THE USE OF *KWL-PLUS ON IMPROVING READING COMPREHENSION* OF THE TENTH GRADE STUDENTS OF SMA NEGERI 2 BANJAR

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at improving the students' achievement in reading comprehension through the use of *K-W-L Plus* strategy. The study was designed in the form of an action-based research. It was conducted in two cycles consisting of three sessions in which two sessions were for treatments and one session was for test. Each cycle involved four steps, namely: planning, action, observation and reflection. The subjects of the study were 34 students. The data were obtained by using tests (pre-test, post-test I and post-test II), researcher's diary, and questionnaire. The results indicated that the students' reading comprehension improved along with the implementation of *K-W-L Plus* strategy. It can be seen from the improvement of the students' mean score from pre-test (45.89), post-test I (65.63), to post-test II (75.00). The improvement also can be seen from the result of the questionnaires in which it indicated that the students gave positive response toward the application of *K-W-L Plus* Strategy. Based on the result of the study, it can be concluded that the implementation of *K-W-L Plus* Strategy can improve reading comprehension of the tenth-grade students of SMA Negeri 2 Banjar especially class X IPS 3.
Keywords: Reading Comprehension, K-W-L Plus Strategy

INTRODUCTION

Although KTSP (School Based Curiculum) has been revised into the implementation of K-13 (Curiculum 2013), teaching English in school is still emphasized on the four language skills namely speaking, writing, listening and reading. All of those skills should be taught in an integrated way. As states by Boyle and Peregoy (2005), in natural, day to day experience, oral and written language uses are not kept separate and isolated from one another. Instead, they often occur together, integrated in specific communication event. Further, they states that listening, speaking, reading and writing also occur naturally together in learning events in school at all grade level, even though traditionally they were taught separately.

Without neglecting other skills, reading as one aspect of four language skills plays an important role in teaching English as foreign language. In line with this, Cross (1991) states that reading in the foreign languages

deserves attention and reading should not view merely as a springboard for speaking or writing activities. An aim of most language teaching program should be to develop the student's reading competence. According to Dallman, et all (1982), reading is seen to be the basic skill that should be mastered by the students. Considering the important role of reading, the process of teaching reading should be given a serious attention in teaching learning process.

In reading class, students do not only read the text, but they are expected to be able to comprehend the text. In brief, reading comprehension is the heart and goal of reading, since the purpose of all reading is to gather meaning from the printed page. If a student says words in a passage without gathering their meaning, one would hesitate to call that reading.

The teaching of reading has been developed longer before, but the students are still faced with the problem of reading comprehension. In real situation, many students found difficulties in comprehending the texts. Based on the preliminary observation and interviewed with the students, it was found that the tenth grade students of SMA N 2 Banjar especially class X IPS 3 often found difficulties in reading comprehension. The factors due to lack of vocabulary and there were many difficult words in the text that they never heard before, it makes the students unmotivated to read. They also said that they felt bored with the translation activities that mostly done by the teacher in reading class. As noted by the researcher, numbers of student who brought dictionary during the reading class might also contribute to their competency in reading comprehension. Only some students bring dictionary in English class. Besides that, teacher and students were never activated their prior knowledge in reading class. Whereas, activating prior knowledge is important in reading comprehension.

Prior knowledge is what we already know or have experienced directly or vicariously, that we bring to the act of reading. In relation with background knowledge, Gillet and Temple (1994) stated that when we can somehow relate what we read to our prior knowledge, we understand and remember more clearly. Cooper (2008) stated that Reader's

background seem to have a greater influence on the comprehension of implied or inferred information than on directly stated information, probably because readers understand implied information only when they can relate it to their prior knowledge and experience.

