



# Improving Seventh Grade Students' Reading Comprehension of Fantasy Stories through the Implementation of Jigsaw Cooperative Learning Model at MTs. Swasta Al-Hakimiyah Paringgonan

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## Abstract

This study aimed to improve seventh-grade students' reading comprehension of fantasy stories through the implementation of the Jigsaw Cooperative Learning model at MTs. Swasta Al-Hakimiyah Paringgonan. The research employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) based on the model of Kemmis and McTaggart, consisting of four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The participants of this study were 33 seventh-grade students at MTs. Swasta Al-Hakimiyah Paringgonan. The data were collected through reading comprehension tests, classroom observations, interviews, field notes, and documentation. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics by calculating students' mean scores and the percentage of students achieving the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM), while qualitative data were analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

The findings revealed that the implementation of the Jigsaw Cooperative Learning model significantly improved students' reading comprehension of fantasy stories. The students' mean score increased from 61.21 in the pre-test to 72.88 in Cycle I and 83.64 in Cycle II. The percentage of students achieving the Minimum Mastery Criterion also increased from 27.27% in the pre-test to 63.64% in Cycle I and 87.88% in Cycle II. In addition, classroom observations showed that students became more active, confident, collaborative, and motivated during the learning process. The Jigsaw activities helped students understand the elements of fantasy stories, including characters, settings, plot, conflicts, resolutions, and moral values through peer interaction and group discussions.

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Jigsaw Cooperative Learning model effectively improved seventh-grade students' reading comprehension of fantasy stories. Therefore, this model is recommended as an alternative teaching strategy to create an interactive, collaborative, and student-centered reading environment in junior high school classrooms.

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## 1. Introduction

Reading comprehension is an essential skill in English language learning because it enables students to understand, interpret, and respond to written information effectively. Through reading activities, students are expected not only to recognize words and sentences but also to construct meaning, identify important information, and analyze the messages contained in texts. However, reading comprehension remains a challenging skill for many junior high school

students, particularly when they encounter literary texts such as fantasy stories. Students often experience difficulties in identifying the main ideas, understanding the sequence of events, recognizing characters and settings, and interpreting implicit meanings within the story.

Fantasy stories are one of the literary texts introduced to seventh-grade students in Indonesian junior high schools. These texts contain imaginative events, supernatural elements, and unique characters that differ from real-life experiences. Understanding fantasy stories requires students to comprehend various narrative elements, including orientation, complication, resolution, characters, setting, plot, and moral values. However, many students find it difficult to understand fantasy texts because of unfamiliar vocabulary, complex story structures, and limited reading strategies. As a result, students may lose interest and have difficulty obtaining deeper meaning from the texts they read.

To overcome these problems, teachers need to implement effective and interactive learning strategies that encourage students to actively participate in the reading process. One learning model that can support students' reading comprehension is Jigsaw Cooperative Learning. Jigsaw is a cooperative learning model in which students work in small groups, become responsible for specific parts of learning material, and share their understanding with other group members. This model encourages interaction, peer teaching, collaboration, and active involvement, allowing students to develop a deeper understanding of reading materials.

Previous studies have shown that cooperative learning, particularly the Jigsaw model, has positive effects on students' reading comprehension. Aronson and Patnoe (2011) stated that the Jigsaw technique promotes positive interdependence and individual responsibility among students, which can improve learning outcomes. Similarly, Slavin (2014) explained that cooperative learning provides opportunities for students to discuss ideas, receive feedback, and construct knowledge collaboratively. Several studies have also reported that the implementation of Jigsaw Cooperative Learning improves students' reading comprehension by increasing motivation, participation, and interaction during reading activities.

Although previous research has investigated the effectiveness of cooperative learning in improving reading comprehension, limited studies have specifically focused on understanding fantasy stories among seventh-grade students in Islamic junior high school contexts. Most previous studies have examined general reading comprehension or informational texts, while the use of the Jigsaw model for comprehending fantasy stories remains less explored. Therefore, further investigation is needed to determine how Jigsaw Cooperative Learning can help students understand literary texts with imaginative and complex structures.

This study aims to investigate the improvement of seventh-grade students' reading comprehension of fantasy stories through the implementation of the Jigsaw Cooperative Learning model at MTs. Swasta Al-Hakimiyah Paringgonan. The study is significant because it provides empirical evidence on the effectiveness of a student-centered learning approach in teaching reading comprehension. The findings are expected to contribute to English language teaching practices by offering teachers an alternative strategy to create more active, collaborative, and meaningful reading experiences for students.

