

IMPROVING READING COMPREHENSION OF THE EIGHTH-GRADE STUDENTS OF SMPN 4 DENPASAR THROUGH KWL PLUS

Ni Komang Aninda Cahyaning Rahayu Suwarsiki¹, Ni Luh Putu Dian Sawitri², Ni Wayan Krismayani³

^{1,2,3} Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar

Email: acrs050102@gmail.com, niluhputudiansawitri@gmail.com, chrismayani@unmas.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Reading comprehension is a crucial skill that enables individuals to acquire new information. This study at SMPN 4 Denpasar aimed to enhance the reading comprehension of class VIII.10 students. Using the Classroom Action Research method over two cycles, the initial pre-test mean score was 63.00, with only 35% students who could pass. Cycle I, employed the KWL Plus strategy, showed a post-test I mean score of 85.25, and 82.5% of the students who could pass. In Cycle II, with the same strategy, post-test II mean score was 97.25, and 97.5% of the students who could pass. A concluding questionnaire showed 35.22% strongly agreed, 52.72% agreed, and 12.04% were undecided. The study highlights the effective enhancement of reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 4 Denpasar in the class VIII.10, affirming the success of the KWL Plus strategy in the academic year 2023/2024.

Keywords: Improving, Reading Comprehension, KWL Plus

ABSTRAK

Kemampuan pemahaman membaca adalah keterampilan penting yang memungkinkan individu memperoleh informasi baru. Penelitian ini dilakukan di SMPN 4 Denpasar yang bertujuan untuk meningkatkan pemahaman membaca siswa di kelas VIII.10 menggunakan metode Classroom Action Research selama dua siklus, skor rata-rata pre-test awal adalah 63.00, yang hanya 35% siswa yang lulus. Siklus I, dengan menerapkan strategi KWL Plus, menunjukkan skor rata-rata post-test I sebesar 85.25, dan 82.5% siswa yang lulus. Pada siklus II, dengan menerapkan strategi yang sama, skor rata-rata post-test II adalah 97.25, dan 97.5% siswa yang lulus. Pada kuesioner menunjukkan 35.22% sangat setuju, 52.72% setuju, dan 12.04% ragu-ragu. Studi ini menyoroti peningkatan efektif dalam pemahaman membaca siswa kelas VIII.10 SMPN 4 Denpasar, mengonfirmasi keberhasilan strategi KWL Plus pada tahun akademik 2023/2024.

Kata Kunci: Meningkatkan, Pemahaman Membaca, KWL Plus

INTRODUCTION

Reading is an ability to make sense of written or printed symbols and it is often combines the two senses of hearing and sight Fischer (2003). Based on the definition above, it can be concluded that reading is an activity to seek any information in a book and the others to understand the purposes of the content on a book by interpreting the symbols such as alphabet that the readers remember. It will

bring up a comprehension in it after seeking and reading the information based on a book or text.

Besides that, according to Blachowicz & Ogle (2008) reading comprehension have several meaning there are reading comprehension is motivated and purposeful, reading comprehension is a process that is constructive, Reading comprehension is skillful and strategic. And also reading also have some aspects.

Without aspects in reading, this will affect how to read and read fluency. So, there are two kinds of aspects in reading comprehension that is grammar and vocabulary. The first is grammar, according to Harmer (2002) stated that grammar as the rules by which words change their forms and are combined into sentences. The second is vocabulary, according to Willis (2008) stated that vocabulary is a processing requires students to organize their thoughts through neural networks connecting brain regions in several lobes. Without grammar, people will never know how to arrange the words with grammatically correct. And also if without vocabulary, people will never know how to organize the words well.

