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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### I.1 Background of the Study

Reading comprehension is an active reading process to get information and to create meaning from reading materials by integrating what to be read into what has already known(Guthrie and Scafiddi, 2004:227; Blachowicz and Ogle, 2008:27-28). Reading comprehension is important in language learning, including in senior high school level. It can be seen from the fact that reading comprehension is one of the skills to be tested in the National Examination that determines the students' graduation. Furthermore, according to Widiasih (2013) reading comprehension questions also take a big portion in the National Examination that comprises 75% of all questions.

Furthermore, the importance of reading skill in determining the students' academic achievement has been stated by the government in the statements of passing competence standard (*SKL*) of reading skill for the senior high school students (*BSNP*, 2006). In the competence standard, the senior high school students are required to comprehend the meaning ofthe interpersonal and transactional written texts, formally and informally, in forms of recount, narrative, procedure, descriptive, news item, report, analytical exposition, hortatory exposition, spoof, explanation, discussion, and review texts, in daily life contexts. It implies that the senior high school students need to deal with this standard as one of the requirements to graduate, particularly in reading comprehension of



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English subject. Hence, the students as well as the teacher need to pay attention to improve reading comprehension.

A person who is reading means he is doing something in the form of communication with oneself through the written symbol (Pearson, 1993). The meaning of the reading passages does not lie only on writing material, but also lies in the mind of the reader itself. Thus the meaning of the reading can vary depending on readers and their different experiences that they had at the time of reading and they use them to interpret the written word.

The main purpose of reading text is comprehension of getting the meaning of the text. So students was obtained much more information. This is one of the most important factors in modern societies that each individual has to search the information through reading comprehension since much information is available in textbooks, newspapers, magazines, etc. that can enrich the readers' knowledge.

Reading skills are necessary when students want to further their study. They need a good reading skills for acquiring knowledge and learning new information.

Reading is a complex cognitive process of mastering aspects of reading for an academic success and achievement. It becomes an important requirement for more complex reading materials (Gardill & Jitendra, 1999).

To master reading skill, readers need good a recognition of reading comprehension activities, dealing not only with codes of the reading text, but also with the complete meaning of the reading text as a whole. In other words, the reading comprehension involves the thinking process.



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Reading comprehension ability in this context refers to the ability of students to grasp the information or ideas presented by the authors through reading texts. The students are expected to be able to interpret the ideas, messages and meaning of the text being read. They can, for examples, be in the forms of information, knowledge, technology and many others.

However, according to Hamra (2010) the teaching reading comprehension, particularly in the senior high school level seemed to be unsatisfactory. Based on the writer's teaching experience in SMAN 1 Kampar Utara, The students have difficulties to find main idea of a paragraph. They can not find the meaning of vocabulary in context and find synonym and antonym of the word. They are also difficult to identify reference and make inference. Hence, the teachers need to work harder in order to solve these problems. The teachers could work with a variety of methods that best reflects the students' needs (Harmer, 2001:9; Snow, 2002:42). According to Alberta (2013) Erawati (2012), it would be appropriate to introduce various reading strategies to students in grade eleven of senior high school because in this grade they are introduced and taught to comprehend several informational texts. Thus, it makes reading comprehension become a significant skill to be taught to students in this level.

Number Heads Together (NHT) is included in cooperative learning technique which holds students' accountability for learning and comprehending reading materials. It offers an alternative to the competitive approach of whole-class question-answer activity. In this case, teacher gives each student "head number" (e.g. 1-4), provides reading materials, and then tells the students to "put

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their heads together” to comprehend it. Then, they should be responsible to correctly answer the questions in the quiz session that decides their group scores.

(Coffey: n.d.) Number Heads Together (NHT) is beneficial to implement for two reasons. First, the structure facilitates positive interdependences and promotes individual accountability. Second, it gives confidence to low achievers because they know they will have the correct answer to give to the class.

A number of studies have examined the effectiveness of Number Heads Together method in improving students’ reading comprehension. In general, the findings of these studies show that the NHT is effective in improving the students’ reading comprehension ability. However, research on the use of the NHT in Indonesian context, especially in the senior high school, has been conducted by a few researchers. This, study, thus, aims to fill this gap by examining the implementation of the Number Head Together at SMAN 1 Kampar Utara.

Besides, **Kagan (1992)** states that Pairs Check is a technique to structure pair work on mastery-oriented worksheets. Students work in pairs of four with two sets of partners. The worksheet is set up with problems presented in pairs. The first person in each partnership does the first problem with the pair partner gives suggestion and addition information. After the first problem is done, partners change roles. After each pair of problems, teams of four checks each other’s work and if they agree they give a team cheer or handshake. In this way, students stay on task, working together toward mastery. This technique is expected to be a relevant technique as the solution for the problem on writing and reading comprehension.



