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## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF NUMBER HEAD TOGETHER STRATEGY ON IMPROVING STUDENTS' ENGLISH ACHIEVEMENT AT XYZ SCHOOL**

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### **Abstract**

This is a study on the effectiveness of the Number Head Together (NHT) strategy on Improving Students' English achievement. It was done to find out whether the NHT strategy could improve the students' English ability. This study is a classroom action research that was done at the XYZ School. To find out the effectiveness of the implemented strategy, then the students were tested using the English test after they were treated teaching using NHT strategy by the teacher, besides, the students were also observed. To obtain these, so there were two instruments used in this study such as; a set of English tests and an observation sheet. After all of the data were analyzed, so the finding of this study is finally drawn as that the NHT strategy is very effective to be implemented on improving the students' English achievement at XYZ School. Where 40 students were able to achieve the minimum score criteria, 31 of the students got the "good" score category and 9 of the students got a "very good" score category. Due to this result, then the English teacher is expected to apply the NHT strategy in learning English.

**Keywords:** Effectiveness; NHT; Achievement; Learning; English.

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### **1. Introduction**

There are some approaches which are applicable in learning English, one of them is the thematic learning approach. Thematic learning is an approach that departs from a particular theme or topic and is then elaborated from various aspects or viewed from a variety of subject perspectives that are commonly taught in schools. Thematic learning also called integrated learning, it offers learning methods that make learning activities relevant and meaningful for students [1;2]. Based on observations made at the XYZ School, exactly at the primary school year 6, there are several problems were found. The problems found concerns on the teaching strategies applied by the English teachers in learning. In conducting teaching, the teacher did a conventional classroom,

namely by implementing a teacher-centered approach, where basically, this approach made the teacher as a center of teaching-learning activities by doing a knowledge transfer. Well, implementing this kind of approach will never encourage the students to develop their abilities.

This is proven by the achievement made by the students in learning English, where most of them could not achieve the passing minimum score which has been determined by the school (It is 70). To see complete data on the students' achievement in learning English, it is provided in the following table.

Table 1: Students' Score Achievement on Learning English

No	Students' Score Range	Students' Score Frequency	Achievement Result (%)
1	10 – 29 (very poor)	0	0
2	30 – 49 (poor)	2	4,4
3	50 – 69 (fairly)	31	68,8
4	70 – 89 (good)	11	24,4
5	90 – 100 (very good)	1	2,2
TOTAL		45	100%

From the above table, it is known that the students' learning achievement in English is low. It is proven by the fact that only 26% of the students passed the passing minimum score, and the rest, 74% of the students did not pass the passing minimum score. While it is stated one of the learning objectives which should be achieved in the curriculum is that the students can speak English for daily communication.

This fact encourages the researcher to make a further observation of this case through research, then before the research was done, the researcher did some reading on research papers, books, and any other sources to find the solution to face this problem. Then after reading those sources, he found one of the very good strategies that might be implemented in that case, it is NHT teaching strategy. Some previous researches which are focused on these topics had been done, they are: a) Merita, she concluded that that NHT is an effective method to teach reading. Therefore, the teacher is suggested to apply Numbered Heads Together for teaching reading [3]; b) Nelli & Hartati, the results of their study showed that applying NHT can improve the students' reading ability [4].

Through the fact of the research, it is known that the application of the NHT strategy is good to be implemented to improve the students' achievement in learning. That is why the researcher is very interested to know whether this learning strategy is applicable or not to be used in the XYZ school to face the problem of the students. Therefore, research was done to know how NHT strategy improves the students' learning achievement. The research done entitled in "The Effectiveness of Number Head Together on Improving Students' English Achievement at XYZ School".

## 2. Literature Review

In teaching English at schools, of course, an English teacher needs to take care of the four important aspects of English, namely: a) listening and speaking; b) speaking which is a productive language skill; c) learning to read in; d) writing is a complex language skill, the fourth skill is a series of four as a communication tool to give birth to thoughts and feelings [5;6]. Speaking is a

language skill that develops in a child's life, which is only preceded by listening skills, and it is during this time that the ability to speak or speak is learned. Speaking skills. Speaking in English skills is the ability to pronounce articulation sounds or words in expressing, saying and conveying thoughts, ideas, and feelings through spoken language [7].