The understanding of the content of reading can be called comprehension. According to a book by Pang, Muaka, Bernhardt, & Kamil (2003) reading consists of two related processes those are recognition and comprehension. Based on those explanations above, it can be concluded that reading is the process of understanding the meaning of symbol written and understand what the writer means on a book that they wrote. Based on Oakhill, Cain, & Elbro (2015) reading comprehension is a complex task which requires the processing of many different cognitive skills and abilities. According to Blachowicz & Ogle (2008) reading with understanding and fluency or something that can called reading comprehension is important because people can gain the information and ideas from it and reading is an essential for our life because it can help the readers gain success in education and employment.

To address this issue, the researcher implemented the KWL Plus strategy to

improve reading comprehension on the eighth-grade students of SMPN 4 Denpasar in the academic year 2023/2024. The KWL Plus strategy involves students filling the charts to record what they Know, Want to know, and Learned about a topic, followed by categorizing and summarizing the information Buehl (2017). This strategy aims to stimulate critical thinking and engage students in the reading process. This study identified weaknesses in the traditional teaching approach, leading to boredom, low activity, and unsatisfactory scores in reading comprehension. The KWL Plus strategy, with its emphasis on prior knowledge and active participation, aimed to address these shortcomings. By implementing this strategy, the researcher sought to improve students' engagement, understanding, and overall achievement in reading comprehension.

In conclusion, the KWL Plus is the revised strategy from KWL made by Ogle (1986) in the book Herrel & Jordan (2015). According to Arends (2012) states that effective teachers employ strategies interdependently until motivation is a permanent aspect of their classroom. Which means that with strategy, the students will be motivated in learning where they will find learning activities that are interesting and meaningful. So, now the KWL Plus strategy Buehl (2017) is a valuable tool for improving reading comprehension. Its structured approach, involving charts and critical thinking, fosters a deeper understanding of reading texts. The researcher conducted this study to leverage the benefits of the KWL Plus strategy in improving the reading comprehension of the eighth-grade

students of SMPN 4 Denpasar in the academic year 2023/2024.

RESEARCH METHOD

The subject of this study was the eighth-grade students of SMPN 4 Denpasar in academic year 2023/2024 especially the 8.10 class. At class 8.10 of SMPN 4 Denpasar there were 40 students in a classroom. And the researcher has found a problem such as the low ability in comprehend the content of reading text. Besides, the low of reading comprehension of students on that class the researcher also found the low reading ability especially in identify and analyze general, specific until textual information on the recount text. And the researcher chose the students who have a problem in reading comprehension that must be improved using strategy KWL Plus. This study is using Classroom Action Research design. Classroom Action Research is part of a broad movement that has been going on in education generally for sometimes which is related to the ideas of reflective practice and the teacher as researcher Burns (2010).

This study investigates students reading comprehension skills in recount text. Therefore, the method of this research is Classroom Action Research (CAR) based on the existing problems and must be handled directly in the field. Classroom Action Research is a qualitative procedure that is approaches to data collection, analysis, interpretation, and report writing differ from the traditional Creswell (2009, p. 4) The researcher chose Classroom action Research (CAR) because the researcher intended to improve students reading comprehension skills through the KWL Plus Strategy

The implementation of the research was conducted in cycles. However, in this present study, the process imitated the theory from Burns (2010). In which the researcher will begin with initial reflection and then it took two cycles to reach the objective. Each cycle consisted of four main steps: planning, action, observation, and reflection. Based on the problems faced by the students, classroom action research carried out by researcher to answer and overcome problems in students in the term of reading comprehension. The approach of this study is only action research, whereby taking action to eliminate problems in reading comprehension. The results are very effective than not acting in class directly. Here the researcher uses a cycle to ensure that using learning strategy such as KWL Plus helps students improve their reading comprehension in English. The cycles that the researcher use which was adopted from Kemmis & Taggart as cited Burn (2010).

