

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Reading is like opening a window to the world. The more we read, the more knowledge we can get. In English lessons at school, reading is one of the four important skills that must be mastered well by students. Kusumawanti and Bharati (2018) explain that among English language skills, reading skills have the most important role for student learning success because all learning activities are initiated and developed by reading activities. In reading, students must have good reading comprehension. One of the benefits of good reading comprehension is that students can develop their way of thinking and creativity in learning which will improve their learning achievement. Therefore, in order for students to be successful in learning, they must be able to understand the intent and purpose conveyed from the readings they read.

Tarigan (2008: 7) states that reading is a process carried out and use by a reader to acquire a message which is conveyed by a writer through words that could be seen and known by the reader. In addition, reading comprehension is the process of making meaning from text (Woolley: 2011). Reading comprehension is the process of constructing meaning from a text and involves the complex coordination of several processes, including “decoding, word reading, and fluency along with the integration of background knowledge and previous experiences” (Klinger & Geisler, 2008: 65). Therefore, when we read, our brains will

automatically process the understanding of the text we read, and filter them into important points that we can conclude later.

Patel and Jain (2008: 113) state that reading is an important activity in life with which one can update his/her knowledge. This supports that students' reading comprehension skills must be well honed because by reading they can gain knowledge and messages conveyed through a text. Grabe and Stoller (2002) stated that students' ability in text comprehension is the key to success in academic achievement. Moreover, reading is an essential skill for academic success (Levine, et. al. 2000).

Elwer (2014) said that there are some students who do not understand what they read. In fact, based on the results of observations made by researcher at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Denpasar, it shows there are still many students who have problems or difficulties understanding the English text they read. Some of these problems come from various factors. The first is the internal factor, which comes from the students themselves. They have difficulties in understanding word meaning, recognizing sentence meaning, identifying specific information, finding detailed information, and inferring the communicative purpose of the text and of course this has an impact on students' low reading comprehension. The second is external factors, which include the techniques and methods of teaching teachers in the classroom. Not infrequently, teachers teach in a monotonous and non-creative way so as not to increase students' enthusiasm for learning; also do not invite students to be interactive while teaching. Third, the class atmosphere that is not conducive causes them to be often distracted by other things when the teacher is explaining.

Research conducted by Rambe (2018) at SMP N 6 Padangsidempuan and Ganggar (2018) at SMP Wisata Sanur which examined students' reading comprehension showed weaknesses and low reading comprehension of students. The low reading comprehension of students that they found was also almost the same based on the explanation above. The two previous studies have proven that the Numbered Heads Together technique can help improve students' reading comprehension. However, there are several shortcomings in the previous research, such as the discussion of the results of the study not being to the point and the researcher used a type of narrative text and also the same type of questions in each test. Therefore, in this study, it is intended to fill in the shortcomings of previous research and also to find solutions or ways out of the formulated problems. In overcoming this problem, the researcher used the Numbered Heads Together technique.

Numbered Heads Together is a cooperative learning strategy that asks each student to be responsible for studying the material. Maheasy and Rosyid (2022) stated that the Numbered Heads Together technique was proven to help improve student achievement in understanding the material. Not only that, this technique also helps students become interactive during learning. There are four steps that will be implemented in the implementation of NHT, namely Numbering, Questioning, Head Together, and Answering.

Thus, the researcher is interested in applying Numbered Head Together techniques to improve students' reading comprehension. Therefore, this research is entitled "Improving Reading Comprehension of the Eighth-grade Students of

SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Denpasar in Academic Year 2022/2023 Through Numbered Head Together (NHT)"

## **1.2 Research Problem**

Based on the problems found by researchers by conducting interviews with eighth grade students and English teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Denpasar, namely problems that arise both internally and externally by students that affect them so that it is difficult to understand English texts. With that, the purpose of this research is to provide a solution or a way out of the problems faced by students. In practice, researchers use the technique of numbered heads together to solve problems faced by students. Therefore, the research questions from this study can be formulated as follows: Can the reading comprehension of eighth-grade students of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Denpasar in the 2022/2023 academic year be improved through the Numbered Heads Together technique?