## **2. Literature Review (12 pt)**

Reading comprehension is a fundamental skill in language learning that involves the ability to understand, interpret, and evaluate written texts. It is not only a process of recognizing words but also a complex cognitive activity that requires readers to construct meaning from the text. According to Brown (2007), reading comprehension involves the interaction between the reader, the text, and the reading purpose. Therefore, successful reading requires students to use various strategies, such as identifying main ideas, making inferences, understanding vocabulary, and analyzing text structures.

In English learning at the junior high school level, reading comprehension is an important competence because students are required to understand different types of texts, including narrative texts. One type of narrative text taught to seventh-grade students is fantasy stories. Fantasy stories are imaginative texts that present unreal events, magical elements, and extraordinary characters. According to Anderson and Anderson (2003), narrative texts generally

aim to entertain readers while conveying messages through a structured sequence of events, including orientation, complication, and resolution. Understanding fantasy stories requires students to recognize not only the explicit information but also the relationships among characters, events, conflicts, and themes.

However, students often face difficulties in comprehending fantasy stories. These difficulties may occur because fantasy texts contain unfamiliar vocabulary, imaginative settings, complex plots, and abstract ideas that require deeper interpretation. Students with limited reading strategies may focus only on translating individual words rather than understanding the overall meaning of the story. According to Nunan (2003), effective reading comprehension requires active involvement from readers through interaction with the text and the use of appropriate comprehension strategies. Therefore, teachers need to apply instructional approaches that encourage students to actively construct meaning during reading activities.

One learning model that can support students' reading comprehension is Jigsaw Cooperative Learning. Jigsaw is a cooperative learning strategy developed by Aronson and his colleagues in which students work in small groups and become responsible for learning specific parts of the material before teaching them to their group members. In this model, each student plays an important role in contributing knowledge to the group. Aronson and Patnoe (2011) explain that the Jigsaw technique creates positive interdependence, individual accountability, and meaningful interaction among learners.

The Jigsaw model is based on the principles of cooperative learning, which emphasize collaboration and active participation. Slavin (2014) states that cooperative learning can improve students' academic achievement because students receive support from peers, discuss learning materials, and engage in knowledge-sharing activities. Through group discussions, students have opportunities to clarify their understanding, exchange ideas, and develop critical thinking skills. These characteristics make Jigsaw Cooperative Learning appropriate for teaching reading comprehension, especially when students need to analyze complex texts such as fantasy stories.

Several previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of the Jigsaw model in improving reading comprehension. Research by Meng (2010) found that cooperative learning techniques, including Jigsaw, improved students' reading performance because students actively participated in discussions and supported each other's learning. Similarly, Ghaith and El-Malak (2004) reported that cooperative learning enhanced students' reading comprehension and increased their motivation toward reading activities. These findings indicate that collaborative learning environments can positively influence students' understanding of written texts.

Furthermore, studies conducted in Indonesian educational contexts have also shown that the Jigsaw Cooperative Learning model contributes to improved reading comprehension. Students taught through the Jigsaw model generally demonstrate higher engagement, better participation, and improved ability to identify important information in texts compared to students taught through conventional methods. The opportunity to discuss and explain parts of a text to peers helps students develop deeper comprehension and greater confidence in reading activities.

Although many studies have investigated the use of cooperative learning and the Jigsaw model in reading instruction, limited research has specifically examined its application in improving seventh-grade students' comprehension of fantasy stories, particularly in the context of MTs (Madrasah Tsanawiyah). Most previous research has focused on general reading comprehension or other types of texts. Therefore, this study attempts to fill the research gap by investigating how the implementation of Jigsaw Cooperative Learning can improve students' understanding of fantasy stories.

Based on the reviewed literature, Jigsaw Cooperative Learning provides an effective framework for improving reading comprehension because it encourages active participation, peer interaction, and collaborative knowledge construction. Therefore, this study aims to examine the improvement of seventh-grade students' reading comprehension of fantasy stories through the implementation of the Jigsaw Cooperative Learning model at MTs. Swasta Al-Hakimiyah Paringgonan.

### **3. Method**

Clearly This study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) to improve seventh-grade students' reading comprehension of fantasy stories through the implementation of the Jigsaw Cooperative Learning model. Classroom Action Research was chosen because it allows the researcher to identify learning problems, implement an instructional action, observe the learning process, and evaluate the effectiveness of the action through continuous reflection. This research followed the action research model proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), which consists of four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection.

