



The boosting academic literacy for young learners' reading comprehension and character building

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Reading habit is important to be introduced to young learners. Through academic literacy, students not only comprehend social and science texts but also enhance their character. To realize the literacy program in these lessons, a team-game tournament is used that consists of a presentation, group discussion, reading tournament, and the award. The study uses a qualitative research method that applies a semi-structured observation guide and interviews sixth-grade students in one primary school in Indonesia. The observation indicates teaching techniques for improving reading comprehension, and the interview shows the impacts of academic literacy in the team-game tournament (TGT) on students' knowledge. The findings show that academic literacy improves understanding of social and science texts, and moral values. This is an integrated skill because students get academic knowledge and character building. Students know how to comprehend passages related to social and science, as well as how to communicate the information through presentation skills. Academic literacy is proven to be an effective strategy to improve understanding and fluency in written and spoken forms. The study recommends that team-game tournament provides practices not only in reading but also in writing and speaking skills. Team-game tournament is an interesting learning method to have fun activity in the modern era of English teaching for young learners.

Keywords: academic literacy, reading comprehension, character building, team-game tournament.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the abilities that students must acquire in English learning is reading skill. Understanding text is a crucial component of learning achievement (Ortiz et al., 2021). It has always been a priority because students can learn through story book which has interesting plot and values (Minns, 2020). In line with this, knowing how to comprehend the meaning of the text is incomplete without understanding moral values (Garces-Bacsal, 2022). Educating young learners about character building is very important because they are in the developing phase in terms of behavior (Shoshani, 2019). For this reason, they should be taught not only knowledge but also character development as a way to support academic achievement (Burnett et al., 2020). Engaging in character building in the curriculum of learning is important because they will know how to behave in social life and family based on moral principles.

The capability to read comprehensively and to behave in good character is the important output for young learners that will be proven for each capacity and should be taught proportionally. Some studies show the relation between reading skill and character building.

Reading is regarded as an exciting method for fostering ideals, personality, and ability in both individuals and teams (Alatalo & Westlund, 2021). Reading exercise provides interactive communication between the students that shows ideas, emotions, appropriateness, and adaptation (Suganda et al., 2020; Mulatu & Regassa, 2022). For all of that, the reading ability can be improved by using many types of treatment in teaching and learning (D'Andrea et al., 2021).

One of them is suggested in this study which is the use of academic literacy for young learners. This literacy type is used to improve the ability to read comprehensively and to behave properly. In the Indonesian context, students are encouraged to be polite to their parents, teachers, and friends. This local culture is represented in their communication or interaction that has moral principles (Zuchdi & Nurhadi, 2019). This culture is really common for Indonesian students. For all of that, reading comprehension and character building should be taught to young learners. In this case, there is an integration between character values and English teaching material (Jalaluddin & Jazadi, 2020).

The study uses academic literacy to improve reading and character building. Meaning of academic literacy refers to the capability to understand the knowledge given and apply it in practical learning activities (Kumpulainen et al., 2020; Taylor et al., 2021). Therefore, students are encouraged to read as the major purpose of academic literacy (Hackett et al., 2020). Young learners are given reading practice that relates to social and science subjects so that the learning activity is integrated. Students are divided into groups and read the materials related to social and scientific knowledge. To enhance reading motivation, a team-game tournament is applied to encourage them to read and have reading habits (Juwita et al., 2017). The use of a team-game tournament (TGT) will stimulate students to consider reading as an interesting activity because it is formed in a fun learning program. One of the simple-to-use cooperative learning approaches is TGT which involves all students in a variety of activities, such as presenting, learning with a group, conducting the game, and giving awards (Harianto et al., 2020).

A study has proven that TGT is effective in involving students in two-way communication between teacher-students, and student-student. In line with this, TGT improves the students' ability in learning English. Furthermore, TGT can enhance the students' understanding of reading text (Nurchasanah, 2020). For this reason, academic literacy will apply fun learning activities by using TGT strategy to encourage students to read social and science studies with high motivation to develop reading comprehension and character building (Caingcoy, 2021). Through the understanding of moral values in each lesson, students will know how to behave properly for students and the school's benefit. A previous study has revealed that TGT helps students to achieve academic performance. So, literacy programs should be integrated with a specific technique to have a beneficial output for young learners.

