



Improving News Text Comprehension Through Educational Game-Based Interactive Media

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ABSTRACT

Reading comprehension of news texts remains a persistent problem among junior high school students, and this study was motivated by the low understanding of Grade VII students at SMP Bina Utama regarding the 5W+1H elements, text structure, and the distinction between fact and opinion in news texts, a condition caused by monotonous teaching methods that rely on worksheets, lectures, and one-way assignments. This study aims to determine whether the educational game-based interactive medium Zep Quiz can improve Grade VII students' comprehension of news texts at SMP Bina Utama. A Classroom Action Research (CAR) design based on the model of Arikunto et al. (2021) was employed, comprising two cycles of planning, action, observation, and reflection, involving 17 seventh-grade students as participants. Data were collected through tests, classroom observation, and teacher interviews, then analyzed descriptively and quantitatively using N-Gain and classical mastery formulas. The results show that the students' average score increased from 69.88 in Cycle I to 85.35 in Cycle II, the classical mastery rate rose from 52.94% to 94.11% (very high category), and the N-Gain increased from 0.44 to 0.53 (medium category). It is concluded that the Zep Quiz educational game-based interactive medium effectively improves students' comprehension of news texts. This study implies that quiz-based digital game media can be adopted by Indonesian language teachers as a contextual, low-cost alternative to conventional methods, particularly for materials that demand factual accuracy and critical reading, while also contributing procedural evidence on how such media should be implemented cyclically to sustain learning gains.

News Text Comprehension, Interactive Media, Educational Game, Zep Quiz.

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesian language instruction at the junior high school level continues to face the persistent problem of low student interest, largely because teaching methods used in the classroom lack variety and fail to foster active participation (Darmuki et al., 2023). This phenomenon is not confined to a single school; broader studies on reading instruction likewise report that students' extrinsic and intrinsic motivation to read, as well as their reading comprehension proficiency,

often remain low when learning is delivered through conventional, one-directional methods (Anningrum & Syafri, 2023). Similar symptoms have been documented across educational levels and text types, from narrative texts in junior high school (Rochmawati et al., 2023) to descriptive and short-story materials at the secondary level (Hasanah et al., 2024), indicating that the difficulty in comprehending texts critically and accurately is a widespread, cross-contextual phenomenon rather than an isolated case.

Future education demands innovative approaches that make learning enjoyable while still achieving instructional goals (Lanos et al., 2022). Educational games represent an innovation that fosters children's interest in learning through elements of play and fun, thereby making material easier to comprehend (Hidayat et al., 2019). Far from being mere entertainment, educational games serve as a bridge that enables students to learn without feeling burdened (Anwar & Jasiah, 2024). Interactive media has also been shown to enhance student engagement by creating a more dynamic learning environment (Praheto et al., 2020); it is considered highly relevant in the digital era, as it appears in various forms ranging from interactive simulations and digital platforms to instructional games that allow students to experience diverse learning scenarios in a safe and engaging manner (Salsabila et al., 2021).

Within this body of literature, game-based learning for reading comprehension has taken shape across a range of digital platforms. Kahoot has been used to improve narrative text comprehension (Rochmawati et al., 2023) and reading comprehension among junior high school students more generally (Hasanah et al., 2024; Anningrum & Syafri, 2023). Quizizz has served both to enhance reading comprehension in vocational schools (Rosmawati et al., 2024) and to support gamification-based news text writing (Ningsih et al., 2025). Wordwall has been applied to improve elementary reading comprehension (Azhar et al., 2024) and, more specifically, critical reading of news texts through the OK5R and SQ3R methods among senior high school students (Mahardika & Haryadi, 2026). Canva-based games have improved fifth-grade reading skills (Hasmalia et al., 2025), while gamified interactive e-books with metacognitive strategies have strengthened reading comprehension in mathematics learning (Shao et al., 2025). Beyond these, the web-based platform Lättëra has shown that technology-supported, game-based approaches can improve reading competence among school-age learners (Leal Uhlig et al., 2023), and digital educational games more broadly have been found to positively influence reading comprehension in basic education outside Indonesia (Reyes-Rodríguez & Chicaiza-Medina, 2025). Altogether, this literature confirms that game-based interactive media is a well-established, cross-nationally validated form of

instructional innovation for reading comprehension, spanning narrative, descriptive, mathematical, and general texts.