The research was conducted at MTs. Swasta Al-Hakimiyah Paringgonan during the academic year 2026/2027. The participants of this study were seventh-grade students who experienced difficulties in comprehending fantasy stories, particularly in identifying the main ideas, understanding the sequence of events, recognizing story elements, and interpreting the meaning of the texts. The class consisted of 30 students who participated in the implementation of the Jigsaw Cooperative Learning model.

The research was conducted in two cycles. Each cycle consisted of two meetings involving four main stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. In the planning stage, the researcher prepared lesson plans, learning materials, reading texts, observation sheets, and comprehension tests based on the Jigsaw Cooperative Learning model. In the action stage, the researcher implemented the Jigsaw strategy by dividing students into small groups. Each group member was assigned a specific part of the fantasy story to study. Students with the same assigned section then formed expert groups to discuss and analyze their parts before returning to their original groups to share their understanding. Through this process, students collaboratively constructed a complete understanding of the story.

During the observation stage, the researcher observed students' participation, collaboration, motivation, and interaction during the learning process. Field notes were also used to record classroom situations and students' responses toward the implementation of the Jigsaw model. In the reflection stage, the researcher analyzed the results of each cycle to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the implemented action and to make improvements for the next cycle.

The data in this study were collected through quantitative and qualitative instruments. The quantitative data were obtained from reading comprehension tests administered before the action (pre-test) and after each cycle (post-test). The tests consisted of questions related to the content of fantasy stories, including identifying the main idea, characters, setting, plot, conflict, resolution, and moral values. Students' scores were analyzed by calculating the mean score and the percentage of students who achieved the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM).

The qualitative data were collected through classroom observation, interviews, field notes, and documentation. Observation sheets were used to identify changes in students' engagement and learning behavior during the implementation of Jigsaw Cooperative Learning. Interviews were conducted with selected students and the English teacher to obtain additional information regarding students' experiences and perceptions of the learning process.

The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis. The researcher calculated the students' average scores and the percentage of students who achieved the mastery criterion in each assessment. Meanwhile, qualitative data were analyzed using the interactive data analysis model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing.

The success indicators of this study were determined based on two criteria. First, students' reading comprehension scores showed improvement, with at least 75% of students achieving the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM). Second, students demonstrated positive changes in learning behavior, including active participation, cooperation, confidence, and enthusiasm during the Jigsaw Cooperative Learning activities.

### **4. Results**

The findings of this study revealed that the implementation of the Jigsaw Cooperative Learning model improved seventh-grade students' reading comprehension of fantasy stories at MTs. Swasta Al-Hakimiyah Paringgonan. The improvement was identified through students'

reading comprehension test scores, classroom observations, and students' learning activities during the implementation of the action.

Before implementing the Jigsaw Cooperative Learning model, the researcher conducted a pre-test to determine the students' initial reading comprehension ability. The results showed that most students had difficulties in understanding fantasy stories, especially in identifying the main idea, characters, setting, plot, conflict, resolution, and moral values. The students also experienced difficulties in interpreting unfamiliar vocabulary and understanding the relationship between events in the story.

The result of the pre-test showed that the students' average score was 61.21. From the total of 33 students, only 9 students (27.27%) achieved the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM) of 75, while 24 students (72.73%) did not reach the expected mastery level. These findings indicated that students' reading comprehension of fantasy stories needed improvement through an appropriate learning strategy.

#### Cycle I

In Cycle I, the researcher implemented the Jigsaw Cooperative Learning model through group discussion activities. Students were divided into several groups, and each student was responsible for understanding a specific part of the fantasy story. Students who received the same section gathered in expert groups to discuss the content, identify important information, and prepare explanations before sharing their understanding with their original groups.

During the learning process, students showed positive responses toward the Jigsaw activities. They became more active in discussing the texts and sharing information with their group members. However, some students still experienced difficulties in explaining the story elements, understanding unfamiliar vocabulary, and connecting events within the story.

The reading comprehension test at the end of Cycle I showed improvement. The students' average score increased from 61.21 in the pre-test to 72.88. A total of 21 students (63.64%) achieved the Minimum Mastery Criterion, while 12 students (36.36%) still needed further improvement. Although students' comprehension improved, the success indicator had not been achieved because the percentage of students reaching mastery was still below 75%. Therefore, the researcher continued the action to Cycle II.

