

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

In an academic environment, reading is regarded as the primary tool for acquiring new knowledge and gaining access to several explanations and interpretations (Marianne, 2014). It indicates that reading is an important tool for students to use in order to gain new information. However, based on several research studies on English teaching in Indonesia, the objective of learning English has never been perfectly achieved (Gunarwan, 2000).

According to Nurkamto (2000), there are several challenges in teaching English in Indonesia, including: (1) English is a second language in Indonesia, and students just acquire it in class; (2) Indonesia is thousands of miles distant from English-speaking countries, providing students limited opportunities to apply the target language within real-life contexts; (3) Indonesia has several traditional viewpoints that do not motivate students to learn as much as possible; and (4) the professional and academic environment in Indonesia.

English teaching experts have devised several techniques to help teachers in overcoming the problem. The Cooperative Learning model is one of them. According to Bern and Erickson (2001:5), cooperative learning is a learning model that sets up learning in small groups in which students work together to accomplish academic objectives. Cooperative learning is a teaching model in which students work together in small groups to help one individual understand the academic subject of another. According to Slavin (1994), in cooperative

learning, students are supposed to assist one another, discuss and debate one another, assess one another's present knowledge, and fill gaps in one another's understanding. This demonstrates that cooperative learning refers to a variety of teaching techniques in which students cooperate in small groups to assist one another in learning academic topics. Cooperative learning employs a variety of techniques. The researcher chose the Numbered Head Together technique for this study.

Numbered Head Together (NHT) is a type of cooperative learning technique that requires each student in the group to be accountable for learning the subject matter. Students must collaborate in groups and think collaboratively to solve problems with all group members in this technique. Every person is responsible for figuring out the answer because no one knows which group will be asked to present the answer by the teacher. According to Cooper (1999: 282), the NHT technique provides incentives for students to improve their interest in socializing with an academic objective, invest in their teammates' learning, and work hard on their own. Furthermore, the NHT technique is a learning technique that allows students to be more active in understanding the subject matter, both in groups and individually (Kusumojanto, 2009).

In this Numbered Head Together technique, students are not only given responsibility for the group but must also be responsible for themselves as according to Slavin (2005), this Numbered Head Together is great for fostering a sense of individual responsibility in group discussion. According to Winarno (2002), NHT makes students not bored with learning activities and students can

be discussing with their friends to solve the problems provided by the teacher. Because the teacher is just a facilitator of students' learning, as well as able to make students responsible even better which in the end will improve student learning outcomes to be better.

Safitri (2018) revealed in her research that applying Numbered Head Together was effective in teaching reading comprehension. In accordance, Novitasari (2013) stated that NHT is a type of cooperative learning technique that integrates teams and individual accountability, which leads to cooperative interaction among students. Risnaldi (2016) also states several positive effects for students by using the Numbered Head Together technique in the teaching of reading comprehension, such as increased enthusiasm for learning, confidence to express opinions, easier work on difficult topics, more interest in group work, more confident, easier to compromise with friends, not easily bored in learning, can be closer to friends at work, more adapted to group work, and increased interest in sharing knowledge with others.

Several previous studies have found that implementing NHT can assist students in improving their reading comprehension skills. A study titled "The Implementation of Numbered Head Together (NHT) in Improving Reading Comprehension Skill of The Eight Grade Students of SMP Negeri 16 Banda Aceh" by Oulia (2021) found that NHT is a good teaching technique that can be used to teach reading. Meanwhile, Eko and Giyoto (2017) discovered in their study "Improving Students' Reading Comprehension through Numbered Head

Together Techniques" that most students with low average reading comprehension abilities benefit from the use of NHT.

Based on the previous research and explanations, numbered head together are useful in enhancing pupils' reading comprehension. However, in order to establish the effectiveness of the NHT technique in the educational environment, students' perceptions of learning reading comprehension must be observed. Perception is the process through which an individual receives stimuli through his senses, also known as the sensory process. Stimulation will persist, and the perceptual process will continue (Walgito, 2010). The teacher's teaching method is influenced by students' perceptions of learning. After realizing the students' perceptions, teachers can select the appropriate technique and model in teaching and learning activities.

