

# **A NUMBERED HEADS TOGETHER IN TEACHING READING: LECTURERS' PERCEPTION AT AL-ANWAR ISLAMIC COLLEGE**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The purpose of this study are to know the lecturers' perception, usefullness regarding of using a numbered heads together and to know to what extent the use of a numbered heads together in teaching reading at Al-Anwar Islamic College. The participants of this study were English lecturers' at Al-Anwar Islamic College. Research method used in this study was descriptive analysis. The author compiled all of the data through survey as the instrument of this study. In collecting data, the author collected and described the data based on the result of the survey. It related to their perspective of a numbered heads together in teaching reading. The author analyzed the data by describing the result of the survey. Based on the results of this study, it showed that the Lecturers' had positive perception of using a numbered heads together. They thought, a numbered heads together was a good choice to lead students to think carefully in teaching reading. From the result above it could be concluded that a numbered heads together was effectively helped lecturers' in teaching especially teaching reading. It could make students' to be active and participate in the classroom and helped students became independent learners.*

**Keywords: Numbered Head Together, Teaching Reading, Perception**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Teaching English as foreign language has come across various ups and downs by using different strategies, methods or techniques. If one considers the trends of teaching a foreign language to adult learners, a research of current teaching methods needs to be made, aiming to determine which techniques, strategies, approaches will be most effectively used.

Today almost every school, college and univeristy especially English lecturers of a

foreign language as part of its educational requirements. The reason that a foreign language is taught and learned based on one needs to widen the horizons, as communication tool, increasing the knowledge, travel, work, study, emigration, or challenging oneself. This does not only make a person smarter but also this can help others and themselves. The importance is enormous, and also can change personality and the way of life when one learns and interacts with people from other countries.

The area that captures curiosity is how

learners learn a foreign language. A lot of approaches, techniques, methods and strategies have been devised that the aim is to answer the problem of acquiring a foreign language that is English. However, the challenge consists of finding technique which suit students need, especially if one considers that the success of techniques are depending on students' aspirations and goals of learning a language.

When English lecturers organize the essential strategies in teaching English, some considerations that will be determined by the lecturers are: interest and explanation, concern and respect for students and students learning, appropriate assessment and feedback, clear goals and intellectual challenge, control and active engagement, learning from students. Thus, it needs appropriate strategies in teaching and learning process in the classroom even for teaching English skills especially for reading.

Reading is a must for students. At Al-Anwar Islamic college especially for students at the third grade or semester three that is vocational English lessons or English III. The materials are about reading mostly. The purposes of the learning are the students should know what is the text about, how to read correctly, how to find the answer from the questions available, how to understand the meaning of vocabularies, in the passage and etc. One of a good strategies in teaching reading is utilizing a numbered head together.

A numbered heads together is a cooperative learning strategy that holds each student accountable for learning the material. Students are placed in groups and each person is given a number (from one to the maximum number in each group). The lecturers poses a question and students put their heads together to figure out the answer. The teacher calls a specific number to respond as spokes person for the group. By having students work together in a group, this strategy

ensures that each member knows the answer to problems or questions asked by the lecturers. Because no one knows which number will be called, all team members must be prepared.

This cooperative learning strategy promotes discussion and both individual and group accountability. This strategy is beneficial for reviewing and integrating subject matter. 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. Group learning methods encourage students to take greater responsibility for their own learning and to learn from one another, as well as from the instructor.

Cooperative learning has been shown to increase students achievement, race relations, acceptance of specials needs students, and self-esteem. How can you make it happen? Have a look at the way of arranging a numebered heads together: divide the students into groups of four or more and give each one a number from one to four. Pose a question or a problem to the class. Have students gather to think about the question and to make sure everyone in their group understands and can give an exact answer. Ask the question and call out a number randomly. The students with that number raise their hands, and when called on, the student answers for his or her team.

Then, how can you stretch students' thinking? This is a flexible strategy that can be used at a variety of levels. The lecturers may start with factual information questions and students become more familiar with the strategy, ask questions that require analysis or synthesis of information. After the students respond, have the other groups agree or disagree with the answer by showing a thumbs up or thumbs

down, and then explain their reasons. Or, if the answer needs clarifying, ask another students to expand on the answer.

Afterwards, when can you use it? In reading: comprehension questions can be posed to groups, and students can work together to find the answers. For example, when reading a text about interpretation of Qur'an, students can be given the task of analyzing one of the exegetes or interpreters characters. They can be asked questions such as, "Which character traits are stated directly, and which are implied by the author?" and "What information do you get from the character's speech and actions?"

Reading theories have had their shifts and transitions. Starting from the traditional view which focused on the printed form of a text and moving to the cognitive view that enhanced the role of background knowledge in addition to what appeared on the printed page, they ultimately culminated in the metacognitive view which is now in vogue. It is based on the control and manipulation that a reader can have on the act of comprehending a text.

