

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Learning English as foreign language (EFL) in Indonesia has been engaged to any scientific and academic purposes. Therefore, in learning English, the students are expected to master four language skills namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. Reading is a process of constructing meaning through dynamic interaction among readers in written form. Reading makes connection between what the students have to know and what the students need to know. The students read a text to know and understand about the meaning, and then the students can catch the point and get a lot of information from what the students have read. Therefore, when the students read a text, they should be able to comprehend the reading text during the process of reading. According to Patel (2008), reading is not only a source of information and a pleasurable activity, but also a means of consolidating and extending one's knowledge of the language. Reading is very necessary to widen the mind and gain an understanding of a foreign culture.

Reading is certainly an important activity for expanding knowledge of a language. Reading not only helps the student to get knowledge and wisdom from the culture of heritage but is also very helpful in passing for leisure period. Leisure hours are not only, during the active period of life but also, more significantly, when a man has retired from active life. By reading, the students can develop and enlarge their knowledge. They can learn a lot from reading. But, the fundamental goal of any reading

activity is to understand what is read. Teaching reading is not so easy or simple because many students still have problems with having a good comprehension of what has been read and understanding the main points of the text.

Reading is the act of creating meaning with text (Hirsch, 2003) . It means that this process will require the use of background, vocabulary, and experiences of the readers to help them comprehend the written text. Comprehending and interpreting the information in the text is important. It means that students need to learn a considerable amount of information from a text. Some students perceive that reading is boring, the boredom can lead the students to have low motivation in doing the activity. Consequently, teachers should pay attention to how to make reading comprehension activities more interesting. By inserting the interesting activities before, during reading, and after reading, boredom could be prevented. In addition, students can get the clues to evaluate whether the messages they caught are true or false. By doing so, they will be more ready and confident to answer the questions after reading.

Reading comprehension is a highly interactive process that takes place between a reader and text (Bernhardt, 2011). Individual readers will bring variable levels of skills and experiences to the interaction. These include language skills, cognitive resources, and word knowledge. Any act of reading occurs within a particular socio-cultural and emotional context. This consists of elements such as the child's home culture, their previous experiences of reading and being read to, their expectations that reading should carry meaning, their motivations, their view of themselves as readers, the purpose for reading the text, the culture value placed on reading and the reading environments the reader experiences.

Even though reading skills are very crucial in mastering English. However, based on the explanation from an English teacher at SMPN 1 Kuta Utara stated that many students could not pass their reading class successfully. Comprehending the reading text was the problem still faced by many students in reading class. The students don't know how to get the idea from the text easily. The problem is also faced by the students of SMPN 1 Kuta Utara, particularly the seventh-grade students. Another problem is the teaching technique that is implemented by the teacher in the school. The technique that is used by the teacher in the class is monotone which makes the students difficult in comprehend the text. It is hard work to make the students interested and like reading. Therefore, the students mostly think that reading is something difficult to understand and quite boring to do. It will be difficult for them to get the meaning of the text. In addition, their ability to master vocabulary is very limited. Hence, in order to get the meaning of a text, students need to be stimulated by the teacher.

To solve student's difficulties in understanding English reading, this research believes that *Numbered Heads Together* can help students improve their abilities. *Numbered Heads Together* is a teaching technique in which the students are involved in analyzing the material discussed in the teaching-learning process. In the teaching process, the students are divided into groups and each member is assigned a number. Then the teacher poses a question to a group who discuss the answer among themselves. The group member is motivated to make sure that each person understands the answer because it does not know who will be required to present it. This technique is effective for reviewing material as well as for checking knowledge, and comprehension, and it develops students' team-building skills. Each student within the

group has an equal opportunity to share. It is possible that one student may try to dominate. The teacher can check that this does not happen. This technique promotes discussion and both individual and group accountability. As a result, the group supports each member and provides opportunities to practice and discuss the content of the material in their classroom.