Due to the problem above, researcher felt challenged to find an effective ways to solve the problems. Several researchers have offered various strategies to improve student's reading comprehension. Among those numerous strategies, the researcher proposed K-W-L plus strategy. The first step of this strategy is activated student's prior knowledge. As stated previously, activating prior knowledge is very important in reading comprehension. Carr and Ogle (1987) develop "K-W-L Plus," an enhanced of K-W-L with two additional steps. Following the reading and the use of the three steps, students engage in concept mapping or summarizing. The *Plus* refers to the mapping or summarizing step that seemed to provide the additional active ingredient that an earlier version of this method needed to bring about more predictable benefits. In this

study, mapping is chosen as the additional step. Peregoy and Boyle (2005) state that mapping is a powerful strategy for assisting students with organizing and remembering information. A map may simply represent information using headings and subheadings as presented in a text, or it may synthesize the information according to the reader's deeper understanding of the texts.

K-W-L Plus strategy was developed by Carr and Ogle in 1987, and by the time, many researches were conducted on the use of K-W-L Plus strategy in language teaching especially in teaching reading comprehension. Hamdan (2014) conducted research entitled KWL-Plus Effectictiveness on Improving Reading Comprehension of Tenths Graders of Jordanian Male Students. In this experimental research, he found that KWL-Plus strategy was useful and effective for students in improving their reading experience.

This strategy consists of four steps. Two steps, which are K step and W step, occur before the students read the text. Step L and mapping will be done after they read the text. During the K (know) step students will use

brainstorming, students list what they already know about the topic. During the W (want to know) step, students discuss what they want to learn or know from the text. At W step, the students make questions about the things that they want to know from the text, and then they begin reading. On the L (learned) step, the students write down what they learned from their readings. After completing those three steps, mapping is added. In this step, the students make a map. Map helps students to see the association of the information that they found in the text by categorizing the information based on its main idea and supporting details.

In relation of the use of K-W-L strategy in reading comprehension, two studies had been conducted. The first one was by Putra in 2019 for Senior high school students. He revealed that K-W-L strategy could improve the achievement of senior high school students in reading comprehension. Another study was conducted by Maulida in 2016. She revealed that K-W-L strategy could improve the students' reading competency of SMPN 3 Banda Aceh. Those researchers found that K-W-L

and K-W-L Plus strategy is an effective strategy to improve students' achievement in reading comprehension. Since the K-W-L Plus is proven to be effective, the researcher is interested in using this strategy to solve the problems in reading comprehension faced by the tenth grade students of SMA Negeri 2 Banjar.

Based on the background of the study, the problem of study is "can the achievement in reading comprehension of the tenth grade students of SMA Negeri 2 Banjar be improved through the use of K-W-L Plus (KWL_+) strategy in reading descriptive text.

RESEARCH METHODS

The subjects of the study were 34 students of the tenth grade students of SMA Negeri 2 Banjar, particularly class X IPS 3. The students were chosen to be the subjects of the study because they were observed to have difficulty in comprehending the reading texts especially in finding the main idea (MI), specific information (SI), textual reference (TR), and word meaning (WM).

This study was designed in the form of classroom action-based research. According to Kemmis & Mc. Taggart (1998), an action-based research is a cyclic process that continuously conducted by the researcher until the minimum standard or passing score is reached. Each cycle consists of four steps namely planning, acting, observing, and reflecting.

The instruments used in this study are**:** Questionnaire, Researcher's Diary and Tests. Before implementing the treatment, the pre-test was administered to the students to know their reading level and their problems in reading. Before implementing the technique in the classroom, the researcher needs to make several preparations related to the strategy. At *planning* stage, the researcher prepared all the material and instruments used for collecting data. The plan that had been prepared would be implemented at *action* stage. Action refers to the treatment conducted by the researcher to the classroom activities based on the planning designed. There were three main activities in the lesson plan namely pre-activity, whilst-activity, and post-activity. The activities in the

classroom were recorded in researcher's diary. In the *observation* stage, the researcher observed the result of the action which had been done in the first cycle. The researcher evaluated the student's achievement; it can be seen from the result of the tests. The student's responses and feelings toward the treatment in the action were known from the result of the questionnaire and researcher's diary. In the *reflection* stage, the researcher made reflection about the process, the strengths, and the weaknesses of the action conducted based on the result of post test, questionnaire and researcher's diary. The finding in each meeting and the result of the test were used as an input to improve the next action in the next cycle. Suppose if the action was not successful, the researcher should try to find out the causes and the solutions to overcome the problems.