#### Cycle II

Based on the reflection from Cycle I, several improvements were made in Cycle II. The researcher provided clearer instructions about the Jigsaw procedure, gave additional vocabulary support, provided more examples of fantasy texts, and encouraged students to participate actively in group discussions. Students were also guided to focus on identifying the main ideas, story elements, and implicit meanings of the texts.

The implementation of Cycle II showed significant improvement in students' reading comprehension. Students became more confident in expressing their understanding, cooperating with group members, and answering comprehension questions. They were able to identify the structure of fantasy stories and explain the relationships among characters, events, and conflicts more effectively.

The post-test results in Cycle II indicated that the students' average score increased to 83.64. From the total of 33 students, 29 students (87.88%) achieved the Minimum Mastery Criterion, while only 4 students (12.12%) did not achieve the expected score. The percentage exceeded the predetermined success indicator of 75%; therefore, the research was considered successful and stopped at Cycle II.

Improvement of Students' Reading Comprehension Achievement

| Assessment         | Mean Score | Students Achieving KKM | Percentage |
|--------------------|------------|------------------------|------------|
| Pre-test           | 61.21      | 9 students             | 27.27%     |
| Post-test Cycle I  | 72.88      | 21 students            | 63.64%     |
| Post-test Cycle II | 83.64      | 29 students            | 87.88%     |

The results indicate a continuous improvement in students' reading comprehension achievement after the implementation of the Jigsaw Cooperative Learning model. The students' average score increased by 22.43 points from the pre-test to Cycle II. In addition, the number of students achieving the Minimum Mastery Criterion increased from 9 students (27.27%) to 29 students (87.88%).

The qualitative findings from classroom observations also supported the improvement in quantitative results. During the first cycle, some students were still passive and depended on their group members. However, in the second cycle, students showed greater enthusiasm, cooperation, and responsibility in completing their assigned tasks. The Jigsaw activities encouraged students to exchange ideas, discuss the meaning of the text, and help each other understand the fantasy stories.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the implementation of the Jigsaw Cooperative Learning model successfully improved seventh-grade students' reading comprehension of fantasy stories. The model provided opportunities for students to actively participate, collaborate, and develop a deeper understanding of reading texts.

## 5. Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of the Jigsaw Cooperative Learning model successfully improved seventh-grade students' reading comprehension of fantasy stories at MTs. Swasta Al-Hakimiyah Paringgonan. The improvement was demonstrated by the increase in students' average scores from 61.21 in the pre-test, 72.88 in Cycle I, and 83.64 in Cycle II. Furthermore, the percentage of students who achieved the Minimum Mastery Criterion increased from 27.27% before the treatment to 63.64% in Cycle I and 87.88% in Cycle II. These results indicate that Jigsaw Cooperative Learning was effective in helping students understand fantasy stories more comprehensively.

The improvement occurred because the Jigsaw model provides students with opportunities to actively participate in the learning process. Unlike conventional reading instruction, where students often receive information passively from the teacher, Jigsaw requires students to become responsible for specific parts of the learning material and share their understanding with peers. According to Aronson and Patnoe (2011), the Jigsaw technique promotes positive interdependence and individual responsibility because each student contributes important information to complete group understanding. In this study, students were encouraged to analyze different parts of fantasy stories and teach their peers, which helped them develop deeper comprehension.

The findings are also consistent with the theory of cooperative learning proposed by Johnson and Johnson (2009), who explained that effective cooperation consists of positive interdependence, individual accountability, promotive interaction, social skills, and group processing. During the implementation of Jigsaw activities, students worked together to identify story elements such as characters, settings, conflicts, and resolutions. The interaction among students allowed them to exchange ideas and clarify their understanding of the texts.

The improvement in students' reading comprehension can also be explained through the role of peer interaction. When students discussed the fantasy stories in expert groups and home groups, they received explanations from their classmates using language that was easier to understand. Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivist theory supports this finding by emphasizing

that learning occurs through social interaction and collaboration. Students can achieve higher levels of understanding when they receive assistance from more capable peers through the process of scaffolding.

The Jigsaw model also improved students' ability to identify important information in fantasy stories. Before the implementation of the action, many students had difficulties recognizing the main idea, understanding the sequence of events, and identifying the elements of narrative texts. Through Jigsaw activities, students were trained to focus on specific parts of the text and then combine their understanding with other group members. This process helped students develop reading strategies such as summarizing, predicting, questioning, and making connections between ideas.