## **1.3 Objective of the Study**

Research objective describes concisely what the research is trying to achieve. A particular investigation is expected to provide a scientific solution to the research problem. Moreover, the objective of the study should be in line with the background and the research problem that has already been formulated for the present study. Furthermore, the aims any activities which were related to the specific investigation were always intended to find out a scientific solution to the research problem that has been previously formulated and determined. Based on the research problems in the background, the purpose of this research is to

improve students' reading comprehension by using numbered heads together technique of eighth-grade students of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Denpasar in the academic year 2022/2023.

#### **1.4 Limitation of the Study**

In reading comprehension, there are many broad topics to discuss. Therefore, in this study, research limitations play an important role in making the discussion of research problems more specific and focused. Based on the third basic competence in the syllabus of class VIII students, it is about understanding the structure of the text and linguistics elements in carrying out the function of a social descriptive paragraph that discuss things, people, places, animals. Therefore, in this study researcher focused on improving students' reading comprehension of the descriptive paragraph through numbered heads together technique for class VIII students of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Denpasar in the academic year 2022/2023. In this study, researcher took the VIII D class.

The researcher improved the eighth grade students of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Denpasar reading comprehension from a passage or text especially identifying general information, specific information, textual references, and textual meaning in reading by using the numbered heads together technique.

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

Teaching descriptive paragraph using numbered heads together technique be the main concern in this study. Therefore, it becomes the focus of the researcher to implement this strategy to help the students and English teachers in improving

reading comprehension. So that the research results can be meaningful and provide benefits for many parties, especially school residents.

Theoretically, the study is about implementing Numbered Heads Together technique in improving reading comprehension in the classroom and whether it can improve students reading comprehension. The findings of this study are also expected to enhance the theories of teaching techniques in English and support evidence to existing research findings which have revealed the importance of having different strategies concerned with teaching and learning reading comprehension.

Practically, the presence of this study provides a beneficial contribution to the students and English teachers. Teachers can facilitate students' understanding so that they can provide the best strategies for students in understanding the reading, and for students, they can implement them for maximum learning outcomes.

## **1.6 Definition of Key Term**

The terms of the operational definition in this study, are given clearly by the researcher. This is done to avoid misunderstanding and confusion from the readers of this research. This operational definition can be used as a reference in limiting the complexity of this research. The researcher defines the following terms of the present study as follows: Reading Comprehension and Numbered Heads Together Technique.

### **1. Reading Comprehension**

Reading comprehension is operationally defined as the ability of the eighth grade students of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Denpasar in understanding information that is presented in written form. In this study, reading comprehension involves descriptive paragraph that discuss things, people, places, and animals, where students are asked to be able to understand reading especially identifying general information, specific information, textual references, and textual meaning in reading.

## 2. Numbered Heads Together

Numbered Heads Together is operationally defined as a teaching technique used by teachers to improve students' reading comprehension. In this technique, students are asked to work in groups, and each student in the group has a responsibility to study the material. After that, group discussions were held to provide opportunities for students to exchange ideas and then consider the correct answer.



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## **CHAPTER II**

### **THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Theoretical Review**

Theoretical review is a theoretical review for this research. This is very important to support and build research, as well as a problem-solving framework in research. Scientific research should be carried out on the basis of some relevant theoretical constructs and hope to provide practical significance and empirical evidence. There are three areas described and discussed in this chapter as follows: Reading Comprehension, Numbered Head Together, Descriptive Text Reading, Assessment Reading

##### **2.1.1 Reading Comprehension**



When reading we do not just see a collection of a paragraph, but we need to understand the meaning conveyed by the text. Oberholzer (2005) Stated that understanding what we are reading is important to us. Without understanding, reading would serve no purpose. Moreover, according to Snow (2002), reading comprehension is an increase in the success of reading instructions and readers who read accurately and quickly for the advancement of good understanding. Reading comprehension is a brain process that involves several components in which these components interact with each other to attract the meaning of the text.

