CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of Study

Learning to read is an important educational goal. For both children and adults, the ability to read opens up new worlds and opportunities. It enables students to gain new knowledge, and do everyday things that are part of modern life, such as, reading textbooks, newspaper, advertisement and so on (Elizabeth S. Pang et. al., 1990: 6). In this case, reading competence should be developed as a habit for the students as well as build on learners’ knowledge.

Reading competence, in syllabus of SMP, requires students to be able to understand the contents of the text for the purpose they can used them in daily life (Silabus SMP: 24-25). It means that, the students must be able to read aloud words, phrases, sentences with the correct pronunciation. Besides that, the students have to get some information from the text they read.

It is real that reading competence plays important role in learning English. Through reading, students can improve their insight and critical thinking. In this case, reading competence should be developed as a habit for the students as well as build on learners’ knowledge.

In Junior and Senior High School curriculum, reading is one of the competence standards conducted to the students. In KTSP curriculum, one of reading competences which should be learnt by them is to comprehend the
meaning of short functional texts essays in the form of narrative, descriptive
text, and news item in the context of daily life activities and to access
knowledge. This kind of reading competence has even been conducted since
they are at junior high school. In addition, the questions in National
Examination in English subject contain those kinds of texts and the students
are asked to comprehend them.

After observing the teaching learning process at the seven grade
students of SMP PGRI Sumbang and interviewing the English teacher on
September 28, 2011 there were some results: Firstly, the students were
difficult to comprehend the content of text because they were used to focus on
the word not focus on the content. Secondly, the method of teaching reading
that the teacher used in this school was not attractive and interesting because
the teacher just applied conventional methods in which the students read the
text and did the exercise.

As a consequence, it is a duty for the teacher to change this habit by
providing a technique that enables the students to comprehend English text
easily. Numbered Head Together method (NHT) was applied as Classroom
Action Research which is appropriate to solve the problem.

Number Head Together is one of cooperative learning in structural
methods; it is an approach of learning which is arranged to affect the
interaction system of students and as alternative toward traditional class
(Ibrahim, 2000: 112). By using this method, the students could get
competence in reading by sharing ideas and information with other students
in the text reading easily without feeling bored. Moreover, Numbered Head Together method improves cognitive skill of student individually or teams work.

Finally, this research used Numbered Head Together method to improve students’ reading competence entitled “Improving Students’ Reading Competence Using Numbered Head Together (A Classroom Action Research at the seventh graders of SMP PGRI Sumbang in Academic Year 2011/2012)”.

B. The Reason of Choosing the Topic

The reasons of this study were as follows:

1. The students found difficulty comprehending the text. It can be seen from the result of reading test in the observation.
2. NHT is an appropriate teaching strategy to be implemented to improve students' reading competence.

C. The Problem of Study

The problem that was gone to be discussed in this research was as follow: “Can Numbered Head Together improve students’ reading competence at the VII grade of SMP PGRI Sumbang?”
D. **The Aim of Study**

The aim of this research was whether or not “Numbered Head Together” improve students’ reading competence.

E. **The Clarification of Terms**

The title of this research is “Improving students’ Reading Competence Using Numbered Head Together of SMP PGRI Sumbang in the Academic Year of 2011/2012”. Before discussing this final project deeply, however, in order to be clear, it will be explained some word in the title, so that the readers who want to read this final project will understand it. They are as follows:

a. Improving

   It is something that makes or becomes something better than before (Hornby, 1989: 625)

b. Reading

   “Reading” is dynamic case most particularly with the readers’ knowledge of the experimental content of the text, (Nunan, 1991: 70).

c. Students’ Competence

   Students’ competence means person knowledge of his her language as the mastery of system of rules of language. (1992: 46). It is supported by Nurgiyantoro’s statement (2001: 165).

d. Numbered Head Together
Numbered Head Together leads your class through a series of steps designed to promote learning through cooperation, active participation, and individual accountability. It is an approach of leaning which arranged to affect of interaction system the students and as alternative toward traditional class (Ibrahim, 2000: 112).

This method is applied by some groups in which the students have a time to think and then discuss the answers in a group. After that, each student puts their heads together and shares their answers. They reach consensus on a team answer and discuss and teach if necessary so every knows the answer or knows how to solve the problem (www.KaganOnline.com).

F. Contribution of the research

This research contributes much in the teaching and learning process. First is for the student. Teacher helps them to solve the problem in reading activity and to make the students are able to comprehend the passage of text easily and to make students more active in reading lesson by cooperate in group. Second is for the teacher. This research gives the alternative solution in teaching reading that is using Numbered Head Together, so that teacher can vary their teaching strategy as well as develop their competence in teaching. Thirdly, the researcher hopes numbered head together method would be good method in teaching and learning process especially English for the purpose the students would be more enthusiastic in studying English.