

**IMPROVING THE EIGHTH YEAR STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION BY
USING NUMBERED HEADS TOGETHER (NHT) AT SMP MUHAMMADIYAH 2
KALISAT – JEMBER**

**MENINGKATKAN KEMAMPUAN READING COMPREHENSION SISWA KELAS 8
MELALUI *NUMBERED HEADS TOGETHER (NHT)* DI SMP MUHAMMADIYAH 2
KALISAT – JEMBER**

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ABSTRACT

Reading refers to the ability to read and understand the written text. Reading is one way to find information. The use of Numbered Heads Together (NHT) model offered the students to work in groups and help them out to improve their reading comprehension. This research was done through cycle model and the data of the research were taken from the result of observation and reading test. After having two cycles of the implementation, it showed that there was an improvement. The students' active participation increased from 60,86% to 73.91% while the result of students reading test increased from 60,86% of the students to 73.91% or 17 students. Based on this result, it can be concluded that the use of NHT could improve the eighth year students' reading comprehension.

Keywords: *Numbered Heads Together (NHT), reading comprehension, written text*

ABSTRAK

Membaca adalah merupakan kemampuan untuk memahami teks tulis. Membaca merupakan salah satu cara untuk menemukan informasi. Model Numbered Heads Together (NHT) memberikan siswa kesempatan untuk bekerja sama dalam grup dan membantu mereka untuk meningkatkan kemampuan membaca. Penelitian ini dilakukan dalam bentuk siklus dan data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah hasil observasi dan tes tulis membaca. Setelah dilakukan dalam dua siklus, hasil menunjukkan adanya peningkatan. Kektifan belajar siswa meningkat dari 60,86% ke 73,91% sedangkan hasil tes tulis membaca meningkat dari 60,86% menjadi 73,91% atau 17 siswa. Berdasarkan hal tersebut, dapat disimpulkan bahwa penggunaan NHT dapat meningkatkan kemampuan membaca siswa kelas 8 SMP.

Kata kunci: *Numbered Heads Together (NHT), reading comprehension, teks tulis*

A. INTRODUCTION

Reading enables the students to gain some information through reading. As it is one of the language skills, reading skill has a great function in English subject mastery. The main purpose of teaching reading to the students is to develop their communicative competence both spoken and written form to reach the level of functional literacy (BSNP, 2006). Through reading activities, they are expected to understand what the author wants to say in reading texts. In order to gain the purpose, the students must have a good reading ability. They cannot just read the language of the text but they should comprehend the text content. Fairbrain and Winch (1996 : 8) note that we read in order to gain meaning from the text. To get the understanding of the reading text is the main activity. In line, Grellet (1996 : 8) also states that it is important for the students who deal with the English language through reading activities.

Furthermore, reading is one among the other skills which should also be mastered by the students to gain English language comprehensively. In that case, the students of junior high school are also required to learn it. Specifically, the objective of teaching reading to the eight year students is they are expected to be able to comprehend the meaning of functional texts and short essays in the form of descriptive, recount, and narrative text which have relation to their surrounding environment (BSNP, 2006). In fact, some of the students may feel that reading comprehension is difficult. In reading activities, the students not only read the text but also comprehend the text. Between reading and comprehending the text, the students should be familiar with the words used that these words help them understand the content of the text.

Based on the preliminary study conducted in SMP Muhammadiyah 2

Kalisat, it was revealed that the eighth year students still experienced difficulties in comprehending the meaning of words, sentences, and paragraphs. They also had problem in identifying the general and specific information of the text, so that they did not comprehend the whole text. Besides, the English teacher often asked them to read individually and invited them to answer the questions. In fact, they lacked of motivation and less activeness. It was also found that there were only 45.1% or 14 students who got the passing grade. It means that there were less than 50% of the students who succeeded in reading activities.

Based on the problem above, it is important to overcome the students' difficulties, so that their reading comprehension can be improved. As it is known that overcoming the students' difficulties is essential, cooperative learning can be a problem solving . According to Joyce (2005), cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups through which students work together to maximize their own and each other learning. It can be said that cooperative learning is a learning activity in which students work together to accomplish shared learning. By learning cooperatively, students are given the responsibility of creating the learning community where all the students participate in significant and meaningful ways.