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Using Pairs Check technique in teaching reading comprehension encourages the students to cooperate in pairs so that they have self-confidence to finish the worksheet because the student can share with his or her partner. After that, they can enjoy their learning process because they can work together to check their friends' worksheet.

Based on the explanation above, motivates the writer to conduct a research entitled: "A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON THE EFFECT OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING TECHNIQUES (NHT) & PAIRS CHECK ON STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION".

## I.2 Statement of the Problem

The purpose of the research is to compare the effect resulted from two techniques, Number Head Together (NHT) and Pairs Check technique, applied by English teachers teaching reading comprehension. As mentioned in the background, the majority of students still had such difficulties as to find main idea of a paragraph, to identify detail information in the reading texts, appropriate contextual meaning or vocabulary. They were still unable to find out the synonyms, antonyms and references of certain words, let alone to make an inference.

As the reading activity continuous, the attention of a reader should, first of all, be on unfamiliar words or vocabulary. In this case, dictionaries might not always be a solution, just continue reading and guess the meaning of the unfamiliar words. In reality, however, the students almost always open their



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dictionary that they could not focus on finding the main points of the text because by doing so, the students get only the lexical meaning of the words, not the contextual meaning.

Brown (2001: 321) claims that since reading is looking for a general idea, unknown vocabulary can just be ignored. In other words, the first priority in reading is to grasp the main idea of the text.

Furthermore, Klinger, Voughn and Boardman (2007: 18) state that comprehension questions in narrative generally focus on the setting, characters, sequence, and plot of a story.

Reading is a very important skill and should be mastered by the students in learning English. By reading, students can get information and knowledge. They can use reading to learn and to get information and also for pleasure.

Referring to the problems mentioned above, the solution for this problem some questions need to be addressed such as: what do teachers do to make their students able to comprehend a reading text well? What do the students do in an attempt to comprehend reading texts better? Do the students spend the time effectively in reading comprehension? Why do the students get difficulties in identifying a main idea in the text? Why do the students get difficulties to find the meaning of vocabulary in context in the text? Why do the students get difficulties to find synonym and antonym of the word? Why do the students get difficulties to identify reference and make inference? Why do the students fail to comprehend the text? Does the teaching strategy used by their teacher improve the reading



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comprehension ability of the students? Which strategy contributes better result Number Head Together (NHT) or Pairs Check technique?

### I.3 Limitation of the problem

For the limited time, facilities, knowledge and funds, I feel necessary to limit the research problem only on investigating the effect resulted from Number Head Together (NHT) and Pairs Check technique on reading comprehension of the second year students of SMAN 1 Kampar Utara. The limitation of the problem is to compare which technique gives better result between Number Head Together (NHT) and Pairs Check technique on reading comprehension. The subjects of the participants are class second year students of SMAN 1 Kampar Utara.

### I.4 Purpose and Objectives of the study

The purpose of this research is to compare between the effects resulted from Number Head Together (NHT) and Pairs Check technique on reading comprehension of the second year students of SMAN 1 Kampar Utara.

Specifically, the study is to fulfill the objectives of the research that can be stated as follows:

1. To find out any significant effect of teaching reading by using Number Head Together technique on reading comprehension of students in SMAN 1 Kampar Utara;
2. To find out any significant effect of teaching reading by using Pairs Check technique on reading comprehension of students in SMAN 1 Kampar Utara;



3. To find out any significant different effect of teaching reading by using the two techniques, Number Head Together and Pairs Check technique, on reading comprehension of students in SMAN 1 Kampar Utara.

### I.5 Research Questions

In line with the background of the study in the previous section, this study mainly focuses on answering the following research questions:

There problems to be investigated in this research are formulated in the form of the following questions:

1. Is there any significant effect of teaching reading by using Number Head Together technique on reading comprehension of students in SMAN 1 Kampar Utara?
2. Is there any significant effect of teaching reading by using Pairs Check technique on reading comprehension of students in SMAN 1 Kampar Utara?
3. Is there any significant different effect of teaching reading by using the two techniques, Number Head Together and Pairs Check technique, on reading comprehension of students in SMAN 1 Kampar Utara?

### I.6

### Significance of the Study

This study focuses on Number Head Together (NHT) and Pairs Check technique on the students' reading comprehension. This study also contributes to the collaborative and cognitive technique. It is hoped that the use of those



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techniques will increase the reading comprehension of the second year students of SMAN 1 Kampar Utara, especially Narrative text.

This study could have significance to the students reading comprehension of the second year students of SMAN 1 Kampar Utara and any schools with similar demographics implementing reading standards. Practically, it is hoped that the results of the study assist the teachers to determine which technique is better to improve the students reading comprehension between Number Head Together (NHT) and Pairs Check technique.

