

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE USE OF KNOW-WANT-LEARNED (KWL) STRATEGY IN READING COMPREHENSION

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ABSTRACT


This study investigates the English learners' perceptions of the application of Know-Want-Learned (KWL) strategy in reading comprehension class. The study used the quantitative method, employing a questionnaire to collect the data needed. The respondents of the study were 30 students majoring in English Education at a public university in Banda Aceh, Aceh Province, Indonesia. The respondents had already experienced the use of KWL strategy in the Reading Comprehension class. The findings showed that and the students' perception of KWL strategy was generally positive that most of them felt that KWL is suitable to use to help them in their reading comprehension on English texts.

KEYWORDS: *Students' Perceptions, Know-Want-Learned (KWL) Strategy, Reading Comprehension.*

INTRODUCTION

People who enjoy reading develop themselves to be skilled readers, which raises their chances of success in education and other fields. However, those who dislike reading, on the other hand, will struggle to develop literacy habits, making it difficult for them to sharpen their abilities and achieve success in the education setting (West & Chew, 2014). In other words, for people who have high priority in reading, they take it as a prime need to get much information. They also can comprehend ideas, arguments and detect implication of text easily. On the contrary, it becomes a complicated activity for people who do not like reading. These people often get troubles not only in detecting new vocabulary, but also in predicting the meaning of the text. The more difficult the text for them, the more demotivated them in reading.

Therefore, many strategies have been developed in helping people who struggle in reading, one of which is the KWL strategy. The KWL stands for "Know, Want to Know,



and Learned." This strategy refers to a practice in which the teacher guides students, as readers, through the process of interacting with reading texts (Blachowicz & Ogle, 2008; Ogle, 1986). The practice incorporates whatever information and knowledge the students have had in order to assist their groupmates in establishing a suitable learning environment and communicating the outcomes of their reading. Put simply, this method encourages students to use prior knowledge when reading. Students can turn into active readers by analyzing texts in three steps in the KWL chart. The first is the "Know" step whereby the readers are asked to deliberate what they already know about the topic of the text before they read the material. They would write down all the words come across their mind in the "K" column. After finishing the "K" column, the readers move on to the "Want to Know" step. Here, the readers write down what they want to learn or want to identify further about the topic of the text. The last step is "Learned", in which after the readers read the passage and then they should summarize what they have learned from the reading. They would write this down in the "L" column.

In view these discussions, this study tried to examine the use of the KWL method applied in a reading class. This study posed the following research question: What is the university students' perceptions of the KWL strategy applied in the classroom in a public university in Aceh Province, Indonesia?

LITERATURE REVIEW

READING COMPREHENSION

A good reading skill cannot be acquired overnight, as it requires a lot of effort and practice. According to Patel and Jain (2008), reading is not simply taking a source of information, but it is also an interactive process that requires recognition and comprehension skills. In addition, Barchers (1998) explains about some reading process theories through bottom-up theory of reading, top-down theory of reading and interactive theory of reading. Bottom-up theory believes that readers who have strong understanding relationship between letters and sounds will succeed when coming across unfamiliar words and sentences in books. Up-down theory highlights the learning system by using experience and knowledge that readers already have previously about the reading that they will have.

Stauffer (1969) enlightens that good readers will have purpose of a reading activity, and if they do not have any purpose of reading, the reading will be useless. By this, it is very important to have a purpose of reading in order to have a better understanding of reading texts. Reading has three common purposes, they are: reading to be informed, reading for literary experience (pleasure), and reading to perform a task. Reading to be informed is an aim in which a reader reads a text or book to find

information that will help the reader's knowledge. Newspapers, books, and magazines are the reading materials for this purpose. Reading for literary experience is done to have fun while reading. Comic books, novels, and other fiction reading texts are included in this purpose. Reading to perform a task is carried out to complete a particular task.

The importance of reading cannot be denied as it is a fundamental skill not only to certain people in certain fields, but also to every person in this world. The need of information has increased nowadays and one of the most effective ways to get information is by reading. Reading is also a crucial factor affecting intellectual and emotional growth (Broom, 1951). The more readers read some materials, the more information they will get that will expand their knowledge about certain subjects and eventually lead them to have lots of knowledge (intellectual) and also emotional growth

