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**NUMBER HEAD TOGETHER TECHNIQUE: ITS USE TO IMPROVE  
INDONESIAN EFL STUDENTS' READING ABILITY**

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**Abstract:** The objective of this research is to improve students' reading ability and learning activities through Number Head Together Technique at the tenth class of MA Hidayatul Mubtadi in Tulang Bawang Barat, Indonesia in 2017/2018. The subjects of this research consisted of thirty-one students. This research used classroom action research which was conducted in two circles. Each circle consisted of four steps: Identifying problems and planning action, implementing the action and observing or monitoring the action, reflecting the result of the observation, revising the plan for the following step. The data were collected through interviews, observation sheets, questionnaires, and tests. This research used both quantitative and qualitative techniques of data analysis. In the first cycle, the average score of class activities was Satisfactory. In the second cycle, the average score of class activities was increased. The significant improvement students' reading ability shown from the average score of the first cycle was 69.80, there were 19 students or 61.29% who passed the Minimum Mastery Criterion, and the average score of the second cycle was 75,74, there were 25 students or 88.33% who passed the Minimum Mastery Criterion.

**Keywords:** *Reading, Number Head Together, NHT, Cooperative Learning, CAR.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

In English foreign students' teaching and learning, process reading is students' necessity, since in most classroom activities students need to gain information through books, articles, journal and some other written resources. In addition, not only for getting information and knowledge but reading also give another advantage as language acquisition. This also can be seen on Harmer (1998:68), he stated that "Reading is beneficial not only for careers, study, and pleasure but also for language acquisition. Moreover, most of the English examination tests are made in written form, so students must get to understand the main point of the question text while doing the examination. According to Nuttal (1996: 4 & 7), he defined reading as a way to get meaning (messages) from a text. It means that students' reading comprehension is definitely required. Those aspects are students' challenges to face, and in reality, most English foreign students found difficulties in comprehending the main idea of some texts or paragraphs. According to the result of class observation, most of Madrasah Aliyah Hidayatul Mubtadi in students felt so, they felt that reading is

not interesting and tends to be boring. Low students' motivation may spark monotonous and passive class; moreover, the teachers are using the conventional technique and teacher center method, this case worsened the classroom circumstance. Regarding these entire problems, teachers are responsible to find an appropriate method or learning technique and create an enjoyable learning atmosphere that is interesting, active and fun.

For solving those problems, Number Head Together (NHT) is a technique that has criteria to overcome those problems. This technique is focused on increasing the students' reading ability and class activities. The number Head Together (NHT) technique is a teaching technique that places the students as the center of the learning process rather than teacher-centered. As Kagan (1994) this strategy emphasizes cooperation, work team or social interaction in order to construct the knowledge and concept in learning reading. This technique is also under the cooperative learning method which may encourage students more active, more cooperative, and create a fun and active learning atmosphere. Not only

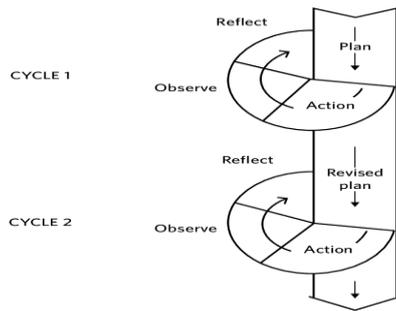
increasing students reading skills and guide students to solve the problem by discussion and sharing, but also expected to enrich teachers' experience to use the various technique in teaching English. Moreover, Number Head Together is a technique appropriate to apply to various levels. It could be applied in elementary school, junior high school and senior high school, even university. Kagan (1994) stated NHT is a flexible technique that can be used at a variety of levels.

#### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research was conducted in Madrasah Aliyah Hidayatul Mubtadi in Tulang Bawang Barat in the second semester in the academic year of 2017/2018. The subjects of this research were students in the X class of Madrasah Aliyah Hidayatul Mubtadi in Tulang Bawang Barat. The number of students consisted of 31 students.