Reading material in the team-game tournament can be applied by choosing the appropriate topic that relates to social and science studies so that the learning system is integrated between the lesson and the skill (Saefuddin et al., 2019; Henry & Solari, 2022). Whereas, character building is provided with questions and practices which are explained and guided by the teachers (Gani, 2019). Team-game tournament is included in each competency so that learning reading and character building will be interesting for young learners (Wardani et al., 2019).

In this phase, students are involved in all of the activities to participate in social and science reading texts, as well as in the practical activity by conducting a tournament. Fun learning in reading material should be given to motivate students to get an interest in reading social and science subjects. The activity consists of a presentation, a group discussion, a reading tournament, and a reward. Presentation is conducted through teacher demonstration of certain topic on social or science material, then students learn and get more information from the reading text. This strategy will ease the students' understanding of the topic discussed. Thus, they are provided with background knowledge through the teacher's presentation. Furthermore, group discussion works on reading tasks to find moral values and social and scientific knowledge. Students can learn theory and new knowledge, as well as find moral values for their character building. In this case, the teacher should prepare a worksheet that trains knowledge, opinion, critical thinking, and motivation.

Team-game tournament provides a fun learning that students do role-playing for competition in reading material. Role-playing contains reading aloud, guessing the meaning, and writing moral values. These aspects require much time to read the passage, understand it, and produce ideas in the discussion. Team-game tournament allows students to work in a group and compete in terms of knowledge and positive values (Amalia, 2019). For this reason, a team-game tournament will give an impact on the development of social and scientific understanding, as well as good personality. The previous study has proven that character building should be embedded in each process of learning to reach the expected output of both morality and related skills (Cheung et al., 2021). Therefore, this study aims to find out the academic literacy strategy to boost the students' comprehension and character building. Secondly, it also investigates the impact of academic literacy used in the reading and character-building competencies.

METHODS

This study applies a qualitative method that uses teamgame tournaments (TGT) in social and science lessons as the academic literacy. The activity of TGT consists of a presentation, group discussion, reading tournament, and

award. The students are in one of the private primary schools in Surabaya and there are thirty students in the sixth grade. The research was conducted in eight meetings that cover teaching and learning using academic literacy and data collection techniques. Furthermore, the semi-observation guide is used to know the academic literacy strategy to boost reading comprehension and character building. This observation described the teaching technique in applying TGT and how academic literacy is managed. Whereas, the interview is given to the students to find out the impact of academic literacy in improving social and science knowledge, and the student's character. The result of the interview provides specific benefits of academic literacy in terms of knowledge and character building.

because the strategy involves students' participation, and has fun learning activity for young learners so that they are not easy to get bored in reading. There are four steps in TGT, namely presentation, group discussion, reading tournament, and the award. The process will be explained using the result of semi-structured observation which describes detailed information related to the academic literacy activity, the use of TGT strategy, and character-building competence.

TABLE 1 | Academic literacy activity in the social lesson

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To enhance reading comprehension and character building, academic literacy is practiced more in social and science lessons. Team-game tournament is conducted

Academic literacy activity	TGT strategy	Observation notes (Teaching technique)	Observation notes (Character aspect)
1.1. Teacher explains the social topic related to Indonesian culture and diversity in terms of custom, language, clothes, and religion.	1.1. Presentation	1.1. Teachers uses picture and video to support the introduction of material2.2. Teacher triggers knowledge by providing interactive questions and answers for students3.3. Teacher emphasizes certain vocabularies for character-building knowledge.	1.1. Mutual tolerance between different races, and ethnicities.
2.2. Reading aloud		1.1. Teacher sets the classroom situation by playing the national anthem to create a fun and comfortable atmosphere during reading aloud. 2.2. Teacher reads the passage to show how perfectly a text should be read. 3.3. The students listen to the text read by the teacher supported by the song's background. 4.4. Students read loudly the text related to the social and culture of Indonesia 5.5. Teacher guides the understanding by asking some keywords to see how they respond and trigger critical thinking. 6.6. Teacher provides detailed explanations when students find difficulties in understanding the content. 7.7. Teacher sometimes uses bilingual language (English and Indonesian) to answer the questions so that it is clear for the students.	2.2. Respecting cultural diversity
3.3. Reading and Role-playing	2.2. Group discussion	1.1. Students read the passage from a different resource provided by the teacher to enrich their knowledge of Indonesia's social and cultural.	1.1. Respecting parents, teachers, and elders