Nevertheless, as stated by Woolley (2010), there are some reasons that make students feel difficult in reading. Some common issues happen during the reading process mostly related to matters such as word recognition, fluency, language system, and prior knowledge. The first issue is about word recognition. Students face difficulties when trying to recognize word of targeted language. This problem arises because of two different languages, which are not coming from the same branches of same language. English words are complex; one of the complexities comes from the meaning of a word. English has more than one meaning for most of the words, which sometimes confuse English language learners. Students who have a difficulty in recognizing words will find trouble in reading, as they will get stuck in reading as an effect of less recognizing of word. They will concentrate more on finding out the new word than trying to connect it to another word in sentences. The second issue is about fluency. Fluency refers to the ability to read with speed, accuracy, and proper expression. To understand what the text is about, the readers should be able to read fluently when reading silently or reading aloud. However, fluency problem is also related to word recognition since the readers who have difficulty to recognize words will be less fluent in reading the texts. The third one is about language system. Vocabulary, spelling, and grammatical structure are firmly tied because vocabulary follows its structural regulation, and vocabulary and spelling in English may give difficulties for the readers due to phonemic irregularity. The last common issue is about prior knowledge. If the readers do not have any prior knowledge about the reading that they will read, they will also face an obstacle to comprehend a reading text.



THE KWL STRATEGY

The KWL, which refers to Know, Want-to-know, and Learned, is a useful approach for reading comprehension. The KWL strategy is simple to use and can significantly improve the readers' capacity to learn efficiently and remember what they have studied (Academic Success Center, 2019). The KWL is also an approach helpful for encouraging active reading (Macceca, 2014). Further, this strategy connects the readers' prior knowledge, their desire to learn more, and their learning conclusions (Reading Educator, n.d.). In this strategy, the active steps in reading match the acronym KWL and are often grouped in the format of a three-column chart as follows (Academic Success Center, 2019):

KNOW	WANT-TO-KNOW	LEARNED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before reading, assess and record what you know. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set a purpose for your reading. • What do you want to learn from the text? • As you read, maintain focus on your purpose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After reading: reflect, note and review what you learned from your reading.

GRAPH 1. The KWL chart

In the context of education, the KWL has shown a number of benefits, including being easily used, demonstrating the level of knowledge and gaps in the students' understanding, motivating and engaging the students in the learning process, tracking the students' progress and learning outcomes, presenting a simple method for organizing notetaking, and offering flexibility that can be adapted to the lesson or students' needs (Lucid Content Team, 2019).

In addition, the KWL also provides several advantages as described in the following (Someka, 2022):

- Setting a purpose: Students know why they are about to read a particular text.
- Highlighting existing knowledge: It motivates students to think over and detects their prior knowledge about the topic.
- Giving a direction: By recognizing what they already know, students could set their learning goals and expectations.
- Being practical and flexible: It helps to visualize the learning process easily, also provides a flexibility to use it for a different subject or needs.
- Bringing students and teachers together: It engages students in the learning process and provides teacher's identification on the students' needs.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a quantitative research method. The participants of the study were selected purposively consisting of 30 students of English Department at a public university in Banda Aceh, Aceh Province, Indonesia. The students were already exposed to the KWL strategy in the reading class. The study used a questionnaire to collect the data. The questionnaire consisted of 30 statements in several parts: the first part focused on the students' previous common habits in reading a text; the second part focused on their perceptions about the use of the KWL strategy in reading; and the last part focused on the difficulties that the students faced when reading a text. They students were asked to choose "Yes" or "No" responses on the statements in the questionnaire. The data from the questionnaire were analyzed in the percentage. The students' identities were kept confidential in this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In order to find out whether the KWL strategy has had an impact on the students' reading abilities and what obstacles the students encountered when reading a text, the researchers distributed questionnaires to gain the data required. The results are in the following:

TABLE 1. Students' responses on usual reading strategies

STATEMENT	PERCENTAGE (%)	
	YES	NO
1. I read a text by reading and translating all the text first then answering the questions	83.33	16.67
2. I read a text by reading through all the texts and questions then translating the whole text and answering the questions	66.67	33.33
3. I read a text by reading the whole text without translating and then answering the questions	50	50
4. I read a text by analyzing the questions and then finding the answers in the text	33.33	66.67
5. I read a text by preparing some note about the content related to the reading topic	33.33	66.67
6. I read a text by determining the type of text	16.67	83.33
7. I read a text by clustering the same information on the text	16.67	83.33
8. I read a text by brainstorming idea before reading the text	13.33	86.67
9. I read a text by predicting what the text will be talked about	13.33	86.67
10. I read a text by listing what I want to know through the text	0	100

As seen in Table 1, it shows that most of the students (83.33%) still read the English texts by translating them into Indonesian. About 66.67% of them read a text by reading and translating all the texts first, and then answering the questions. However, only 50% of them read through all the texts without translating and then answered the questions. It seems that it would take much time for the students to comprehend the text first.

