

“Improving the Grade Eight Students’ Participation and Their Reading Comprehension Achievement by Using Numbered Heads Together Technique at MTsN Arjasa”

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Abstract

This classroom action research was intended to improve the grade eight students’ participation and their reading comprehension achievement by using Numbered Heads Together (NHT) Technique at MTsN Arjasa. This research was conducted in two cycles. The subjects of the research were the students of class VIII-C chosen purposively. The data collection methods of this research were a reading comprehension achievement test, observation, documentation, and interview. The collected data were analyzed by using statistic with percentage formula. The result of the students’ active participation increased 13.82, from 63.33% in Cycle 1 to 77.15% in Cycle 2. Moreover, the result of the students’ reading comprehension achievement improved 9.99% from 66.7% in Cycle 1 to 76.66% in Cycle 2. The research found that the use of NHT Technique could improve the grade eight students' participation and their reading comprehension achievement. Therefore, it is suggested that the English teachers use NHT as an alternative Technique to teach reading comprehension.

Keywords: *Numbered Heads Together (NHT) Technique, Reading Comprehension Achievement, Classroom Action Research.*

Introduction

English is an international language. It is used by many people all over the world. They use it as the first language, the second language, or the foreign language. Moreover, most of the sources of information, including book, science, and technology are written in English. Therefore, people need to master English both in oral and written forms.

English is considered as a foreign language in Indonesia. It means that Indonesian people do not use English for daily life. They only learn and practice English when they have English subject at schools. Consequently, mastering English is very difficult for the learners because there are many differences between English and their mother tongue.

Based on 2006 curriculum, reading is one of the four skills that should be learn by the students of junior and senior high schools. [1] This skill has a great function in mastering English since reading is a way to get knowledge and information about something. By reading, the students are able to get some information stated in the text. From the explanation above, it can be inferred that mastering reading skill is very important for the students because most activities of English at school usually involve reading.

From the preliminary study that was conducted in MTs N Arjasa by doing informal interview with the English teacher on December 5th 2014, it was revealed that most of the grade eight students especially class VIII C still could not achieve the standard requirement score (KKM) of

English which was 75. The mean score of the last reading test in class VIII C was 71.3. There were only 45.1 % or 13 students out of 30 students who got the standard score. Their scores were between 75 up to 85. They got the standard score because they always paid attention to the teacher and they could answer the teacher’s questions better than the rest of the students. Obviously, there were 54.9% or 17 students out of 30 students got under the standard score. Their scores were between 65 up to 70. The English teacher said that they found some difficulties in comprehending the words meaning, sentences meaning, and paragraph meaning of the text.

Based on the classroom observation done by the researcher on December 8th 2014, it was found that those students were passive in the teaching learning process. There were some students who did not pay much attention to the teacher. Moreover, they never answered the teacher’s question seriously. When the teacher delivered a question, they only smiled and talked to each other. Besides, they asked their mates to answer the teacher’s question. It can be said that, the students were less motivated in learning reading comprehension, and actually they did not understand well about the text although the teacher repeated the explanation several times.

Based on the problems above, it is important to overcome the students’ participation and their reading comprehension achievement. There are many teaching strategies that can be used to teach reading comprehension. One of them is

Cooperative Learning. In Cooperative Learning, students work together on academic tasks in small groups to help themselves and their teammates learn together [2]. In other words, this strategy concerns more on cooperation rather than competition.

There are some teaching models that can be used in Cooperative Learning. In this research, the researcher used Numbered Heads Together (NHT) to overcome the students' problem in the reading class. Numbered Heads Together is a technique that trains the students to work in groups and think together to solve the problems given by the teacher. NHT technique provides an incentive from the students to harness their interest in socializing to academic agenda, to invest the learning of their teammates and to work hard themselves [3]. In this technique, every member of the groups should share their ideas together. They have to discuss the answer of the problems before the teacher calls the number of the representative of each group. Every member should be ready and know the best answer because the teacher will call the number of the students randomly

The previous research was conducted by Wijaya in SMP Muhammadiyah 2 Kalisat in 2011/2012 academic year. It was proved that Numbered heads Together Technique could improve the students' reading comprehension achievement [4]. In addition, Izzaty (2014) found that, Numbered Heads Together (NHT) could improve class VIII E students' reading comprehension achievement at SMP N 4 Jember in 2013/2014 academic year [5]. She used descriptive text as the materials in her research. Besides, an experimental research conducted by Agustin (2013) proved that the application of NHT technique significantly influenced the students' reading comprehension achievement of the eighth grade students of SMPN 2 Tanggul jember [6].