In conducting the research, the writer used the Classroom Action Research (CAR) method, which was derived from the root action research. Due to occurring in the classroom frame, it was called Classroom Action Research. Kemmis in Hammersley

(1993: 177) defined action research as following "Action research is a form of self-reflective inquiry undertake by of participants a social (including educational) situation in order to improve the rationality and justice of (a) their own social or educational practice, (b) their understanding of these practices, and (c) the situation in the which the practice are carried out. Thus, it is clear that classroom action research is an evaluative and reflective method to bring about change and improvement in practice. Those statements conclude that Classroom Action Research (CAR) method is a proper method to overcome the diagnosed problem in the class. It was appropriate to improve the quality of teaching and learning process, including teachers, students, Teaching instruments, and educational social atmosphere. According to Kemmis and McTaggart in Burns (1999: 32), action research occurs through a dynamic and complementary process, which consists of four essential 'moments': of planning, action, observation, and reflection.



- a. Identifying problems and planning action.
- b. Implementing the action and monitoring the action.
- c. Reflecting the result of the observation.
- d. Revising the plan for the following step.

In this research, the researcher collaborated with the English teacher of MA Hidayatul Muftadi in as an observer and adviser. Here was the application of the CAR method to the research action.

In the Planning phases, the researcher collected information regarding class activity and students' abilities. Then, those data would be considered to formulate the problems which have to be overcome. Those processes would be followed by arranging teaching instruments including lesson plans, syllabus, observation sheet, questionnaire, and

test as well. In the Action and Observation Phase, the planning and teaching technique which had been arranged was implemented in the class. During activities were conducted, the observer monitored teaching and learning activity. The observation was the activity of collecting data to supervise to what extent the result of acting reaches the objective. It was carried out to find and obtain the development of the learning process and the effect of the action. The data would be taken was quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data was covered the students' progress (the students' scores), while the qualitative data was comprised of the students' interest and students' responses. The last phase was reflecting. After the data were collected, information regarding the teaching-learning process would be analyzed. Then the researcher reflected himself by seeing the result of the observation, whether the teaching-learning process was running well or not. If the first plan was unsuccessful proven by students' achievements, the writer would make the next plan (re-planning) to solve the students' problems and to get better improvement in both the teaching-

learning process and students' achievement.

Number Head Together (NHT) was one of cooperative learning strategy which guided students to work together and solved the problems cooperatively. According to Cruickshank (1999: 205), cooperative learning (a variation on the theme of student team learning) was the term used to describe instructional procedures whereby learners work together in small groups and rewarded for their collective accomplishments. Number Head Together involved students into several small groups, and there are several steps in conducting the technique. According to Kagan (1994), this strategy emphasizes cooperation, work team or social interaction in order to construct the knowledge and concept in learning reading. Instead of directing questions to the whole class, teachers used the following four-step steps: Numbering; questioning; Heads together; and answering. This technique is appropriate to use in reading skill, this is in line with the Kagan's statement that "NHT technique is one of the cooperative techniques that can be applied for an ESL/EFL reading

activity" (Kagan in Richard and Renandya, 2002).

The technique encouraged the student to work together, increased communication skills, more active in the social atmosphere and helped each other in comprehended material. It was supported by the statement given by Kagan (1994). NHT is under a cooperative learning strategy that holds each student accountable for learning material. NHT allows students to be actively involved in reading discussion, fostering positive independence among groups, and developing communicative skills. This technique also creating social interaction; cooperative learning guided the students involved in social interaction. The condition would encourage students to more active in communication and shared various experiences with each member, students would exchange and get new information. The technique focused on the students learning atmosphere that more active and interesting, it was caused that Number Head Together (NHT) placed students as the main subject of the learning process or student learning center. The statement that supports was given by Kagan

(1994). Numbered Head Together is a technique which makes the students as a center of the learning process rather than teacher-centered.

Test and non-test are used in collecting the data in this research. The test covered the formative test and summative test, these tests were used to assess students' reading ability. The formative test is used to measure the students' achievement in each meeting of the learning process. Whereas, summative is used to assess the students' achievement at the end of each cycle. Besides, non-test which includes observation sheet, questionnaire and interview are used to analyze the learning process whether it is in line with the plan or not. These were used to know the situation and the progress in the learning and teaching process.

