

**THE USE OF KWL PLUS STRATEGY TO IMPROVE READING
COMPREHENSION OF THE SECOND YEAR STUDENTS OF SMP N 12
PEKANBARU**

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Abstract

This classroom action research was intended to know whether or not KWL – Plus strategy can improve the ability of the students in comprehending reading text. The researcher was helped by a collaborator and used observation sheets and field notes as the instruments of the research. Besides, she also used speaking test to see the improvement of students' speaking skill on each cycle. The research started on July 9, 2012 and ended on August 13, 2012.

This action research was conducted to the students at SMPN 12 Pekanbaru, class VIII⁷. There were 32 students in the classroom. The researcher conducted the test three times. They were Pre Test conducted before the strategy was implemented, Post Test conducted at the end of cycle 1 and Post Test conducted at the end of cycle 2. The aspects of reading evaluated were finding factual information, main idea, supporting idea, reference, the meaning of vocabulary. At the beginning of cycle 1 the average score of the students reading comprehension was 43. At the end of cycle 1 improved to 62, and at the end of cycle 2 improved to 76.

Based on the findings, it was concluded that the use of KWL plus Strategy can improve students' reading comprehension; therefore, the researcher should continue using this technique in teaching reading.

Keywords: *KWL plus Strategy, Reading Comprehension*

INTRODUCTION

Reading as one of the basic skill in English is not simply translated word per word but need to be acquired during language course. However, it appears to be neglected by some English learners. They tend to treat it simply as a supplementary skill. The ability to comprehend something from reading materials for students who learn a foreign language needs to be improved in order to make them easier in reading process and to give them enough time in developing their ability.

Aashoor and Hawamdeh (2007: 23) state that Reading as a field of teaching is considered one of the important areas of teaching if not actually the most important ever. It is one of the most important academic skills. Besides, it is a major pillar upon which the teaching/learning process is built. The reading ability plays a central role in the teaching/learning success at all educational stages. Having any difficulty in this skill will result in variety of consequences on all subjects of study, since reading includes a variety of sub-skills such as: discrimination of linguistic symbols, coordination between the symbol and a suitable meaning, using the context to recognize the lexical meaning, the ability of visual analysis of words to recognize their ingredients, the ability of sound discrimination, coordination between the symbols seen by the reader and the corresponding sound, the good comprehension of a reading text, and understanding further meanings or meanings implicitly included within the lines.

According to Durkin, Hanna & Al Nasir (1993) reading comprehension is considered the real core for the reading process; and a big process around which all other processes are centered. Comprehension is the peak of the reading skills and the bases for all reading processes (It is viewed by some researchers as the ultimate objective of the reading process, since they who do not comprehend what they reads is considered as if they have not read. However, there are five components of reading comprehension that have to be considered. They are: finding Factual Information, finding main idea, finding supporting idea, finding the meaning of vocabulary, and identifying reference.

Du Boulay (2004) assures that weakness in the reading ability constitutes one of the biggest problems that encounter students' at all educational levels. Thus, teaching Reading is viewed as a teaching objective at the different educational stages; and the key to success in other subjects of study.

Through the writer's experience in observing and teaching the second year students of SMP Negeri 12 Pekanbaru, she usually discovered that there was many students still had difficulties in reading and comprehending texts. Most of students were still not achieve the minimum criteria of achievement of English subject yet. It can be seen by the result of T-Test. There was only 1 student can achieve the minimum criteria of achievement of English subject or got the score higher than 71. Most of students got low score almost at each component of reading comprehension. There were 27 students who got the score 30 -65. Then, there were 4 students who got the score 1 – 29. The average score of students was only 43.

It was happen because of some problems faced by students in reading. Firstly, most of student's ability in comprehending the reading text was not yet satisfactory. It was indicate that the teacher did not teach the students how to have understanding in reading comprehension. Secondly, most of students had difficulties in finding main idea and supporting idea of the text. It was indicate that the teacher's explanation about finding the main idea and supporting idea was not clear. Thirdly, most of students had difficulties in finding the meaning of words in written texts. For example, it is difficult for the students to find the meaning of words. They did not know what they wanted to do. It was indicate that the teacher's explanation about the meaning of words was not yet satisfactory. Fourthly, most of students just copied their friends' assignment. It was indicate that they do not understand about the material that given by the teacher. Fifthly, they also had difficulties in identifying reference such as: she, he, they, this, that, them, and even they had problems in answering Yes / No questions or WH questions.