News texts specifically are a type of text that must be studied in the Indonesian language subject at the junior high school level. A good and comprehensive news text must contain six key elements known as the 5W+1H framework: what (the event that occurred), who (the people involved), when (the time of the event), where (the location of the event), why (the reason the event occurred), and how (the process or manner in which the event unfolded); these six elements serve as the primary guidelines for drafting news reports, ensuring that the information conveyed is complete, accurate, and easy for readers to understand (Depita Sari, 2025). The structure of a news story further consists of three main parts, namely the lead, the body, and the tail (Gideon, 2025), and understanding both the elements and the structure of news texts is a fundamental competency that junior high school students must master so that they are able to identify, analyze, and comprehend the content of a news report thoroughly and critically.

Beyond structural comprehension, news literacy also requires the ability to distinguish fact from opinion, a skill that has become increasingly urgent given the prevalence of misinformation online; psychological science suggests that interventions combining corrective (debunking) and pre-emptive (prebunking) strategies, often delivered through interactive and game-like formats, are effective in strengthening individuals' ability to recognize misleading information (van der Linden et al., 2021). In line with this, a game-based approach specifically designed to teach news literacy skills has been shown to be an engaging and pedagogically sound method for helping students critically evaluate news content (Literat et al., 2021), reinforcing the argument that gamified media is not only suitable for improving general reading comprehension but also well-suited to the specific demands of news text literacy. Most research on game-based reading comprehension still focuses on narrative texts (Rochmawati et al., 2023), general reading materials (Hasanah et al., 2024; Anningrum & Syafri, 2023), or subjects other than Indonesian, such as science (Husen & Wulandari, 2025) and mathematics (Shao et al., 2025). Research regarding news text comprehension via digital or game-based media remains limited; the most relevant studies involve multimodal text media for 7th-grade students (Hindriyani et al., 2025) and Wordwall-assisted critical reading interventions using the OK5R and SQ3R methods for 11th grade students (Mahardika & Haryadi, 2026). However, no study has specifically utilized quiz-based educational game media within a Classroom Action Research design to integrate the 5W+1H framework, text structure, and fact versus opinion

distinction for 7th-grade students a gap this research aims to fill. Indonesian language instruction for 7th-grade students at SMP Bina Utama is still dominated by worksheets, lectures, and assignments, resulting in a monotonous learning atmosphere and low levels of student attention, interaction, and participation, which in turn limits comprehension of news texts. Consequently, this research is crucial for enhancing students' literacy and critical thinking skills.

In this study, the researcher argues that using a web-based platform called Zep Quizan educational tool that enables students to take part in online learning assessments through an engaging and adolescent-friendly interface (Yulianti et al., 2025) offers a contextually appropriate solution to the problems identified above. This is because the platform aligns with the characteristics of junior high school students, who tend to prefer learning activities that are enjoyable, dynamic, and technology-based. It is hypothesized that implementing Zep Quiz as an interactive, game-based learning medium, applied cyclically through Classroom Action Research, will progressively improve Grade VII students' comprehension of news texts. This improvement is expected to be reflected in their average scores, classical mastery rate, and N-Gain values across cycles.

This study introduces an innovative approach by utilizing an educational game-based interactive medium (Zep Quiz) to enhance seventh-grade students' comprehension of news texts, contrasting with the traditional classroom reliance on lectures, student worksheets, and basic audiovisual aids. Another novel aspect lies in the specific focus of the content: news texts, with an emphasis on the 5W+1H elements, news structure, and the distinction between fact and opinion, rather than merely aiming for general improvements in learning outcomes as in most prior game-based studies (Azhar et al., 2024; Hasmalia et al., 2025; Rosmawati et al., 2024). Furthermore, the study employs a Classroom Action Research design, ensuring that the innovation not only evaluates results but also iteratively improves the learning process through cyclical reflection, distinguishing it from the largely experimental or quasi-experimental designs used in comparable studies (Anningrum & Syafri, 2023; Hasanah et al., 2024). A number of earlier studies lend support to this research. Husen and Wulandari (2025) found that the Zep Quiz medium had a positive and significant effect on fourth-grade elementary students' understanding of science concepts, with a significance value of 0.000 (< 0.05). Meanwhile, Mutaslimah (2022), through a two-cycle Classroom Action Research design, showed that a "silent game" model was able to improve high school students' learning outcomes in news text material, with class mastery rising sharply from 21.88% to 96.88%. In a similar vein, Ningsih et al. (2025) reported that Quizizz-based gamification had a significant influence on eighth-grade students' news text writing skills, with the