Based on the explanation of the problem above, the researcher is considering the problems discussed above, reading has an important role in helping learners understand the text they read. From the preliminary observation made by the researcher, it could be known that in the school, the learners had some problems in reading text. Consequently, the researcher is interested in conducting research on improving the students' reading skills by using the NHT technique. The researcher was highly motivated to find out whether the implementation of NHT can improve the students' reading comprehension.

1.2 Research Problem

Formulation of a research problem is very important in carrying out scientific research. Based on the background of the study, there are some problems faced by the students dealing with reading comprehension in the classroom. The students still had weaknesses in reading comprehension; for example, they did not really understand what the text was about, and they had only a few chances to express their opinions. Students required interesting techniques in teaching reading which was expected to improve their reading comprehension. Thus, the research problem can be formulated as follows: can the reading comprehension of the seventh-grade students of SMPN 1

Kuta Utara in the academic year 2023/2024 be improved through *Numbered Heads Together?*

1.3 Objective of the Study

Based on the problems faced by the students, the researcher must find a solution to solve those problems. This study is directed to answer the research problem that has been previously formulated and determined. The purpose of this study is to find out whether or not the reading comprehension of the seventh-grade students of SMPN 1 Kuta Utara in the academic year 2023/2024 can be improved through Numbered Heads Together (NHT).

1.4 Limitation of Study

This study was limited to improving the reading comprehension of the seventh-grade students of SMPN 1 Kuta Utara in the academic year 2023/2024 through NHT. This research used *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum. In addition, the student's reading comprehension in the present study was strictly limited to identifying general information, specific information, textual meaning, and textual reference on reading texts which are provided in the form of descriptive text.

Based on the *Alur Tujuan Pembelajaran* (ATP) of the seventh-grade students of SMPN 1 Kuta Utara, the learning objectives were identifying context, main ideas, text structure, and detailed information from a variety of oral / written texts related to the topics correctly. The focus of learning is on the activity of identifying the context of the text, main ideas, and detailed information through NHT. The reading

comprehension that would be improved was limited to the Descriptive text. Students can identify the social function, structure of texts, and linguistic elements of some oral and written descriptive texts according to the context in which they are used. In addition, this study focused on answering the question based on the reading text by using NHT. Moreover, reading comprehension in the present study was also focused on identifying general information, specific information, textual meaning, and textual reference.

1.5 Significance of Study

The present study was concerned with improving the reading comprehension of the seventh-grade students of SMPN 1 Kuta Utara in the academic year 2023/2024. The present study is expected to indicate the significance of both theoretical and practical information on the importance of implementing the *Numbered Heads Together* (NHT) technique in teaching reading comprehension. Moreover, the result of this study is expected to provide both theoretical as well as practical significance as follows:

Theoretically, the findings of the study which are focused on implementing the numbered heads together technique in improving reading comprehension can give information about how the implementation in the classroom is and whether it can improve student's reading comprehension. The findings of this study are also expected to enhance the theories of the teaching technique in English and support the existing theories which have revealed the importance of having different techniques that can be applied in teaching reading comprehension.

Practically, the result of this study would be useful for students, teachers, and other researchers. For teachers, the results of this study are to give interesting techniques that they can apply to solve the students' problems in the class and they can enrich their knowledge about numbered heads together. Besides, they can develop their teaching through various teaching techniques. For students, the results of this study are intended to make the students know the benefits of numbered heads together technique in improving reading comprehension. In addition, the students are able to understand the reading text easily through numbered heads together.

1.6 Definition of Key Term

The title of this research is “Improving Reading Comprehension of the Seventh-Grade Students of SMPN 1 Kuta Utara in Academic Year 2023/2024 through *Numbered Heads Together*”. In order to make the reader clearly understand and to avoid misunderstanding of the readers, the researcher then clarified the key terms. They are reading comprehension and numbered heads together. The key terms that were used in the present study are operationally defined as follows:

1. Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension can be operationally defined as the ability of the seventh-grade students of SMPN 1 Kuta Utara to find out the general information, specific information, textual meaning, and textual reference of reading a descriptive text.