Brassell and Rasinski (2008;15) state that reading is a multidimensional process that involves the eyes, the ears, the mouth, and most importantly, the brain. In other words, reading affects several parts of the body to work together



and is finally processed by the brain to be able to conclude the message conveyed from writing or reading. Therefore, concentration is needed by a reader in receiving messages in a reading.

Klingner (2007) states that reading comprehension is the important key to reading. It is impossible we read just knowing the meaning of the words without comprehending the text. Good reading skills must be developed for students in order to achieve success in reading to obtain achievements in learning. In learning English, there are common questions related to the text. Students must be able to understand it so that they can answer the question with the correct answer. Pollard (2008:44) states that reading is a receptive skill that involves student interaction. Reading is categorized as one of the receptive skills because, when reading we receive the knowledge or information conveyed. In addition, Nunan (2003:68) states that reading is a fluent process of readers combining information from a text and their background knowledge to build meaning. This makes it increasingly clear that study reading comprehension needs to be consulted carefully because it is related to their learning outcomes.

### 2.1.2 Numbered Heads Together

Numbered heads together developed first by Kagan (1993) to involve more student in learning material which consist of a lesson and to know their knowledge about the material given. Numbered heads together technique is a group working which usually consists of four students, and each student has numbers 1 until 5, when the teacher asks a question, they put their heads off together to discuss the answer. Then the teacher will call the number randomly

and students with that number can raise their hands to answer the question. Numbered heads together is a cooperative learning strategy in which students work together to ensure that each member of a group knows the correct answer to a problem or question asked by the teacher.

Cooperative learning is part of group of teaching/learning techniques where students interact with each other to acquire and practice the elements of a subject matter and to meet common learning goals. It is much more than just putting students into groups and hoping for the best. According to Macpherson (2007), Cooperative learning is a very formal way of structuring activities in a learning environment that includes specific elements intended to increase the potential for rich and deep learning by the participants. This technique is beneficial for reviewing and integrating subject matter. Jolliffie (2007:39) explains that the cooperative learning strategy requires the students to work together in a small group to support each other to improve their own learning and those of others. Discussion activities in cooperative learning combine responsibility for oneself and group responsibility. This can help students who have strengths and students who have weaknesses to learn together and help each other in solving problems. Of course, this technique will provide good benefits in achieving learning goals.

Frey, et. al. (2009:59) state that in the teaching-learning process through numbered heads together technique, the students are divided into groups and each member is assigned a member. In the implementation of the numbered heads together technique, the teacher uses four steps, namely numbering, questioning, heads together and answering the question.

a) Numbering

Numbering is the first step in this technique. It is also the most important step in the teaching-learning process through numbered heads together technique. In this step, the teacher divides the students into several groups which consist of 4 to 5 students in each group. All of the students in the group are given a number based on the quality of the student in the groups. The teacher also has to make sure that each member consists of student with different levels of ability so that they can share their knowledge and information.

b) Questioning

The second step is questioning. In this step, the teacher makes a question to the students. The question can be based on the material which is discussed in the teaching-learning process. The question which is proposed should be varied, from a specific question to the general one. Besides, the question should also be created with different level of difficulty to make a variation and each number of the group get the challenge to answer the question.

c) Heads Together

The third step is to head together. After getting the question from the teacher, all of the students in the group should discuss the answer together. In this step, they can share the information and their own opinion with the other member of the group. The point all of the students in the group should involve in the discussion to make sure that all of them know the answer.

d) Answering

The last step is answering, here the teacher chooses a certain number of the group member that have already assigned before and all of the students who

get the number which is mentioned should present their groups' answers in front of the classroom. In this step, the student reading comprehension could be improved through this strategy because all of the students have responsibility.