Discussing about reading, the term of "the traditional view", according to Dole et al. (1991), in the traditional view of reading, novice readers acquire a set of hierarchically ordered sub-skills that sequentially build toward comprehension ability. Having mastered these skills, readers are viewed as experts who comprehend what they read. Readers are passive recipients of information in the text. Meaning resides in the text and the reader has to reproduce meaning. According to Nunan (1991), reading in this view is basically a matter of decoding a series of written symbols into their aural equivalents in the quest for making sense of the text. He referred to this process as the 'bottom-up' view of reading.

McCarthy (1999) has called this view

'outside-in' processing, referring to the idea that meaning exists in the printed page and is interpreted by the reader then taken in. Although it is possible to accept this rejection for the fact that there is over-reliance on structure in this view, it must be confessed that knowledge of linguistic features is also necessary for comprehension to take place. To counteract over-reliance on form in the traditional view of reading, the cognitive view was introduced. "The cognitive view". The 'top-down' model is in direct opposition to the 'bottom-up' model. According to Nunan (1991) and Dubin and Bycina (1991), the psycholinguistic model of reading and the top-down model are in exact concordance. Goodman (1967; cited in Paran, 1996) presented reading as a psycholinguistic guessing game, a process in which readers sample the text, make hypotheses, confirm or reject them, make new hypotheses, and so forth. Here, the reader rather than the text is at the heart of the reading process.

The schema theory of reading also fits within the cognitively based view of reading. Rumelhart (1977) has described schemata as "building blocks of cognition" which are used in the process of interpreting sensory data, in retrieving information from memory, in organising goals and subgoals, in allocating resources, and in guiding the flow of the processing system. Rumelhart (1977) has also stated that if our schemata are incomplete and do not provide an understanding of the incoming data from the text we will have problems processing and understanding the text.

Cognitively based views of reading comprehension emphasize the interactive nature of reading and the constructive nature of comprehension. Dole et al. (1991) have stated that, besides knowledge brought to bear on the reading process, a set of flexible, adaptable strategies are used to make sense of a text and

to monitor ongoing understanding.

The term “the metacognitive view” according to Block (1992), there is now no more debate on “whether reading is a bottom-up, language-based process or a top-down, knowledge-based process.” It is also no more problematic to accept the influence of background knowledge on both L1 and L2 readers. Research has gone even further to define the control readers execute on their ability to understand a text.

This control, Block (1992) has referred to as metacognition. Metacognition involves thinking about what one is doing while reading. Klein et al. (1991) stated that strategic readers attempt the following while reading: Identifying the purpose of the reading before reading, Identifying the form or type of the text before reading, Thinking about the general character and features of the form or type of the text. For instance, they try to locate a topic sentence and follow supporting details toward a conclusion, Projecting the author’s purpose for writing the text (while reading it), Choosing, scanning, or reading in detail, Making continuous predictions about what will occur next, based on information obtained earlier, prior knowledge, and conclusions obtained within the previous stages.

Moreover, they attempt to form a summary of what was read. Carrying out the previous steps requires the reader to be able to classify, sequence, establish whole-part relationships, compare and contrast, determine cause-effect, summarise, hypothesise and predict, infer, and conclude. Basically, when English teachers organize the essential strategies in teaching reading, some considerations that will be determined by the teacher relates to students’ experiences:

Interest and Explanation “When lecturers’

interest are aroused in something, whether it is an academic subject or a hobby, they enjoy working hard at it. Come to feel that they can in some way own it and use it to make sense of the world around us. Coupled with the need to establish the relevance of content, teachers need to craft explanations that enable students to understand the material. This involves knowing what students understand and then forging connections between what is known and what is new. Relating to appropriate assessment and feedback, this principle involves using a variety of assessment techniques and allowing students to demonstrate their mastery of the material in different ways. It avoids those assessment methods that encourage students to memorize and regurgitate. It recognizes the power of feedback to motivate more effort to learn and engage in teaching and learning process.

Independence, control and active engagement – “Good teaching fosters (a) sense of student control over learning and interest in the subject matter. Good teachers create learning tasks appropriate to the student’s level of understanding. They also recognize the uniqueness of individual learners and avoid the temptation to impose “mass production” standards that treat all learners as if they were exactly the same. It is worth stressing that we know that students who experience teaching of the kind that permits control by the learner not only learn better, but that they enjoy learning more.

Learning from students—effective teaching strategy refuses to take its effect on students for granted. It sees the relation between teaching and learning as problematic, uncertain and relative. Good teaching is open to change: it involves constantly trying to find out what the effects of instruction are on learning, and modifying the instruction in the light of the

evidence collected.

Generally, teaching English at Al-Anwar Islamic College was still accustomed teaching strategies, and the method that the lecturers used was teacher centered. Basically, the author observed at Al-Anwar Islamic College especially in Al-Qur'an Exegesis Program exactly at semester three. Generally, they can be classified as adult learners. According to Brown (2001: 90) adults learners are more able to handle abstract generalization about usage and not enough real life language use can be deadly for adults. Adults have longer attention spans for material that may not be intrinsically interesting to them. In that case, the rule of keeping your activities short and sweet applies also to adult age teaching, sensory input need not always be quite as varied with adults. They have their own perceptions. Perception has sometimes been defined as the consciousness of particular material things present to sense. Perception is as a matter of fact always a larger thing than this definition would immediately imply; because we are always aware in the "fringe" in the background of consciousness, of sense activities other than those we speak of as being perceived, especially those connected with the internal operations of our own organism. Perception as psychologists describe it, is therefore, like sensation, something of an abstraction.

