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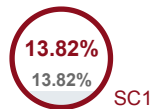
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KWL (Know, Want to Know, Learned) Plus strategy: Does it have an impact on the ninth-grade students' reading comprehension achievement?

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Abstract. The study investigates the impact **of the KWL Plus strategy on ninth-grade students' reading comprehension achievement**. Employing a quantitative research design, the research utilizes a true experimental approach with a pretest-posttest design to assess the effect of the KWL Plus strategy on students' reading comprehension achievement. The study randomly assigns students into experimental and control groups, where the experimental group receives the KWL Plus treatment while the control group follows standard instructional methods. **The KWL Plus strategy, which stands for "What I Know," "What I Want to Know," and "What I Learned,"** encourages active participation and metacognitive awareness among learners, enhancing their comprehension skills. The data are analyzed descriptively to evaluate the changes in reading comprehension due to the intervention. The results show that there was **a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores in both groups**. The experimental group showed an average score increase of 14.040 with a significance value of 0.000, while the control group experienced an average rise of 7.083 with a significance value 0.000. Since the significance values of both groups are below the 0.05 threshold, **the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This** finding indicates that the intervention provided by using the KWL Plus strategy significantly improved the students' learning outcomes, with a greater effect on the experimental group than the control group. Finally, it is expected that the study provides insights

into effective teaching strategies that foster better learning outcomes in language education.

Keywords - KWL Plus strategy, reading comprehension, ninth-grade students, quantitative research

1. I. Introduction

Reading is an essential component of the teaching-learning process, so it is crucial to cultivate good reading habits in students in their native language when learning English. Moreover, reading is a complex cognitive process that involves understanding words presented in a textual format. It enables readers to expand their knowledge for academic success and personal development [1]. Reading skills include various aspects that contribute to comprehension. Students can express what they read clearly and confidently by honing comprehension, vocabulary, reading fluency, phonic knowledge, and phonological awareness skills [2].

learning reading skills requires a thorough understanding of reading comprehension, vocabulary, general knowledge, and cultural awareness. Students are also required to develop better reading comprehension skills, have better fluency, and demonstrate a higher level of general knowledge [3]. This is where the teacher's role is essential. Since effective teaching methods can spark students' interest and motivation to read, teachers should apply a good strategy when instructing reading. Teachers work with students to help them meet the challenges of teaching English reading comprehension with integrated cognitive skills and talents, including word recognition and linguistic mastery of the text. In other words, readers must become proficient in language to recognize words, decode the text, and comprehend the reading in the future [4].

1. Reading comprehension aims not to deduce the meaning of individual words or sentences but to comprehend the text as a whole. Gaining the information required from the text as soon as possible is part of reading comprehension, which is the capacity to take in the information in the text and apply it to one's understanding. It also creates a mental image of the meaning of the text in conjunction with the reader's past knowledge of the written text [5]. Students often have trouble with their reading activity, especially when learning recount text [6].

Reading competency requires students to understand interpersonal meanings in recounts, narratives, procedures, descriptions, and reports. However, many struggle with recount texts, students have difficulties to grasp the content, which leads to boredom and decreased interest in reading lessons [7]. Recount texts are texts whose main purpose is to tell the readers about an experience they have had in the past. Recount texts describe "what happened" and are centered on a sequence of incidents that are all connected to the event [8]. A recount text retells past events in order, aiming to inform or entertain. Its structure includes three parts: orientation, events, and re-orientation. The orientation introduces the setting, participants, and when and where the events occurred. The re-orientation, optional, provides a closing or summary. Linguistic features include specific participants, action verbs, time and place references, past tense, and a focus on event sequence [9]. Students are expected to receive resources to advance their comprehension skills in reading. Meanwhile, teachers need to use appropriate strategies that appeal to students and establish a comfortable and joyful ambience in the classroom to create an effective learning environment. Teachers can use various teaching and learning strategies to help students become proficient readers in everyday lessons. The majority of teaching and learning techniques have typically been created to advance [10].

