

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

Language plays an important role in communication. Ramelan (2003) stated that man uses language as a means of communication with other people, as a tool to express his ideas and wishes. Without language, it is hard to imagine how people in the world can cooperate and get along with one another.¹ In addition, language can be a communicative tool to convey thought and feeling both verbally and written.

As a communicative tool, language can develop communication in many fields, such as in social field, educational field, etc. In educational field, language can develop teaching and learning process. By using language, teachers can deliver the materials to students briefly. The language used in the teaching and learning process can be either as a native or foreign language (e.g. English language).

In Indonesia, English language is considered as a first foreign language used in school and it is a compulsory subject in the Junior High School and Senior High School level. There are four skills in learning English, those are listening,

¹ Ramelan, *English Phonetics*, (Semarang : UNNES PRESS, 2003), p. 1

speaking, reading, and writing. The four skills are taught in an integrated way.

As integrated skills of English language, speaking and writing are productive skills or ability to produce, while listening and reading are receptive skills or ability to comprehend. Receptive skills are the ways in which people extract meaning from the discourse they see or hear. There are generalities about this kind of processing which apply to both reading and listening.² In other hand, the ability to produce or speak language is referred to as expressive language (sign, write, etc.)³. Both expressive and productive language skills are built from vocabulary and grammar mastery.

Grammar is rule for forming words and making sentences (Oxford Learner's Dictionary:193). There are many things investigated in grammar, such as parts of speech, singular and plural, tenses, etc. As one part of grammar, the word tense defined as the verb form that shows the time of the action or state; present, past and future (Oxford Learner's Dictionary:458). The tense has formula that is usually applied in the sentence, for example the formula of simple present tense, simple past tense and simple future tense below:

² E-book : Jeremy Harmer, *The Practice of Language Teaching*, (Longman, Third Edition), p. 246

³ E-book : Nina C. Capone, "*Language Assesment and Intervention:As Developmental Approach*", (Jones and Bartlett Publishers, LCC), p. 6

Simple Present Tense	S + V1 –s / -es
Simple Past Tense	S + V2
Simple Future Tense	S + will + V1

Table 1.1

The table above shows that verb used in simple past tense is different from simple present and future tense. It can be a complicated formula for students, because the verb used in the simple past tense is verb II whereas two others tense are using verb I.

Talking about past tense, there is a problem encountered when the teachers teach the nominal sentence or verbal sentence formula. The problem is students don't pay much attention when applying verb II in the sentence, both regular verb and irregular verb. In addition, they must be careful that *to be* used in the simple past tense is different from *to be* of simple present tense and simple future tense.

The problem above was occurred to students at the Eighth grade of MTs Manabi'ul Falah Pati. Based on the researcher's interview with the MTs Manabi'ul Falah English teacher, the researcher concluded that grammar was the major complicated problem in learning English. He said that the students were still lack of mastering English, especially in grammar and vocabulary mastery. It could be seen by their difficulties in arranging a good sentence or paragraph using the correct grammar. They were still confused to differentiate

between nominal and verbal sentence (positive, negative and interrogative sentence), and irregular verb. Therefore, the researcher decided to apply an innovative learning strategy that is hardly ever used there, in order to make students be more attracted in learning grammar. In the same line, Allah stated in the Al-Qur'an *Surah An Nahl*, verse 125 :

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ

“Invite (all) to the Way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are the best”.

Related to the verse above, we must invite all to the Way of Allah, and expound His Universal Will; we must do it with wisdom and discretion, meet people on their own ground and convince with the illustration from their own knowledge and experience, which may be very narrow, or very wide. Our preaching must be, not dogmatic, not self-regarding, not offensive, but gentle, considerate and such as would attract their attention.⁴

In this research, the word *attract their attention* of explanation above refers to attract students' attention for learning English. To attract students' attentions and motivations to learn English, it could be applied by using a new learning model for them, such cooperative learning.

⁴ E-book : Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Meaning of The Holy Qur'an*, (USA : amana publications, 2004) p.669

Cooperative learning is an approach to teaching that makes maximum use of cooperative activities involving pair and small groups of learners in the classroom.⁵ Slavin (1995) cited by Miftahul Huda (2012), stated that there are some cooperative learning activities that is interested by some teachers and often used by them. The activities are called as *informal method*, such as *Spontaneous Group Discussion*, *Numbered Heads Together*, *Think-Pair-Share*, etc.⁶

From the above several cooperative learning strategies, the researcher was attracted to use Numbered Heads Together. The researcher thought that Numbered Heads Together is the most appropriate strategy used in learning English, especially in teaching simple past tense, because Numbered Heads Together is an attractive and simple activity could make students to be more active and class to be more alive.

Based on the reason above, the researcher chose simple past tense. It was based on the students' difficulties to use verb II in the sentence and also *to be* used in the simple past tense. The researcher told to the students that simple past tense is easy. In addition, the researcher used Numbered Heads Together as a simple activity and an innovative

⁵ E-book : Jack C. Richards and Theodore S. Rodgers, *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*, (United Kingdom : Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 192

⁶ Miftahul Huda, *Cooperative Learning*, (Yogyakarta : Pustaka Pelajar, 2012), p. 129

teaching strategy, because it never used in teaching learning process there. Hopefully, they would be easy to comprehend simple past tense. Furthermore, it could be an attractive learning activity.

B. Reason for Choosing Topic

The reasons for choosing the topic are as follow:

1. Numbered Heads Together is an innovative learning strategy at the Eighth Grade MTs Manabi'ul Falah Pati. In the Numbered Heads Together learning strategy, students will learn to cooperate and share their ideas.
2. Simple Past Tense has complicated formula than the two others simple tense. On simple past tense, verb used is verb II. It can make students are confused, because they have to apply verb II in the sentence.
3. The Eighth grade students of MTs Manabi'ul Falah had the problem in learning English, especially in learning English tense. They are confused to apply verb II (both regular and irregular verb) in the sentence.

C. Research Questions

Based on the background above, the researcher would like to formulate the problems as follow.

1. What is the improvement of students' mastery of simple past tense after using Numbered Heads Together?

D. Objectives of Research

The objectives of this research based on the statement of the problem above were as follow:

1. to describe the improvement of students' mastery of simple past tense after using Numbered Heads Together (NHT)

E. Significances of Research

This research is expected can give some positive contributions to the English teaching and learning components, as follow:

1. For Students

This study is expected to improve students' mastery on simple past tense by using Numbered Heads Together strategy.

2. For English Teacher

This research is expected to give an input in order to use the various strategies in teaching English.

3. For Further The researcher

This research is expected to give a new knowledge and a reference for further the researcher

wants to conduct a better research in classroom action research.

4. For Writer

This research is expected to be a new teaching experience to the writer, how to improve students' mastery on simple past tense by using an innovative strategy. It also can improve the writer's English teaching ability.

F. Scope of Research

Based on the background above, the researcher wants to limit the problem discussed. This classroom action research only focused on simple past tense by using Numbered Heads Together at the Eight B grade of MTs. Manabi'ul Falah Pati in two cycles.