

**USING NUMBERED HEADS TOGETHER TO INCREASE VOCABULARY
MASTERY AND READING COMPREHENSION ON RECOUNT TEXT OF
THE EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS OF SMP NEGERI 20
OGAN KOMERING ULU**

A THESIS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents: (1) background of the study, (2) problems of the study, (3) objectives of the study, and (4) significance of the study

1.1 Background of the Study

English as an international language has an important role in communication. For Indonesian, English is used as a foreign language (EFL) in some major fields such as education, government, and business. Wang and Hill (2011) state, “English is increasingly used to facilitate communication between non-native speakers in major domains such as government, education, and business” (p.210). As an international language, English also plays an important role to unite among nations all over world. Wang and Hill (2011) claim that English as an international language is important for non-native speakers or EFL students including Indonesian. Therefore, English should be mastered by EFL students because the communication among nations all over world will be meaningful if they master English well.

In 2006 the Ministry of National Education launched School Based Curriculum (KTSP). One of its contents is dealing with English subject, especially for junior high school which requires students are able to master English as a means of communication through four skills of English. Depdiknas (2007) explains the main objective of teaching English in Indonesia based on the 2006 Standard of Content is to prepare students to be able to communicate in various oral and written forms to achieve a certain functional literacy level. Meanwhile, the primary objective of teaching reading in English as one of language skills is to understand the meaning of functional texts and short essay in the form of procedure, descriptive, recount, narrative, and report. Unfortunately, some students still have problem in learning English. English Proficiency Index (2014) published the information dealing with the rank of countries by the average level of English skills amongst adults and Indonesia was 28th out of 63 countries under Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, India, and

Japan. It means Indonesian people especially for students still need improvement in their English proficiency.

Vocabulary is one of important aspects in learning English. Through vocabulary, we can convey what we want either in spoken or written and people may understand. Wilkins (1972) states, “without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed” (p.111). On the other hand, students who lack of vocabulary will face a lot of problems in communication. The mastery of vocabulary is needed for them because it will be useful for the process of achieving their achievement in learning process. Zhihong (2000) says, “words are the basic unit of language. Without a sufficient vocabulary, one can not communicate effectively or express ideas” (p.25). Vocabulary is difficult enough to be mastered. However, sometimes it would be easier for students to absorb new vocabularies although sometimes they are easy to forget them too. It happens because the ability of a student to acquire new vocabularies is different from other students. “Vocabulary learning is universal but at the same time unique to the individual, however, the way of learning vocabulary is different from another one learner to another as well as from one level to another” (Ivone, 2005, p. 206).

Biemiller (2007) claims that native speakers of English must know about 400-500 more word meanings each primary grade. Graves (2006) claims native speakers of English must master 1,000 to 3,000 word meanings in primary school. It means that native speaker of English students really need to have a sufficient number of vocabularies. For EFL Students, Laufer (1992) states that EFL students must have 3,000 word families of general English vocabulary in order to read effectively and have a good understanding of general English text. This condition is arguable to say that having sufficient number of vocabulary is a prerequisite in learning English even though for native speakers of English still have a sufficient number of vocabularies are very urgent. It is difficult enough for EFL students including Indonesian students because learning vocabulary effectively need to have certain techniques or strategies in order to make them be easier to master vocabulary.

Reading is one of English skills that must be mastered by students because it has contribution for them in learning process. Reading plays an important role in all education stages because most of the materials of teaching and learning process are written form. Therefore, there is tendency for the students to increase their reading skill in order to be able to understand the materials that they face in their learning

process. Brozo (2002) says, “reading skill is an important tool that students need to become academically successful and they will be academically successful if they have a good reading ability” (p.32). It means students must have the ability to understand what they read.

Reading comprehension is needed for students because they must read and understand dealing with written materials. Moreover, if there is a lot of reading tasks in students’ textbooks. Grabe and Stoller (2002) say, “reading comprehension is a complex and dynamic process that involves a set of activities such as remembering, comprehending, interpreting, differencing, comparing, finding out, analyzing, organizing, and applying messages sent through written language in order to understand its content” (p. 9). Therefore, students need to practice in reading in order that their reading comprehension will be better than before.

Indonesian students still have low achievement in reading comprehension. The results of studies show the facts that Indonesian students still have problem in their reading comprehension. Diem (2011) found that literacy skills achievement in English of the fifth graders was still in the poor level and the mean score of the students’ reading comprehension was only 29.83 in 100 scales. It suggests that the students may get more difficulties in reading comprehension in their later learning at junior and senior high schools. Then, the study was done by Payani, Diem, and Purnomo (2003) showed that the English reading level of senior high school students in Palembang was on frustration level and this was resulted through their poor knowledge of English vocabulary. Internationally, the report of the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) in 2011 showed that the average reading achievement score of fourth graders in Indonesia was 428. Unfortunately, the score was significantly lower than the benchmark of the PIRLS scale that was 500 (IEA, 2012). In addition, the result of Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) study in 2012 showed that Indonesia was 60 out of 65 countries participated in this study and the score was only 396. It means that this was below than the average score that was 496 (OECD, 2013). By looking at the facts above, it means that there is problem for Indonesian students in their reading comprehension.

Vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension have a relationship. Reading is influenced by vocabulary as one of the aspects of language. A student who has good achievement in reading comprehension may know the meaning of the words and understand about the contents of the text. Alderson (2000) says, “reading is built from

two components: word recognition and comprehension” (p.122). Based on those two components, students are urged to be able to recognize the word as well as the content of the text. Word recognition deals with vocabulary while comprehension deals with the ability to understand the text which what they read. It is clear that if students have good vocabulary mastery, they will be able to understand the content of the text. Then, comprehension plays an important process in reading. It is the core of reading ability. Comprehension is not only to read, understand the words, and surface structures of the text, but also deeper to understand the writer intention as well as other important information. Therefore, a relevant teaching strategy is needed to help them in increasing their vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. In this case, Numbered Head Together.

