Numbered Head Together Technique on Improving Students’ Reading Comprehension

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Abstract

This study aims at investigating the impacts of the implementation of Numbered Heads Together technique perceived by the students on their reading comprehension and the impacts of the implementation of Numbered Heads Together technique perceived by the teacher on her students and the difficulties. Descriptive qualitative study design was undertaken by using purposive sampling. The instruments of this study were questionnaire items and interview guide. The collected data were analyzed by presenting them in the form of narration and three steps proposed by Miles and Huberman. The result of this study showed that the implementation of Numbered Heads Together technique gave positive impacts perceived by the students and the teacher. Their enthusiasm in learning can be higher, easier in accomplishing the difficult questions, more interested in group working, and easier in accomplishing the difficult questions. Thus, Numbered Heads Together technique can be used by the English teacher as one of the alternative teaching techniques in English particularly teaching reading in EFL classroom.

Keywords: Reading, numbered heads together, impact

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is inseparable in teaching English as a foreign or second language. It is also defined as the activity of looking at and understanding written words. Moreover, Heilman (2001) argues that reading can be defined as a thinking process and it can be a communicative skill. The research findings on students’ problems in reading are supported by several experts. Iwuk (2007) contends that lack of vocabulary, ineffective use of reading strategies, and inability to locate the main idea are among the problems encountered by students in reading comprehension. Moreover, Gunning (2002) explains that the main problems that students face in reading comprehension are insufficient knowledge of vocabulary and sentence structure.
In addition, Harris (1999) acknowledges that students still face some problems in reading comprehension, for instance the difficulties in identifying main idea, detail information, inference, reference, and lack of vocabulary.

Some previous studies showed that the implementation of Numbered Heads Together can increase students’ ability in learning reading skill. One of the studies conducted by Hadi (2011) which is entitled “Using Numbered Heads Together to Improve the Reading Ability of The Eighth Graders of MTs Al-Amin Mojokerto” showed that the use of Numbered Heads Together technique can improve students’ ability in reading. The other study carried out by Japar (2011) under the title “Improving the Students’ Reading Comprehension through Numbered Heads Together Technique” indicated that most low average achievers in reading comprehension gained advantages using NHT. In a nutshell, by using this technique, students’ achievement, motivation and participation in reading comprehension got a progress.

Pertaining to the use of Numbered Heads Together technique in teaching reading skill, from the result of interview with the English teacher at MTsN Rukoh Darussalam, Banda Aceh, the teacher said that she had implemented Numbered Heads Together technique in improving students’ comprehension in learning reading skill. In addition, she confessed that the use of Numbered Heads Together in teaching reading skill had enhanced students’ ability. It also increased the students’ learning outcomes in which the average score of the students’ minimum completion criteria (KKM) for reading was 35 before implementing the Numbered Heads Together technique by the teacher, yet, after she applied the NHT technique, the students’ score was 80, it is indicated that the students have reached standard KKM which has determined in this school; 70. Unfortunately, the teacher did not mention every detail what the impacts of the implementation of Numbered Heads Together technique on her students’ reading comprehension.

Based on the above elaborations regarding the implementation of Numbered Heads Together technique, the writer intended to conduct a research to know furthermore what the impacts of the implementation of Numbered Heads Together technique perceived by the students on their reading comprehension, the teacher’s perceptions after she implemented this technique in relation to her students’ reading ability including the problems encountered by students and teacher from the implementation of this technique.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Reading

According to Serravallo (2010) basically, reading is thinking and understanding and getting at the meaning behind a text. Reading is a complex behavior which involves conscious and unconscious use of various strategies, including problem solving strategies, to build a model of the meaning, which the writer is assumed to have intended. In addition, reading is the skill or activity of getting information from books or the way in which the reader understands something.

Glendinning & Holmstrom (2000) stated that reading is one of the effective ways to enrich knowledge and experience. Furthermore, Brown (2001) explains that reading is an important activity in every language. Reading is only incidentally visual, the reader then contributes more information by the print on the page. Moreover, Leipzig (2001) argues that reading requires words recognition, comprehension, and fluency. To understand all types of information in an array of
the texts, it requires not only the reading activity, but also ability to understand the content. In addition, he states that without the ability to understand the text content, one is not able to absorb or comprehend a lot of information quickly, accurately, and easily.