Based on the background and the research findings above, the researcher was interested in conducting a research entitled "Improving the Grade Eight Students' Participation and Their Reading Comprehension Achievement by Using Numbered Heads Together Technique at MTs N Arjasa".

Research Method

The purpose of this research was to improve grade VIII-C students' reading comprehension achievement at MTs N Arjasa by using Numbered Heads Together (NHT) Technique. Classroom Action Research was used in this research because this research design has a function to improve the students' performance in learning reading comprehension.

The research area of this research was determined by using purposive method. MTsN Arjasa was chosen because the grade eight students in this school had problems in learning reading comprehension. In addition, the headmaster and the English teacher gave permission to conduct this research. Besides, the English teacher had never applied Numbered Heads Together (NHT) Technique in teaching reading comprehension.

The subjects of this research were class VIII-C of MTs N Arjasa. They were chosen because this class had the lowest mean score of reading (71.3). There were only 13 students

or 45.1% out of 30 students who got score 75 and higher. Besides, they were many students who did not pay much attention to the teacher during the teaching learning process of English, especially in reading comprehension class.

There were primary data and supporting data collected by the researcher in this research. The primary data were taken through a reading comprehension achievement test and observation. Meanwhile, the supporting data were collected through interview and documentation.

The indicators of the students' active participation to be observed were:

1. Reading the text, re-reading the text, or/and consulting dictionary actively
2. Writing the answer individually on the sheet appropriately
3. Putting heads together cooperatively
4. Standing up and ready to answer the posed questions seriously
5. Stating the answer of the posed questions given by the teacher seriously

Note: The students were claimed as the active students if they could full fill at least 3 indicators.

In calculating the percentage of the students' participation and the students' reading comprehension achievement, the researcher used statistic with percentage formula like the following formula [7]:

$$\frac{A}{N} \times 100\%$$

Notes :

A = the total number of the students who fulfill at least 3 indicators

N = the total number of the students joining reading class by using NHT technique

$$\frac{A}{N} \times 100\%$$

Notes :

A= the total number of the students who get at least 75

N= the total number of the students doing the test

Research Results

The Results of Observation in Cycle 1

The classroom observation was conducted during the teaching learning process of reading comprehension by using Numbered Heads Together (NHT) technique. Observation was used in order to know the students' participation during the teaching learning process of reading comprehension by using NHT technique in Cycle 1. At that time, the observation was done in two meetings

and all of them were carried out by the English teacher. The observation in the first meeting of Cycle 1 was carried out on Tuesday, March, 24th, 2015 at 10.15 a.m – 11.45 a.m. Meanwhile, the observation in the second meeting of Cycle 1 was conducted on Friday, March 27th, 2015 at 07.15- 08.45 a.m. There were five indicators observed by using observation checklist, namely 1) reading the text, re-reading the text, or/and consulting dictionary actively, 2) writing the answer individually on the sheet appropriately, 3) putting heads together cooperatively, 4) standing up and ready to answer the posed questions seriously, 5) stating the answer of the posed questions given by the teacher seriously. The students were categorized as active students if they fulfilled at least three indicators.

The purpose of the results of observation in Cycle 1 was to know the students activeness during the teaching learning process.

The formula:

$$\frac{A}{N} \times 100\%$$

Meeting 1

Active students = $\frac{18}{30} \times 100 = 60\%$

Meeting 2

Active students = $\frac{20}{30} \times 100 = 66.67\%$

Notes :

A= the total number of the students who fulfill at least 3 indicators

N = the total number of the students joining reading class by using NHT technique

(Taken from Cohen, 2007:423)

After finding out the percentage of the students' active participation in each meeting of Cycle 1, the calculation had to be continued to find out the average result of the students' participation. Its purpose was to know whether the required percentage that was 75% had been achieved or not. The calculation of the average result of the students' participation was presented in the following table.

Table 1. The Results of the Students' participation in Cycle 1

| No. | Meeting | Percentage of Active students |
|---------|-----------|-------------------------------|
| 1. | Meeting 1 | 60% |
| 2. | Meeting 2 | 66.67% |
| Average | | 63.33% |

Based on table above, it could be seen that there were 18 students out of 30 students who were active joining reading class through NHT technique in the first meeting. While there were 12 who did not categorized as active students.

Therefore, the percentage of the students' participation in the first meeting was 60%. Meanwhile, there was an improvement happened in the second meeting. There were 20 students were categorized as active students, and there were 10 students were passive in reading class. The percentage of the students' active participation in the second meeting was 66.67%. It can be said that there was an improvement of class VIII C students' participation from the first meeting to the second meeting, although it did not achieve yet the required target percentage of the students' participation that was at least 75%. Therefore, it needed more improvement of the students' participation

The Results of The Reading Comprehension Achievement Test in Cycle 1.