The role of teaching strategies in education cannot be overstated, as they help students understand the subject matter being taught [11]. Using a learning strategy aims to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning [12]. Numerous strategies exist for teaching or learning reading comprehension, such as KWL (Know, Want to Know, Learned), KWL Plus, DRAT (Direct Reading Thinking Activity), P2R (Preview, Read, Review), SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review), etc. The KWL Plus Strategy is among them [13]. Using the KWL Plus strategy can create a more effective learning environment in the language classroom. It is an alternative to improving comprehension in students by actively involving them in setting learning goals and monitoring progress. KWL Plus Strategy not only aids in text comprehension but also encourages critical thinking and structured summarization, making it a highly effective approach for diverse learning contexts [14]. The purpose of implementing KWL Plus in English learning is to increase the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. For this reason, teachers need to know reading learning strategies and apply them in the classroom [15].

The KWL Plus strategy, often called the self-scheduling strategy, is a metacognitive technique that relies on information stored in learners' memory. The letter K stands for "What I know," the letter W for "What I want to know," and the letter L for "What I learned." "Plus" refers to students providing a summary of what they learned. Students try to make concept maps, write summaries of the material, and discuss what they learned from the text. As a reading and thinking technique, the KWL Plus approach emphasizes the learner and encourages active participation in information gathering and the development of their various thinking abilities [16].

Therefore, incorporating the KWL plus strategy into reading comprehension skills is a self-reflection that motivates students to evaluate their metacognitive knowledge. The KWL plus strategy is easy to implement with textbooks and engages students, even inactive students [17]. It is crucial to consider how to configure the strategy efficiently to benefit from implementing it in the language instruction [18]. KWL Plus strategy can improve the learning environment in language classrooms. This strategy differs from other strategies that may only focus on learning during the reading process. KWL Plus explicitly integrates the before, during, and after reading stages to increase student engagement and deepen **their understanding of the text**, which lends support to their use [19]. The main purpose of implementing the KWL Plus strategy for reading comprehension in the classroom is to help students understand more complex texts. It also trains critical thinking skills, increases student engagement in discussions, and helps organize information through concept maps or summaries [14].

Previous studies have shown that KWL Plus is significantly effective. First, M. Suryantini found that applying the KWL Plus strategy is very useful in improving students' reading comprehension and increasing their reading achievement [20]. KWL Plus is one of the interesting alternative teaching strategies that can encourage students' imagination, creativity, and drive to learn. Moreover, the KWL Plus strategy is combined with mapping and charts. B. Adhinata D highlighted that by emphasizing students' prior knowledge and curiosity, they are engaged to be able to think critically and, through a structured approach, can foster a deeper understanding of the reading text [21]. Third, according to R. Zalisman, the effectiveness of using the KWL Plus strategy improves student reading comprehension and produces positive contributions [22]. Fourth, C. Chimwong argues that the KWL Plus Technique process is effective in helping students comprehend and acquire knowledge meaningfully. Students can create their knowledge and retain it for extended periods [23].

Moreover, according to Sornkeaw J, the KWL-Plus strategy can effectively enhance students' reading abilities, making it suitable for use in the classroom [24]. T.P Ahda Salae mentioned that through group interactions, the students developed close friendships and mutual respect [25]. Not only that, Jittisukpong P claims that the KWL-Plus method has been shown to help students improve their reading abilities by combining experience, fresh information, and motivation to help students identify what they genuinely need to comprehend [26]. This made the students feel energized by the lessons designed using the KWL Plus strategy.