Furthermore, lack of vocabulary was also one of the reasons that caused difficulties for students in comprehending the texts. It becomes the reason why they lose interest in reading. Sometimes the students look up the meaning of the difficult words in the dictionary. But, when they go back to the texts, the students fail to catch the correct words based on the context of the passage. In addition, some of students also have low motivation to learn English especially reading.

Based on mentioned above, the writer is nodded that the teacher pays great attention in teaching reading. The teacher should search other reading strategy. Therefore, in this study the writer wants to try the use KWL plus Strategy to improve students' reading

comprehension. This strategy is developed by Carr, E and Dina Ogle in “European journal for social Reading (April 2010). K-W-L Plus is designed as a strategy used to develop reading comprehension by helping students create a connection between their prior knowledge and what they read, hear, or view. KWL requires students to identify what is known about a particular subject (K), what the students wants to know (W), and what is learned as a result of reading the text (I). KWL Plus adds mapping and summarization. (Carr, E and D, Ogle, 2010:12 - 03).

Carr, E and Dina Ogle in “Journal of Reading (April 1987:626 - 31) states that KWL-Plus is a reading and thinking strategy which focuses on the student as a learner. It is a highly effective strategy that supports nonfiction inquiry and clarifies thinking. Research involves identifying what reader knows about a topic, wondering what more reader would want to learn about it, and finding more information which leads to the formation of new ideas. It encourages the student to ask questions and think about ideas while doing task.

In short, the purposes of this research are: (1) To find out whether KWL – Plus as a strategy can improve the ability of the students in comprehending reading text. (2) To find out the factors cause the improvement of the students’ ability in reading comprehension at the second years students at SMPN 12 Pekanbaru. Hopefully, the result of this research will give contribution to: (1) Teachers can get input from this research about the use of KWL -Plus Strategy to help students in reading comprehension. English teachers will improve their teaching strategy in order to upgrade the students’ ability in reading comprehension. (2) The students can get information about their ability in reading comprehension and make them easier to create a connection between their prior knowledge and what they read, hear, or view. Students also more confident in attempting comprehension question. (3) School can add the references for the library. (4) The reader can enlarge their knowledge about using KWL-Plus in comprehending some reading texts. (5) The researcher herself who has experience in conducting the research about the use of KWL Plus in teaching reading.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

^This research is a classroom action research. It is used to improve students’ reading comprehension. This opinion is in line with what Kemmis (1993) in Wiriaatmadja (2008:12) state that Action research is something to do to improve knowledge by doing practice by the

teacher and learners in the classroom to solve a problem that usually happens in teaching learning process.

It means that the action research is done to acquire informational in order to solve the problem that are faced in certain condition or to give improvement on the situation where the research is applied in order to fill the need of teachers in daily teaching to improve their performance. According to Susilo (2007), action research is a process in cycle. There are four steps of cycles in action research; they are planning, acting, observing, and reflecting.

This research was conducted at SMP Negeri 12 Pekanbaru, located on Jl. H. Guru Sulaiman, Sukajadi. The participants of this research were the second year students of SMP N 12 Pekanbaru class VIII⁷; there were 32 students in the class. The writer chose this class because she discovered that the students of this class were unable to understand, develop, and create a connection between their prior knowledge and what they read, hear, or view in reading comprehension.