Next in conducting classroom action research, the researchers need significant data to determine the increase in the subject reading comprehension. So, in this study, the researcher used several instruments those are test and questionnaire to convincing the reader from the data that has been collected. Test is a method of measuring a person's ability, knowledge, or performance in a given domain Brown (2004). There are two kinds of test that the researcher used in this study such as pre-test and post-test. The tests are in the form of short answer task. The subject gave 2 texts and consisted of 5 questions in each text. Moreover, the subjects totally answered 10 questions. The tests are to find out general information, specific information, and

textual meaning of recount text. The result of short answer task will be scored by using scoring rubric which was adapted from Brown (2004).

Questionnaire used to let the students express their opinion about the learning process that has been followed. The questionnaire is conducted in order to acquire responses toward learning English specially to know this judgment or interest during teaching and learning process in reading comprehension by using KWL Plus. The questionnaire will use Indonesian that consist of 10 questions in table form with five options, there are: strongly agree, agreed, uncertain, disagree and strongly disagree. The answer of each item determined how KWL Plus strategy influenced students learning behavior. This questionnaire will using Indonesian language.

The data is pre-test and post-test will analyze by using mean score formula. The mean score is the total score. The total scores divided by the total number of the subjects under the study, the formula could be drawn as follows:

$$\text{Formula: } M = \frac{\sum x}{N}$$

The second is questionnaire should descriptively analyze in which the percentage is the total responses of an item divided by the total responses of all items. Moreover, it was timed hundred percent as the following percentage of an item:

$$\text{Percentages} = \frac{\text{total responses on an item}}{\text{total responses on all items}} \times 100\%$$

The success indicator in this study is when the subject under the study already fulfills the minimum criteria of mastering the reading comprehension. Classroom Action Research was successful if all

subjects passed the minimum passing grade. It means that all the students based on the curriculum that use in SMPN 4 Denpasar suggested that the students minimum score is 79. This research is regarding to be successfully done if 80% of subjects under study obtained 79 in reading comprehension. That is mean, in the present study the 24 students should achieve the minimum passing grade of SMPN 4 Denpasar in academic year 2023/2024.

DISCUSSION

The data of this study was collected from the eighth-grade students of SMPN 4 Denpasar in the academic year 2023/2024. The data were collected from the results of pre-test and post-test. Pre-test was administered before the teaching and learning process was given to the subject, with the aim was to know the reading comprehension ability of the students before applying the strategy that will use. And the post-test was conducted in the last session of every cycle.

Pre-Cycle

In the Pre-Cycle of the research, the researcher aimed to identify the reading comprehension challenges faced by the eighth-grade students of SMPN 4 Denpasar. The process involved preliminary observations, including interview with the English teacher of class 8.10 and classroom observations during English learning activities. The English teacher highlighted the students struggles in comprehending reading content, particularly in identifying general and specific information. The teaching approach was deemed ineffective, relying on traditional and monotonous techniques. Students were often asked to read texts and

answer questions without receiving specialized treatment to improve their comprehension.

Observations during class revealed students disengagement, boredom, and lack of attention during English lessons. The students expressed difficulty in understanding English and found reading texts to be boring. To gauge the existing reading comprehension levels, a Pre-test was administered to the 40 subjects. The test consisted of two paragraphs with a total of 10 short-answer task focused on identifying general and specific information in a recount text. The mean score of the Pre-test was calculated, resulting in a score 63.00. only 35% of the students achieved the minimum passing grade of 79. The pre-test results highlighted the subjects' challenges in reading comprehension, emphasizing the need for improvement. To address these challenges, the researcher introduced the KWL Plus strategy in a cyclical process, starting with cycle 1, with the goal of enhancing the subjects' reading comprehension in subsequent cycles.

Cycle 1

In Cycle I, the researcher aimed to improve the reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students at class VIII.10 who had shown low reading comprehension in the Pre-cycle. The cycle involved planning, action, observation, and reflection.

In planning the researcher prepared teaching modules, learning materials, student worksheets, KWL Plus charts, and post-tests. The focus was on creating a thorough plan aligned with the school's curriculum, covering the definition of recount text, its generic structure, language

features, adverbs of time, and writing recount text.