experimental class recording an average score increase of 42.34 points. Sulastri and Thamimi (2025) also found that a self directed learning model grounded in local wisdom was effective in improving students' engagement with news text material. Taken together, these studies provide the empirical grounding for the present research, which focuses on improving seventh-grade students' comprehension of news texts through the educational game-based interactive medium Zep Quiz in Indonesian Language learning.

Building on this background, the researcher is interested in carrying out a study entitled "Improving News Text Comprehension through Educational Game Based Interactive Media." The problem this study seeks to address is how the comprehension of news texts particularly in terms of content, elements, and structure can be improved among seventh-grade students at SMP Bina Utama through the use of educational game based interactive media, namely Zep Quiz. Accordingly, this study aims to find out whether the use of Zep Quiz as a learning medium can improve students' comprehension of news texts, with a specific focus on seventh-grade students at SMP Bina Utama, and to describe how this improvement unfolds across the cycles of the classroom action research.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study was conducted at SMP Bina Utama, focusing on Grade VII students' low comprehension of news texts in Indonesian language lessons. The intervention involved implementing Zep Quiz, an educational game-based interactive medium, to address students' limited understanding of news text content, elements, and structure. The Grade VII classroom was chosen because observations and interviews showed that instruction relied heavily on worksheets, lectures, and one-way assignments, reflecting the broader problem this study aims to tackle. This study employs a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design through collaboration between the researcher and the Grade VII Indonesian language teacher at SMP Bina Utama. Combining qualitative and quantitative data, the study used classroom observations and interviews to capture student behavior and engagement, while test scores measured comprehension levels in each cycle. Primary data came from student comprehension tests and observation sheets, whereas secondary data were obtained from teacher interviews and prior academic records to establish the pre-cycle class profile. The study involved 17 Grade VII students (11 boys and 6 girls) as respondents who provided test and observation data, and the Grade VII Indonesian language teacher, who served as an informant in the pre-cycle interview and as a collaborator and observer during the action. According to Arikunto et al. (2021), Classroom Action Research aims to improve instructional

practices through structured, reflective actions that make learning more effective, meaningful, and relevant to students' needs. The variables in this study were the action variable (use of interactive, game-based educational media to enhance learning effectiveness) and the outcome variable (students' comprehension of news texts after the intervention).

The research began with a pre-cycle stage involving interviews with the class teacher to identify students' initial conditions and inform the planning of Cycles I and II. Each cycle followed the Classroom Action Research model of Arikunto et al. (2021), consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection. The teacher prepared instructional materials, Zep Quiz media, comprehension tests, and observation sheets during planning. The action stage involved teaching through introduction, core activities, and conclusion using Zep Quiz. Observation focused on student behavior, while reflection involved analyzing the results collaboratively to determine the need for the next cycle.