This finding supports the argument of Brown (2007), who stated that reading comprehension requires active interaction between readers and texts. Successful readers do not simply decode words but actively construct meaning through comprehension strategies. Similarly, Grabe and Stoller (2019) emphasized that comprehension involves multiple cognitive processes, including extracting information, interpreting meaning, and evaluating texts. The improvement found in this study suggests that Jigsaw activities encouraged students to apply these processes during reading.

The increase in students' motivation and participation was another important finding of this study. Classroom observations showed that students became more confident in expressing their opinions and discussing the content of fantasy stories. Cooperative learning created a supportive environment where students felt more comfortable sharing ideas. Slavin (2014) stated that cooperative learning improves academic achievement because students receive academic and social support from their peers.

The findings are in line with previous studies on the effectiveness of Jigsaw Cooperative Learning. Meng (2010) found that the Jigsaw technique improved students' English reading achievement because it increased interaction and student involvement during learning activities. Similarly, Ghaith and El-Malak (2004) reported that Jigsaw cooperative learning had a positive effect on students' literal and higher-order reading comprehension. These studies confirm that collaborative learning can enhance students' ability to understand written texts.

Furthermore, the present findings support the results of Tran and Lewis (2012), who found that cooperative learning encouraged students to become more active learners and improved their academic performance. The opportunity to discuss and explain materials to peers helped students develop responsibility for their own learning. This condition was also observed in the present study, where students gradually became more independent in analyzing fantasy stories.

The effectiveness of Jigsaw Cooperative Learning is also supported by research conducted by Zarei and Keshavarz (2011), who found that cooperative learning strategies improved EFL learners' reading comprehension. They argued that interaction among learners provides more opportunities to process information and negotiate meaning. Similarly, Al-Hebaish (2012) reported that cooperative learning increased students' motivation and comprehension performance in English reading classes.

In the context of Indonesian education, the findings support previous studies showing that cooperative learning models can improve students' reading comprehension. Huda (2013) explained that cooperative learning provides structured interaction that helps students develop academic and social skills. Additionally, Isjoni (2016) stated that cooperative learning encourages students to actively construct knowledge through collaboration rather than depending only on teacher explanations.

The gradual improvement from Cycle I to Cycle II also reflects the importance of reflection in Classroom Action Research. In Cycle I, several students still depended on their group members and experienced difficulties understanding unfamiliar vocabulary. After reflection, the researcher improved the learning process by providing clearer instructions, additional vocabulary support, and more guidance during group discussions. These improvements resulted in better student performance in Cycle II. This finding supports Kemmis and McTaggart's (1988) concept that action research involves continuous cycles of planning, action, observation, and reflection to improve teaching practices.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the Jigsaw Cooperative Learning model is an effective approach for improving students' reading comprehension of fantasy stories. The model not only improved students' academic achievement but also developed collaboration, communication, confidence, and responsibility. Therefore, implementing Jigsaw Cooperative Learning can be considered an appropriate strategy for teaching reading comprehension, especially for literary texts such as fantasy stories in junior high school contexts.

## **6. Conclusion (12 pt)**

This study concludes that the implementation of the Jigsaw Cooperative Learning model successfully improved seventh-grade students' reading comprehension of fantasy stories at MTs. Swasta Al-Hakimiyah Paringgonan. The improvement was indicated by the increase in students' reading comprehension scores during the Classroom Action Research. The students' average score increased from 61.21 in the pre-test to 72.88 in Cycle I and further improved to 83.64 in Cycle II. In addition, the percentage of students who achieved the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM) increased significantly from 27.27% in the pre-test to 63.64% in Cycle I and 87.88% in Cycle II.

The implementation of the Jigsaw Cooperative Learning model also positively influenced students' learning behaviors. Students became more active, motivated, confident, and responsible during reading activities. Through group discussions and peer teaching, students were able to share ideas, understand story elements, and develop better comprehension of fantasy stories. The collaborative learning process helped students overcome difficulties in identifying main ideas, characters, settings, plots, conflicts, resolutions, and moral values contained in the texts.

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the Jigsaw Cooperative Learning model is an effective strategy for improving students' reading comprehension, particularly in understanding fantasy stories. This model provides meaningful learning experiences by encouraging interaction, cooperation, and active participation among students. Therefore, English teachers are recommended to consider implementing Jigsaw Cooperative Learning as an alternative teaching strategy to create an interactive and student-centered reading classroom.

Future researchers are suggested to investigate the application of the Jigsaw model in different text genres, educational levels, and learning contexts to obtain broader evidence regarding its effectiveness in English language learning.

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