For instruments of research, there are several instruments were used such as syllabus, lesson plan, formative and summative test, observation sheet, questionnaire, and interview. The syllabus was defined as the document that consists of topics or portions covered in a particular subject. A syllabus was considered as guidance to conduct the learning process in the

class during the whole semester in detail. It covers learning outcomes in general, expectations from the students, consequences of failure, etc. It contains general rules policies, instruction, topics covered, assignment, projects, test dates, and so on. The lesson plan is the instructor's road map of what students needed to learn and how it would be done effectively during the class. Before arranging the lesson plan, it is considered to identify the students and class conditions to determine the proper strategy and technique to obtain the effective teaching and learning process. The lesson plan consists of basic competency, an indicator of learning outcome, specific learning objective, and interactional activities. The lesson plan was made based on the tenth-grade syllabus in the second semester in the academic year 2017/2018. For the Formative test, the test would be designed based on the learning objectives. The test would be used to know the students' reading ability and would be given to students at the end of classroom activities. While Summative test was used to assess the students' reading ability after several meetings within the whole topic; it is conducted

at the end of each cycle. Another instrument is the Observation sheet; this is used to measure the progress of students during the learning process ongoing. The observation sheet was also used as a material reflection on the next cycle. The questionnaire also part of these instruments because it is used to know the students' attitudes by giving Yes No questionnaires. A questionnaire was needed to know students' enthusiasm in learning reading and to know how the technique was implemented in class. About the Interview; this action was taken to know the students' difficulties in reading skills and students' conditions in the learning process. So that the information of the students is digging from English teachers before the classroom action research was conducted.

In this part, the quantitative data analysis and qualitative data analysis are presented. In analyzing the result numerical data test, first, the researcher tried to get the average of students' reading ability per action within each cycle. It was used to know how well students score as a whole in reading. It used the percentage formula. Second, the writer tried to get the class

percentage which passes the KKM 70 (seventy). It uses the formula:

$$P = \frac{F}{n} \times 100\%$$

P = the class percentage

F = total percentage score

n = number of students

Third, after getting the mean of students' scores per action, the writer identified whether or not there might have students' improvement scores on reading from test scores in cycle 1 and cycle 2.

This research could be called successful if it could exceed the criteria that have been determined, that when there was 75 % of the students could achieve the target score. It means that during the CAR students have to achieve the target of scores of KKM 70 of the reading test started from the test of the cycle I until the second test in cycle two. Moreover, CAR was able to be called fail if it was cannot exceed the criteria that have been detained. Then, the alternative action would be done in the next cycle.

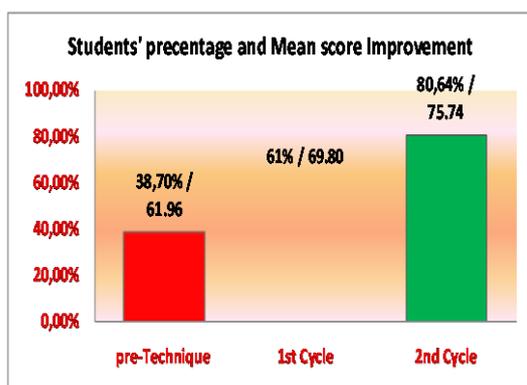
## **DISCUSSION**

The action of cycle 1 was done in the third and fourth weeks on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017 and April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018 and the first test on April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2018. The first meeting one topic was taken, "Pinocchio". In the acting phase, Number Head Together Technique was conducted by using Narrative text. After the first cycle was finished, the test1 was carried to measure how well the students' achievement in reading improvement. Besides, other data also taken during the first cycle was conducting. Based on the observation sheet that had been taken, some of the students did not pay attention to the discussion and the students were looks like busy with their own business and passive. The classroom condition was still uncontrolled yet, there were still some students who disturbed the other students while the learning process was processing. Teachers' performance also needs to be improved, the teacher should be more active in guiding students to discuss. Especially interaction with the students, students were looks shy to ask the teacher. Increasing communication hopefully would make students braver and confident.