The basic ability in English activities can be seen when: a) having a dialogue; b) making an announcement; c) making an argument; and d) when telling a story, a close relationship can be established. Besides, the benefits of storytelling include, namely: a) providing entertainment; b) teaching the truth, and c) giving examples. The ability to speak is the ability to say sentences to express, express, convey thoughts, ideas, and feelings. The assessment of English skills includes three aspects, namely: a) oral language used, including pronunciation and intonation, choice of words, language structure, as well as language and pragmatics; b) content of speech, include: the relationship of topic content, structure of content, quantity of content, and quality of content; c) technique and appearance, including: gestures and expressions, relationship with listeners, volume, and the course of the conversation [8;9]. Therefore, this research will focus on students' skills in English from learning material that will be taught through the NHT method by looking at students' abilities in telling stories, answering questions, and asking verbally about learning material by focusing assessment on aspects of use vocabulary, pronunciation / pronunciation and fluency in English [10].

Cooperative learning is a learning method that prioritizes student cooperation to achieve learning goals. Meanwhile, cooperative learning methods as follows: a) Team learning-All team members (group members) must help each other to achieve learning goals. For this reason, the criteria for learning success are determined by the success of the team; b) Based on cooperative management-Cooperative management has four main functions, namely the planning function which shows that cooperative learning requires careful planning so that the learning process runs effectively, the implementation function which shows that cooperative learning must be carried out according to plan, the organizational function that indicates that cooperative learning is a joint work of each between group members, and control functions that show that cooperative learning needs to determine success criteria both through tests and non-tests; c) Willingness to work together-Not only must each group member set their duties and responsibilities, but also the need to instill mutual assistance; and d) Cooperative skills-The willingness to cooperate is practiced through activities and activities that are reflected in the skills of working together. Thus, students need to be encouraged to be willing and able to interact and communicate with other members [11;12;13].

Based on this description it can be concluded that cooperative learning occurs if students believe that their goals will be achieved if and only if other students also achieve these goals. Cooperative learning with NHT strategy is one type of cooperative learning that influences student interaction patterns to increase mastery in the academic field. NHT is a variance from group discussion. The implementation technique is almost the same as group discussion. Learning using NHT strategy begins with numbering. With this technique, the teacher divides students in the class into small groups according to the number of concepts learned [14]. According to the goal of NHT is to improve student performance outcomes in academic assignments so that they can receive group friends with a variety of different thoughts, and can develop their social skills [15].

There are several steps to the numbered head method learning activities, namely: a) students are divided into groups, each group member gets a number, b) assignments to each group, c) the group discusses the correct answer and makes sure each group member knows the answer, d) the teacher calls one number of students to report the results of their cooperation, e) responses from other friends, then the teacher shows another number, and conclusion [16] Meanwhile, the teacher uses a four-phase structure as a syntax in NHT, which is Phase 1: numbering ie the teacher divides students into groups of 3-5 people and to each group is given numbers 1-5; Phase 2: ask questions that the teacher asks questions to students; Phase 3: think together ie students unite their opinions on the answers to questions from the teacher and it is hoped that each group member knows the answers of his other peers; Phase 4: answers ie the teacher calls out the numbers that have been shared. In practice, the method of group discussion with the numbered heads together method is supported by the use of aids in the form of a head number made of paper measuring 5 cm x 5 cm [17;18;19]. The use of paper of this size is intended for ease of rolling and students can see to see the number of heads to choose from.

### 3. Research Methods

The research conducted was classroom action research. The term class refers to a group of students who at the same time receive the same lesson from the same teacher. Action research is a series of steps that form a spiral. Each step has four stages, namely planning (planning), action (acting), observation (observing), and reflection (reflecting) ". This research was conducted at the XYZ School exactly in the sixth year of primary school. This is due to the low achievement made by the students in learning English. Data collection techniques used in this study were observation and test techniques. The tool used in observation is an observation sheet that aims to observe the activeness and presence of students. Meanwhile, the test is obtained through assigning tasks and evaluating students' achievement in learning English. Observation and test techniques were carried out in four stages; planning; actions; observation; and reflection. The data contained in this study is based on observations of the condition of the school environment and the learning process at the study site.

After observing the activities by the teacher and students, the data obtained by the students during the learning English applying NHT. Meanwhile, the source of data in this study was obtained from the results of observations on the behavior and the achievement of students in learning English. Data collection techniques used in this study are observation techniques, tests, and documentation. The observation technique is done by directly involved with the daily activities of students who are being observed. Data collection techniques with the test carried out by assigning students according to the material that has been given through the application of NHT. The test is carried out every action in one cycle and analyzed.

