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Applying Make a Match Model to Improve Students Outcomes in Language Learning

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A B S T R A C T

This study aims to improve the learning outcomes of Grade VII students at SMP Negeri 03 Baras on pantun (traditional Malay poetry) material through the implementation of the make a match learning model. The study was motivated by the low cognitive absorption among students, attributed to several factors, including inadequate instructional content delivery and the use of inappropriate learning models. This classroom action research (CAR) was conducted over two cycles. Cycle I was implemented on May 17, 2023, while Cycle II was carried out on June 7, 2023. The pre-cycle results indicated that the classical learning mastery rate reached only 38.10%. In Cycle I, an improvement was observed, with the classical learning mastery rate rising to 50.00%. In Cycle II, student learning outcomes further improved to 78.57%. These findings demonstrate that the make a match learning model, when applied to Indonesian Language instruction—particularly in the context of pantun material—is effective in enhancing student learning outcomes, enabling students to complete tasks more readily through collaborative group work.

Keywords: *Learning, Make a Match, Model, Outcomes*

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesian Language is one of the core subjects in the junior high school curriculum. The teaching of Indonesian Language aims to enhance students' ability to communicate effectively and accurately in Indonesian. Furthermore, Indonesian Language instruction is intended to cultivate an appreciation for the literary works of Indonesian authors. Pantun, as a traditional form of Malay poetry, embodies both aesthetic and educational values. As the younger generation, it is our collective responsibility to preserve the cultural heritage of the nation. One of the competency standards for Indonesian Language that must be developed through junior high school instruction pertains to the comprehension of pantun.

In practice, many Grade VII students at SMP Negeri 03 Baras in Baras Regency have yet to meet the minimum competency standards in Indonesian Language learning. Observations reveal that the instructional process at SMP Negeri 03 Baras continues to rely predominantly on the lecture method, in which the teacher assumes the role of the active knowledge transmitter while students remain passive recipients of information. Students are expected to sit quietly, listen, take notes, and memorize content in preparation for examinations. This mode of instruction tends to produce passive learners, as students are confined to monotonous routines, rendering the learning experience insufficiently engaging.

Indonesian Language instruction, particularly on the topic of pantun, consists largely of theoretical content. Teachers frequently deliver lectures and subsequently assign tasks for students to complete individually, rarely providing opportunities for students to interact with peers from diverse backgrounds. Such peer interaction is, however, essential for fostering active cognitive engagement during learning activities. When addressing a specific topic, it is therefore critical to select the learning model most appropriate to the intended objectives, as the choice of instructional model significantly influences learning outcomes. It is imperative

for teachers to continually study and broaden their knowledge of available learning models, as teachers who are well-versed in a variety of instructional approaches will find it considerably easier to implement effective classroom instruction, thereby enabling learning objectives to be achieved as anticipated.

Consequently, teachers are encouraged to employ a diverse range of instructional models. According to Joyce (1992), as cited in Trianto (2007, p. 5), a learning model constitutes a conceptual framework used as a guide for planning classroom instruction or tutorial-based learning. Learning models encompass a variety of educational tools and resources, including textbooks, films, computers, and curricula, among others. In alignment with the view expressed by Ayuwanti (2016), as cited in Suprapta (2020), teachers are expected to select instructional models that are congruent with the learning material in order to achieve positive student learning outcomes.

Based on the aforementioned problem background, this study seeks to present a comprehensive overview of problem identification, problem analysis, and alternative solutions and their prioritization within the research context of SMP Negeri 03 Baras. This serves as a preliminary description of the issues occurring in the classroom, and provides the rationale for conducting Classroom Action Research (CAR) in Grade VII at SMP Negeri 03 Baras.

