
K-W-L: A TEACHING STRATEGY TO DEVELOP STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION IN THE SEVENTH GRADER OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the implementation of K-W-L strategy to develop seventh graders students' reading comprehension and their involvement in the classroom activities. This study employed a mixed method design. There were two classes of seventh grade that were selected to be samples; one class of control group and one class of experimental group. Each of the class consisted of 32 students. The data were gained from the pre-test and post-test, the classroom observation, the field notes, and the interview. The results from the pre-test and post-test showed that there was a small increase of the mean of the control group which was 11.41 (pre-test 28.75 and the post-test 40.16), meanwhile, the experimental group showed a significant increase by 46.71 (pre-test 30.16 and the post-test 75.31). In addition, the value of eta squared was 0.725, which indicated that the implementation of K-W-L strategy had large effect on students' reading comprehension. It can be implied that the students' reading comprehension skill could be developed through the implementation of K-W-L Strategy. The results from the classroom observation, the field notes, and the interview revealed that each step of K-W-L strategy contributed to improve reading comprehension and develop students' involvement in the classroom activities.

Keywords: K-W-L strategy; reading comprehension; students' involvement

INTRODUCTION

Most of the Indonesian students have obstacles in reading English texts since English is a foreign language (Hamra and Syafitriana, 2010). Related to this, it is caused by poor interpretation of the texts, lack of vocabularies, the implementation of inappropriate reading strategies, and poor grammatical skill (Behroozizad and Bakhtiyarzadeh, 2012). Thus, it is essential to improve students' reading comprehension skill by several reasons (Anderson, 1999; Muijis and Reynolds, 2010; Mikulecky, 1986 in Rahim, 2015; Richards & Renandya, 2002 in Cahyono and Widiati, 2006). Firstly, it is due to reading is the important skill that every learner needs to possess. Secondly, reading is the foundation for success in language learning and academic learning. Thirdly, reading helps students to improve vocabularies. Fourth, the students become more comfortable with written English. Lastly, it can enhance language acquisition

process, provide good models for writing, give chances to introduce new topics, stimulate the discussion, and learn the language.

Looking at its importance, it can be implied that an appropriate strategy to improve reading comprehension is required to be applied in teaching English texts in teaching reading English texts in Indonesia. It is believed that K-W-L strategy is can improve students' reading comprehension and their involvement in the classroom (Ogle, 1986; Vacca & Vacca, 2008).

The K-W-L strategy is a teaching strategy that focuses on the involvement of the students and the teacher to take active role in reading and learning (Ogle, 1989). K-W-L strategy is used to guide the students through mostly for the expository text (Ogle, 1989). There are three specific steps of K-W-L proposed by Ogle (1989) that can enhance students' reading comprehension: (a) know, (b) want to know, (c) learned. The

concern on the students' reading comprehension and their involvement in the classroom activities leads a study to investigate the implementation of K-W-L strategy in improving reading comprehension. The objectives of the study are to improve students' reading comprehension and to develop students' involvement in the classroom activities by employing K-W-L in teaching reading. In fact, the main goal of this study is to investigate how students' reading comprehension can improve after they experience K-W-L strategy.

Literature Review

Reading is an active process between the readers and the texts to create meaning through the readers' experience and their prior knowledge (Anderson, 1999). To create meaning from the text, a reader requires reading strategies. Cohen (1986) pointed out that reading strategy is "mental processes that readers consciously choose to use to accomplish reading tasks". In line with this, Nergis (2013), prevailed that reading strategies assist student to understand the text they read better. By applying reading strategies, the reader will try to solve the problem when they encounter any difficulties while reading. Added to this, theoretical and empirical research have shown that reading comprehension can be adjusted by implementing reading strategies in teaching reading (Anderson, 1991; Block, 1986). Reading comprehension itself is an active process that the reader is required to interact and engage with the text to construct the meaning from a text (Kruidenier, 2002). Therefore, by comprehending the text, the reader can become a good reader who is able to link the information with their own background knowledge to build meaning, to be success in writing since they have solid knowledge, and to have higher success of understanding (Anderson, 2012).

