

# **EFL Education Journal**

**Siti Sundari**      **The Economics Students' Tenses Mastery and Their Participation by Using the Inductive Approach at the Faculty of Economics, the University of Jember**

**Moh. Rofid Fikroni,  
Musli Ariani,  
Sugeng Ariyanto**      **An Analysis of the Eleventh Grade Students' Speaking Performance based on Krashen's (1982) Monitor Hypothesis at SMAN 4 Jember**

**Ika Yuni Kartika,  
Zakiyah Tasnim,  
Bambang Suharjito**      **Using Individual Pictures to Improve the Eighth Grade Students' Active Participation and Their Descriptive Text Writing Achievement at SMPN 7 Probolinggo**

**Mergina Sefa D H,  
Zakiyah Tasnim,  
Made Adi Andayani.**      **Using Numbered Heads Together (NHT) Technique to Improve the Eighth Grade Students' Active Participation and Their Reading Comprehension Achievement at MTsN Arjasa**

**Riantino Yudistira,  
Aan Erlyana Fardhani,  
I Putu Sukmaantara**      **The Effect of Using the Serial Slideshow of Single Pictures on the the Eighth Grade Students' Descriptive Writing Achievement at SMPN 1 Mayang, Jember**

**Adelya Dwi A,  
Wiwiek Eko Bindarti,  
I Putu Sukmaantara**      **Improving the Seventh Grade Students' Vocabulary Achievement through English Songs at SMP Negeri 11 Jember**

**Rahmat Sudana,  
Bambang Suharjito,  
Asih Santihastuti**      **Using Round-table Model of Cooperative Learning to improve the Eight Grade Students' Vocabulary Mastery and their Active Participation at SMPN 2 Banyuwangi**

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# EFL EDUCATION JOURNAL

- Siti Sundari**      **The Economics Students' Tenses Mastery and Their Participation by Using the Inductive Approach at the Faculty of Economics, the University of Jember**      **253-264**
- Moh. Rofid Fikroni,  
Musli Ariani,  
Sugeng Ariyanto**      **An Analysis of the Eleventh Grade Students' Speaking Performance based on Krashen's (1982) Monitor Hypothesis at SMAN 4 Jember**      **265-276**
- Ika Yuni Kartika,  
Zakiyah Tasnim,  
Bambang Suharjito**      **Using Individual Pictures to Improve the Eighth Grade Students' Active Participation and Their Descriptive Text Writing Achievement at SMPN 7 Probolinggo**      **277-284**
- Mergina Sefa D H,  
Zakiyah Tasnim,  
Made Adi Andayani.**      **Using Numbered Heads Together (NHT) Technique to Improve the Eighth Grade Students' Active Participation and Their Reading Comprehension Achievement at MTsN Arjasa**      **285-292**
- Riantino Yudistira,  
Aan Erlyana Fardhani,  
I Putu Sukmaantara**      **The Effect of Using the Serial Slideshow of Single Pictures on the the Eighth Grade Students' Descriptive Writing Achievement at SMPN 1 Mayang, Jember**      **293-300**
- Adelya Dwi A,  
Wiwiek Eko Bindarti,  
I Putu Sukmaantara**      **Improving the Seventh Grade Students' Vocabulary Achievement through English Songs at SMP Negeri 11 Jember**      **300-308**
- Rahmat Sudana,  
Bambang Suharjito,  
Asih Santihastuti**      **Using Round-table Model of Cooperative Learning to improve the Eight Grade Students' Vocabulary Mastery and their Active Participation at SMPN 2 Banyuwangi**      **309-318**

## Using Numbered Heads Together (NHT) Technique to Improve the Eighth Grade Students' Active Participation and Their Reading Comprehension Achievement at MTsN Arjasa

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**Abstract:** This research was intended to improve students' active participation and their reading comprehension achievement by using the NHT technique. The research design was Classroom Action Research (CAR), and the research subjects were the students of class VIII-C at MTsN Arjasa chosen by using purposive method. The research data were collected by test, observation, documentation, and interview. This research was conducted in two cycles, and the result of observation in cycle 1 showed that there were 63.33% of the students categorized active, and it increased to 77.15% in cycle 2. Moreover, the result of the test proved that 66.67% or 20 students out of 30 students could achieve the target minimum score (75) in cycle 1, and it increased to 76.66% or 23 students in cycle 2. This means that using the NHT Technique could improve the eighth grade students' active participation and their reading comprehension achievement.

**Keywords:** Numbered Heads Together (NHT) Technique, Reading Comprehension

Based on 2006 curriculum, reading is one of the four skills that should be learnt by the students of junior and senior high schools (Depdiknas: 2006). This skill has a great function in mastering English since reading is a way to get information and knowledge. By reading, the students are able to get some information stated in the text. In other words, mastering the reading skill is very important for the students because most of their activities in learning English at their school usually involve reading.

The result of the informal interview with the English teacher in the preliminary study at MTs N Arjasa in 2014 revealed that most of the eighth grade students

especially class VIII C remained unable to 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 experienced difficulties in comprehending the words meaning, sentences meaning, and paragraph meaning of the text.

The result of the classroom observation in 2014 showed that the students of the school 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 did not respect to her. 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 the text well although the teacher repeated the explanation several times. For this reason, it is important to overcome the students' active 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 (Lie: 2002).