1. In relation to the present study, the pre-observation was conducted at MTs. Bi'rul Ulum. Based on the interview with one of the English teachers, it was found that the students' reading comprehension skills of the English subject still need to be improved. Low interest in reading makes students reluctant to read English texts, resulting in a lack of training in understanding the content of the text. This is due to many students read only because it is a requirement for their assignments, not because they want to gain knowledge or enjoyment. They do not yet understand that reading can broaden their horizons and improve their critical thinking skills. Through the observation, the researchers concluded that the language acquisition goals are still **far**

from what is desired, especially in English reading comprehension skills. Therefore, the researchers saw an opportunity to maximize the use of KWL Plus to improve students' reading comprehension skills. By focusing on the students' attention of their critical thinking and providing opportunities for hands-on practice, the KWL Plus strategy aims to bridge the gap between students' prior knowledge and what they have learned.

2. By letting students learn in groups and having internal discussions, the Collaborative Strategic Reading and KWL Plus Technique are educational exercises that focus on intra-group interaction to improve English reading comprehension. The step to create a KWL Plus is Step 1: Preview (K): Students quickly scan the text by glancing at the title or illustration to make connections between the material they are about to read and what they already know. Students will write about what they are reading or how the proceedings should go using the KWL Plus table K (What I know). Step 2: Click & Clunk (W): Students read a text for a short while and use the KWL Plus table to make notes about what they don't understand or would like to know. In addition to exchanging knowledge with other group members, the students ask questions about the subject or challenging terms they are unsure of. Step 3: Get the Gist (L) Students carefully read the passage to identify the main idea and write it down in their own language. The group then discusses the main points and uses the KWL Plus table to form conclusions. L (What I've discovered) Step 4: Wrap up (Plus): Using the KWL Plus, students create a mapping that summarizes the key points of what they have read [23].

3. Even if the KWL Plus technique has been the topic of some prior research, the study is still essential because the school has not adopted the strategy to help students overcome the difficulties they face when learning English, particularly with regard to their reading abilities. Compared to the study conducted by M. Suryantini [17], which uses Classroom Action Research (CAR) method, pretest-posttest, and questionnaire, the present study employs a quantitative research design. In line with this, the research question is formulated as follows: Does the KWL Plus strategy have an impact on the ninth-grade students' reading comprehension?

4.

2. II. Method

Research Design

The study uses a true experimental design with a pretest-posttest approach in a descriptive quantitative method to investigate the effect of a given treatment on the variable. The design involves randomly assigning research subjects into experimental and control groups. The results of both measurements are analyzed descriptively to describe the changes that occurred due to the intervention by Creswell, which defined as a true-experiment [27]. The research design model is demonstrated in the table below:

Table 1. Design True-Experiment Study.

Group Pre-test Treatment Post-test

A1 R X O 1

A2 R - O2

Description:

A1: The group assigned to receive treatment is the experimental group.

A 2: The control group was assigned no therapy other than the standard.

R: Random assignment for Experiment and Control.

X: The treatment given is the learning procedure using the KWL Plus strategy for recounting text.

O1: After treatment, the Experimental group was observed.

O2: Control group observation without no treatment.

Participant

The participants used in this study are ninth-grade students at MTs. Bi'rul Ulum Gedangan Sidoarjo. This school was chosen as the object of research because it has characteristics that are relevant to the focus of my research, aligns with the objectives of my study and provides a relevant setting to observe the implementation and impact of the KWL Plus strategy on students' reading comprehension. The school implements a curriculum that is in line with the KWL Plus strategy that I want to study, and has students with diverse reading abilities, making it ideal for measuring the effectiveness of this learning strategy. The researchers randomly choose two groups of classes as the subjects. In the control group, namely class 9B, there are 24 students, and the experimental group, namely class 9A, has 25 students. Thus, the total of participants in this study is 49 students. 9A was chosen as the experimental group because the students in this class often have difficulty understanding the deep meaning of reading comprehension exercises during English lessons in their class, which can be seen from their lower scores compared to class 9B. The experimental group were given treatment using KWL Plus.

