean score (43.77) was under the passing grade (70.00). The students who passed the grade were only 4%	The mean score was increased up to 71.05 at the end of the cycle. The number of students who passed the grade was 72%
c. Classroom situation	The students were only waiting for each other to answer the question or they would wait for the teacher to answer, also they are shamed to answer a question. In the class, they were noisy. They also were busy with their own business that had no related to the lesson, such as busy to talk to each other.	Students were active; dared to ask when having difficulty. They gave more participation to their group and to the teaching and learning process. Students paid more attention to the teaching learning process. The noisy situation was reducing. Students also only talk each other to discuss the material.

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The finding of the research question is focused of the research. The research questions are: (1) whether Students Team-Achievement Division (STAD) and Team Games Tournament (TGT) improve the students' reading skill and (2) to identify the challenges of the implementation of STAD and TGT in teaching reading skill.

The implementation of teaching reading skill by using cooperative learning especially using STAD and TGT is improve students' reading skill. The students' skill to find main idea, literal and implied meaning of word, identify inference and reference, and find specific information about the text improve. The students also enjoyed working together as a group, they are interest on game and discussion which motivated them to learn. From this research, it could be seen

that the student's achievement improves. It could be shown from the scores of the tests done by the students where the mean score of pretest is 43.77 and the mean score of posttest is 71.05. STAD and TGT also made the students more motivated, enthusiast and actively participated in the class.

However, there are 4 challenges of implementation of STAD and TGT in teaching reading. Referring to the research finding, there was domination of high achiever students in the group because they feel that they are more capable of directing their own learning and in taking decision. The preparation of different seating arrangement, material, and teaching style in every meeting is also the challenge of this research. Next, it was difficult to keep students concentration, attention, and participation in a long time, it is also

difficult to control the students' behavior effectively. This method also consuming a lot of time. Though, these problems can be resolve by designed appropriate lesson plan, material, worksheet, and everything related to the action based on the curriculum that attract students and require every member's participation. Time management is also the important point. Class presentation and team study stage spent much more time in this research. Class presentation is important stage because in this stage the students build their understanding.

Based on the conclusion of the research, there is improvement of students' reading skill. It implies that teaching reading by using cooperative learning, especially STAD and TGT, is strongly suggested. Cooperative learning, especially STAD and TGT can improve the students' reading skill. It offers way to organize group work to enhance learning and increase academic achievement. Yet, to support the teaching learning process teacher should provide to design appropriate lesson plan, material and teaching learning activities that require every member's participation. It is also important to pay attention to seating arrangement, classroom management and time allotment. The result of the research showed that using cooperative learning, especially STAD and TGT, improves students' reading skill. Having concluded the result of the research, I would like to propose some suggestions of English teacher, the institution of education, and also for the other researcher.

For the English Teacher. The teachers should choose and apply a proper strategy to make teaching learning process interesting and enjoyable and improve their creativity in managing the class. When applying STAD and TGT to teach reading, the teachers should guide the students to do the

process well. During team study stage, the teacher should monitor and guide the student. The teacher also must follow the suggested steps in STAD and TGT to give optimal result.

For the students. Since the technique needs the students' teamwork, the students should be able to help each other, build good communication with other, keep togetherness among the team members, and avoid non-academic activities during the lesson to create conducive class situation. The students also have to brave to ask or consult to the teacher or other friends when having difficulties.

For the school. The school should encourage the teachers to use the various techniques in the teaching learning process based on the basic competence stated in the national curriculum in order to improve the quality of their teaching and students' achievement including in teaching reading.

For Other Researchers. This research discusses the implementation teaching reading skill by using cooperative learning, especially STAD and TGT to junior high school students. It is hoped that the finding of this study could be used as the additional reference in the future research on similar problems.

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