There were two types of data in this research, namely quantitative data and qualitative data. The quantitative data was used to describe what can be scored or measured in this research, which will involve the result of the tests (pre-test, post test 1 and post test II). The qualitative data was

used to describe data which can not be scored or measured. The data involved the researcher diary and the questionnaire.

The mean score of the students' test was show the effectiveness of using K-W-L Plus strategy. This study would be considered as successful and stopped after 85% of the students obtained the deal passing score in reading competency that is ≥ 6.5, as a standard score applied by the school.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Before implementing the treatment, the pre test was conducted in order to know the problems which were faced by the students. Pre test consisted of twenty items which covered items to test students' ability in finding out main idea, specific information, textual reference and word meaning. The result of pre test shows that the students had a low achievement in reading comprehension. The students' mean score was 45.89 and categorized as "*Insufficient*". The students' mean score in finding main idea was 48.03 (Insuffi*c*ient), Specific Information was 41.54 (*Insufficient*), Textual

Reference 49.26 (*Insufficient*), and Word Meaning 44.71 (*Insufficient*).

Then, the researcher began to give treatment by using K-W-L Plus strategy in teaching reading. It was hoped that the application of K-W-L Plus strategy could help the students to overcome their problems and improved students' achievement in reading comprehension. Before giving the treatment, the researcher planned and prepared all the things which were needed such as teaching scenario, reading text, and also researcher's diary.

The researcher then gave a reading test at the end of cycle 1 to know the students's improvement in reading comprehension. Post test 1 was administered to the students in order to know whether K-W-L plus strategy could improve their reading comprehension, especially in the four indicators (main idea, specific information, textual reference and word meaning).

Based on the findingg on post test 1, the highest score was 95 and categorized as "*excellent*". Meanwhile the lowest score was 45 which was categorized as "*Insufficient*". There were 3 students (8,82%) obtained

"excellent" result, 2 students (5,88%) obtained "Very Good", 13 students (38.24%) obtained "Good" score, 14 (41,18%) obtained "Sufficient" and only 2 students (5.88%) obtained "Insufficient" score. There were 18 students (52,94%) who reached the standard passing grade used in this study.

It can be seen that the result of the test in cycle I showed the improvement of students' reading comprehension. The students' mean score in post test 1 was 65.63, it was categorized as "*Good*". It improved 19.74 points from the result of pre test that was 45.89. The result of post test 1(cycle 1) showed that the students' mean score still could not reach the researcher's target score that was 85% of the students got score ≥ 65. There were only 18 (52.94%) students who were able to achieve the target score. Because the standard passing score had not achieved yet, therefore the researcher conducted second cycle.

Based on the finding on post test II, the highest score was 95 and categorized as "*excellent*". Meanwhile the lowest score was 55 which was categorized as "*Sufficient*". There were 5 students (14.71%) obtained excellent result, 9 students (26.47%) obtained "Very Good", 16 students (47.06%) obtained "Good" score, 4 (11.76%) obtained "Sufficient" and none obtained "Insufficient" score. Numbers of students who reached the success indicator improved from 18 students (52,94%) in post test 1 to 30 students (88,24%) in post test II.
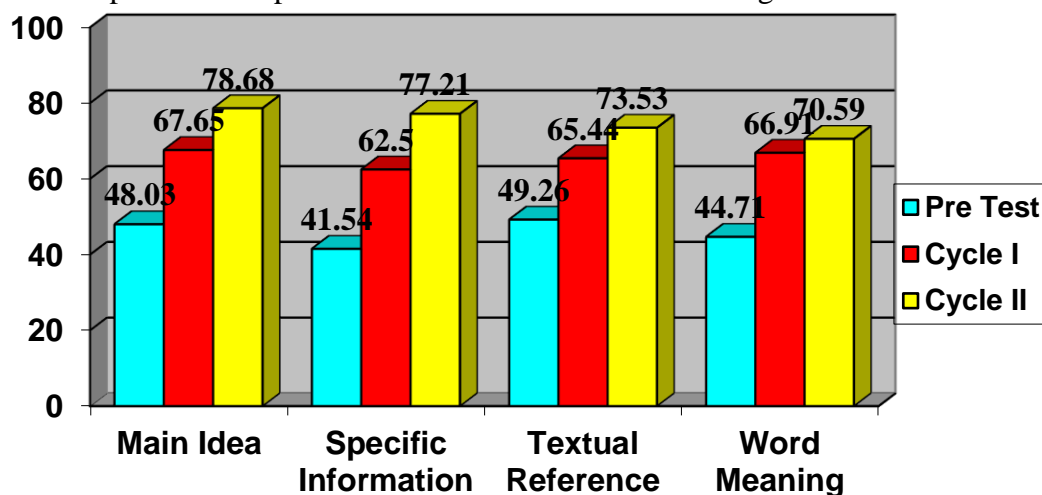
The students' mean score from pre test, cycle I and cycle II showed an improvement. The mean score in pre test was 45.89 and gradually increased became 65.63 in cycle II and then improved to 75.00 in cycle II. The improvement of the mean score in each cycle can be seen in the following graph.