Administering the reading comprehension test was the product evaluation of this research. It was done in the third meeting of Cycle 1 on Tuesday, March, 31th, 2015 at 10.15 a.m – 11.15 a.m. The time allocation for the reading test was 60 minutes. The reading comprehension test had 20 questions of multiple choice and 10 questions of true false statement. They covered 8 test items of word comprehension, 8 test items of sentence comprehension, 6 test items of paragraph comprehension, and 8 test items of text comprehension. There two texts in the test entitled "The Crow and the Oyster" and "The fox and the Crow".

There were 30 students joining the reading comprehension test and no one was absent at that time.

Based on Table above, there were 30 students in doing the reading comprehension achievement test of Cycle 1. The analysis of students' reading comprehension test was done in order to know the percentage of the students who got score 75 or higher.

The result of reading comprehension test above reported that there were 20 students (66.67%) who could achieve the standard minimum score that was 75, and 10 students (33.33%) who could not achieve the standard minimum score that was 75. It could be concluded that, the action in Cycle 1 had not reached the success criteria of the research yet. Therefore, the second Cycle needed to be conducted by revising some weaknesses related to the use of Numbered Heads Together (NHT) technique in reading class.

The Results of the Action in Cycle 2

This sub chapter presents the result of the action in Cycle 2. They covered the implementation of action in Cycle 2, the result of observations in Cycle 2, the results of the students' reading comprehension test in Cycle 2, and the results of reflection in Cycle 2. Those aspects will be explained in the following section

The results of observation in Cycle 2

The observation was also done in two meetings. It was done collaboratively between the researcher and the English teacher. As stated before, observation was used to measure the students' active participation during the teaching learning process of reading comprehension by

using NHT technique. The observation instrument of this research was in the form of checklist. The indicators observed of this research were: 1) thinking about the answer of the posed question actively, 2) writing the answer individually on the sheet appropriately, 3) sharing and confirming the answers of the posed questions cooperatively, 4) standing up and ready to answer the posed questions seriously, 5) stating the answer of the posed questions given by the teacher seriously. The students were categorized as active students if they fulfilled at least three indicators.

As explained before, this research was considered successful if at least 75% the students got score ≥ 75 for their reading test. The results of the observation checklist are presented in the following table.

Table 2 The Results of the Students' Active Participation in Cycle 2

| No. | Meeting | Percentage of Active students |
|---------|-----------|-------------------------------|
| 1. | Meeting 1 | 75% |
| 2. | Meeting 2 | 79.31% |
| Average | | 77.15% |

Based on the results presented on the table above, it was known that there were 21 out of 28 students or 75% students categorized as active students in meeting 1 of Cycle 2. Moreover, in meeting 2 of Cycle 2, there were 23 or 79.31% active students in teaching learning process. From the result above, it can be concluded that the percentage of the students' active participation in Cycle 2 had achieved the required target percentage of the students' active participation. That was at least 75%. In addition, this result showed that the students' active participation increased 13.82%, from 63.33% in Cycle 1 to 77.15% in Cycle 2.

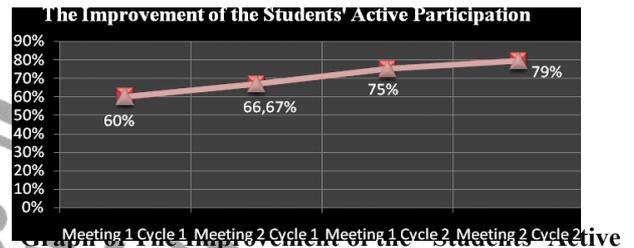
The Results of Students' Reading Comprehension Test in Cycle 2

The reading comprehension test as the product evaluation in Cycle 2 was conducted in the third meeting of Cycle 2 on Tuesday, April 28th, 2015 at 10.15 – 11.05 a.m. and it lasted for 60 minutes. The test was in the form of multiple choice and true false statement. The total items of the test were 30. The items were constructed by the researcher. There were 2 narrative texts entitled "The Grasshopper and the Ants" and "The wind and the Sun".