The collected data were analyzed by descriptive qualitative and quantitative descriptions. Process data that has been collected is analyzed with the following steps: a) review the data - Data that has been collected based on the results of observations, tests, and documentation are reviewed to carry out the transcription process; b) data reduction - At this stage, data reduction is carried out after the data is collected through observation and assignment activities. The collected data is selected, so that valid data is obtained by the stages of the implementation of the action; c) present data - Presentation of data is done by describing all the data that has been reduced and selected data. At

this stage, the research data has been organized in the form of units of information according to the type of problem. In line with this explanation, the result data obtained were analyzed using the steps below: a) recapping scores obtained by students; b) determining the maximum score, and c) calculating the student's final grade. The application of the student's final grade is based on the formula:

#### 4. Research Results and Discussion

In this part, the result of this study is written by elaborating on the activities and presenting the data according to the research stages done (planning, acting, observing, and reflecting). But before the cycle was started, the pre-test was done to measure the prior knowledge of the students on learning English achievement. The result of the pre-test is shown in the following table.

Table 2: Students' Pre-Test Score Achievement on Learning English

No	Students' Score Range	Students' Score Frequency	Achievement Result (%)
1	10 – 29 (very poor)	0	0
2	30 – 49 (poor)	2	4,4
3	50 – 69 (fairly)	29	64,4
4	70 – 89 (good)	13	28,8
5	90 – 100 (very good)	1	2,2
TOTAL		45	100%

The result of students' achievement in learning English is very low because there are only 14 (31%) students out of 45 students passed the minimum score criteria.

Planning - During the teaching and learning process, the class was conducted by implementing the NHT strategy, and filling up the observation sheets to support the assessment of student activity and improvement in learning English. The objectives to be achieved in this learning action are after the learning process is complete it is expected that students can better understand the material being taught, and can express their answers based on the material discussed.

Acting - The implementation in the first cycle lasted for 3 meetings with the length of time for each meeting was 5 x 45 minutes. Based on the learning plan that has been prepared.

Observing - the results of observations on students' activities in the first cycle, students present at the first meeting to the third meeting were 45 students (100%). At the first meeting, students' were very active in answering teacher questions. The activeness of students in answering the teacher's questions at the first meeting was (53.33% or about 24 students), at the second meeting (64.44% or about 29 students), and the third meeting (62.22% or about 28 students). Students who at the beginning of learning still seem unfamiliar with group learning methods gradually get used to the application of the NHT strategy. This is not only seen from the activeness of students in answering teacher questions but also seen in students' social behavior individually and their interactions in groups.

In the first cycle, 32 students were active in class, but some of them (8 students) did not achieve the minimum score criteria (incomplete) and the rest (24) students achieve the category (complete).

In Cycle I research conducted using the NHT method, students gradually began to show improvements in aspects of learning English, it shown by the increase of the students who achieve the minimum score criteria (25 or 26.6%) of the students, even though some students also still looked doubtful and were not confident in expressing their answers.

Therefore, to maximize the improvement of students' ability to understand lessons evenly in class, and to maximize students' communication in aspects of learning English, it is necessary to continue research into Cycle II. The students learning achievement in the first cycle can be seen in the following table.

Table 3: Students' Score Achievement on Learning English in Cycle I

No	Students' Score Range	Students' Score Frequency	Achievement Result (%)
1	10 – 29 (very poor)	0	0
2	30 – 49 (poor)	1	2,2
3	50 – 69 (fairly)	19	68,8
4	70 – 89 (good)	24	24,4
5	90 – 100 (very good)	1	2,2
<b>TOTAL</b>		45	100%

Reflecting – There are some reflections made by the planning, action, and observation was done, they are: a) in learning that uses text, students tend to be fixated on the contents of reading texts. When students are invited to retell in their language, students will memorize the reading text; b) cooperation among group members is still lacking. Some students carry out other activities while learning activities take place. There are still some students who disturb each other in the other group; c) when presenting answers and in presenting group results, some students still feel shy and look doubtful about the answers; d) Student voice volume is still relatively small to moderate; and e) lack of confidence in students becomes a problem in improving students' English abilities.