Perception is the process by which people interpret and organize sensation to produce a meaningful experience of the world (Lindsay & Norman, 1977) In other words, a person is confronted with a situation or stimuli. The person interprets the stimuli into something meaningful to him or her based on prior experiences. However, what an individual interprets or perceives may be substantially different from reality.

Perception refers to the way we try to understand the world around us. We gather information through our five sense organs, but perception adds meaning to these sensory inputs. The process of perception is essentially subjective in nature, as it is never an exact recording of the event or the situation. Perception can be defined as the set of processes by which an individual becomes aware of and interprets information about the environment.

The model of perception helps one to understand the basic processes involved in human perception in a rather simplistic way. At a point of time, we are flooded with a myriad of stimuli impinging on our sense organs, like now as you are reading this particular page in front of you, light rays from the page are reaching your eyes. But these are, by no means, all. Light rays from every possible direction are also impinging on your retina as well.

As it is now happening with you, you are, in all probability, hardly aware of all these sensory inputs reaching you. Thus what happens is that we only selectively choose from among a host of stimuli and process only those. If we examine the model above we will find that only those stimuli are given entry to the process of 'registration' which have got adequate attention or have aroused our interest.

The perceptions of people differ from the perceptions of inanimate objects like tables, chairs, books, pencil, etc. mainly because we are prone to make inferences regarding the intentions of people and thus form judgment about them. The perceptions and judgments regarding a person's actions are often significantly influenced by the assumptions we make about the person's internal state.

## METHOD

Research method used in this study was descriptive analysis. The author compiled all of the data through a survey and tried to figure out the data acquired.

Then, the participants of the study were the English lecturers at Al-Anwar Islamic College. There were three English lecturers at Al-Anwar Islamic College. They taught at the first and third semester.

A survey was used as the instruments of this study. Items include 10 positive statements regarding a numbered head together. Using a five point Likert scale, the participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with these statements. Choices were “Strongly agree,” “Agree,” “Disagree” and “Strongly disagree. In addition to it, participants were left additional space on the survey to make comments about a numbered head together.

The data collected consists of lecturers ratings on statements about the use of a numbered heads together in teaching reading. Each participant responded to 10 statements about a numbered heads together and rated the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statements (see Appendix).

In data analysis, to evaluate the responses of lecturers who use a numbered heads together, then descriptive analysis including an analyzing of the surveys were used to summarize the data. An item by item analysis was used to describe overall responses.

## DISCUSSION

The results of this study will be presented by question as identified in the purpose of

this study. Results for an additional question addressed after the collection of data will also be presented. Research Question 1: What are teachers’ perceptions regarding the use of a numbered heads together in teaching reading? The majority of the responses were in favor of a numbered head together. Within all items, participants agreed or strongly agreed with each of the statements provided (see appendix). The highest percent of “strongly agree” responses reached 100% for item one, “a numbered heads together aids learning,” and item 10, “I have seen positive results with a numbered heads together.” The highest percent of “strongly disagree” responses reached 66 % for item 4, “A numbered heads together helps students cope with academics”. In view of these results, it is evident that the majority of participants seem to have positive perceptions of a numbered heads together.

Research question 2: How is the usefulness of a numbered head together as lecturers strategy in teaching reading? The majority of the responses were in favor of a numbered head together. Within all items, participants agreed or strongly agreed with each of the statements provided. The highest percent of “strongly agree” responses reached 100% for item 6, “I would use a numbered heads together even if materials were not available.” and item 7, “A numbered heads together can benefit all students”. The highest percent of “strongly disagree” responses reached 66 % for item 2, “Students’ improvement is worth the extra effort of using a numbered heads together”. And item 5 “A numbered heads together improves overall classroom conditions”. Based on the view of these results, it is believed that the majority of participants seem to have positive usefulness

perceptions of a numbered heads together in teaching reading.

Research question 3: To what extent the use of a numbered heads together in teaching reading at Al-Anwar Islamic College. The majority of the responses were in favor of a numbered head together. Within all items, participants agreed or strongly agreed with each of the statements provided. The highest percent of “strongly agree” responses reached 100% for item 8, “A numbered heads together is fun”, and item 9, “A numbered heads together helps students to become independent”. The highest percent of “strongly disagree” responses reached 66 % for item 3, “Regular use of A numbered heads together has increased my appreciation of it”, and item 4, “A numbered heads together helps students cope with academics”. From the results above it could be said that a numbered heads together was apparently to have positive perception on teachers in teaching reading.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results which was found by author, we could see that the Al-lecturers perception in teaching English by using a numbered heads together was positive. It can be seen through their respond in the survey available. Teaching reading through a numbered heads together is a good strategy in teaching reading, because by engaging the students in the teaching and learning process, it is believed that the students will join the lesson happily and it will be fun. Besides, it will attract the students interactions in the classroom and helps students to become independent learner.

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