Related to the above mentioned, to encourage students to foster their reading skill, there are various teaching and learning strategies that can be used by the teachers in the classroom. Mainly, the teaching and learning strategies focus on a particular strategy. In this case, K-W-L (Know, Want,

Learned) strategy is one of teaching and learning strategies used mainly for information text (Ogle, 1986). The K-W-L strategy stands for what I Know, what I Want to learn, and what I Learned (Ogle, 1986). This is the reading strategy which is employed to guide the students to comprehend the text by activating students' background knowledge. According to Ogle (1986), its aims are more diverse, it helps readers to elicit prior knowledge of the topic of the text, set a purpose for reading, monitor their comprehension, assess their comprehension of the text, and expand ideas beyond the text. Furthermore, K-W-L can be seen as a metacognitive strategy since the problem-solving process focuses on thinking about and developing a language for the reading process (Pennington, 2009). Moreover, it is reader-centered because the reader(s) sets their own purposes for reading (Pennington, 2009).

In line with this, there are three basic steps of K-W-L strategy which are recalling what they Know, determining what they Want to learn, and identifying what they Learned as they read. In the "know" step, students are encouraged to brainstorm what they know about a given topic and write down their ideas in the board or the worksheet that can be saved (Sinambela, Manik & Pangaribuan, 2015). Some researchers believe that activating prior knowledge of the readers is the most important variable for comprehending during a new learning experience (Buehl, 2016). Moreover, since the know step requires reader's prior knowledge about the topic given, this can encourage the reader to be more critical because they will ask themselves whether the content of the text that they read is reasonable or not. By doing this, they become alert when they find disagreement with what they have previously accepted as true (Harris and Sipay, 1980). In addition, Smith (1982) in Somadayo (2011) pointed out that reading comprehension is an activity done by the reader to link new information with his/her prior knowledge to obtain new sort of knowledge.

Furthermore, it is believed that this step enables students to focus on the topic that they are going to read (Buehl, 2016). This is supported by Somadayo (2011) that

the main principal of good reader is they actively involve in the reading process. They have clear purpose and monitor their comprehension from the text they read.

Afterwards, in the “want” step, teacher asks the students to create questions about the topic related to what they want to know and other questions may be things students are wondering about (Buehl, 2016). This step is aimed to demonstrate to students the importance of asking questions of the material before reading since they will have their own reason for reading to find the answers that will increase their knowledge about the topic (Ogle, 1986). It is believed that having responsibility for formulating one’s questions can increase active attention to the meaning and offer a base for responsible and efficient learning (Anderson et. al, 1978). In addition, purpose plays a major role in comprehension (Smith and Robinson , 1980). As stated by Guthrie (1977) that by giving purpose in reading, students can focus on what information that should be gained. In addition, the teacher role in this part is central to emphasize the agree or disagreement, gaps in information and help students to prompt questions (Ogle,1986).

In addition, the “learned” step offers opportunity for students to make direct links among their purpose for reading, the questions they had as they read and the information they found (Ogle, 1986). Therefore, they will identify the important information and conclude the important aspects of the text.

In line with this, K-W-L can increase students’ reading comprehension since it covers the needs to understand, evaluate, and utilize of information and ideas obtained through reading (Smith and Robinson, 1980). As proposed by Smith and Robinson (1980), to comprehend reading materials successfully, most readers require help as follows:

1. To develop strategies for sampling and selecting graphic, syntactic, and semantic cues.
2. To develop prediction strategies and anticipate meaning, syntactic patterns, and graphic features not yet seen;
3. To develop confirmation strategies to check predictions against subsequent

cues;

4. To develop correction strategies when miscues occur which interfere with comprehension;
5. To develop flexible strategies for dealing with a wide variety of materials.
6. To develop critical strategies for judging validity of information in reading;
7. To develop flexibility in use of reading process for different purposes. (Smith and Robinson, 1980)

Likewise, Vacca and Vacca (2008) asserted that the most important situations underlying reading comprehension and learning in general are the prior knowledge and experience that students convey to any learning situations. Furthermore, it is stated that the purpose of reading can be facilitated through making prediction of what will be read. Therefore, those requirements can be fulfilled through K-W-L strategy. Finally, this strategy will accommodate students to strengthen their learning of a topic, make them get involved in doing what every good reader does, comprehend the topic, let them monitor their own learning, internalize student learning, and retain the information of the topic.

METHOD

This research employed mixed method design by using three instruments namely tests, classroom observation, and interview. In order to find out the answer of the first research question, this research employed quantitative approach with quasi-experimental method. Furthermore, the research compared two treatments in two groups in order to studying the effects. Those groups were namely experimental group and control group.

The experimental group received the treatment which is K-W-L strategy, meanwhile, the control group received the conventional teaching. The treatment was used to find out the improvement of students’ reading comprehension. Hence, the pre-test and post-test were administered.

In order to find out the second research question and to strengthen the first research

question, this research also employed qualitative approach with descriptive method. The experimental group of this study were observed in five meetings and three students of the experimental group were interviewed by the researcher. The observations and the interviews were aimed to portray students' active involvement during teaching and learning process of K-W-L strategy and to find out the process of K-W-L strategy that contributed to reading comprehension.