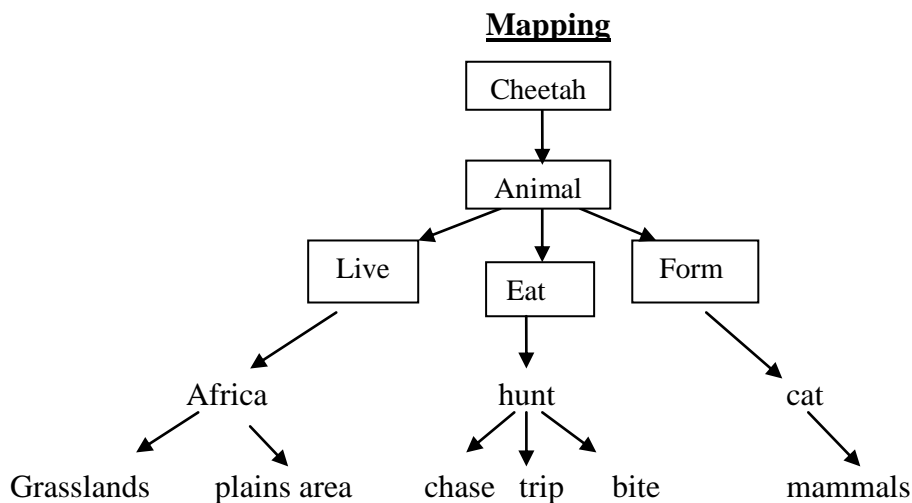
To get the data, the researcher used the instruments as follows: (1) **Reading Test**. It used to measure students' ability in reading. In this research, teacher gave the students pre-test and post- test. Pre- test is a test that is done at the beginning of action research. It was done in order to know the ability of student in reading comprehension before treatments were given. Post-test is a test conducting after the students treatments are given. (2) **Observation sheets**. It used to see the application of KWL – Plus in the process of teaching in the classroom. For the students, the observation sheet used to see students' involvement in the process of teaching learning by using KWL-Plus, whether they could follow the activities and were active in teaching learning process or not. For the teacher, the observation sheet was used to see how well the application of the use KWL-Plus in teaching learning process.(3) **Field notes**. It was a kind of notebook for recording the thoughts and events during the teaching and learning process that were not covered on the observation checklists. Then all of the data were analyzed in quantitative and qualitative ways.

One example of teaching procedure is that, the writer List the topic and/or key vocabulary from the text on the board or chart paper. Distribute K-W-L chart to each student, the table might be as the following:

Topic: Cheetahs

What we Know	what we Want to know	what we Learned
1. animal	Where do they live?	They live in Africa in grasslands/plains areas.
2.fast	How and what do they eat?	They hunt mammals using a "chase - trip - bite" method.
3.hunter	Are they more like dogs or lions?	Cheetahs evolved from cat-like mammals that lived more than four million years ago.

From the table above, the first column is discussing about what students know about the topic before reading the text. The second column is discussing about the students' question or about what students want to know about the topic. The third column is discussing about what the students have learned about the topic. After the student lists the entire KWL chart, they have to create mind map in group discussion; the mind map might be as the following:



From the mind maps above, the students write the summary about the text that they have learned.

Summary

Cheetahs are one kind of animal from Africa. They live in grasslands or plain area. They hunt mammals by using chase, trip and bite method. Cheetahs evolved from cat and they are like mammals. Cheetahs lived more than four million years ago.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

To know the ability of the students in reading comprehension of descriptive text before a strategy was applied, the researcher together with the collaborator conducted the pre test. The test consists of four texts with 20 questions. Each text has 5 questions. The test was a multiple –choice type. After collecting the data and computing the students' score, the result of pre – test showed that the ability of students was still low in comprehending each component of reading. Most of students got the low score almost at all components of reading comprehension, and the average score of students was only 43. They did not achieve the minimum criteria of achievement of English subject at SMPN 12 Pekanbaru. Next the researcher and collaborator arranged the lesson by applying KWL plus strategy for cycle 1. The implementation of action in the first cycle was done in three meetings.

At the end of cycle 1, again the researcher gave the students the test and analyzed the result of the test in each components of reading. The result increased than before. It can be seen from the average score of pre- test and post – test. The average score of pre – test was 43, while post – test was 62. It means that the increasing was 19 but the average score was still under KKM. The students also had problems in comprehending 2 points of reading components likes; Vocabulary in the context and finding main idea.

When the researcher analyzed the field notes, and the observation checklist, she found that some of students were still not active in following the new strategy in reading, beside the time allocation was not enough to do all activities.

There were some points from the collaborator as conclusions at the first cycle as in following: At the first meeting, the teacher voice was not loud enough to be heard while the teacher taught to the students in front of class. At the second meeting, the teacher just focused on her explanation about KWL Plus strategy in front of class. In the third meeting, the teacher was really relaxed and enjoyed while they taught the students in front of the class. Although the teacher activity was better, the students' average score was still under KKM. Therefore, the researcher should continue to the next cycle 2.