		2.2. Teacher asks students to do role-playing in explaining the subject and moral values.	2.2. Developing the art, and culture of the nation
			3.3. Knowing how to behave properly and politely
4.4. Reading and competition	3.3. Reading tournament	 1.1. Teacher asks some questions related to Indonesian society and culture, and students compete to answer correctly. 2.2. Teacher asks some questions related to moral values from the reading text, and students should provide the meaningful statement for character development. 3.3. Teacher gives the different reading texts related to Indonesia's social and culture 4.4. Teacher asks questions related to the text and moral values that they have learned. 5.5. Students compete in groups to answer the questions correctly. 	parents, teachers, and elders. 2.2. Developing the art, and culture
5.5. Providing award and summary	4.4. The award	1.1. Teacher provides the award to the group who completes all the reading practices and questions.2.2. Teacher also gives an award to the group who has answered correctly in the competition.3.3. Teacher gives a summary by saying moral	1.1. Upholding the noble values of the nation

value statements.

Table 1 indicates the application of academic literacy for sixthgrade students in primary school which is fun and interesting for young learners because they are not forced to do the common reading practice. Students are provided with specific literacy movements at school, such as reading passages related to Indonesian culture and diversity from different resources to enhance knowledge. Presentation in TGT consists of an introduction from the teacher, reading aloud, interactive discussion, vocabulary reinforcement, classroom setting, and teacher's guidance. In this phase, the teacher leads the reading activity, and students are asked to be involved through several programs, such as answering questions related to social knowledge and moral values. Because this is a tournament, the discussion is set like a competition to encourage students to finish the reading task and make moral values implications from the text. Furthermore, the class setting and preparation by using songs and reading worksheets help the teacher in realizing an academic literacy atmosphere among students.

Group discussion and reading tournaments are challenging for students because they can use general knowledge from different texts, and discuss opinions about the material and moral values. Here, they use critical thinking, experiences, and background knowledge to produce findings that are relevant to compete in the tournament for the winner selection. In this case, the form of academic literacy activates involvement, motivation to read, and critical thinking to find out good values in a context (Méndez Prado et al., 2019). Through academic literacy, students not only learn social topics but also know how to behave properly, such as owning tolerance among people,

respecting parents, teachers, and the elders, upholding good values to develop national language, art, custom, and culture. Academic literacy is also applied to science lesson in the form of outdoor learning so that students will directly learn from the environment, and living things surrounding them. The result of the observation of the teacher's teaching technique is as follows.

TABLE 2 | Academic literacy activity in a science lesson

Academic	TGT	Observation notes	Observation notes
literacy activity	strategy	(Teaching technique)	(Character aspect)
1.1. Teacher explains the science topic related to living things	1.1. Presentation	1.1. Teacher explains about plants in the school garden that students see directly the demonstration of plant parts and functions.2.2. Students do repetition on vocabulary related to plant parts and functions	1.1. Respecting each other -Preserving plants and living things surrounding 2.2. Taking turn
2.2. Reading aloud		1.1. A group of students reads the text about plant parts and functions on the worksheet, and the other group listens to it.2.2. Teacher shows the demonstration about plants to provide a detailed explanation when students find difficulties in understanding the content.3.3. Teacher explains the moral value related to plants and living things.	
3.3. Reading and Role-playing	2.2. Group discussion	1.1. Each group reads additional material about plant parts and functions.	1.1. Respecting each other
		2.2. Each student demonstrates plant parts and functions, including the moral value that they can conclude.	2.2. Preserving plants and living things surrounding
4.4. Reading and competition	3.3. Reading tournament	1.1. Students read the explanation about plant parts and functions through the video.2.2. Teacher explains how to answer the questions for the reading tournament3.3. Students do the tournament in the group by demonstrating the task using living things' surroundings.	1.1. Bravery and leadership.2.2. Cooperative learners
5.5. Providing award	4.4. The award	1.1. Teacher evaluates the result of the demonstration.2.2. Teacher provides the award for the group who demonstrates the task well.	1.1. Honesty and cooperative learners

Table 2 explains the result of the semi-structured observation guide in science class. It shows that academic literacy is applied through outdoor activity in the team-game tournament. The teacher does not only demonstrate the material but also encourage students to read. The use of living things' surroundings helps students to understand the subject. Students also do a demonstration about plant parts and functions in a tournament. Each group takes the participants to show their understanding of the text through a demonstration about living things and the moral values they can get from the reading activity. These actions will enhance the reading comprehension of the subject and character development. In this part, students learn about respecting each other, preserving living things, cooperating in a group, and having bravery and leadership. It can be summarized that students are involved in this teamgame tournament because they learn independently without neglecting the guidance from the teacher, and the reading material.

