

IMPROVING STUDENT'S READING COMPREHENSION IN DESCRIPTIVE TEXT USING THE NUMBERED HEADS TOGETHER TECHNIQUE

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A. Background

Johnson (2008:3) states “reading is the practice of using text to create meaning”. It means that when someone reads a text, the person should put forward the main idea of the text to create a conclusion or understanding as a result. Then, the person also have to understand other purpose of the text he/she reads.

Reading is one of four basic skills that are taught to the junior and senior high school students. This skill is as important as the other language skills. Grellet (1996:8) states “reading comprehension should not be separated from other skills”. It means that everything that people talk or write is all about everything they have read. Reading relates to reading comprehension. When students are reading, they are doing thinking process by comprehending all the words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs. In order to get the meaning of the text as a whole, the students still have difficulties in comprehending of the text. Through reading activities, students are expected to be able to understand the meaning of the whole text. Consequently, the students must have a good reading ability.

Corbet (1983:8) states “Descriptive text is one of the expository writing”. For that reason, the researcher choose the appropriate teaching technique to make the students master descriptive reading which is cooperative learning.

“Cooperative learning is an approach to teach that makes maximum use of cooperative activities involving pairs and

small group of learners in the classroom” (Richards and Rodgers, 2002:192). It means that this approach emphasizes on cooperation rather than competition within the member of group. “Good cooperative learning strategies engage students in sharing how they think, examining it themselves, gaining insight from the critiques of their peers, and enlarging their conceptual understanding by hearing how others understand the same content” (Cooper 1999:272). There are many kinds of technique in cooperative learning. The researcher chose Numbered Head Together technique to conduct this research.

Numbered Head Together (NHT) technique is a cooperative learning strategy that holds each student in a group accountable for learning the materials. In this technique, the students have to work in group and think together to solve the problem with all the member of the group. The entire member has responsibilities to know the answer because nobody knows who will be called by the teacher to present the answer. Cooper (1999:282) who states that Numbered Head Together technique provides an incentive from students to harness their interest in socializing to academic agenda, to invest the learning of their teammates and to work hard themselves.

Thus the research intend in investigating “The Students Improvement Reading Comprehension in Descriptive Text Using The Numbered Heads Together”.

B. Theoretical Foundation

The first section discuss about reading, the second section provides descriptive text, the third section numbered heads together and the last section presents and teaching reading comprehension using numbered heads together.

Reading

“Reading is one of the most basic, necessary, important skills in life. It is the fundamental skill of mankind” (Dechant, 1991:4). Reading expands world to the vast universe and it is the pin of all education and all people life when people masters reading and gains an enjoyment of this powerful skill, they have built a foundation on which they can learn any subject. It is the basis for understanding any subject matter. Even learning mathematics, science and other subjects are based upon the ability to read each chapter and its instructions. Reading and comprehension is a must.

Haris and Sipay (1980:9) state “reading may be defined as the act of responding with appropriate meaning to print or written verbal symbols”. From that statement, it be can concluded that reading is to absorb the information from a text and that to understand what the text means.

Reading technique plays an important role in understanding reading materials. They facilitate students who want to read efficiently. A student who has determined what he expected to gain from his reading should select a reading technique which best suits particular purpose. To achieve one purpose of reading, the person can apply some reading techniques:

a. Skimming

Skimming is a useful skill to be applied in reading, Burns (1984:22) mention that in preview skimming a reader read the introductory information, the heading and the summary if one is provided. Find out the topic of the paragraph and to answer specific questions.

b. Scanning

Kustaryo (1988:22) states “scanning is reading technique that a reader need to read quickly in order to answer the give questions”. This technique is important for reader to get main point of ideas concern with the given questions.

Many students try to read word when they read. So they read very slowly, in scanning, a reader is looking for anything in particular. It is one skill in effective reading means to look quickly reading to find out the certain answer. What have been determined? Scanning is very fast reading. When you scan, you skip over many words.