2. Numbered Heads Together

Numbered Heads Together is defined as a teaching technique used by the researcher to improve reading comprehension of the seventh-grade students of SMPN 1 Kuta Utara in which the teaching-learning process is mainly in group learning activities. Each group consists of 5 students who are numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 and the teacher gives the text and some questions then calls a number at random to answer the question and share the answer in front of the class.



CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

The purpose of the theoretical reviews is to support and build this study. It is a review of related research which are related to this study that is conducted on the relevant theoretical construct. The relevant theories related to the study support the research, as a result, the researcher was described and discusses as follows: reading comprehension, numbered heads together, and assessment of reading comprehension.

2.1.1 Reading Comprehension

Reading is a process to get information from a text and also a section of language skills that is important in improving the student's ability. Reading is one of the skill that students have to master in the class. The important part of reading comprehension is the students should comprehend the text read because it can help students in learning process especially in order skills such as listening, writing and speaking. Wolley (2001) states that reading comprehension is the process of the readers interacting and constructing meaning from the text. He continues that the goal of reading is increase the general understanding of what is described in the text rather than to get meaning from isolated words or sentences.

Reading comprehension is the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language (Snow, 2002). Extracting and constructing words are used to emphasize both the importance and the insufficiency of the text as a determinant of reading comprehension.

After extracting and constructing the word, the reader was get the knowledge and the information from the text.

On the other hand, according to Klinger (2007), reading comprehension is the process of constructing meaning by coordinating a number of complex processes that include word reading, word and world knowledge, and fluency. Recent studies have focused on how readers use their knowledge and reasoning to understand texts. The term comprehension strategy is sometimes used to refer to the process of reasoning. Good readers are aware of how well they understand a text while reading and also take active steps to overcome difficulties in comprehension. Students can be instructed in strategies to improve text comprehension and information use.

Reading comprehension involves understanding the meaning of the context, vocabulary, and grammatical structure (Patel, 2008). Moreover, the students are also given the opportunity to explore the language that they are learning. It means that during reading students not only enjoy reading and getting the information but also they can extend or share the language knowledge. A reader's comprehension is influenced by a range of internal factors, including perceptions, beliefs, motivation, and problem-solving strategies (Soffos, 2005). It proves that in reading, the personality of the readers can help them to get a comprehension after reading the text.

Based on the definitions above, it can be concluded that reading comprehension is the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. In brief, understanding comprehension requires the reader, the text activity, or the purpose of reading.

2.1.2 Numbered Heads Together

In the teaching- learning process, the teacher can teach the students by applying many techniques. Numbered heads together is a part of cooperative learning that can build student's motivation and at the same time, it would help the students understand the learning material. This technique is effective for reviewing material as well as for checking knowledge, and comprehension, and it develops student's team-building skills. Each student within the group has an equal opportunity to share. It is possible that one student may try to dominate. The teacher can check that this does not happen. This technique promotes discussion and both individual and group accountability. As a result, the group supports each member and provides opportunities to practice and discuss the content of the material in their classroom. The student's ability in reading comprehension can be improved by the right technique that the teacher uses during the teaching-learning process, one of them is cooperative learning that can be used to improve the student's reading comprehension.

Cooperative learning requires pupils to work together in small groups to support each other to improve their own learning and those of others (Jolliffe, 2007). To work effectively certain key elements, need to be in place. The five elements include positive interdependence (students must feel that they need each other), individual accountability (every member has learned the material), group processing (it helps all group members achieve while maintaining effective working relationships among members), small-group and interpersonal skills (provide the motivation to use an individual skill in order for groups to function effectively), face-to-face interaction (building effective communication between the students).

According to Kagan (2009) numbered heads together is a technique to convey the idea that each student has a number and that all the students in the team put their best answer. Numbered heads together are learning methods in when each student is given a number and they make a group work. The cooperative learning strategies promote discussion on both individual and group accountability. Cooperative learning forces students to do an interaction instead of self-understanding. Therefore, the students can share their knowledge with each other's. Learning cooperatively was help students communicate about what they do not know as well as what they have known based on the text that has been read. As a result, cooperative learning can improve students' ability to work in groups.