Cooperative learning also requires the students work together to achieve goals which they could not achieve individually. It is also said by Dornyei (1997:482) that in cooperative learning, students settle small group in order to achieve common learning goal via cooperation. Crandall as quoted in Arnold (1999:244) says that cooperative learning offers many positive affective features which encourage language learning, while also supporting development of prosocial, academic and higher order thinking skill.

Number Heads Together (NHT) is one of the cooperative learning models. It offers the students to work in group. By taking the advantages of NHT model, they are able to socialize one another that it helps them to work in group to solve the problem. Cooper (2011 : 267) states that Numbered Heads Together provides the students with an incentive to sharpen the students' interests in socializing to an academic agenda, to invest in their teammates learning, and to work hard themselves. The students work in groups and they think together to discuss the answer with the members of the group.

This model offers group success orientation. The group's success depends on every individual's success because every student has his or her own responsibility to do the assignment based on the result of the discussion. The benefit of this strategy is cooperative work and the group success depends on individual success, so every member cannot entrust to the other members without working. Each students has the same chance to support their team to get maximal score. Millis (2002) states that Numbered Heads Together (NHT) is one of cooperative learning models that has some advantages, they are:

1. Promote discussion and both individual and group accountability.
2. Increase student's retention.
3. Enhance student satisfaction with their learning experience.
4. Each students has the same chance to support their team to get maximal score.
5. Help to promote positive competition.

To be successful in implementing NHT, there are some procedures should be followed. As it is proposed by Cooper (2011: 266), there are 6 stages in NHT model.

1. **Plan.** Identifying appropriate practice material.

2. **Form teams.** Assigning students using five member teams only as needed. In general it is best to make teams approximately equal in the range of student ability.
3. **Assign numbers to the students.** Giving each student on the team a number from 1 to 5 at random.
4. **Pose the questions.** When the teams are settled and the student number the teacher pose a question.
5. **Call for heads together.** The students put their heads together to make sure that everyone in the group has the answer.
6. **Call for the number of respondents.** The teacher calls a number from 1-6. All the students with that number stand. One of the standing students is called upon to give their group's answer. Standing students with different answers can be called upon to explain their group's thinking.

On the other hand, the implementation of NHT model is to help the students in reading comprehension. In this case, reading comprehension covers several types of comprehension. Grellet (1996) propose four levels of comprehension based on the unit of comprehension, they are; comprehending words meaning, comprehending sentences, comprehending paragraph and comprehending text.

1. Word Comprehension

The first step in reading comprehension is to comprehend the word's meaning. Students need to comprehend most of the words in each sentence. Afterwards, they combine the words into a sentence and they try to understand the whole sentences. Then, they will be able to comprehend the paragraphs. Finally, they will be able to comprehend the text.

It is basically important in reading comprehension to understand the word's

meaning, because it is impossible for the students to comprehend the text or the material without understanding the meaning of the words. Sometimes students find unfamiliar words. Here, they must guess or decode the meaning of the words. Grellet (1996:7) states that the students have to use what they know to understand unknown elements, whether these are ideas or simple words. From decoding process it will make them to understand. As stated by Oakhil and Beard (1999:15), good readers should process word faster because they use of redundancy lightens that load on their word decoding mechanism. So, the students can only decode or guess the meaning of the words if they feel it is difficult to understand them. It can be restated that word comprehension refers to understanding the meaning of the words in the context or in the sentences.

Shortly, it can be concluded that understanding word meaning is basically important since it is impossible to comprehend the meaning of the text without understanding the word meaning of the words in it.

2. Sentence Comprehension

Wood (1991:151) defines sentence as the smallest unit in the material that we read that expresses a complete idea. Grellet (1996:15) has suggested that it is better to understand the meaning of some words constructed in sentences than to understand the meaning of word by word. Commonly, it is difficult to understand a sentence although each word is known. Sometimes, it is possible for the students to make clear comprehension of the sentence as a whole although they already have read word by word and then tend to groups of words appropriately because sentence is not as simple as words.

Wood (1991:151) further says that all sentences to be complete, they must have a subject and a predicate that give information about the subject. In addition, there are three kinds of sentences: a simple sentence express one complete thought and contain one subject and one predicate. A compound sentence contains two or more subjects and predicates since they are made up of two or more simple sentences. A complex sentence contains a simple sentence and several phrases. The phrases may also contain a subject and a predicate, but they do not express complete thought. So, the phrases are not sentences in their own.