In the second cycle – The planning stages are almost the same as the first cycle, the difference is that all of the components that are applied are more optimized in their implementation. Before conducting the second cycle, the first time the teacher did was to plan the learning process by applying the NHT strategy. The preparations made by researchers in the second cycle are things that need to be added from the results of the reflection of the first cycle including; change the original group members so that less positive events can be minimized i.e. groups members in cycle I am different from members in cycle II. And provide material that is easy for them to understand. but still, according to the theme and sub-theme at the previous meeting. The objectives to be achieved in this learning action are after the learning process is complete it is expected that students can better understand the material being taught. Students can answer questions by recounting the topic being taught.

Implementation - The implementation of the actions in the second cycle lasted for 3 meetings with the length of time for each meeting was 5 x 45 minutes. Based on the learning plan that has been prepared and revised based on the results of reflections in the first cycle. Learning is done through three stages of activities, namely, opening activity; main activity; and closing activity.

Observation - The results of observations of student activities in cycle II, in all meetings, all of the 45 students (100%) attend the meeting. At the first meeting, the number of students' who were active in learning English is greater than those in cycle I. Besides, the improvement in student learning outcomes in cycle II is greater than those in the first cycle. The average value of students learning achievement in English at the second cycle is 78.5 and there were 45 students had achieved the minimum score criteria with the classification as follows.

Table 4: Students' Score Achievement on Learning English in Cycle II

No	Students' Score Range	Students' Score Frequency	Achievement Result (%)
1	10 – 29 (very poor)	0	0
2	30 – 49 (poor)	0	0
3	50 – 69 (fairly)	5	11,11
4	70 – 89 (good)	31	68,88
5	90 – 100 (very good)	9	20,00
TOTAL		45	100%

From the above table, it can be seen that the improvement made by the students in learning English is very good. Most of the students have made a very good improvement that from 45 five students, there are only 5 (11.11%) students who did not achieve the minimum score criteria, and 31 (68.88%) of the students who had achieved the good score range or achieved the minimum score criteria, and the rest 9 (20.00%) of the students had achieved a very good score range.

Reflection - In cycle II, students experienced better improvement in terms of attitude and learning English aspects. After changing group members at the start of cycle II, negative activities such as disturbing other friends while learning can be reduced. Besides, after getting direction and motivation from the teacher, students become more responsible for the tasks that are done and completed on time. Students' skills gradually also increase. Beginning with students' confidence in expressing their opinions both in groups and individually. The volume of students' voices which were initially very small, gradually also grew larger until heard by other students. Besides, the students' fluency in describing the results of their group's answers indicates that the level of students' learning English is getting better. Improving student skills is inseparable from good student understanding when learning. By using the NHT strategy, students can share their knowledge with other students.

The NHT strategy involves the overall active role of students in a group to help students improve their learning English. The research was conducted based on the problems that arose in the class, namely the students have low English ability. Therefore, in this study, the researcher wanted to apply a learning method that could improve students' English abilities [20].

The data through observation were descriptively described as follows: At the first cycle, it was seen students were still hesitant in expressing opinions, some students can not interact with members of the group or the absence of cooperation, then they were seen slowly starting to express their answers and in groups discussion, they began to listen to the instructions of the teacher to cooperate with each other in completing group assignments. Even students showed more enthusiasm when the teacher gave motivation by conducting competition between groups, students who had not been active in the previous meeting became active in expressing their answers.

Besides, students are getting used to learning the NHT method. Gradually students can express their opinions, and the more fluent in English when describing the results of group work. The resulting sound volume becomes slightly larger, so that other students, can listen [21]. At the second cycle meeting, the enthusiasm of students in participating in learning increased. The confidence displayed by students is getting better. This can be seen from the problem of several aspects in the assessment of learning English. Students become not hesitant in expressing their opinions. This is shown in the enthusiasm of students in answering the teacher's questions individually and in describing the group's answers. Improved student learning is increasingly seen in the results of tests in the second cycle, name there are 40 students were able to achieve the minimum score criteria, 31 of the students got "good" score category and 9 of the students got "very good" score category. So, the finding of this research drawn as follows that the NHT strategy is very effective to be implemented on improving the students' English achievement at XYZ School [22;23].

## 5. Conclusion and Suggestion

Based on the presentation of the results of data analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that the application of NHT strategy can increase student activity and student learning achievement in learning English. So based on the conclusions expressed, the suggestions proposed by researchers to improve student activities in the learning English are: a) the English teacher is expected to apply NHT strategy in learning English; b) the English teacher must be able to foster student activeness by applying various methods or approaches that vary in teaching, so that the learning atmosphere becomes lively; c) It is expected that English teachers and students work together, so that the implementation of learning strategy especially the NHT strategy can be done well according to the steps.

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