The samples of this research were seventh grade of Junior High School in Lembang which were VII-F and VII-D. VII-F was the experimental group while the VII-D is the control group. Furthermore, the data of pre-test and post-test were analyzed by using SPSS 16.00 for windows; meanwhile, the results from classroom observations and the interviews were analyzed and linked them with the underly studies.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The first research question in the present study sets out to determine whether the use of the KWL strategy will develop the students' reading comprehension or not. The results from the pre-test and post-test showed that there was a small increase of the mean of the control group which was 11.41 (pre-test 28.75 and the post-test 40.16), meanwhile, the experimental group showed a significant increase by 46.71 (pre-test 30.16 and the post-test 75.31). In addition, the value of eta squared is 0.725 which means that the implementation of K-W-L strategy has large effect on students' reading comprehension. Based on the findings, it can be seen that implementing K-W-L strategy has a significant effect on the students' reading comprehension rather than the control group who was taught by using conventional method. It can be indicated that K-W-L strategy is considered effective in improving students' reading comprehension. As the research conducted by Fengjuan (2010), Rayuningtya (2013), Lismayanti (2014), Utami (2014), Rahim (2015), Hamid and Rahman (2016), and Dieu (2016), the results showed that K-W-L strategy can improve reading comprehension.

The second research question in this study is addressed to find out the impact of K-W-L strategy on students' involvement in the classroom activity. According to the findings, the results depict that each step of K-W-L strategy contribute to reading comprehension and to the improvement of students' involvement in the classroom. It can be seen from the aspects of each step in K-W-L such as previewing, activating prior knowledge, setting purpose for reading, decoding, scanning, skimming and summarizing that contribute to the development of the students' involvement in the classroom activities.

Firstly, to do with the previewing activity in the K step, it is proven that in five meeting treatments, the students were able to preview the text after they were given related pictures and videos of the topic of the text and additionally, the previewing activity can make the students involved in the classroom discussion. In line with this, it is stated that previewing is aimed to make prediction about the topic and create framework of the text (Valeri and Gold, 1987; Huang, 2009). It is also believed that making prediction is an important role in reading (Harmer, 2007).

Secondly, to do with activating prior knowledge's activity in the K step, it is revealed that the students were able to activate their prior knowledge in five meeting treatments and it makes them to participate actively in the classroom. Regarding this, activating prior knowledge is essential for achieving comprehension. Biemans and Simons (1996) in Strangman et.al (2004) stated that background knowledge refers to all knowledge that the learners have obtained before reading the text which is potentially relevant for acquiring new knowledge. As prevailed by Langer, 1984; Long, Winograd & Bridget, 1989; Stevens, 1980 in Strangman et. al (2004) that there is a well established correlation between prior knowledge and reading comprehension.

The activation of prior knowledge in the implementation of K-W-L strategy gradually occurred in five meetings and they could develop their participation in stating what they know about the topic. Moreover, from the interview's result, it can be indicated that recalling what they know in

the K step of K-W-L offer foundation for the students to remember the material better. As Campbell (2008) stated that linking everyday experiences into the classroom activity can build meaningful and lasting learning. In addition, Alderson (2000) proposed that to get meaning of the text, the reader has to make connection with the things they know and make prediction of the text. This is supported by Bailey (2002) that by associating the text with the students' prior knowledge can enhance understanding and increase comprehension. In line with this, in the K step also enables teacher and learners to identify misperception, hence; it will be corrected in the L column. Regarding this, Campbell (2008) asserts that when teachers find misperception from the student, they should assist them to discover thoughtful ways to correct their ideas (Campbell, 2008). To conclude, by activating prior knowledge in the K step of K-W-L supports the learners to participate in the classroom discussion, foster meaningful yet lasting learning, increase comprehension, have ability to identify misperception.

Thirdly is to do with setting of purpose's activity in the W step. It is disclosed that the W column gives opportunity to the students to inquire about the topic and at the same time it offers them to set purpose for reading. Regarding this, setting purpose to read is one of the approaches to comprehend the text (Knutson, 1998; Mikulecky; 2008). In the same way, the students will become more focused and engaged while reading (Cox, 2017). K-W-L strategy offers the opportunity for learners to make purpose for reading by generating some questions that they are wondering about. In

Ogle (1986) stated that increasing the learners' knowledge about a particular topic can be achieved through prompting some questions made by the learners so that they will have their own reason for reading to discover the answers. It is justified from the classroom observation and interview's findings that the students were facilitated by W step to have purpose for reading.