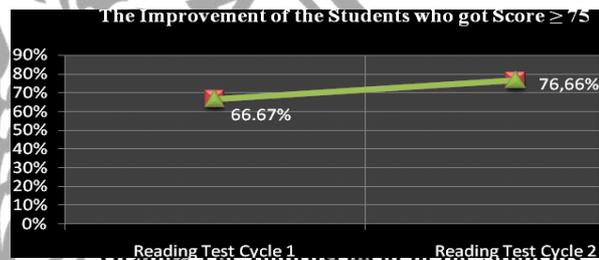
The result of observation in Meeting 1 of second cycle showed that there were 21 out of 28 students (75%) and in Meeting 2 of second cycle showed that there were 23 out of 29 (79.31%) actively participated in teaching learning process of reading comprehension by using NHT technique. The average result of observation between Meeting 1 and Meeting 2 of second cycle was 77.15 %. Besides, the result

of reading comprehension test in the Cycle 2 was 76.66 % of 30 students achieved the standard criteria of the research that was 75. Based on the results of observation and students' reading test in Cycle 2, both of product and process evaluation have achieved the target of the research.

In conclusion, the result of the observation and students' reading comprehension test in Cycle 2 had shown improvement and achieved the standard criteria of the research successfully. Therefore, it was not necessary to continue to the next cycle. At last, the cycle was stopped. The improvement can be seen in the following tables and graphs.



Participation From Cycle 1 to Cycle 2



Reading Test from Cycle 1 to Cycle 2

Discussion

Considering the results of observations of the students' active participation and their reading comprehension achievement, there were some weak points happened in Cycle 1. First, the researcher used full English to class VIII-C during the teaching learning process. As a result, the students could not understand well about the teacher's explanations. In addition, they seemed confused while the teacher guided them to do NHT steps. Second, there were many students who forgot to bring their own dictionaries, so it made them confused and did not understand well about the meaning of the unfamiliar words. Moreover, they did not answer the questions seriously. Sometimes, they were doing prediction to answer the posed questions. Third, it was the first time for the students working in groups in doing the comprehension' questions, so they might need more explanation and guidance from the teacher about how to implement Numbered Heads Together (NHT) technique. There were some students who did not do the steps of implementing NHT Technique seriously, for example they felt uncomfortable when they should stand up and sit down

several times while they were doing the step of *Put Heads Together*. Fourth, in Cycle 1 the researcher made the group formations. It was done by considering of the students' ability level. In fact, the students did not feel comfortable in doing the exercises with the teacher's formation. It happened because they usually did everything with their close friends.

The weaknesses in Cycle 1 were necessary to be solved. Thus, the researcher and the English teacher were doing discussion to overcome the problems. The first, the researcher used English and Indonesian during the teaching learning process. As the result, the students could understand well about the teacher's explanation and also the teacher's instructions during the teaching learning process. Second, the researcher made a new rule for the students. The rule was each group had to bring 2 or more dictionaries. The group could not join the lesson if there was not any dictionary on their tables. In fact, this new rule could make the students became more active in reading the text. As the result, they could be easier in understanding the words meaning. In other words, they did not take longer time to answer the posed questions delivered by the teacher. Third, the researcher considered to explain briefly about what is meant by NHT and how to implement this technique. The researcher motivated the students to do all the steps of NHT patiently. At that time, when the students felt tired while putting heads together, the teacher allowed the students to be relax for a moment. Fourth, the students did not feel comfortable with the teams settled by the teacher. Thus, the teacher allowed the students to make their own members in each team. The students felt comfortable and they were more active in teaching reading comprehension by using Numbered Heads Together (NHT) Technique.

In conclusion, Numbered Heads Together (NHT) was a fun and a new interesting learning activity for both the teacher and the students. Moreover it also an appropriate technique to solve the daily problems faced by the students. Lie (2002:37) states that the students must have willingness to cooperate with another in Cooperative Learning that will give benefit to each other. [8] Thus, this technique was able to improve grade VIII- C students' active participation and their reading comprehension at MTs N Arjasa in the 2014/2015 academic year.

Conclusions and Suggestions

Based on the data analysis and the discussion in the previous chapter, it can be concluded the following points:

- The use of NHT Technique could improve the grade eight students' participation in the teaching learning process of reading comprehension at MTsN Arjasa.
- The use of NHT Technique could improve the grade eight students' reading comprehension achievement at MTsN Arjasa.

From the results, the English teachers are suggested to use Numbered Heads Together (NHT) technique to teach reading comprehension. It is because this technique could improve the students'

active participation and the students' reading comprehension achievement. In addition, it was known that this technique could invite the students' participation. The students also felt easier in comprehending reading comprehension text. As a result, the students' reading achievement could improve and be better. In addition, the students are suggested to be more active in joining the reading class by using NHT technique. It is used to make the reading class can run well. At last, they can improve their reading ability. Finally, it is suggested to the future researchers who are interested in improving the students' participation and their reading comprehension achievement to use NHT Technique. Hopefully, the future researchers can make the students more active in joining the reading class. Moreover, they can improve the students' reading comprehension achievement.

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