Problem Identification

This section refers to the preliminary observations conducted by the researcher in collaboration with the second supervisor, who served as a peer colleague in carrying out this study. Initial data were successfully collected to serve as a reference for implementing this Classroom Action Research (CAR), which was conducted during the pre-cycle phase with Grade VII students at SMP Negeri 03 Baras. Several problems were identified, most notably that the instructional methods employed by the teacher were deemed ineffective in facilitating the learning process. Consequently, this had a significant impact on the learning outcomes of Grade VII students at SMP Negeri 03 Baras, which remained unsatisfactory. Based on observations conducted by the supervisor during the pre-cycle instructional phase implemented by the researcher, it was found that the level of student participation yielded a total score of 26, with a mean score of 2.60 and an average observational percentage of 65.00%. Based on the identified problems, it is evident that student participation in the learning process exerts a considerable influence on the learning outcomes of Grade VII students at SMP Negeri 03 Baras. In the pre-cycle assessment, the mean score for Individual Absorption Capacity (IAC) was recorded at only 67.86%. Meanwhile, the Classical Learning Completeness (CLC) percentage attained a mean value of merely 38.10%, given that only 8 out of 21 Grade VII students at SMP Negeri 03 Baras were able to meet the established learning criteria.

Problem Analysis

The results of the problem identification process in the learning environment, conducted by the researcher in collaboration with Supervisor 2, revealed several underlying causes contributing to the identified problems. Following a discussion with Supervisor 2, it was determined that the low individual absorption percentage, the low classical learning completeness percentage, and the low classical absorption percentage among Grade VII students at SMP Negeri 03 Baras were attributable to several factors, as outlined below: 1) students had not yet demonstrated adequate focus in receiving instructional material, 2) the teacher experienced difficulties in managing classroom dynamics effectively, 3) no instructional media had been incorporated into the classroom learning process, 4) students frequently entered and exited the classroom during instructional time, 5) a sense of learning saturation had emerged, resulting in a lack of motivation and interest in learning, 6) the instructional process was unidirectional, with the teacher as the sole focal point of learning, 7) students had not been comprehensively engaged as active participants in classroom activities. Based on the observations conducted by Supervisor 2, it was concluded that the implementation of Classroom Action Research (CAR) in Grade VII at SMP Negeri 03 Baras is necessary to address the various problems that have been identified.

Alternative Solutions and Problem-Solving Priorities

Following the analysis of the aforementioned problems, the researcher developed alternative solutions and established priorities for this Classroom Action Research study. The fundamental issue identified in the problem analysis was the underutilization of effective teaching methods and instructional models by the teacher, which had given rise to a range of learning difficulties. It is therefore essential to employ instructional models that are effective, contextually appropriate, varied, and engaging, so that students are able to comprehend the material being taught. One instructional model that is well-aligned with the characteristics of junior high school students and the objectives of Indonesian Language education — particularly in the context of understanding pantun — is the cooperative learning model.

The cooperative learning model is not an entirely unfamiliar approach for teachers. It is an educational framework that emphasizes the formation of heterogeneous learning groups, in which each student possesses varying levels of academic ability (high, medium, and low). Where possible, group members should be drawn from diverse racial, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds, with due consideration given to gender equity. The cooperative learning model places emphasis on collaborative problem-solving as a means of applying knowledge and skills in order to achieve the intended learning objectives.

One prominent technique within cooperative learning is the matching method, which involves the activity of searching for a paired card. In this model, one set of cards contains questions or problems, while a corresponding set contains the answers to those questions, with both sets functioning as matching media. Suyatno (2009, p. 72), as cited in Aliputri (2018), explains that the make a match model is an instructional method in which the teacher prepares a set of cards containing questions or problems alongside a corresponding set of answer cards, and students are subsequently required to match each question card with its correct answer. The make a match, or card-pairing, method constitutes one viable alternative that can be effectively applied with students. The implementation of this method begins with a technique in which students are asked to find the card that represents the correct answer or question before a designated time limit expires. Students who successfully match their cards are awarded points. Student engagement is clearly observable through their active efforts to identify answers that correspond to the given questions. One of the principal advantages of the make a match model is that students discover their paired cards while simultaneously learning about a concept or topic within an enjoyable and stimulating learning atmosphere.

In light of the aforementioned considerations, the researcher was motivated to conduct a Classroom Action Research study entitled "Applying Make a Match Model to Improve Students Outcomes in Language Learning". Accordingly, the research questions addressed in this study are as follows: (1) What efforts can be made to improve the learning outcomes of Grade VII students at SMP Negeri 03 Baras in Indonesian Language instruction? (2) Does the implementation of the make a match learning model improve the learning outcomes of Grade VII students at SMP Negeri 03 Baras?