In action the researcher conducted two sessions in Cycle I. the first session involved explaining the necessary concepts, followed by a worksheet for practice. In the second session, the KWL Plus strategy was implemented. Students worked in groups, filled out the KWL Plus chart, read a text titled "Climbing the Mountain" and presented their findings to the class.

In observation the researcher observed the students engagement and understanding. It was noted that the subjects faced challenges and needed more practice to comprehend the information effectively.

After the KWL Plus implementation, a post-test was administered. The total score obtained by the subjects was 3410, with a mean score of 85.25. while there was an improvement in reading comprehension, the passing grade indicator is 82.5% was not fully achieved. As a result, the researcher decided to proceed to cycle II to provide additional practice and further enhance reading comprehension.

Cycle 2

In Cycle II, the researcher aimed to address the remaining challenges observed in Cycle I, where not all students achieved the minimum passing grade. Similar to the previous cycle, the KWL Plus strategy was employed to improve students reading comprehension in identifying general information, specific information, textual meaning and, textual references.

In planning phase for Cycle II mirrored Cycle I, with the researcher preparing teaching modules, learning

materials, worksheets, KWL Plus charts, Post-test II, and a Questionnaire. The teaching module covered two sessions, each lasting 80 minutes with a focus on reading comprehension. Learning materials included a worksheet on recount text about personal experience, and post-test II was designed to assess students progress.

In action, the researcher followed the planned activities in Cycle II, conducting two sessions that is session 3 and 4. The first session involved teaching about recount text, taking 80 minutes. In session 4, the KWL Plus strategy was implemented using a text titled "My First Date". Students, organized in groups of four, filled out the KWL Plus chart and engaged actively in the learning process. The session concluded with the administration of post-test II, followed by a questionnaire.

In observation, the teaching and learning process in Cycle II, the researcher observed an increase in students enthusiasm, engagement, and active participation. Students asked questions, provided grammatically correct answers, and overall enjoyed the lesson. The KWL Plus strategy proved affective in capturing students interest and attention.

Post-test II results demonstrated a significant improvement in subjects reading comprehension. The mean score for post-test II was 97.25, indicating a substantial increase from the previous cycle. Notably, 39 out of 40 subjects that is 97.5% achieved the minimum passing grade of 79, surpassing the success indicator. The success of this study was attributed to the effective implementation of the KWL Plus strategy, leading to

improved engagement and overall comprehension among the students.

Questionnaire

This questionnaire aimed to collect the subjects' feedback regarding the implementation of KWL Plus for improving reading comprehension. The questionnaire consisted of 10 statements in Bahasa Indonesia. The responses from the subjects were analyzed using a rating scale of 5 to 1. Based on the subjects' responses were as follows: Strongly agree were 155; Agree were 232; Undecided were 53; Disagree were 0; and Strongly disagree were 0. Furthermore, the data were examined to determine the percentages of responses from the questionnaire given at the end of the last cycle. The results of the questionnaire were evaluated using a rating scale from 5 to 1. The researcher computed the questionnaire results according to the formula that has been mentioned that is

$$\text{Percentages} = \frac{\text{total responses on an item}}{\text{total responses on all items}} \times 100\%$$

The results of the questionnaire above indicated that 35.22% of the respondents strongly agreed, 52.72% agreed, 12.04% were undecided, and 00.00% disagreed. Additionally, there were no responses categorized as strongly disagree. Furthermore, these questionnaire results suggest that the majority of the subjects had positive reactions to the implementation of KWL Plus. Therefore, the implementation of KWL Plus in teaching reading comprehension had successfully solved the problem faced by the subjects.