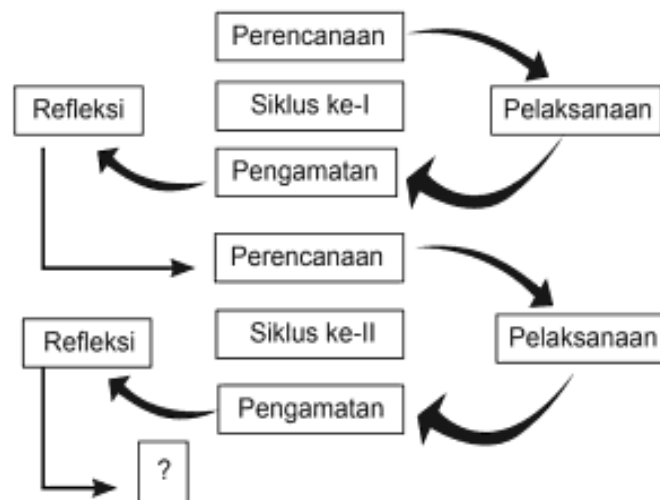


Figure 1.
Action Research Cycle

Data were collected through triangulation of tests, observations, and interviews. Tests measured news text comprehension at the end of each cycle, observations monitored student behavior and engagement, and pre-study interviews with the teacher provided baseline information on students' initial conditions and prior instructional methods. The study is considered successful if: (1) at least 80% of students reach post-test scores at or above the school's KKTP benchmark; (2) each student shows individual improvement beyond the KKTP; and (3) the class average score increases from the initial score. If these criteria are not met in Cycle I, the study proceeds to Cycle II with refinements based on reflection findings. Data were analyzed using both quantitative techniques, to calculate average scores and classical mastery percentage, and qualitative

techniques, to describe student engagement based on observations. Test scores were further analyzed using N-Gain analysis determine the category of improvement in learning outcomes, using the following formula:

$$N - Gain = \frac{skor\ posttest - skor\ pretest}{skor\ maksimal - skor\ pretest}$$

Table 1.
Category N-Gain

Interval Nilai	Kategori
$0,7 \leq N-Gain \leq 1,0$	Tinggi
$0,3 N-Gain < 0,7$	Sedang
$N-Gain < 0,3$	Rendah

The calculation of classical mastery uses the following formula:

$$P = \frac{L}{n} \times 100 \%$$

Note:

P : Class wide student passing percentage

L : Number of students who met the KKTP

n : Total number of students

Data obtained from student learning test results were then categorized using a 1-5 Likert scale, as follows:

Tabel 2.
Student Learning Outcome Criteria

Penilaian (%)	Kriteria
81% - 100%	Sangat Tinggi
61% - 80%	Tinggi
41% - 60%	Cukup
21% - 40%	Rendah
0% - 20%	Sangat Rendah

Finally, student scores and observation results from Cycle I and Cycle II were compared against the three success indicators described above to determine the overall effectiveness of the intervention; the average student comprehension score was required to meet the predetermined KKTP, the mastery rate was required to reach at least 80% of the total students, and an improvement between Cycle I and Cycle II was required as evidence of the intervention's cumulative impact.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The data for this study consist of objective learning achievement scores regarding news texts for Grade VII students at SMP Bina Utama, obtained during an effort to improve their understanding of news texts through an educational game-based interactive medium; the recapitulation of the calculations is presented in Table 3.

Table 3.
Recapitulation of calculations.

Tahap	Siklus I	Siklus II
Nilai Rata - Rata	69,88	85,35
Jumlah Peserta Didik Yang Tuntas	9	16
Presentase Ketuntasan	52,94	94,11

Based on Table 3, the average academic achievement of Grade VII students at SMP Bina Utama was 69,88% in Cycle I and 85,35% in Cycle II. The number of students achieving mastery was 10 prior to the use of the Zep Quiz educational game-based interactive media; this figure stood at 9 students in Cycle I and rose to 16 students in Cycle II. In percentage terms, the mastery rate was 52,94% in Cycle I and 94,11% in Cycle II, placing it in the "very high" category.