### I.7 Rationale of the Study

This study was conducted to find out which teaching technique, between Number Head Together (NHT) and Pairs Check technique, contributes better effect on reading comprehension of students. In reading comprehension, it is very important for English teachers to use an appropriate technique in order that their students achieve better learning goals. Applying appropriate learning techniques makes language learning easier, faster, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations (Rubin 1987 and Oxford 1990). Language Learning Strategies refer to conscious or unconscious mental steps, procedures, techniques or specific actions employed by learners to aid in the acquisition, storage, retrieval and the use of information to regulate one's efforts in learning a target language.

Todays' learning, educators and researchers are of the belief that the learning of a second language should be meaningful, reflective and learner-focused so that students can develop learner autonomy in lifelong learning. They



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stress that learner autonomy can be attained through learner training, i.e. focusing on not only ‘what’ to learn, but also ‘how to learn’ through the teaching of learning strategies (Dickinson 1987; Littlewood 1996.).

The research findings support previous researches (e.g. Oxford 1990; O’Malley & Chamot, 1990; Cohen 1998) that successful language learners are those who utilize a wide range of key language learning strategies. One pedagogical implication of this is that less successful language learners can be helped to better their language efficiency through learner training or strategy training. Oxford (1990) stated that learner training is particularly necessary in the field of second and foreign language because language learning in these contexts require active self-management on the part of students.

Moreover, teachers are as a facilitator in the class. The students will discover or gain the knowledge facilitated by the teachers. It is known as student center. When the students get high achievement, it signs that the students get success in achieving or gaining their goal. When the students gain low achievement, it shows that the students do not get success in reaching their goal.

Because of the change, and the phenomena about achievement above some problems appear especially for the students. The students must have good motivation as well as strategy in learning to get good result in English field and to gain the best achievement in English. Because of that, the significant of motivation and language learning strategy are important to be known, as an effort form to get a fact about language learning strategy. It is supported by (Elliot and Fryer, 2008), they stated that motivation, the powerful force behind our behavior,



take place in every field of our lives, especially academic achievement, pertinent to the success in the world of knowledge, is critical in various areas such as education, business, human resources, sports and so on. Another theory by A.J. Elliot, T.M. ve Thrash (2001), they said that motivation is one of several important factors that may influence the students' English achievement. Another theory states by Green & Oxford, 1995; Khaldieh, 2000; Wharton, 2000 stated that language learning achievement or proficiency has also been consistently linked to strategy use.

In conclusion, in the curriculum, the teachers give many chances to the students as object of education to develop them in the learning process, including learning in the class and learning outclass. The teachers give students opportunities to analyze something that the teachers give to be solved. Then the teachers also give student chance to be creative in solving the problems about the taught subject. Therefore, that by knowing good strategy and high motivation through this study is very important not only to the students as object of education, but also for teachers and all stakeholders of the school to improve the students' achievement, especially in English achievement.

## I.8 Definitions of Key Terms

There are some key terms which are related to the study. The following are the key terms and their definitions:



### I.8.1 Comparative

According to Pentti (2007), comparative study is often used in the early stages of the development of a branch of science. It can help the researcher to ascend from the initial level of general theoretical models, invariance, such as causality or evolution. In this research, comparative study is meant by comparing two strategies.

### I.8.2 Number Heads Together

Number Heads Together (NHT) in this study is a kind of technique which focuses more on the students' activities in looking for, processing, and comprehending information provided in the reading materials.

(Coffey: n.d.) Number Heads Together (NHT) is beneficial to implement for two reasons. First, the structure facilitates positive interdependences and promotes individual accountability. Second, it gives confidence to low achievers because they know they will have the correct answer to give to the class.

### I.8.3 Pairs Check

Pairs check is a technique in teaching reading skill used by the teacher in which the teacher asks students to work in pairs to check, revise their work together.

Besides, **Kagan (1992)** states that Pairs Check is a technique to structure pair work on mastery-oriented worksheets. Students work in pairs of four with two sets of partners. The worksheet is set up with problems presented in pairs. The first person in each partnership does the first problem with the pair partner

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gives suggestion and addition information. After the first problem is done, partners change roles. After each pair of problems, teams of four checks each other's' work and if they agree they give a team cheer or handshake. In this way, students stay on task, working together toward mastery. This technique is expected to be a relevant technique as the solution for the problem on writing and reading comprehension.

#### I.8.4 Reading comprehension

Reading comprehension is the building of the bridges between the new and the known (Pearson & Johnson, 1978). Since reading comprehension is a mental dialogue between writer and reader, the reader needs to interpret and process what is being read in accordance with what is already known. It is difficult for a reader to learn something new if it cannot be connected to something that is already known.