METHOD

Research Subjects, Setting, and Timeline

This study involved 21 Grade VII students (6 male, 15 female) at SMP Negeri 03 Baras, Pasangkayu Regency. The study was conducted over two cycles: Cycle I on May 17, 2023, and Cycle II on June 7, 2023, during the even semester of the 2022/2023 academic year.

This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design adapted from Kemmis and McTaggart (1991), comprising four stages: planning, action implementation, evaluation, and reflection. Each cycle served to address weaknesses identified in the previous cycle, with the aim of progressively improving student learning outcomes.

Action Implementation Phases

The intervention was carried out over two repeated cycles, each consisting of four phases: (a) planning, (b) action implementation, (c) observation, and (d) analysis and reflection.

The planning phase of Cycle I involved the following activities: preliminary school observation, development of syllabus and lesson plans, preparation of observation sheets, development of evaluation instruments.

Classroom action was implemented during the teaching and learning process using the instructional materials prepared in the planning phase, with the make a match learning model adopted as the primary instructional approach. The teacher began by explaining the topic, objectives, and expected learning outcomes, after which students were divided into small groups. Each group received a set of cards containing randomly shuffled lines (larik) of pantun, which they were then required to arrange into a correctly sequenced pantun. Groups competed against one another to sequence each card into the correct order before presenting their results to the class. Following each presentation, other groups were invited to provide responses and feedback. The session concluded with a teacher-administered evaluation, after which the teacher and students collaboratively formulated a conclusion regarding the lesson material.

Observation was conducted throughout the implementation of the action, encompassing student engagement during the learning process, identification of student difficulties, and monitoring of the teacher's instructional activities during the study.

In the last phase, the researcher collected and analyzed data obtained during the observation stage, including evaluation results. By examining the observational and test data, it was determined whether the implemented actions had successfully improved the Indonesian Language learning outcomes of Grade VII students at SMP Negeri 03 Baras. Where the results had not yet met the predetermined targets, revisions to the instructional plan were made in preparation for the subsequent cycle.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data obtained from student learning test results were analyzed using the following measures:

Individual Absorption Capacity (IAC). Each student's individual absorption capacity was calculated using the following formula:

$$IAC = (X / Y) \times 100\%$$

where X = student's obtained score and Y = maximum possible score.

Classical Learning Completeness (CLC). The proportion of students achieving learning mastery was calculated as follows:

$$CLC = (\sum N / \sum S) \times 100\%$$

where $\sum N$ = number of students who achieved mastery and $\sum S$ = total number of students. A class is considered to have achieved classical learning completeness when at least 70% of students have met the individual mastery criterion (SMP Negeri 03 Baras).

Classical Absorption Capacity (CAC). The overall absorption capacity of the class was calculated using the following formula:

$$CAC = (\sum P / \sum I) \times 100\%$$

where $\sum P$ = total percentage score and $\sum I$ = ideal score of all students. A class is considered to have achieved learning completeness when the classical absorption capacity reaches a minimum of 75% (SMP Negeri 03 Baras).

Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis was conducted following the completion of data collection, encompassing three stages: (a) data reduction, (b) data presentation, and (c) conclusion drawing and verification.

Data reduction involved the systematic selection, focusing, and simplification of all collected data, from the initial stages of data collection through to the compilation of the research report.

Data presentation involved organizing the reduced data into descriptive narratives, comprising information on the learning process, student activity and performance, and observational findings. The presented data were subsequently interpreted and evaluated to inform the planning of subsequent instructional actions.

Conclusion drawing involved synthesizing the core findings derived from the interpretation and evaluation stages, encompassing the search for meaning and the provision of explanatory insights. This was followed by verification, which entailed testing the validity, robustness, and coherence of the meanings emerging from the data, in order to ensure that all information obtained was accurate, reliable, and accountable (Miles and Huberman, 1992, p. 16).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Student Activity Observation Results

The results of student activity observations conducted during the learning process in both Cycle I and Cycle II are presented in the following table:

Table 1. Student Activity Observation Results

Assessment Components	Cycle I	Cycle II
Total Score	28	35
Mean Observation Score	2.80	3.50
Mean Observation Percentage (%)	70.00	87.50

The observations reveal a progressive improvement in student learning activity across both cycles. In Cycle I, a total score of 28 out of a maximum of 40 was recorded, yielding a mean observation score of 2.80 and an average observation percentage of 70.00%. In Cycle II, the total score increased to 35 out of 40, resulting in a mean observation score of 3.50 and an average observation percentage of 87.50%. These results indicate that student learning activity in Cycle II can be categorized as very good.