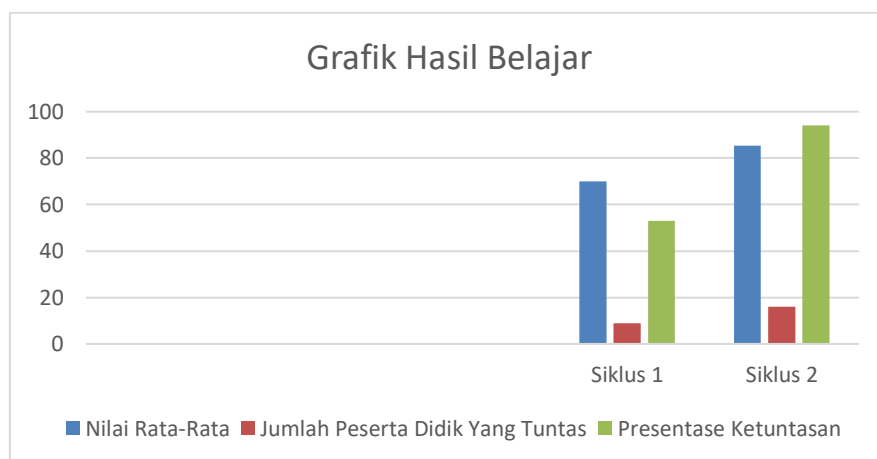


Figure 2.
learning outcome graph

Based on the graph above, the students' learning outcomes improved overall from the beginning of Cycle I through Cycle II when using interactive media additionally, the number of students achieving mastery increased. Thus, it can be concluded that the educational game-based interactive medium "Zep Quiz" enhances the learning outcomes of Grade VII students at SMP Bina Utama.

Table 4.
Student Learning Outcomes by Cycle I

Uraian	Siklus I
	Posttest
Nilai Tertinggi	93
Nilai Terendah	27
Rata-rata	69,88
Banyak Siswa Tuntas	9
Banyak Subjek	17
Presentase Ketuntasan	52,94%
Klasikal	

Based on Table 4, the students' learning achievement falls within the "sufficient" qualification, with a classical mastery rate of 52,94%.

Table 5.
Student Learning Outcomes by Cycle II

Uraian	Siklus II
	Posttest
Nilai Tertinggi	93
Nilai Terendah	53
Rata-rata	85,35
Banyak Siswa Tuntas	16
Banyak Subjek	17
Presentase Ketuntasan	94,11%
Klasikal	

Based on Table 5, the students' learning achievement falls within the "very high" qualification, with a classical mastery rate of 94,11%

Tabel 6.
Cycle N-Gain Analysis Results I
Cycle N-Gain Analysis Results I

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Ngain_score	17	-1	1	.44	.368
Ngain_persen	17	-51	83	43.59	36.750
Valid N (listwise)	17				

Tabel 7.
Cycle N-Gain Analysis Results II
Cycle N-Gain Analysis Results II

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Ngain_score	17	-1	1	.53	.449
Ngain_persen	17	-86	100	52.74	44.897
Valid N (listwise)	17				

Table 6 shows that the N-Gain scores for learning outcomes among the 17 students in Cycle I fell into the medium category, with an average N-Gain of 0,44 meanwhile, Table 7 shows that the N-Gain scores for the 17 students in Cycle II also fell into the medium category, with an average N-Gain of 0,53. This represents an increase of 0,09 from Cycle I to Cycle II, remaining within the medium category.

Discussion

The initial condition of Grade VII students at SMP Bina Utama was characterized by low achievement against the Learning Objective Achievement Criteria (KKTP), as evidenced by the raw scores from the first summative assessment, in which only ten students met the established criteria while the teacher relied on traditional, lecture-based instruction, an approach considered insufficient to motivate student participation. Following the implementation of the Zep Quiz educational game-based interactive medium across two cycles, the data show a consistent upward trend: the average score increased from 69.88 (Cycle I) to 85.35 (Cycle II), the classical mastery rate increased from 52.94% to 94.11%, and the mean N-Gain increased from 0.44 to 0.53, both cycles falling within the medium category of improvement.

This pattern of progressive improvement is consistent with, and extends, prior findings on game-based educational media. Husen and Wulandari (2025) reported that the Zep Quiz medium had a significant effect on elementary students' understanding of science concepts, while Mutaslimah (2022) found that a comparable game-based Classroom Action Research intervention raised the mastery rate of high school students on news text material from 21.88% to 96.88% across two cycles, and Ningsih et al. (2025) demonstrated that Quizizz-based gamification improved eighth-grade students' news text writing skills by an average of 42.34 points. Similarly, Yulismar and Marlina (2025) found that interactive educational games implemented through Classroom Action Research improved elementary students' reading comprehension in Indonesian language

learning, reinforcing that the combination of CAR and interactive game media generalizes across school levels within the same subject.