According to Grellet (1981), reading comprehension is the process of understanding a written texts by means of extracting the required information from the text as efficiently as possible. In the first case, a competent reader will quickly reject the irrelevant information and find what they are looking for. In the second case, it is not enough to understand the gist of the text; more detailed comprehension is necessary.

2.2 Numbered Heads Together

Numbered Heads Together (NHT) is a cooperative learning method developed by Spencer Kagan in 1989. Numbered Heads Together is an approach to involve more students in the review of materials covered in a lesson and to check their understanding of a lesson’s content. As a cooperative learning technique, Numbered Heads Together is designed to involve more students’ in reviewing materials covered in a lesson and in checking their understanding of a lesson’s content (Arends, 2004)

In addition, Numbered Heads Together technique also has strengths and weaknesses based on Cooper (1999) The strengths of it are; increase the students’ motivation, increase the students’ retention, promote positive competition, and promote discussions in both individual and group accountability. According to Kagan (1994) there are four steps in implementing Number Head Together as follows: Firstly, Each student in a group of four gets a number: 1, 2, 3, or 4. Secondly, The teacher or the student asks a question based on the text the class is reading. Finally, the students in each group put their heads together to come up with an answer. They should also be ready to supply support for their answer from the text or from other knowledge.

Numbered Head Together is believed to give more opportunities to students to cooperate with one another for positive purposes. It means that they are allowed to help each other during the learning process in order that all of them can reach the learning objective easier. This assumption is in line with Slavin (1990), Lie (2002), and Stahl (2002) who mention that cooperative learning is teaching model, in which students learn subject material and learn collaboratively in small groups. It emphasizes the active participation of students and also developing student’s teamwork. In addition, the cooperative learning expects the students to have discussion, arguing, and sharing the information or knowledge to improve academic achievement.

Furthermore Lie (2002) states that cooperative learning has five principles which are positive interdependence, individual responsibility, face to face, promotional interaction, ad team competition. Therefore, it can be concluded that Numbered Head together is a method of teaching which promote the student’s activities in finding, processing, and reporting the information from many sources and finally will present in the front of the class.
3. METHODS

In this research, the writer focused on the impacts on the implementation of NHT technique on students’ reading comprehension at MTsN Rukoh Darussalam. The method used in this study was qualitative research with descriptive approach. It was used because there was no treatment given toward students. According to Ary (2006), qualitative research focuses on understanding social phenomena from the perspective of the human participants in the study. It means that all about the problem of implementation of Numbered Head Together technique on students’ reading comprehension is described as what they are without giving any treatment.

The source of data was obtained from second grade students. The data were collected by distributing a set of questionnaires which contains two questionnaire items (in Indonesia) in the form of open-ended questionnaire and interviewing teacher.

Questionnaire and interview were the main instruments in this research. The researcher acted as the primary data collector. Bogdan & Biklen (1998) stated that human beings can be used as the main instrument in qualitative study. The researcher collected the data in this study by using two kinds of instrument; questionnaire items and interview guide. Walonick (1993) states that questionnaire is one of the most popular methods of conducting scholarly research. They provide a convenient way of gathering information from a target population. In line with this, Sukmadinata (2010) mentions that questionnaire as one of the media in collecting data has some excellences in which questionnaire can express someone's opinion or responses, either individually or in group, a questionnaire also can be used effectively in time if the study has a very large number of respondents as well as the respondents have a great confidence in answering the questions because they are formatted in the form of a sheet.

After the data from the interviews and the questionnaires were collected then, they were translated into English. Afterwards, the researcher used the system of data analysis as proposed by Miles and Huberman as cited in Sugiyono (2012) that consists of three steps namely data reduction (eliminating the data that not related to the topic), data display (displaying the data in the form of basic description), and conclusion (giving the data supposition).

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Findings

From the result of questionnaire analysis, the researcher found that there are ten kinds of positive impacts of the implementation of Numbered Heads Together technique perceived by students on their reading ability namely (1) learning enthusiasm can be higher (2) being brave on giving opinions (3) easier in accomplishing the difficult questions (4) more interested in group working (5) being more confident (6) easier to compromise with friends (7) not easily being bored in learning (8) can be closer with friends in working (9) more accustomed in group working (10) more interested to share knowledge within the group.

In relation to the problems faced by the students from the implementation of Numbered Heads Together technique in teaching reading, the researcher found the difficulties namely (1) releasing too much energy in settle down the seat (2) class tends to be noise and (3) sometimes the group members are not suitable each other due to the fact that some of females students are not eager in being one group with
male student. The most difficulty felt by the students was injustice for the reason that not all members involved in group working.