Teacher Activity in Planning Instructional Improvement

The results of observations on the teacher's competency in preparing instructional improvement plans across Cycle I and Cycle II are presented in the following table:

Table 2. Observation Assessment Results on APKG-CAR 1

Assessment Components	Cycle I	Cycle II
Total Score	19.65	25.65
Mean APKG-CAR 1 Score	3.28	4.28
Mean APKG-CAR 1 Percentage (%)	65.50	85.50

The observations indicate a consistent improvement across both cycles. In Cycle I, a total score of 19.65 was recorded, yielding a mean score of 3.28 and an average observation percentage of 65.50%. In Cycle II, a notable improvement was observed, with the total score rising to 25.65, a mean score of 4.28, and an average observation percentage of 85.50%. Based on these results, the teacher's performance in instructional planning as assessed through the APKG-CAR 1 instrument can be categorized as very good.

Teacher Activity in Implementing Instructional Improvement

The APKG-CAR 2 assessment was used to evaluate the teacher's competency in implementing instructional improvement in the Grade VII classroom at SMP Negeri 03 Baras across both cycles, as presented in the following table:

Table 3. Observation Assessment Results on APKG-CAR 2

Assessment Components	Cycle I	Cycle II
Total Score	23.68	30.68
Mean APKG-CAR 2 Score	3.63	4.38
Mean APKG-CAR 2 Percentage (%)	67.67	87.67

The observations indicate a consistent improvement across both cycles. In Cycle I, a total score of 23.68 was recorded, yielding a mean score of 3.63 and an average observation percentage of 67.67%. In Cycle II, a significant improvement was observed, with the total score rising to 30.68, a mean score of 4.38, and an average observation percentage of 87.67%. Based on these results, the teacher's performance in instructional implementation as assessed through the APKG-CAR 2 instrument can be categorized as very good.

Pre-Cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II Test Results

The CAR conducted over two cycles demonstrates that student interest and learning outcomes in Indonesian Language instruction — particularly on pantun material — improved progressively through the implementation of the make a match model. A comparative summary of the test results across all cycles is presented in the following table:

Table 4. Pre-Cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II Test Results

Assessment Components	Cycle I		Cycle II	
	%IAC	%CLC	%IAC	%CLC
Total Score	983	50.00	1150	78.57
Maximum Total Score	1400	-	1400	-
Achieved Score (%)	70.24	-	82.14	-

The formative test results indicate progressive academic improvement in both Classical Learning Completeness (CLC) and Individual Absorption Capacity (IAC) across both cycles. In Cycle I, the CLC rate reached 50.00%, while in Cycle II, a significant improvement was recorded, with the CLC rate rising to 78.57%. Based on these findings, the overall level of classical learning completeness achieved by Grade VII students at SMP Negeri 03 Baras can be categorized as very good.

Discussion

The implementation of the make a match learning model in Indonesian Language instruction — particularly in the context of the basic competency of writing folk poetry (pantun) — has demonstrated a substantial capacity to enhance both the motivation and learning outcomes of Grade VII students at SMP Negeri 03 Baras. These findings are consistent with the theoretical underpinnings of cooperative learning, which posits that collaborative, game-based instructional approaches foster greater student engagement and cognitive participation compared to conventional teacher-centered methods (Joyce, 1992, as cited in Trianto, 2007).

The progression of student learning activity across the two cycles provides compelling evidence of the model's effectiveness. Observational data revealed that student activity scores improved from a mean percentage of 70.00% in Cycle I to 87.50% in Cycle II, the latter of which falls within the very good category. This improvement reflects a meaningful shift from passive reception of information toward active participation in the learning process, a transition that is central to the objectives of competency-based curricula such as the KTSP framework implemented at SMP Negeri 03 Baras. Prior to the intervention, the learning process was predominantly unidirectional, with students serving as passive recipients of teacher-delivered lectures. The introduction of the make a match model effectively disrupted this pattern by requiring students to engage in collaborative card-matching activities, thereby stimulating peer interaction, critical thinking, and a sense of healthy academic competition.