CONCLUSION

In this study, the researcher applied classroom action research to improve the reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 4 Denpasar in the academic year 2023/2024. Based on the preliminary study, it showed that the subjects faced a problem in their reading comprehension. The teaching learning process was done in two cycles where each cycle consisted of two sessions. To gather data, a pre-test was conducted in the first cycle, followed by post-test at the end of both of those cycles. Additionally, a questionnaire was administered at the end of the last cycle that is cycle II to gain a comprehensive understanding of the students' experiences and perspective.

The mean scores of pre-test, post-test I and post-test II showed respectively figures of 63.00, 85.25, 97.25. The mean scores the pre-test and post-test clearly showed the significant improvements of the subjects reading comprehension. There were 14 to subjects in pre-cycle in this study who could achieve the minimum passing grade, however in post-test I and post-test II the results were 33 and 39 who could achieve the minimum passing grade of SMPN 4 Denpasar. Finally, the findings of the study proved and showed that the problem faced by the subjects in reading comprehension could be overcome through the implementation of KWL Plus. The results of the questionnaire showed 52.72% of the subjects who agreed on the implementation of KWL Plus.

Based on the data which has been explained, it could be concluded that the reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 4 Denpasar in the academic year 2023/2024 could be improve through KWL Plus. In addition,

the subjects could identify general information, specific information, textual meaning, and textual reference in the recount test paragraph. Moreover, the subjects also gave positive responses on implementing KWL Plus to improve the subjects reading comprehension.

REFERENCES

- Alderson, J. C. (2000). *Assessing reading*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Arends, R. I. (2012). *Learning to teach (9th ed)*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Arends, R. I., & Kilcher, A. (2010). *Teaching for student learning: Becoming an accomplished teacher*. New York: Routledge.
- Blachowicz, C., & Ogle, C. (2008). *Reading comprehension strategies for independent learners*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Brown, H. D. (2004). *Language assessment: Principles and classroom practice*. San Francisco: Longman.com.
- Brown, G. T. L., & Harris, L. R. (2009). Unintended consequences of using tests to improve learning: How improvement-oriented resources heighten conceptions of assessment as school accountability. *Journal of multidisciplinary evaluation*, 6(12), 68-91.
- Buehl, D. (2017). *Classroom strategies for interactive learning (4th ed)*. Madison: Stenhouse Publishers.
- Burns, A. (2010). *Doing action research in English language teaching: A guide for practitioners*. New York: Routledge.

- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design (3th ed)*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.
- Duffy, G. G. (2009). *Explaining reading*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Fischer, S. R. (2003). *A history of reading*. London: Reaktion Books Ltd.
- Harmer, J. (2001). *The practice of english language teaching (3th ed)*. London: Longman.
- Herrell, A. L., & Jordan, M. (2015). *50 Strategies for teaching english language learners*. California: Pearson.
- Hilly, H. H. P. (2019). *Improving reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Manggis in academic year 2019/2020 through KWL*. (Unpublished Thesis). Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar.
- Damayanti, I. L., Febrianti, Y., Nurlaelawati, I., Rahmadhani, R., Hutasuhut, M. L., Devianty, G. A. (2022). *English for nusantara untuk SMP/MTs kelas VIII*. Jakarta Selatan: Kementrian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi.
- McCulloch, M. (2007). *An introduction to assessment*. Scotland: Learning and Teaching Centre.
- Oakhill, J., Cain, K., & Elbro, C. (2015). *Understanding and teaching reading comprehension*. New York: Routledge.
- Pang, E. S., Muaka, A., Bernhardt, E. B., & Kamil, M. L. (2003). *Teaching reading*. Chicago: Educational Practices Series.
- Pramesti, N. L. P. N. (2023). *Improving reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMP Wisata Sanur in academic year 2022/2023 through KWL*. (Unpublished Thesis). Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar.
- Snow, C. E. (2002). *Reading for understanding toward a research and development program in reading comprehension*. Pittsburgh: Rand
- Zaida, N. (2022). *Bright an english course for junior high school student grade VIII*. Jakarta: Erlangga.