In line with this, it is strongly believed that formulating questions in pre-reading activity increase active attention to the meaning and gives a base for responsible and efficient learning (Anderson et. al, 1978).

Thus, they will put their attention on what information should be gained (Guthrie, 1977). Added to this, it is strongly believed that having purpose for reading enables students to improve their reading comprehension (Smith and Robinson, 1980; Knutson and Elizabeth, 1988). Furthermore, by giving students opportunity to make inquiries about the topic also encourages them to participate in the classroom discussion. In conclusion, establishing questions in W step of K-W-L enables students to set the purpose of reading, to keep the work on track, to increase comprehension, and to promote active involvement in the reading activity.

Afterwards, to do with the decoding activity in the L step, it is shown that the decoding activity was able to make the students comprehend the text. In line with this, it is argued that having the students to decode facilitate them to increase reading comprehension (Back and Juel, 1995). One of the main components of reading comprehension is the students are able to decode or recognizing words in the text (Harris and Sipay, 1980; Mikulecky; 2007). According to the result of the classroom observation and interview, it is stated that the opportunity to decode occurred in the five meetings treatment which benefited the students to comprehend the text. In summary, in this research students can read the text comprehensively because they are able to decode.

Subsequently is to do with scanning activity in the L step. The results from the classroom observation denote that this activity is successfully carried out in the five meeting treatments because in each meeting, they can find the answer from the questions they have made in the W column. This is also strengthened by the result of the field notes. It is found that the students' ability to scan the text and the students' participation in the classroom activity are developed through the implementation of L step of K-W-L.

Then, according to the result of the interview, it is implied that the scanning activity in the L step accomodates the students to locate the information that they seek to answer the questions. At the same time, the students have to understand the meaning of the question and the answer in

the text. Thus, it can be concluded that the students' ability to scan and the students' involvement were improved by the scanning activity in the L step. In line with this, scanning itself is defined as the ability to find relevant information quickly without reading the whole text (Harmer, 2007; Brown, 2001; Grellet, 1981; Mikulecky, 2008). In this case, Mikulecky (2007) proposed that having the ability to scan is one of the requirements to comprehend the text

Thenceforth, to do with the skimming activity in the L step, it is found that the students' ability to skim and the students' involvement in the classroom were developed by the implementation of skimming activity in the L step. Related to this, skimming can be described as the ability to get the general or main ideas to understand the content of the text quickly (Beale, 2013; Harmer, 2007; Brown, 2001; Mikulecky, 2008). Based on the findings, the skimming activity can improve their comprehension towards the text and their involvement in the classroom. In this case, Mikulecky (2008) asserted that skimming is one of the components of making-meaning from the text. Thus, when the students can gain general understanding of the topic, it will prepare them to read for understanding and assist them to read faster.

Lastly, is to do with the summarizing activity in the L step, it is proven that summarizing activity makes the students comprehend the material better, remember the lesson better, and participate actively in the classroom activity. As stated by Jones (2007) that by having students summarized the text enables them to identify the important ideas, ignore irrelevant information, and integrate the ideas meaningfully.

Based on the findings and discussion, it is obvious that implementing K-W-L strategy can develop students' reading comprehension and their involvement in the classroom activities.

CONCLUSION

This study is aimed to find out how K-W-L impacts on the seventh grader students' reading comprehension and their involvement in the classroom activities.

Referring to the findings and discussion that have been presented in the previous chapter, it is revealed that there was an improvement of students' reading comprehension in reading before and after the treatment of the implementation of K-W-L reading strategies. It is proven that the experimental class showed a significant increase in the average pre-test to post-test rather than control class. The average score of experimental class in pre-test was only 30.16, meanwhile the average of the post-test reached 75.31. In this case, the control class only showed a slight difference between the average score of pre-test and the post-test. The average score of control class in pre-test was 28.75 and the average score of post-test was 40.16. Thus, it can be concluded that K-W-L strategies succeeded to improve students' reading comprehension in reading descriptive text.

Based on the result of the test, observation, and the interview, the K-W-L strategy assists participants to have previewing skill; to activate their prior knowledge and experience related it to the text and connect it to the text; the strategy helps participant to make prediction; the strategy helps the participants to monitor their comprehension; the strategy facilitates the participants to scan and skim the text; the strategy helps participant to realize particular part that they still do not understand; and the strategy helps participants to become actively involved in the classroom activities. Thus, the K-W-L strategy was capable to improve seventh grader students' reading comprehension and their involvement in the classroom activities.

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