### 2.1.3 Descriptive Paragraph Reading

One of the paragraphs in English that is learned at school is a descriptive paragraph. It clearly describes the characteristics inherent in something, be it humans, animals, plants or inanimate objects. The purpose of this paragraph is to provide clear information about the object described to the reader. Oshima and Hogue (2007) state that descriptive text appeals to the senses, so it tells how something looks, feels, smells, tastes, and/or sounds. A good description is a word picture; The reader can imagine objects, places, or people in his mind. A description usually follows the pattern of organization we call spatial order. Spatial planning is the arrangement of things in space.

### 2.1.4 Assessment of Reading

Assessing is an important thing that teachers must pay attention to find out the results of student work during learning. According to Carter and Nunan (2001:138), the assessment is carried out to collect information about the language proficiency and/or achievement of learners that can be used by stakeholders in language learning programs for various purposes. Assessment can be done in writing or orally. In this study, the researcher focused on assessing students' reading comprehension through multiple choices testing reading comprehension. To get their score, the researcher used the descriptive reading paragraph given to

the students by the researcher to determine whether or not there was an increase in students' reading comprehension technique.

## **2.2 Empirical Review**

Reading is one of receiving messages and is often referred to as receptive skills. In addition, when reading, reading comprehension plays a role in the transaction of changing words into understanding the meanings implied in them. This is such a kind of important activity for students to support the learning process, and to make achievement in learning successful. The creativity of the teacher's teaching techniques is very influential in this lesson. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine the effect of the Numbered Heads Together technique in improving students reading comprehension. The first research was conducted by Rambe (2018). The research is entitled "Improving Students' Reading Comprehension by Using Numbered Heads Together Technique at VIII Grade SMP N6 Padangsidempuan". This study aims to improve students' reading comprehension in class VIII SMP N6 Padangsidempuan through Numbered Heads Together technique. The findings can answer research questions. She found that numbered heads together can make a significant contribution to improving students' reading comprehension. The second research was conducted by Ganggar (2018). His research is entitled "Improving Reading Comprehension of the Eighth Grade Students of SMP Wisata Sanur Denpasar in Academic Year 2017/2018 Through Numbered Heads Together". The results showed that there was an increase in students' reading comprehension using the numbered heads together technique. In addition, students showed a positive attitude and increased learning motivation by using this technique. Thus,

questionnaire results also support the technique used. Reviewing studies on applying the numbered heads together technique to students' reading comprehension seems a good way.

The difference between this research and previous research is that the researcher completes the shortcomings and improves on the previous research. In research conducted by Rambe (2018) there are weaknesses such as the delivery of research results is not to the point, so the discussion becomes confusing because it spreads to many things. Therefore, in this study, the researcher focused on answering the formulation of the problem, so that the results of the research can be conveyed clearly, precisely and concisely. Meanwhile, in the research conducted by Ganggar (2018), he used narrative text in carrying out his research. Aside from being a differentiator from previous research, the researcher chose a descriptive paragraph to find out whether the numbered heads together technique can also be implemented in this type of paragraph. In this study, the researcher applies the numbered heads together technique in descriptive paragraphs to see the development of students reading comprehension, where previous research used narrative texts. This technique was chosen and applied by researchers to see the positive development of the previous student's condition. Based on the students' reading comprehension problems experienced by students and previously discussed, the researcher believes that the numbered heads together technique is very suitable to be used to improve students' reading comprehension. Empirical review is a way to obtain information by making observations based on the results of previous research which aims to strengthen the research topic in this study and the function of this term is also as a comparison because this research is relevant

and similar to previous research. From the results of previous studies showing the positive impact and success in improving students' reading comprehension by applying this technique, this study is interested in developing and complementing the shortcomings of previous studies.