Instrument

The instruments of this research are Pre-test and Post-test. The researchers use a multiple-choice and matching test to check the effectiveness of the KWL strategy and to measure significant achievement differences between the experimental and control groups. In this study, the researchers will collect data from the control and experimental groups. The followings are the data collection steps for this study. In the first meeting, the topic given is Recount text. The following techniques can be used to draw random samples. First, the researchers explain the material about recount text orally. Students pay attention to the explanation related to the recount text material. Second, the researchers provide students with understanding through points related to recount text in writing. Third, students are instructed to summarise their understanding in writing and orally so that they can think critically. Fourth, students are given reading examples related to recount texts and instructed to infer the meaning of the content in the reading text. The researchers here acted as teachers, introducing the lesson objectives and explaining the recount text, structure, and characteristics. Then, the researchers gave a pretest for the experimental and control groups, including 25 multiple-choice questions and 5 matching questions to find implied meanings and connect information within the text. In the second meeting, after the pretest results, the researchers introduced the KWL Plus strategy for the treatment to the experimental group. Students are divided into seven groups, each with 3-4 members. Given a topic about recount text, students used a KWL chart to note what they knew and wanted to know. The researchers provided reading materials, and students worked together to complete their learning. Each group then created a mind map to summarize their understanding of recount texts. Then, the experimental group took the post-test of 25 multiple-choice questions and 5 matching questions. In the control class, the students were exposed to a teacher-centered approach, where the teacher acted as the primary source of knowledge, and the students remained mostly passive recipients of information, with minimal involvement in active learning strategies.

Data Analysis

Once collected using a descriptive quantitative method, the findings are compared with theoretical and empirical resources to help understand and interpret the data obtained. One of the researchers acts as a teacher during the study to ensure the study's success. This meant carefully preparing and planning the learning and teaching resources during the treatment. The researchers also created and implemented several teaching approaches to improve students' learning ability. The data collected for this descriptive quantitative research comes from various sources. The researchers analyzed the data once it was collected using quantitative analysis techniques. Specifically, students' reading achievements in the experimental group were compared to those of the control group to evaluate the impact of the KWL Plus strategy treatment. The data is analyzed using Microsoft Excel, which allows calculating various statistical measures using IBM SPSS Statistics 26 (<https://www.ibm.com/products/spss-statistics>) [24].

III. RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Research Finding

This research was conducted on 9th-grade students at MTs. Birul Ulum. The average scores before and after treatment were compared to assess the development of each group, where a significant increase has been proven using descriptive quantitative methods **in the table below:**

Table 1. Average score **Pre-test and Post-test**

Experimental Group	Control Group	Pre-test	78.60	80.50
Post-test	92.64	87.58		

Table 1 presents **the experimental and control groups'** average **pre-test and post-test scores**. Before the treatment, the experimental group's mean pre-test score was 78.60, while the control group had a mean pre-test score of 80.50. This shows that both groups had relatively comparable initial abilities before the intervention. After the intervention was given, there was an increase in the average score in both groups. The experimental group experienced a higher growth, with a post-test mean score of 92.64, compared to the control group, which obtained a post-test mean score of 87.58. Table 2 will provide a detailed breakdown of the distribution of test scores obtained by grade 9 students of MTs. Birul Ulum participated in this study.

Table 2. Test scores distribution

The results of the statistical analysis in Table 2 showed that the experimental group experienced a more significant increase than the control group after being given treatment. The average pretest score of the experimental group of 78.60 increased to 92.64 in the post-test, while the control group increased from 80.50 to 87.58. This increase was also supported by the increase in median, mode, and minimum and maximum values in the experimental group, which were higher than the control group. In addition, the standard deviation in the experimental group's post-test was slightly smaller than the pretest, indicating that the results after the treatment were more uniform. Although the scores given by the experimental group were higher than the control group and the treatment given proved effective in improving the post-test results in the experimental group compared to the control group, in this case, the normality test will be used before using the T-test to determine whether the data is normal **or not**. However, after conducting the normality test, the results of the normality test showed that there were abnormalities **in the data of both groups**. To identify this non-normality, the study used the Wilcoxon test to analyze further.