Based on the ideas, comprehending sentence means understanding what the sentence tells about, not only the meaning of the words but also the whole sentences completely. It can be concluded that accurate understanding of sentences is important to all other comprehension skills and to the effective reading of written material.

3. Paragraph Comprehension

It becomes absolutely essential for the students to comprehend a paragraph. Wood (1991:151) points out that most paragraphs usually contain several sentences and one of these sentences, the topic sentence, introduces the main idea of the paragraph. According to Wingersky et. al (1999:31) a paragraph has three parts: a topic sentence, supporting details and a concluding sentence. Knowing the parts of the paragraph is an important basic for comprehending the meaning of a paragraph. Therefore, to understand the meaning of a paragraph, a reader must be able to identify the topic of the paragraph and state the main point made by writer and investigate the supporting details, which explain or support the main idea.

The following parts will review the parts of a paragraph in detail.

1. Identifying the topic sentence
The term used to identify this main idea is the topic sentence (Wingersky et. al, 1999:25). In fact, the main idea of a paragraph is usually stated in what is called the topic sentence. Topic sentence usually comes at the beginning or at the end of a paragraph.
2. Identifying the supporting details
Supporting details are sentences that give a clear and convincing picture of the main idea of being suggested by the topic sentence (Wingersky et. al, 1999:34). It can be said that supporting details must include facts to support the main idea or the topic.
3. The concluding sentence
Wood (1991:129) states that a conclusion focuses on a major idea that the author wants the reader to pay attention to and remember. It can be said that a concluding sentence gives an explanation about the main idea with different words in order to make the paragraph to be easier to understand.

In this research, comprehending the paragraph means understand the main idea or the topic sentence, the supporting details and the concluding sentence.

4. Text Comprehension

The aim of reading is to comprehend the text, about the message written by the author. Grellet (1996:4) says that one of the reasons for reading is reading for information (in order to find out something or in order to do something with the information got). It can be said that text comprehension refers to understanding the whole of the text, that includes understanding the general information of the text and the specific information of the text. The whole text consists of words, sentences, and paragraphs. So, to comprehend the text,

in order to get the information in the text, the students should comprehend each parts of the text, they are words, sentences, and paragraphs. Based on the explanation above, it can be said that to have a good comprehension in reading a text, students should comprehend words, sentences, and also paragraphs as a whole.

B. METHOD

This research focused on improving the students reading comprehension by using Numbered Heads Together model. In that case, Classroom Action Research was used. Elliot (1991:69) defines the action research is the study of social situation with a view to improve the quality of the action. It means that the aim of CAR is to improve the quality of teaching and learning process. Regarding to the problem of this study, CAR was proposed to improve both the students' reading comprehension through the implementation of Numbered Heads Together and their active participation.

The subjects of this research were selected purposively. They were the eighth year students of SMP Muhammadiyah 2 Kalisat – Jember who consisted of 26 students in the class. This research used cycle model (Elliot, 1991) in which each cycle covered planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting. Indeed, this research was done in two cycles. The indicators of the research success were taken from the result of students' reading comprehension and the result of observation.

The data used in this research were the result of reading comprehension test and the result of observation. Reading comprehension test was administered after the treatment by using NHT model. The research was successfully done if the research achieved at least 70% of the students who passed the passing grade, 65, and the students fulfilled at least 3 indicators of the observation.

C. DISCUSSION

The first cycle was done in 3 meetings, consisting of 2 meetings for the implementation of NHT and 1 meeting for reading test. This cycle was implemented based on the lesson plans had already made before. During the process of teaching reading by using NHT model, the students were observed to see their active participation. This result of observation was used as the data to analyze not only their active participation but also to see whether there were weaknesses or not in the implementation of NHT model.

The result of observation revealed that there were only 14 students or 60.86% of the students who were able to fulfilled at least 3 indicators to be categorized as active. Meanwhile, the standard requirement of the students' actively involved in the teaching reading comprehension by using Numbered Heads Together was at least 70% of the students who were actively involved. It means that from the results of observation, the percentage of the students' active participation could not achieve the standard requirement of the success. On the other hand, the results of reading test in Cycle 1 showed that the percentage of the students who got the passing grade that is 65 or higher was 60.86% or 14 students. It means that the students could not achieve the standard requirement of the success that was at least 70% of the students who got the passing grade that was 65 or higher.