Therefore, the researcher needs to investigate how the NHT technique itself from the student's point of view, so that teachers can evaluate the teaching technique used in teaching reading comprehension, and this technique will be expanded by other teachers. Furthermore, teachers must be aware of their students' perceptions of the classroom learning activity. This study is important because student perceptions can be utilized to determine the student's understanding of learning.

Several studies about student perceptions have been conducted, including one by Muhammad (2017) entitled "The Students' Perceptions Toward Teachers' Way in Teaching Reading Comprehension." The aim of this study was to

determine students' perceptions of how the teacher teaches reading comprehension.

The differences between this study and previous studies are the participants, the technique studied, the research location, and the research method. This research focused on one learning technique used by the teacher to teach reading comprehension, namely the Numbered Head Together technique. While conducting preliminary research at SMP N 35 Medan on May 24th, 2022, the researcher discovered the Numbered Head Together technique in teaching reading comprehension.

As the preliminary data, an English teacher and some of the students at SMP N 35 Medan were interviewed by the researcher. It was discovered that as many as 20 of the 30 second-grade students at SMP N 35 Medan scored below 80 in the first task. Essentially, the set minimum completeness criteria for English subjects are 80. It can be concluded that almost more than half of them have not met the criteria. Most of the reading comprehension skills of the second-grade students of SMP N 35 Medan were still low. The English teacher also said that were several reasons for students having difficulty comprehending the text, including students being lazy to read English material and difficulty understanding text when reading books, articles, novels, and others. Meanwhile, there were significant increase in students' scores on the second and the third assignments. The interviewed of the students, it was found that the teaching technique had a significant effect on student scores.

Actually, the teacher had applied a learning technique namely Numbered Head Together technique in teaching reading. In essence, the students want interesting learning; do not feel bored in the learning activity, so students feel motivated to learn. Teachers hope that this technique makes an effective teaching and learning activity that can make students active and motivated so that the purpose of learning will be achieved. This technique has been done by the teacher several times in teaching reading comprehension. The teacher using this NHT technique not only in teaching reading comprehension but also in various English skills of English hoped that the students can be motivated in learning and then the students can share knowledge with each other.

Based on this preliminary research, the researcher became interested in knowing the students' perceptions of learning reading comprehension of recount texts using the Numbered Head Together technique, therefore the researcher conducted a study entitled "Students' Perceptions on the Use of the Numbered Head Together Technique in Teaching Reading Comprehension at Eight Grade SMP N 35 Medan.

B. Problem of the Study

Based on the background above, the problem of the study is formulated as follow:

What are the students' perceptions on the use of Numbered Head Together Technique in teaching reading comprehension at SMP N 35 Medan?

C. Objective of the Study

Related to the problem above, the objective of the study is to find out students' perceptions on the use of numbered head together technique in teaching reading comprehension of recount text.

D. Scope of the Study

This study is limited to know and describe students' perceptions in learning reading comprehension of recount text through Numbered Head Together technique. The subjects of this study are eight-grade student's classes' VIII-10 of SMP N 35 Medan.

E. Significances of the Study

Theoretically, the findings of this study are expected to provide practical and useful contributions for researchers to increase knowledge about teaching reading comprehension using the Numbered Head Together technique. Hopefully, this research can support existing information or add new information related to students' perceptions of using the Numbered Head Together technique in teaching reading comprehension.

Practically, the results of this study are expected to be useful for finding students' perceptions about the use of Numbered Head Together in teaching reading comprehension which will be discovered by the researcher.

1. For the English Teachers

In practice, the results of this research are expected to be valuable for English teachers. This research will provide students' perceptions on the use of the numbered head-together technique so the teachers can apply the most appropriate technique in teaching reading comprehension.

2. For the Students

This study is mostly concerned with students. It is expected that students can reflect on whether they can accept the lessons conveyed through the numbered head together technique so the students can become active learners. Furthermore, researcher hope that in the future they will be able to undertake a more effective learning process.

3. For the Future Researchers

This research provides several benefits for the next researcher regarding the students' perceptions to the use of numbered head together in teaching reading comprehension.