Furthermore, only 33.33% of them tried to read a text by analyzing the questions and then finding the answers in the text, or preparing some note about the content related to the reading topic. In addition, very few of them (16.67%) thought that knowing the type of text or clustering information is important in reading, respectively. In addition, as low as 13.33% think that brainstorming idea or predicting the text are important things to do in reading, respectively. Moreover, no students jot down any information they wanted to know in the text when reading.

Here, it can be said that most of them were not familiar to various strategies in reading English texts. They merely read without thinking too much on the reading strategies.

TABLE 2. Students' responses on the use of the KWL strategy

STATEMENT	PERCENTAGE (%)	
	YES	NO
1. KWL is a new reading strategy for me	93.33	6.67
2. KWL motivates me in reading a text	83.33	16.67
3. KWL is easy to apply	100	
4. KWL makes me easy in comprehending the text	83.33	16.67
5. KWL helps me in answering the questions easily	83.33	16.67
6. KWL makes me easy to comprehend the important points regarded to a certain text	86.67	13.33
7. KWL helps me to save the time in comprehending reading text	86.67	13.33
8. KWL makes me eager to read more	86.67	13.33
9. KWL helps me to organize my reading steps	93.33	6.67
10. KWL is interesting strategy to use	93.33	6.67

Based on Table 2, it can be seen that most of the students gave positive responses to the use of the KWL, ranging from 83.33% to 100%. Although the KWL was a new strategy for the students, they believed that the KWL could motivate them in reading and helped them to comprehend the texts in English. They also agreed that the KWL made them easy to point out the important thing from the texts. The KWL also helped them to organize their reading steps and saved their time to comprehend the texts. Overall, most of them agreed that the KWL was an interesting strategy in reading comprehension.

TABLE 3. Students' responses on the obstacles in reading

STATEMENT	PERCENTAGE (%)	
	YES	NO
1. The instruction in KWL is confusing	6.67	93.33
2. The implementation of KWL is complicated	0	100
3. The use of KWL demotivate my reading	0	100
4. Using KWL wastes my time more	6.67	93.33
5. I have a lack of background knowledge for some text	83.33	16.67
6. I read very rare so that I do not have much information about a certain topic	93.33	6.67
7. I often face difficulties in reading a text because I have no idea about the topic	93.33	6.67
8. I face difficulties to unfamiliar vocabulary of the text	83.33	16.67
9. I often confuse to some similar spelling vocabulary	83.33	16.67
10. I face difficulties to the sentence structure of the text	83.33	16.67

From the above Table 3, it can be understood that the main factors of the students' reading obstacles were the lack of background knowledge (statement 5; 83.33%), lack of information (statement 6; 93.33%), lack of idea about the topic (statement 7; 93.33%), less familiarity with the vocabulary (statement 8; 83.33%), confusion in spelling (statement 9; 83.33%), and lack of sentence structure knowledge in reading texts (statement 10; 83.33%). One of the reasons for having difficulties in reading was because the students rarely read, especially to the academic texts, and have lack of prior knowledge. According to Anderson (1977, as cited in Ogle, 1986), prior knowledge has a significant impact on how people interpret what they read and what they gain from reading.

Besides, reading also took time because the students had vocabulary and spelling problems. Therefore, looking for the words in the dictionary would take them more time to comprehend the texts. In addition, reading academic texts which often contained compound or complex sentences would be a clear obstacle for the students in comprehending the texts in English.

On the other hand, it can be seen that the reading difficulties faced by the students were not due to the KWL. Most of the students stated that the instructions of the KWL were not difficult to understand nor complicated. They also did not think that the KWL demotivated them in reading or wasted their time to comprehend the texts.

The findings of this study correspond to those in Usman et al. (2019) that the KWL can help the students enhance their ways in engaging them in reading and help them

discover information in the texts. The KWL strategy is highly recommended to be used to help the students in comprehending the reading materials.

CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, some important points can be drawn as the followings. Firstly, the KWL is interesting and suitable strategy for the students, especially for reading academic texts. Secondly, the KWL can help them in organizing their reading steps and also motivate them in reading. Thirdly, most of the difficulties come from the background knowledge, vocabulary and spelling, and sentences structure mastery.

In addition, there are some suggestions to consider. Firstly, it is important to the English teachers to introduce various reading strategies for the students. Secondly, in the line with their main problems, it is also important to let the students practice more about vocabulary, spelling, and sentence structure in English. Thirdly, it needs the students' awareness to keep reading a lot to add their own background knowledge and information about any topic. For this case, they also can read the texts in Indonesian. Then, after they understand about the topic, they can try to read it in English. Hence, the students need a lot of reading activities to boost their English reading skills.

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