Since the standards requirement of the research success were at least 70% of the students who could fulfill at least 3 indicators of observation and there were at least 70% of the students who got the passing grade that is 65 or higher could not be achieved by the students, it means that Cycle 2 was needed to establish to improve the students' reading comprehension. To be

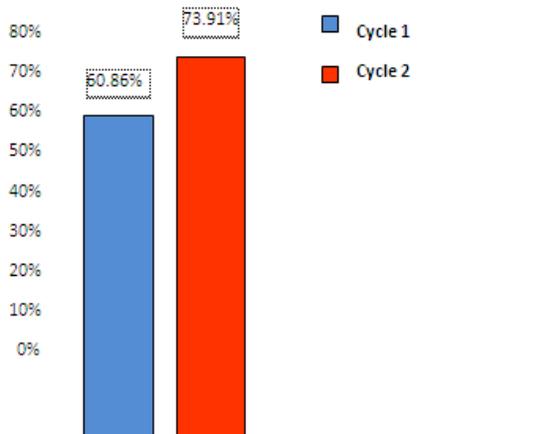
able to improve the results of students' active participation and students reading test, it was needed to revise the previous lesson plans based on the weaknesses found in cycle 1. Based on the result of observation, it was also found that the time given to the students in the main activities during teaching reading process was inappropriate. There were some additional times in the stage of reading text and students' put their heads together when they were discussing the answer. And also, the students were needed to provide more time in doing test. Time allocation in Cycle 1 for doing test was 40 minutes, then it was revised into 60 minutes for the reading test in Cycle 2.

By revising the lesson plan and giving more time to the students in doing the test, there was an improvement on the students' active participation and students' reading comprehension test. The percentage of the students who could fulfill at least 3 indicators was 73.91% of the students in observation. Meanwhile, in the students' reading test, there were 73.91% of the students who got the passing grade that was 65 or higher. In this case, it can be seen that the result of both students' active participation and students' reading test have the same percentage. However, there was no relation between students' active participation and students' reading test. It meant that it was just coincidence which made the same number of the percentage. Having known the results of observation and students' reading comprehension test in Cycle 2 were achieved the standard requirement of the research success, the action of the research stopped.

Based on the reflection above, it can be stated that the use of Numbered Heads Together is able to improve the students' reading comprehension and students' active participation. The results showed that both the students' observation

and the students' reading test have improved from Cycle 1 to Cycle 2. The improvement of the students' active participation and the students' reading comprehension test are presented by the following charts:

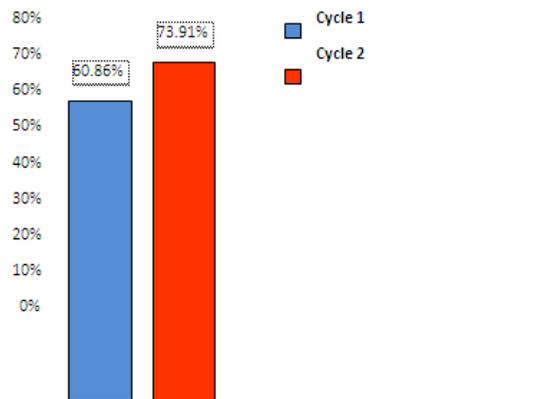
Chart 1. The improvement of the students' active participation



Based on the chart above, the result of observation in Cycle 1 showed that there were 60.86% were actively involved in the Cycle 1. The target requirement of students' active participation in Cycle 1 had not been achieved. It means that Cycle 2 was needed to be conducted to improve the students' active participation. Based on the result of students' observation in Cycle 2, the students' active participation reached the standard requirement of active participation, that is 73.91%. Thus, the target requirement of active participation in Cycle 2 had been achieved.

Meanwhile, the result of the students' reading comprehension test improved from Cycle 1 to Cycle 2. The improvement of the students' reading comprehension test is presented in the following chart:

Chart 2. The improvement of the students' reading comprehension test



Based on the chart above, it can be seen that the students who got score at least 70 increased from 60.86% in Cycle 1 to 73.91% in Cycle 2. In Cycle 1, the result of the students' reading comprehension test could not fulfill the target requirement that is at least 70% of the students who get score at least 65 or higher.

Dealing the reflection of the results of observation and the students' reading comprehension have improved, it can be concluded that the use of Numbered Heads Together can improve the eighth year students' reading comprehension at SMP Muhammadiyah 2 Kalisat.

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