According to Arends (2012), there are four steps of numbered heads together namely, numbering, questioning, heads together, and answering.

1. Numbering

In this step, the teacher divides the students into several groups which consist of 4-5 students in each of the groups. All of the students in the groups are given a number based on the quantity of the students in the groups. The way to group the students can be done by the teacher to make sure that each member consists of students with different levels of ability so that they can share their knowledge and information.

2. Questioning

The second step is questioning. In this step, the teacher asks the students a question. The question can vary. They can be very specific and in question form. In terms of reading class, the teacher also can give an appropriate reading

text and make sure that all students can comprehend the text so that they can understand and catch the meaning; as a result, they were easily get the answer.

3. Heads together

The third step is to head together. In this step, the students put their heads together to figure out and make sure everyone knows the answer. To achieve this purpose, each member of the group has to work cooperatively and discuss the question or task given by the teacher well. In this case, students are asked to be focused and consistent with their answers before they put their heads together and give the answer.

4. Answering

The last step is answering. In this step, the teacher calls a number, and students from each group with that number raise their hand and provide the answer to the whole school, districts, and states are increasing for reliable and valid assessments that reflect progress toward general benchmarks of reading ability. For the area of reading comprehension, good comprehension capacities are sorely needed. These assessments need to be constructed in accordance with many advances in psychometric theory.

2.1.3 Reading Assessment

Assessment is process of collection and information analysis to measure achievement of student's learning result. In order to know the students achievement, teacher can administer a test and the result can be used as a feedback. Brown (2004) stated that the assessment of the reading ability does not end with the measurement of comprehension. Method of assessment varies with the type of responses students and

student's responses can be spoken or written. Assessment of reading should be ideally be authentic. Assessment shows how well they are able to extract information and analyze what they are reading.

Reading assessment is used to determine what skills are being learned and what skills need to be strengthened. The various assessments of the tasks depend on the type of reading. According to Paris (2005), reading assessment measures phonological and comprehension skills. Most of these tests are timed, requiring students to think quickly as well as critically. Students can be better prepared for these tests if they have frequent opportunities to practice and reinforce the necessary skills in the classroom or at home.

Assessment is an ongoing process that encompasses a much wider domain (Brown, 2004). Whenever a student responds to a question, offers a comment, or tries out a new word or structure, the teacher subconsciously makes an assessment of the student's performance. Written works are performance that is ultimately assessed by students, teachers, and possibly other students. All of the activities of written works are used based on the reading comprehension. Reading activities usually require some sort of productive performance that the teacher implicitly judges. A good teacher never ceases to assess students, whether those assessments are incidental or intended.

Pang et al (2003) stated that there are two forms of reading assessment. The first is to find out how well children are reading in order to help them improve (diagnosis). The second is to measure how much progress has been made. In the beginning, reading assessment is normally done by listening to the students reading aloud. The teacher would assess their word recognition and fluency by reading the text that has been given

by the teacher. Therefore, the teacher knows about the student's achievement in reading comprehension.

There is a purpose in doing the assessment. According to Caldwell (2008:43), the basic purpose of any assessment is to gather the information in order to decide if students comprehend and learn the material which they have learned. Besides, there are two more assessment purposes for schools and students. For schools, assessment is used to judge the effectiveness of the school. For the students, it is measuring and monitoring learning progress of the students across a school year. When the teacher gives an assessment for the students, the assessment should be appropriate with the material which has been taught by the teacher to the students. In regard with the comprehension, there are some design for assessing the student's comprehension.