Table 3. Test of Normality

Based on the normality test results shown in Table 3, pre-test and post-test data **in the experimental and control groups** were tested using two methods, namely Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk. This normality test **aims to determine whether the data obtained in the study is normally distributed**, which is an important requirement in choosing the type of statistical test that will be used in the next analysis stage. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results showed **that all significance values (Sig.) for the pre-test and post-test in both** groups were above 0.05, with the highest value reaching 0.200. Similarly, the Shapiro-Wilk test results also showed significance values above 0.05, ranging from 0.053 to 0.366. Based on the decision-making criteria in the normality test, **if the significance value is greater than 0.05**, then the data **can be said to be normally distributed**. Therefore, **it can be concluded that the** data in this study fulfil the normality assumption. With the fulfillment of the normality assumption, data analysis can be carried out using parametric statistical methods that are more powerful in testing differences between groups, such as the t-test. These results also show that the data obtained are stable and representative, so the analysis is expected to produce valid and scientifically justifiable conclusions.

Table 4. T-test

Based on the Paired Samples Test results, **there is a significant difference between the** pretest and post-test scores **in the experimental and control groups**. In the first pair (Pretest Experimental Class - Posttest Experimental Class), **the mean difference is 14.040, with a standard deviation of 2.318 and a standard error of the mean of 0.464. The 95% confidence interval for the difference** falls within the range **of 14.997 to 13.083. The t value obtained was 30.284, with a degree of freedom (df) of 24 and a significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) of 0.000**, indicating **a significant difference**. In the second pair (Pretest Control Class - Posttest Control Class), the mean difference is 7.083, with a **standard deviation of 2.552 and a standard error of the mean of 0.521. The 95% confidence interval is within the range of 8.161 to 6.006, with a t-value of 13.596 and df of 23. The significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) of 0.000 indicates a significant difference**. Thus, these results suggest a substantial change in scores in **both the experimental and control groups** after the intervention. Although the scores of both **the experimental and control classes increased from the pre-test to the post-test**, the level of improvement and the quality of change differed significantly. In the control class, the improvement occurred naturally because they followed the regular learning process that was already familiar to them. However, the improvement in the experimental class was higher, with an average increase of 14.04 points, compared to the control class, which only increased by 7.08 points. Statistically, this indicates that the KWL Plus strategy not only increased scores but also had a much greater impact on improving students' understanding of the reading text. Additionally, the results of the paired samples t-test showed a significance level (Sig. 2-tailed) = 0.000, which is far below the α threshold of 0.05. This means that the improvement is not due to chance but is genuinely influenced by the use of the KWL Plus strategy.

The students in the control class were taught using **a teacher-centered approach, in which the teacher served as the primary source of knowledge and students played a more passive role in the learning process**. Therefore, if there was an improvement in their learning outcomes, it is considered reasonable since both the control and experimental classes received instruction. However, the students in the experimental class showed a more significant improvement, which can be attributed to the implementation of the KWL Plus strategy. This strategy **actively engaged students by**

encouraging them to recall **prior knowledge, set learning goals, and** summarize what they had learned. Through this structured and student-centered approach, learners in the experimental class were more involved in the reading process, resulting in a deeper understanding of the text and a greater enhancement in their reading comprehension achievement compared to those in the control class.

In the context of learning, this indicates that the KWL Plus strategy is more effective than conventional methods, as it encourages students to think critically, reflect, and connect new information with their prior knowledge. Students become more active, understand the material more deeply, and are able to reorganize the information they have learned. This proves that the KWL Plus strategy significantly contributes to improved learning outcomes, not only quantitatively (scores) but also in terms of understanding and student engagement.

Research Hypothesis:

Null Hypothesis (H0): **There is no significant difference between the** pretest and posttest scores **of the experimental and control groups.**

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): There is **a significant difference between the** pretest and posttest scores **of the experimental and control groups.**

Decision Framework:

If the significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) \geq 0.05, then H0 is accepted, and **it is concluded that there is no significant difference between the** pretest and posttest scores.