Numbered Heads Together (NHT) is a cooperative learning strategy which offers an alternative to the competitive approach of whole-class question-answer, in which the teacher asks a question and then calls on one of the students with a raised hand. Slavin (1995) claims that cooperative learning has been shown to increase students’ achievement, race relations, acceptance of special needs students, and self-esteem. NHT has cooperative structure by students’ numbering and the students able to processing and sharing information, communication, developing thinking, review of material, and checking their background knowledge. NHT also has important role in helping every student in a group freely sharing her or his ideas dealing with material. By having students working together in a group, NHT ensures that each member knows the answer to the problems or questions asked by the teacher. It is good for encouraging students to take greater responsibility for their own learning and to learn from one another, as well as from the instructor (Terenzini & Pascarella, 1994). Kagan (1992) states students are placed in groups and each person is given a number (from one to four in each group). The teacher asks a question and students "put their heads together" to figure out the answer. The teacher calls a specific number to respond as spokesperson for the group.

By having students working together in a group, Numbered Heads Together (NHT) can make sure that each member knows the answer to problems or questions asked by the teacher. Since no one knows which number will be called, all team members must be prepared. Students with special needs often benefit when this strategy is used. After direct instruction of the material, the group supports each member and provides opportunities for practice, rehearsal, and discussion of content

material. NHT can be applied in four skills of English (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and also aspects of language (grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation). By having many vocabularies, the students can easily get the information and fun story written in English which finally can enrich their knowledge by reading a lot of books or texts. Students can discuss the material such as sharing their ideas, expression, and opinion together in increasing their vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension through NHT. The study was done by Nuruddin, Seken, and Artini (2013) showed that Numbered Heads Together was likely higher in effectiveness than other strategies for the eighth graders.

The eighth graders of SMP Negeri 20 Ogan Komering Ulu faced problem in vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. Some students still lacked of vocabulary and it was difficult for them to comprehend reading texts. Based on the observation and informal interview to the eighth graders and also their English teacher, they were reluctant to read because they did not understand and got bored while reading the text. They still got confused dealing with the generic structures of the text, some vocabularies on the text, and how to comprehend the text, especially for recount text. The passing grade (KKM) of English for eighth grade students in this school is 75. Unfortunately, many students had score under 75. In other words, they did not reach the passing grade yet and had problem on their English. After looking at those phenomena, applying an appropriate strategy, in this case, Numbered Heads Together to the students may gradually contribute positive effect to their vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension. The writer chooses recount text as a reading material in conducting this study because recount text is the material for reading taught in the 2nd semester based on 2006 SMP English Curriculum (KTSP).

Based on problem and explanation above, the writer was interested in conducting a research entitled, “*Using Numbered Heads Together to Increase Vocabulary Mastery and Reading Comprehension on Recount Text of the Eighth Grade Students of SMP Negeri 20 Ogan Komering Ulu*”.

1.2 Problems of the Study

The main problems of this study were formulated into the following questions:

1. Was there any significant difference in vocabulary mastery on recount text after the students were taught by using Numbered Heads Together?

2. Was there any significant difference in reading comprehension on recount text after the students were taught by using Numbered Heads Together?
3. Was there any significant difference in vocabulary mastery on recount text between the students who were taught by using Numbered Heads Together and those who were not?
4. Was there any significant difference in reading comprehension on recount text between the students who were taught by using Numbered Heads Together and those who were not?
5. Was there any significant contribution of vocabulary aspects to vocabulary mastery on recount text after the students were taught by using Numbered Heads Together?
6. Was there any significant contribution of reading aspects to reading comprehension on recount text after the students were taught by using Numbered Heads Together?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Based on problems above, the objectives of this study were:

1. To find out whether or not there was a significant difference in vocabulary mastery on recount text between after the students were taught by using Numbered Heads Together.
2. To find out whether or not there was a significant difference in reading comprehension on recount text between after the students were taught by using Numbered Heads Together.
3. To find out whether or not there was a significant difference in vocabulary mastery on recount text between the students who were taught by using Numbered Heads Together and those who were not.
4. To find out whether or not there was a significant difference in reading comprehension on recount text between the students who were taught by using Numbered Heads Together and those who were not.
5. To find out whether or not there was a significant contribution of vocabulary aspects to vocabulary mastery on recount text after the students were taught by using Numbered Heads Together.

6. To find out whether or not there was a significant contribution of reading aspects to reading comprehension on recount text after the students were taught by using Numbered Heads Together.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The result of this study is hoped to be useful for teachers, students, the management of the school (SMP Negeri 20 OKU), the writer himself, and other researchers.

1. For teachers of English, they can apply Numbered Heads Together as their teaching strategy in classroom especially for group discussion (cooperative learning) as a guidance to drill them in the right track during teaching and learning process and monitor their progress especially in vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension on recount text improvement.
2. For students, Numbered Heads Together can help them in their achievement in learning process especially for increasing their vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension and it absolutely demands a cooperative team or group, so it is better if they can share ideas and comment on group discussion so that Numbered Heads Together can be applied easily.
3. For the management of SMP Negeri 20 Ogan Komering Ulu, by adopting this strategy, it may mean that authorities should be ready for new form of material as well as facilities in teaching and learning process.
4. For the writer, the result of this study is hoped to give valuable information and knowledge to himself both as English teacher and the writer in conducting next research in the future.
5. For other researchers, this study can give them the contribution as the basis of them to do further research or give them information for the research that they are conducting now.

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