From the explain above, the writer concludes that reading technique is important in learning English which help the students to improve their reading comprehension. The students can select reading materials for getting information and practice the techniques of reading in the classroom.

Number Head Together (NHT)

According to Richard (2007:355) numbered heads together (NHT) is an approach developed by Kagan (1998) to involve more students in the review of materials covered in a lesson and to check their understanding of a 8 lesson"s content. There are four Structured steps of NHT, (1) Numbering,students are places in groups and each person is given number;in this case from one to the maximum in each group, (2) Questioning, the teacher possess a question, (3) Heads Together, students put their heads together to figure out the answer, (4) Answering, the teacher calls a specific number to response as spokesperson for the group. "NHT" is a cooperative learning strategy which holds earch student accountable for learning the material.By having students work together in a group, this strategy ensures that each member knows the answer to problems or questions asked by the teacher. Because no one knows which number will be called, so all team members must be prepared.

Jacobs and Hall (1994: 2) Define Numbered Heads Together encourages successful group functioning because all members need to know their group's answers and because

when students help their groupmates, they help themselves and the whole group.

According to Kagan Publishing (2008:15), the strategy leads the class through a series of steps designed to promote learning through cooperation, active participation, and individual accountability. The steps for each randomly-selected question are:

- a. **Think Time.** Everyone thinks how to answer the question. No talking.
- b. **Write Answer.** Everyone privately writes his/her own answer on his/her own sheet of paper or response board.
- c. **Heads Together.** Teammates put their heads together and share their answers. They reach consensus on a team answer and discuss and teach if necessary so every one knows the answer or knows how to solve the problem.
- d. **Who Answers?** One student on each team is selected. All selected student stands, ready to answer independently. They may no longer consult with teammates.
- e. **Answer Question.** The teacher decides how to have students answer the question. Here are some options:
 - Standing students all show their response boards.
 - Teacher calls on one standing student to share answer aloud.
 - Teacher calls on multiple standing students to share.
 - Students use response cards or fingers for True/False or Multiple Choice questions.

The procedures of structuring NHT are described as below (Kagan, 1989:13)

the steps for using Numbered Heads Together are:

- a) **Students Count Off** - In each group, students count off by the number of students in the group. If you have groups of six students, students count off 1-6.

They do this in whatever order they choose. If there is a group with only five students in it, one student will have two numbers.

- b) Pose a question/problem - The teacher poses a question or problem to the class and tells groups they have a specific amount of time to come to consensus on an answer. The amount of time allotted will depend on whether the question is one with a specific “right” answer or a more open-ended question.
- c) Students put heads together – The students put their heads together to make sure that everyone in the group has the answer or answers.

Teacher calls a number – 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.

Finding and Discussion

The result of this study was collected after the writer conducted the study for four weeks in SMA KP 1 Ciparay. Based on the research, the data acquired were pre test and post test. Pre-test was administered on 04th of October and the post-test was on 25th October 2016. It was given to the experimental group. The test used a written achievement test in the form of multiple choices. In the pre-test the total number of items were 20 and in the post-test the total numbers of items were 20. The data that writer had obtained from this research was from experimental group. The data was analyzed using t-test for dependent group formula. It was used to determine whether the numbered heads together technique effective for improving students’ reading comprehension when they learn descriptive text or not.

Based on the observation, the technique can be used as one of the effective techniques in teaching English. It can be applied for the process of teaching and learning English to improve student's ability and their knowledge.

From the computation last time, the researcher obtained the accounted t observed was 17.35 where the t -table value for $N = 38$. With the $Df = N - 1 = 38 - 1 = 37$ at $p = .05$ the critical value of t is 2.021. As the value of t was lowest than t -table $\rightarrow 17.35 > 2.021$, the Null Hypotheses (H_0) was rejected, and the Alternative Hypotheses (H_a) was accepted, stating that there was significant difference in the students' scores before and after treatments using numbered heads together technique. This means that teaching reading comprehension in descriptive text numbered heads together technique to improve reading ability was effective of the first grade of SMA KP 1 Ciparay.

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