If the significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) \leq 0.05, then H0 is rejected, and H1 is accepted, which means **there is a significant difference between** the pretest and posttest scores.

In this result, since the significance value for both pairs is 0.000 (\leq 0.05), **H0 is rejected, and H1 is accepted,** indicating **a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores in** both groups.

Discussion

Based on the research results, using the KWL PLUS strategy can improve students' reading comprehension skills. This is indicated by a significant increase in the experimental group's pretest score, where the average score of students was relatively low at 78.60 before the KWL Plus treatment in the classroom. Since the primary focus of this study is the impact of KWL Plus on students' reading comprehension of recount texts, the researchers focused on the components of the K (Know) part of this strategy, facilitating the activation of students' prior knowledge, which is essential in understanding the text. The W (What I Want to Know) section enhances curiosity, while the L (Learned) section and additional activities of the PLUS section help the ninth-grade students of MTs. Birul Ulum reflect and summarize vital information to deepen their understanding.

The application of the KWL Plus method in learning recount text in the experimental class significantly improved learning outcomes. Before the implementation of the process, students could only achieve an average score of 78.60 in the initial test (pretest), which reflected their understanding of the material, which was still at a moderate level. However, after the treatment using the KWL Plus strategy, which combines active reading activities with note-taking and reflection on learning, there was a significant jump in scores on the final test (post-test) to an average of 92.64. This result indicates that the KWL Plus method increased students' engagement in the learning process and significantly improved their comprehension and ability to write and understand recount texts. Thus, applying the KWL Plus strategy is practical to be used as an alternative in learning recount text, especially to improve students' learning outcomes.

In line with this, according to the theory of Donna & Ogle (1992). the KWL Plus strategy benefits students by actively engaging them in the reading process, enhancing their comprehension, and helping them organize information through summarization and graphic organizers. This structured approach encourages students to connect prior knowledge with new information, thereby improving their ability to understand, retain, and recall what they have read [28].

This finding is in line with previous research by M. Suryantini, who found that implementing the KWL Plus strategy was beneficial in improving students' reading comprehension and increasing their reading achievement [20]. These results suggest that the KWL PLUS strategy can be used as an effective alternative method to teach reading comprehension, especially in learning English as a second language. Also, according to K. Adhinata D, Budiarta I, this strategy encourages students to be more active in reading and helps them organize the information obtained when reading recount texts [21]. Third, according to R. Zalisman, using the KWL Plus strategy improves students' reading comprehension and produces positive contributions [22]. Thus, **the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H1) is accepted.** It has been found that the KWLPlus Strategy has an effective **impact on students' reading comprehension** achievement.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study shows that the application of the KWL Plus method proved to be successful in improving the reading comprehension achievement of grade 9 students at MTs. Birul Ulum. Through the stages of Know, Want to know, and Learned, as well as additional activities such as recording important information and making summaries, students become more active, directed, and critical in understanding reading texts. This method not only helps improve literal comprehension but also strengthens students' analysis and reflection skills on the reading content. Thus, KWL Plus can be one of the effective learning strategies to improve reading comprehension skills at the junior secondary education level, especially in the context of English language learning.

The KWL Plus strategy has several advantages, including encouraging the development of students' critical thinking skills, accommodating various learning styles, and increasing motivation and enthusiasm in the learning process. In addition, this strategy facilitates educators in presenting learning materials more interestingly and innovatively. Through a learning approach that focuses on comprehension from an early stage, students can develop their reading skills, expand their ideas and understand the structure of the text more deeply. Thus, implementing this strategy in the curriculum can significantly contribute to improving students' reading ability and reading comprehension.

KWL Plus helped me conclude that my research had achieved the following results: Students were given more opportunities to comprehend the context of English reading comprehension in the recount text, they were able to discuss and share ideas in a natural setting, and they were encouraged to share their ideas to help them complete more worksheets that would help them improve their English comprehension skills.

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