At the end of cycle 2, the student's score in all components of reading increased significantly from cycle 1 especially in terms of finding vocabulary in the context and identifying main idea were increasing more than others. The average score of post – test at the end of cycle 2 was 76. The results of post – test at the end of cycle 2 was higher than 71

as the minimum mastery criteria or KKM at SMPN12 Pekanbaru. The students also can comprehend all components of reading better than before.

Based on the results of the observation in teaching and learning process in the cycle 1 and cycle 2, the writer found an improvement that can be reached by students. The writer found that the activeness of students increased after using KWL Plus strategy. After doing teaching and learning process, the achievement of the students increased from pre – test to post – test at the end of cycle 1 to post – test at the end of cycle 2.

Then the classification of students score was improved more at the end of cycle 2. In the post at the end of cycle 1, there were 4 students in excellent level. There were 12 students could reach in good level and there were 16 students in mediocre level. There was no student in poor and very poor level. In the post- test at the end of cycle 2, the numbers of students in excellent level were increased as 10 students. The number of students in good level also increased as 22 students. There was no student in mediocre, poor, and very poor level.

In short, the finding indicated that the researcher was success to apply KWL Plus strategy and this strategy helped the students to improve their ability in reading comprehension. The improvement for the three cycles can be seen at the following table:

The Average Scores of the Students' Reading Comprehension

Components of Reading	Pre Test	Post Test at the End of Cycle 1	Post Test at the End of Cycle 2
Factual Information	7.0	7.8	8.6
Vocabulary	4.3	6.6	11.7
Reference	10.5	13.4	16.9
Main Idea	11.6	17.6	17
Supporting Idea	9.6	16.09	21.6
Average	43	62	76

At the beginning of cycle 1 the average score of the students' speaking skill was 43, improved to 62 at the end of cycle 1; and 76 at the end of cycle 2. After doing the reflection, the researcher and the collaborator agreed that action research in using KWL Plus strategy can improve the ability of students' reading comprehension. They also agreed that the research was successful enough. Therefore, they decided to end the research.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

After conducting the classroom action research in teaching reading by using KWL Plus strategy for two cycles, it can be concluded that: **(1)** The use of KWL plus strategy can improve ability the second year students at SMPN 12 Pekanbaru in reading comprehension. The improvement of the students can be seen from the score of the given test. According to the data, the achievement of students' ability in reading comprehension before given treatment is lower than the minimum criteria state by SMPN 12 Pekanbaru that is 71. The students' average score in Pre Test was 43. Then, the average score improved 62 at the end of cycle 1 and 76 at the end of cycle 2. It means that the students' average score at the end of cycle 2 is higher than the minimum criteria of achievement of SMPN 12 Pekanbaru. **(2)** The dominant factors caused the improvement of the students ability in reading comprehension is the activeness of the students. The improving student's activities can be seen from the result of students' observation sheet. The average of percentage of students' activities in cycle 1 is 61%. Then, it improved to 97% at the end of cycle 2. The improving student's activities solved the students' problems in reading comprehension. **(3)** The components of reading that improved most were in term of finding vocabulary and main idea. Then follow by factual information, supporting idea and reference. It can be seen from the percentage of students' improvement from all components of reading in pre test, post test at the end of cycle 1, and post test at the end of cycle 2 can be concluded that the reading comprehension of the second year's students of SMPN 12 Pekanbaru was satisfactory.

Based on the result of this research, it is suggested that: **(1)** Teacher can be use KWL Plus strategy as an alternative method for teaching reading in order to make the students perform their maximum ability. **(2)** Teacher should pay attention to the students when they are working in group. This is the most valuable thing to determine whether the students learning or not. **(3)** Teacher should build a good and enjoyable atmosphere in classroom to make the students enjoy studying English reading. **(4)** This strategy will effective and efficient to make the students more understand about the materials given. **(5)** The researcher recommends a further research using KWL Plus with negotiated material especially in reading, because the students will be more active in teaching and learning process if they are familiar with the topic of the lesson. **(6)** The researcher realizes that this research is far from perfect. Therefore, further research needs to be conducted.

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