The action of cycle 2 held three meetings in the first and second weeks on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018 and May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2018, and the second test on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018. In the second cycle, some modifications were made in conducted Number Head Together. Some modifications in the way teacher teach were created regarding the previous cycle consideration. When in cycle 1 the teacher only waiting for students asking, whereas in cycle 2 the teacher took an initiative to be more active asking students difficulty during monitoring the discussion, it effectively made students braver asking their difficulties to the teacher also increase students' self-confidence. After the discussion had done as it did in the first cycle, the teacher gave a question to the students randomly and gave feedback based on the student's answer. In the last meeting, the writer gave the post test2. In this cycle, the observer attempted to observe all activities in the classroom activity. It might be about the teacher's performance, students' response and students' participation during the teaching and learning process using the Number Head Together technique.

Related to the observation sheet for the teacher, the teacher still delivered the material by combining the native and the target language. But overall, teacher performances were increasing and developing. On the other side, students' responses during teaching and learning activity also improved, most of the students paid attention to the teacher's explanation and practice with their group enthusiastically. Students' participation showed some better progress in this cycle as well. Most students participated in group discussions, more active, and confident in delivering group discussion.

The result after the implementation of Classroom Action Research from cycle I up to cycle 2 could be seen from the result of students' achievement. The description of the result from the pre Technique, test I and test 2 through the diagram below:



Before the implementation of the Number Head Together (NHT) technique, the students were given a test to know the number of students who pass the KKM. The data derived from the result of pre-Technique achievement. In the pre-Technique, the mean score of the class was 61.96. Data also show the percentage which passed the KKM was about 38.70%. It means that there were twelve students who passed the KMM (70) and there were nineteen students who got the score below the KKM.

A significant improvement was shown after the first cycle was conducted. After the Number Head Together Technique was applied, the mean score of students in posttest 1 was 69.80. This means, there was positive progress from Pre-technique and after the technique was implemented. Furthermore, the percentage of students who passed the KKM was 61.29%. It was showed there were nineteen students who passed the KKM and there were twelve students who got a score below the KKM. So, the students' improvement was 7.84 (69.80-61.96) or 22.59%.

The next cycle also indicated a positive trend, after conducting the

cycle 2 the result of test 2 was increasing from the previous cycle. The mean score of students in test 2 was 75.74 and the improving students' score from test 1 to posttest 2 was 5.94 (75.74-69.80) or 19.39%. Therefore, it could be seen that the improvement students reading ability from pre-Technique achievement to test 2 were 13.78 (75.74-61.96) or 41.94%. Then, from the percentage of the students who passed the KKM in posttest 2 was 88.33%, there twenty-five students who passed the KKM and six students were below the KKM, so it had met a criterion of the action success.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the research that was conducted in tenth class MA HidayatulMubtadiin it can be concluded that Number Head Together (NHT) Technique can improve students' reading ability by the score which students achieve. Related to the test result, there was 22.58% improvement of students' mean score from the Pre-technique test to test 1. There were twelve students who passed the KKM. Meanwhile, in the result of test 1 in cycle 1, there were nineteen or 61.29% students in the class who passed the

KKM considering their mean score of the test were 69.80. Next, based on the result of test 2 in cycle 2, there were twenty-five students or 80.64% students in the class who passed the KKM considering their mean score 75.74. It was showed that the students have significant improvement; the improvement can be seen from the score that getting higher, from Pre-technique, test 1, and test 2. Furthermore, from the students' response toward the teaching and learning activity during CAR, it was proved that the response of the students toward the teacher professionalism and their interest in learning reading using the Number Head Together (NHT) technique was positive.

It could be concluded that the students reading ability were improved by implementing Number Head Together (NHT) technique. Moreover, the observation checklist showed that the students seemed more confident when delivering their opinion in discussion and answer the question. It is proven by their participation in the group discussions and social interaction in the class.

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