Graph 1. The improvement of students' reading competency
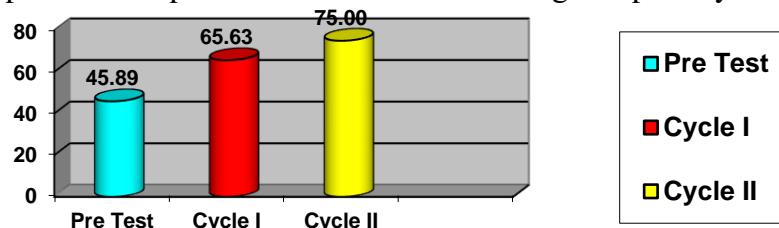
Furthermore, the students' mean score for sub-skills of reading were also improved. The improvements in reading sub-skills were presented in the following graph.

Graph 2. The improvement in four sub-skills of reading

The graph above shows that the students' score improved in the four readings' sub-skills. In finding main idea, the students' mean score was 48.03 in the pre test. It increased 19.62 points to 67.65 in cycle I, and increased 11.03 points to 78.68 in cycle II. Furthermore, in finding specific information, the students' mean score was 41.54 in the pre test. It increased 20.96 points to 62.50 in cycle I and increased 14.71 points to 77.21 in cycle II. In finding textual reference, the students' mean score was 49.26. It increased 16.18 points to 65.44 in cycle I and increased 8.09 points to 73.53 in cycle II. In finding word meaning, the students' mean score was 44.71 in the pre test. It increased 22.2 points to 66.91 in cycle I and increased 3.68 to 70.59 in cycle II.

The students' improvement can also be seen from their individual score in reading competency tests. From the data, it showed that the numbers of the students who reached the passing score used in this study increased in every test. In the pre test, numbers of students who reached the standard passing score were only 5 students (14.71%). After conducting cycle I, the students who reached the passing score improved to 52,94% (18 students), and at the end of cycle II it improved to 88,24% (30 students).While the numbers of the students who did not reached the

passing score were decrease in every test. In pre test, there were 29 students (85,29%) who did not fulfill the achievement of the passing grade used in this study. After applying cycle I it decreased to 16 students (47.06%), and at the end of cycle II, there were only 4 students (11,76%) who did not reached the success indicator. The students' mean score in cycle II had already reached the success indicator used in this study because 88.24% of the students had already got score ≥ 65.

The research was considered successful because 88,24% of the students got score ≥ 65. The success indicator used in this study had been achieved. Since the research was considered successful, the study finished until Cycle II.