Assessing Reading can be done by administering a series of test that the researcher gave the student. When students taking a reading test that administering by the researcher, the effect can be increasing and decreasing student's comprehension especially in reading texts. In addition, As stated by Brown (2004) assessing reading can be done by some kinds of reading tasks, they are reading aloud, written response, multiple-choice, short answer task, picture-cued items, matching task, editing task, gap filling task, cloze task, skimming, scanning, ordering task, information transfer, summarizing and responding the last one is note-taking and outlining. All those kinds of reading tasks are used based on the reading comprehension types.

In this present study, the researcher administered short answer task to assess the student's achievement in reading comprehension after being taught through NHT technique. Moreover, Purpura (2004:136) states that short answer task can be used to

test several areas of grammatical ability, and are usually scored as right or wrong with one or more criteria for correctness or partial credit. Furthermore, the researcher in this present study assess the student's reading comprehension by using short answer task. By using short answer task, the students should give the answer or idea about the test. They directly answer the question by using a complete and grammatical sentence. This kind of test is a good way for measuring the student's reading comprehension.

2.2 Empirical Review

Empirical review is a way to get information and theories about previous researchers that are relevant to the present study. The purpose is to support the present study by considering the result and as consider whether or not the present study would be as successful as the relevant studies in the empirical review. There are two similar researches with the researcher chosen. This point is also focused on discussing about previous two researchers as follows:

The first study was conducted by Selong (2019). He conducted a study entitled Improving Students' Reading Comprehension through the Use of Numbered Head Together (NHT) Technique. The researcher found that students individual score in cycle 1 found that the lowest score was 50 categorized as poor and the highest score was 90 categorized as very good. It means that there was only 1 student was categorized as very good, 10 students were categorized as good, 10 students were categorized as fair, 14 students were categorized as poor, and there is nobody who categorized as excellent and very poor. The students individual score in cycle 2 was better than the students' individual score in cycle 1. The lowest score in cycle 2 was 60 that

categorized as poor score, while the highest score was 100 that categorized as excellent score. From the analysis result of cycle 1 and cycle 2 which had stated above, the student's problem in reading comprehension could be improved and solved. It indicated that the students reading comprehension could improve through the use of Numbered Head Together technique.

In this research there was significant improvement after using the NHT technique in the classroom. The researcher found the improvement of students' reading comprehension during the learning process. Most of students more enthusiastic to follow the lesson through the use of Numbered Head Together technique. However, in this research, she used narrative text in carrying out her research. Aside from being a differentiator from previous research, the researcher chose a descriptive text to find out whether the numbered heads together technique can also be implemented in this type of text. In this study, the researcher applies the numbered heads together technique in descriptive text to see the development of students reading comprehension, where previous research used narrative texts. In relation to this study, the construction of short answer task was implemented to finding the general information, specific information, textual meaning, and textual reference.

The second study was conducted by Theriana (2019). The researcher conducted a study entitled Teaching reading comprehension through numbered heads together to the eleventh-grade students of SMA Nurul Amal Palembang. In this study, pre-test was conducted by researcher before giving the material to the students as sample of research. When the students took the pre-test, they had not been taught through Numbered Heads Together. Meanwhile, the highest score of the pre-test was 8.5 that

reached by one student and the lowest score was 3.75 that reached by two students. The test item in the post-test were exactly the same as those in the pre-test. The writer applied the post-test activity in order to know the students were given a post test that was meant to know the students' progress in reading comprehension. In the post-test the writer found that the highest score was 9.5 that was reached by one student and the lowest score was 5.5 that was reached by one student. Based on the table, the total score of the students in the post-test was 293.75, while the average score of the post-test was 7.34. The result of this study had proven that numbered heads together was an effective technique to improve reading comprehension. It could be seen from the progressing mean score of the pre-test and post-tests.

The researchers above showed that after doing pre-test and post-test there were significant improvements after the researcher applied the Numbered Heads Together technique. Apart from that, there are some weaknesses. The researchers did not explain the correct theory and the steps for applying numbered heads together. In the present study, the researcher was adopt the theory from (Arends, 2012). The researcher was explained clearly about the theory and was complete it with clear steps. That was make the students easier to understand the learning process.