The current study differs from these three earlier studies in that it isolates comprehension specifically (the 5W+1H elements, text structure, and fact-opinion differentiation) as the outcome variable rather than general science understanding (Husen & Wulandari, 2025) or writing skill (Ningsih et al., 2025). It also documents the improvement process cycle by cycle using N-Gain analysis in addition to classical mastery, providing a more detailed account of how much of the observed gain is attributable to real learning rather than test instrument ceiling effects. Compared with studies employing other quiz-based platforms, similar patterns of improvement are evident: Kahoot has been shown to enhance narrative text reading comprehension (Rochmawati et al., 2023) and general reading comprehension among junior high school students (Hasanah et al., 2024; Anningrum & Syafri, 2023), Quizizz has improved reading comprehension in vocational school settings (Rosmawati et al., 2024), Wordwall-assisted learning has improved elementary students' reading comprehension (Azhar et al., 2024) and, more specifically, senior high school students' critical reading of news texts through the OK5R and SQ3R methods (Mahardika & Haryadi, 2026), and Canva-based educational games have improved fifth grade reading skills (Hasmalia et al., 2025). The consistency of these results across platforms and educational levels reinforces the evidence that interactive, game-based media is broadly effective in improving text comprehension. Even so, the present study differs from nearly all of them in three respects: it uses a quiz based platform (Zep Quiz) rather than Kahoot, Quizizz, Wordwall, or Canva; it adopts a Classroom Action Research design rather than a one-shot experimental or quasi-experimental approach; and it targets seventh-grade news text comprehension, a population and material examined by only a few prior studies, most notably Hindriyani et al. (2025) and Mahardika & Haryadi (2026), neither of which used a quiz-based game format or a two-cycle CAR design. The findings are consistent with research showing that interactive and repeated game-based interventions can strengthen information evaluation and reading comprehension. van der Linden et al. (2021) emphasize that corrective and pre-emptive strategies can improve credibility judgments, while Literat et al. (2021) demonstrate the effectiveness of game-based news literacy.

Similar benefits were reported by Reyes-Rodríguez and Chicaiza-Medina (2025), Shao et al. (2025), and Leal Uhlig et al. (2023), who found that digital games and gamified platforms improved reading comprehension and motivation. Thus, Zep Quiz may enhance news-text comprehension by transforming reading into an interactive, feedback-rich learning activity.

Observations also revealed a clear link between teacher performance and student engagement: when teachers managed instruction well, despite still needing to improve motivation, time management, and evaluation, students were more participative, enthusiastic, and reflective. This supports Anwar and Jasiah (2024) and Salsabila et al. (2021), who argue that the effectiveness of educational media depends as much on teacher facilitation as on the medium itself, and aligns with Lanos et al. (2022) on the ongoing need for teachers to strengthen instructional innovation, as well as with Sulastri and Thamimi's (2025) local-wisdom-based self-directed learning model, which similarly places teacher facilitation at the core of successful news text instruction.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis and discussion presented, it can be concluded that the implementation of the educational game-based interactive medium "Zep Quiz" is effective in improving the news text comprehension of Grade VII students at SMP Bina Utama. The most salient finding of this study is the consistent, cycle-by-cycle improvement across all three success indicators: the average score rose from 69.88% (Cycle I, sufficient category) to 85.35% (Cycle II, very high category), the classical mastery rate rose from 52.94% to 94.11%, and the mean N-Gain rose from 0.44 to 0.53, both remaining within the medium category while showing a measurable increase of 0.09. The main contribution of this study lies in demonstrating, through a Classroom Action Research design, that a quiz-based educational game medium can be adapted specifically for news text comprehension, a material that demands not only general reading skill but also the precise identification of the 5W+1H elements, structural analysis of the lead-body-tail format, and the critical differentiation between fact and opinion.

In doing so, this study extends prior work on Zep Quiz and comparable platforms, which has largely focused on science, mathematics, narrative texts, or writing skills, by providing procedural evidence of how such media should be planned, implemented, observed, and reflected upon cyclically in order to sustain and deepen comprehension gains, rather than producing a single, one-time improvement. The sample for this study was limited to a small scale at a single school, conducted over only two cycles, and did not utilize a control group therefore, the results cannot be generalized. Future research should involve a larger number of schools and students, compare Zep Quiz with other platforms, and employ more cycles and a control group to obtain more robust evidence.

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