Both lessons indicate TGT strategy is effective to be conducted to emphasize academic literacy through various reading texts, and fun learning. The presentation has revealed that the teacher guides with the explanation, introduction, and vocabulary mastery to have reinforcement on the material so that students know about the topic discussed. Meanwhile, group discussion uses role-playing and literacy reinforcement to deepen comprehension and get moral values based on the context of the reading text. Reading tournament contains applicative learning in both social and science classes that students should complete the specific tasks to compete with groups so that the award can be given to the achievement group. This tournament is not for having competitors among students, but the purpose is to manage fun and interesting learning for young learners. It is aimed at enhancing students' reading comprehension through academic literacy in social and scientific knowledge.

Various activities in team-game tournaments introduce moral values embedded in the material. Thus, students will compete to provide not only knowledge but also moral values for their character building.

Above all, it answers the research question that the use of TGT in academic literacy, such as presentation, group discussion, reading tournaments, and the award can be used to provide various fun learning in reading material and character building. The creativity in the strategy is promoted such as the use of reading aloud, classroom setting to create a fun learning atmosphere, outdoor activity, the use of video, pictures, role-playing, and vocabulary reinforcement. It is implied that team-game tournaments should be integrated with specific teaching techniques. Students should not only do game and neglect the core of learning. Therefore, it is recommended to relate team-game tournaments with the objective of learning, the output from the skill, and the teaching technique.

This study also investigates the effectiveness of academic literacy used in reading and character-building competencies. The interview session describes the result of student opinions toward the use of academic literacy in social and science lessons.

Figure 1| The impact of academic literacy

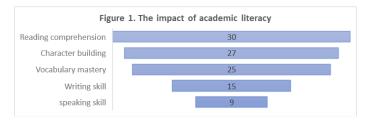


Figure 1 describes briefly the result of the interview to know the impact of academic literacy. In terms of reading comprehension, thirty students successfully comprehend the text given. Academic literacy in social and science topics helps students to master the content material because it is reinforced using many resources. It can be said that TGT strategy in academic literacy provides effective activities to encourage reading preference. In line with this, twenty-seven students have successful enhancement about the moral values which is important for their character building. The teaching technique in reading explanation presents positive norms that can affect students' performance and behavior in dealing with respect, politeness, tolerance, leadership, bravery, and cooperation. Because vocabulary reinforcement is given, twenty-five students can easily understand the reading material which adds background knowledge to complete the task in team-game tournaments.

In contrast, academic literacy has no more than fifteen students who get improvement in writing and speaking skills. This relates to the result of semi-structured observation guide which reveals writing and speaking skills are not practiced during literacy programs in social and science lessons. These skills have a little portion in the targeted competence because the output is only reading and character enhancements. In line with this, the study recommends a balanced proportion for future research in academic literacy.

It is suggested to include writing and speaking practices in the teaching technique so that students' skills are improved not only in reading but also writing and speaking.

In responding to the modern learning system, teaching techniques should be changed from student passive participation to student active involvement. Young learners prefer to be included in the learning process; therefore, academic literacy is reformed to be a fun activity. Thus, academic literacy can be added to the curriculum as one of the programs to create reading habit. Furthermore, specific competence such as reading comprehension and character building can be integrated into the lesson to the realization of the learning goal which is fulfilling knowledge requirements, character, and English skills development. The application of academic literacy in reading and character building recommends team-game tournaments as an effective strategy.

CONCLUSION

Academic literacy is needed for young learners because they grasp knowledge as much as they can to know social and scientific knowledge. If the students do not like to read, they can't achieve development goals in terms of information enrichment and behavior control. For this reason, team-game tournament is as a teaching technique to realize academic literacy for young learners. It is impossible to be applied without creative activities, such as reading aloud, presentation in video and pictures, demonstration, vocabulary reinforcement, setting the class atmosphere, outdoor activity, and role-playing. The study encourages teachers to use suitable teaching techniques according to the objective, curriculum, and specific output so that TGT can produce fun learning. In this case, academic literacy in TGT strategy is proven to boost young learners' reading comprehension and character building.

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