The improvement in student learning outcomes across the three assessment phases further substantiates the efficacy of the intervention. In the pre-cycle phase, the Classical Learning Completeness (CLC) rate stood at only 38.10%, indicating that the majority of students had not met the established minimum learning criteria. Following the implementation of the make a match model in Cycle I, the CLC rate improved to 50.00%, reflecting initial progress. By Cycle II, a significant increase was recorded, with the CLC rate reaching 78.57%, surpassing the minimum classical completeness threshold of 70% stipulated by SMP Negeri 03 Baras. Similarly, the Individual Absorption Capacity (IAC) improved from 70.24% in Cycle I to 82.14% in Cycle II, while the Classical Absorption Capacity (CAC) exceeded the minimum benchmark of 75% by the conclusion of the study. These findings collectively indicate that the make a match model was instrumental in elevating student learning outcomes to a level categorized as very good.

The improvement in student outcomes was further supported by a corresponding enhancement in the teacher's instructional competencies across both cycles. With respect to instructional planning, the APKG-CAR 1 assessment results showed an improvement from a mean percentage of 65.50% in Cycle I to 85.50% in Cycle II, indicating that the teacher

demonstrated a progressively stronger capacity to design effective and structured lesson plans. With respect to instructional implementation, the APKG-CAR 2 assessment results improved from 67.67% in Cycle I to 87.67% in Cycle II, both of which are categorized as very good. These results suggest that the iterative nature of the CAR design — in which weaknesses identified in each cycle are systematically addressed in the subsequent cycle — contributed not only to improved student outcomes but also to the professional development of the teacher as a reflective practitioner.

The findings of this study are in alignment with those of Ayuwanti (2016, as cited in Suprapta, 2020), who argued that the selection of an appropriate instructional model is a critical determinant of student learning success. The make a match model, by integrating elements of cooperative learning with an engaging card-matching activity, proved particularly well-suited to the characteristics of junior high school learners, who benefit from interactive and socially stimulating learning environments. The model's capacity to transform abstract theoretical content — such as the structural and aesthetic features of pantun — into a concrete, participatory task represents a significant pedagogical advantage in the context of Indonesian Language education.

It is anticipated that the findings of this study will serve as a valuable reference for educators and researchers seeking to implement or investigate similar instructional interventions across different subject areas and educational contexts. In particular, this study may be of benefit to practitioners engaged in Classroom Action Research, providing a replicable methodological framework for improving instructional quality and student learning outcomes at the classroom and school levels.

CONCLUSIONS

This study investigated the effectiveness of the make a match cooperative learning model in improving the learning outcomes of Grade VII students at SMP Negeri 03 Baras in Indonesian Language instruction, with a specific focus on pantun comprehension. The findings from two cycles of Classroom Action Research (CAR) demonstrate consistent and measurable improvements across all assessed dimensions, including student learning outcomes, classroom participation, and overall engagement, with the Classical Learning Completeness rate surpassing the school's minimum mastery threshold. In addition, improvements were observed in the teacher's instructional competencies in both lesson planning and classroom implementation, indicating that the iterative CAR process supported not only student achievement but also the teacher's professional development as a reflective practitioner. Overall, these results confirm that the make a match model is an effective, engaging, and contextually appropriate instructional strategy for junior high school Indonesian Language education, as it transforms passive, teacher-centered instruction into a more interactive and collaborative learning experience while addressing issues such as low engagement, monotonous teaching methods, and unsatisfactory learning outcomes. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers adopt the make a match model and other cooperative learning approaches, particularly for content requiring active participation and peer interaction, such as pantun and traditional literary forms. Future research should explore the model's applicability across various subjects, grade levels, and educational contexts, as well as its long-term impact on student motivation and academic achievement, with the expectation that this study will serve as a valuable reference for educators and researchers conducting Classroom Action Research to improve teaching and learning quality in Indonesian schools.

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