From the result of the interview with the English teacher regarding the impacts of the implementation of Numbered Heads Together on her students’ reading ability, the teacher said that there were several positive impacts that she noticed and perceived from the implementation of this technique on students’ reading ability. She mentioned that the students were more enthusiastic in learning material in English especially reading skill when they are involved in working within group. The students were also being easier in finishing the tasks given by the teacher due to the fact that they analyzed it together with friends. In addition, this technique can help students to be more effective in using the time allocation in the process of task completion.

The main problem encountered by the teacher in implementing the Numbered Heads Together technique in teaching reading skill was class controlling for the reason that a large number of the students in a classroom. She also revealed that with this current number of students, it should be controlled by two teachers in order to intercede the class to be calmer and more comfortable.

4.2 Discussion

In dealing with the impacts of the implementation of Numbered Heads Together technique in teaching reading skill, there were several previous research findings had been conducted by various researchers. For instance, Artini & Nuruddin (2013) stated that there is a significant difference of students’ reading score who were taught by Numbered Heads Together. Meanwhile, Rahmawati (2014) asserted that the application of cooperative learning type Numbered Heads Together technique is effective in teaching reading comprehension.

Apart from the above impacts in dealing with the implementation of Numbered Heads Together technique in teaching reading, McCafferty & Jacobs (2006) revealed that Numbered Heads Together encourages all students to think about question and to help their peers to understand the process behind their group’s answer. It means that the students can understand the process how to answer the questions in their groups. In line with this, Hatiningsih (2012) showed that the result in teaching reading by Numbered Heads Together in junior high school can improve students’ reading comprehension. From the observation, she found that the students have shown their improvement such as they were able to comprehend the text well. Besides, the students’ motivation and participation also improved (Khalsiah & Fata, 2016). It can be seen from students’ behavior since before the research, the students were passive in the lesson. After the research, they can share their knowledge and help each other in understanding the lesson material.

Moreover, Agustin, et.al (2013) emphasized that the research findings of Numbered Head Together (NHT) technique can have a significant effect on the students’ reading comprehension achievement. The findings confirm Cooper (1999) that Numbered Heads Together technique makes drill and quick reviews of facts engaging and productive for the whole class. In other words, Numbered Heads Together technique enables the students to learn any subject, especially reading comprehension and mathematics.

As stated by Cooper (1999), Numbered Heads Together technique engages the students actively in achieving the objective of a lesson with their own groups. This means Numbered Heads Together technique triggers the students become active
during the teaching learning process because it enables the students to cooperate with their teams to achieve the goal of the team.

Furthermore, Japar 2011 as cited in Syawalia (2013) claimed that the use of Numbered Heads Together technique may increasingly motivate and help students learn for better text understanding. This can be seen from the result of students’ reading comprehension quizzes that was gradually improving. It means that there was a positive impact of Numbered Heads Together technique toward the increase of students’ ability in answering the quiz based on the reading text.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the implementation of Numbered Heads Together has given the positive impacts toward the students’ reading comprehension. In addition, based on the result of questionnaire analysis and interview regarding students’ and teacher’s perceptions toward the use of Numbered Heads Together technique in learning reading skill, can be concluded that it can help learner to be more enthusiastic in learning English, enhance their motivation to be a good learner, increase the students’ bravery in giving their opinion in working within the group and eventually upgrade their learning outcomes.

There are some positive impacts encountered by the students in learning reading skill through the implementation of Numbered Heads Together technique, such as (1) learning enthusiasm can be higher (2) being brave on giving opinions (3) easier in accomplishing the difficult questions (4) more interested in group working (5) being more confident (6) easier to compromise with friends (7) not easily being bored in learning (8) can be closer with friends in working (9) more accustomed in group working (10) more interested to share knowledge within the group. From the teacher’s perception regarding this matter are students were more enthusiastic in learning the material, and being easier in finishing the task given. Moreover, the teacher also alluded that this technique can help students to be more effective in using the time allocation during the task completion, enhance students learning outcomes and give positive results on students reading comprehension improvement.

In addition, students’ difficulties from the implementation of NHT in reading class are class tends to be noise, releasing too much energy in settle down the seat, group members sometimes are not suitable and injustice. From the teacher’s difficulty toward the implementation of Numbered Heads Together is class controlling. Class should be controlled by two teachers in order to intercede the class to be calmer and more comfortable.

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