Based on the quantitative data of the finding above, it showed that KWL Plus strategy was effective to help students in improving their ability in comprehending the text. In addition, the result of qualitative datas (Questionnaire and Researchers' Diary) also indicated positive response toward the implementation of KWL Plus strategy. Based on the observation during the treatment in

cycle II, the teaching and learning process in cycle II run more effectively. Working in group gave positive impact in the participation of the students. More students involved actively in the discussion. They seemed more confident in expressing their idea. Besides that, by working in group the students can share their ideas with their friend. In W step, the researcher asked the students to make questions about what they want to know or the things that made them curious about the topic. This step helped the students to set their own purposes for reading. By making questions they will have a purpose in reading, that was to find out the answer of their questions, therefore their mind will not wandering elsewhere throughout the process of reading. W step increase student's curiosity to find the answer by reading the text. The process of learning becomes more exciting and interesting and it also increased students active participation in learning process.

KWL Plus strategy helps students to become more independent in their own reading. This strategy helps the students to activate what they already know before they begin

to read and made prediction about the text. This strategy also helps students to organise what they have learned after they finished reading by making map. The PLUS part of this strategy asked the students to transform the information into a concept of map. Concept of maping helps students organise new information and made meaningfull connection between the main ideas and its supporting details. Concept of map help students chunks information based on meaningfull connection. In other words, knowing big picture makes details more significant and easier to remember.

The result of observation showed that the students gave positive response toward the implementation of K-W-L plus strategy. This strategy helped them activated their prior knowledge and more focused during the process of reading. From the data, it indicated that they felt this strategy helped them in finding main idea, specific information, textual reference and word meaning.

CONCLUSION

Based on the previous findings and discussions, it can be concluded that the implementation of K-W-L

Plus strategy can help the students, especially the students in class X IPS 3 of SMA Negeri 2 Banjar in improving their reading comprehension.

The improvement of the students' achievement in reading comprehension can be clearly seen from the comparison of the result of the three tests conducted in this study. The students' mean score in pre test was 45.89 which was categorized as *Insufficient*. Then, it improved to 65.63 in cycle I which was categorized as *good* level of mastery. But the standard passing score used in this study had not been achieved yet. Therefore, the researcher decided to conduct Cycle II. The students' score further improved after the researcher modified the teaching learning activities in Cycle II. As the result, the students' mean score in Cycle II was 75.00 which was categorized as good level of mastery.

Additionally, the students' achievements in sub-reading skills were also improved after being given the treatment by using K-W-L Plus strategy. In finding main idea, the students' mean score were 48.03 in the pre test. It increased 19.62 points to

67.65 in cycle I, and increased 11.03 points to 78.68 in cycle II. Furthermore, in finding specific information, the students' mean score was 41.54 in the pre test. It increased 20.96 points to 62.50 in cycle I and increased 14.71 points to 77.21 in cycle II. In finding textual reference, the students' mean score was 49.26 in pre test. It increased 16.18 points to 65.44 in cycle I and increased 8.09 points to 73.53 in cycle II. In finding word meaning, the students' mean score was 44.71 in the pre test. It increased 22.2 points to 66.91 in cycle I and increased 3.68 to 70.59 in cycle II.

In line with the students' improvement in terms of mean score, the result of the questionnaire also revealed that the students gave positive response toward the implementation of K-W-L plus strategy in teaching reading. Most of the students stated that the application of K-W-L Plus strategy was helpful to improve their reading comprehension especially in finding out main idea, specific information, textual reference and word meaning.

The result of observation showed that the students gave positive response toward the implementation of K-W-L plus strategy. This strategy helped them activated their prior knowledge and more focused during the process of reading. From the data, it indicated that they felt this strategy helped them in finding main idea, specific information, textual reference and word meaning.

Based on the conclusion above, the researcher would like to give some suggestions for the English teachers, for the students, and for other researchers.

For the English teacher, Researcher suggested that the teacher can apply K-W-L Plus strategy as one of alternative strategy in teaching reading comprehension. It is suggested that the students can apply K-W-L Plus strategy both with the teacher's guidance or individually because this strategy can help students activated their prior knowledge and more focus throughout the process of reading. It is suggested for other researchers to continue the study of the application of K-W-L Plus strategy in longer period of time for the purpose of improving students' reading comprehension in descriptive text. Besides that, other researcher can try

to modify this strategy, for example by adding the fourth column in K-W-L chart.

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