In Cooperative Learning, students work together on academic tasks in small groups to help themselves and their teammates learn together (Walker: 2002). In other words, this strategy concerns cooperation rather than competition. There are some teaching models that can be used in cooperative learning, such as Numbered Heads

Together (NHT). It is a technique that trains the students to work in group and think together to solve the problems given by the teacher. NHT technique (Kagan: 2010) 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 (Cooper: 1990). 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 may call the number of the students randomly. In this research, NHT was used to overcome the students' problem in the reading class.

The previous research conducted by Wijaya (2012) at SMP Muhammadiyah 2 Kalisat proved that NHT technique could improve the students' reading comprehension achievement. In addition, Izzaty (2014) also found that NHT could improve the class VIII E students' reading comprehension achievement at SMPN 4 Jember in 2014. Similarly, 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.

The important role of the NHT technique in the above research finding in reading comprehension might evidently reliable if another research is conducted at different schools. Therefore, the NHT technique is still the main concern in this research.

## **The research method on students' reading comprehension**

The purpose of this research was to improve grade VIII-C students' reading comprehension achievement at MTsN Arjasa by using the NHT technique. Classroom Action Research (CAR) was used in this research because this research

design has a function to improve the students' performance in learning reading comprehension (Elliott: 1991).

The research area of this research was determined by using purposive method (McMillan: 1992). MTsN Arjasa was chosen because based on the result of preliminary study the eighth grade students at this school had problems in learning reading comprehension. Besides, they were not familiar with the NHT technique in reading comprehension. Therefore, the research subjects were the students of VIII-C at 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. The research data were collected by test, observation, interview and documentation.

The research data were analyzed by using the simple statistic formula with percentage in  $E = \frac{n}{N} \times 100\%$ , (Ali: 1993) where E is the percentage of the students' activeness or of the students who get reading score at least 75; n is the total number of the students who fulfill at least 3 indicators or who get at least 75; and N is the total number of the students joining reading class by using NHT technique or of the students who did the test.

### **The empirical findings of students' reading comprehension**

The average result of the students' active participation in cycle 1 was only 63.33%. This means the target percentage of the students' active participation was not achieved yet. Therefore, the action was continued to cycle 2. The average result of the students' active participation increased 13.82, from 63.33% in cycle 1 to



77.15% in cycle 2. The finding proved that the use of NHT Technique could improve the students' active participation.

Meanwhile, the result of reading comprehension achievement test in cycle 1 indicated that only 20 students (66.67%) out of 30 students achieved the standard minimum score that was 75. This result did not achieve the success criteria of the research yet. The actions were continued to cycle 2. In cycle 2, the result of the students' reading comprehension achievement test showed that there were 23 students (76.66%) out of 30 students could achieve the standard minimum score that was 75. This means that the result of the students' reading comprehension achievement improved 9.99% from 66.7% in cycle 1 to 76.66% in cycle 2. This result showed that the success criteria of this research had been achieved in cycle 2

### **The pedagogical implications of students' reading comprehension**

The use of NHT technique in teaching reading evidently improved the students' active participation during the teaching learning process of reading class since this technique trains the students to be responsible in doing the exercises and guides them to be confident in finding the problem solving. It can be seen by the improvement of the students' active participation from cycle 1 to cycle 2. Besides, the students can do the exercises easily because they work with their teams.

Considering the results of the observation of the students' active participation and their reading comprehension achievement, there were some weak points that happened in cycle 1. First, the teacher used full English to communicate orally with class VIII-C during the teaching learning process. As a result, the students could not understand the teacher's explanation. In addition, they seemed confused while the teacher guided them to do the NHT steps. Second, there were many students

who forgot to bring their own dictionaries so that they got confused the meaning of the unfamiliar words. Moreover, they did not answer the questions seriously. Sometimes, they tried to predict the answer to the exposed questions. Third, it was the first time for the students working in groups in doing the comprehension' questions, so they needed more explanation and guidance from the teacher about how to implement the NHT technique. Fourth, in cycle 1 the teacher did not allow the students to make their own groups. Although, the grouping was made by considering the degree of students' ability, the students did not feel comfortable in working on the exercises because they usually did everything with their close friends.

The weaknesses in cycle 1 were necessary to be solved. The researcher and the English teacher discussed the weaknesses and the result showed that the teacher had to use the English and Indonesian language during the teaching learning process. Further, the teacher had to make a new rule for the students that each group had to bring 2 or more dictionaries. If any group forgot to bring their dictionaries, they could not join the lesson. Besides, the teacher had to explain briefly about what was meant by the NHT technique and how to implement this technique. Lastly, the teacher allowed the students to make their own members in each team. The above result of reflecting on the weaknesses of cycle 1 was then used to make the lesson plan for cycle 2 of which the result showed improvement in both the process and the product of the teaching and learning process.

The above research findings proved that the NHT technique played an important role in the process of increasing the students' participation because it was a fun and a new interesting learning activity for both of the teacher and students. Moreover it was also an appropriate technique to solve the daily problems faced by the students.

Therefore, this technique could improve grade VIII- C students' active participation and their reading comprehension at MTs N Arjasa in the 2014/2015 academic year.

## Conclusion

Based on the data analysis and the discussion in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that using the NHT technique could improve the eighth grade students' active participation and their reading comprehension achievement in the teaching learning process of reading comprehension at MTsN Arjasa.

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Therefore, the English teacher at the school should use the NHT technique to teach reading comprehension, and the students are suggested to be more active in joining the reading class. Besides, the future researcher who needs to conduct the same research is expected to make use of this research finding as the reference showing that the NHT technique can be used to improve students's reading comprehension achievement.

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