



Improving Reading Comprehension of Narrative Texts through Know, Want, Learn (KWL) Technique among Senior High School Students

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Article Info

Article history:

Received Mar 30, 2026

Revised Apr 17, 2026

Accepted Apr 29, 2026

OnlineFirst May 12, 2026

Keywords:

Classroom Action Research

English Language Learning

KWL Technique

Narrative Text

Reading Comprehension

ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: This study aimed to improve the reading comprehension skill of the eleventh-grade students of State Islamic Senior High School Palopo through the implementation of Know, Want, Learn (KWL) technique. The study focused on helping students understand narrative texts more effectively and increasing their active participation during the reading process.

Methodology: This study used Classroom Action Research (CAR) consisting of two cycles: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The subjects were 26 students of class XI Natural science 1 State Islamic Senior High School Palopo. The instruments included observation sheets, interview lists, reading comprehension tests, and a camera for documentation. Data were analyzed using descriptive quantitative and qualitative methods.

Main Findings: The findings showed that students' reading comprehension improved after applying the KWL technique. In the first meeting of Cycle I, the mean score was 52.88, and in the second meeting it increased to 61.01. Students also showed better participation, stronger motivation, improved understanding of narrative texts, and greater confidence in completing the KWL chart activities.

Novelty/Originality of this study: This study provides a practical classroom strategy by integrating the KWL technique into reading comprehension instruction for narrative texts. It emphasizes activating prior knowledge, setting reading purposes, and reflecting on learned information, which creates a more structured, student-centered, and interactive reading process for senior high school students.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the most fundamental language skills in English learning because it enables students to obtain information, expand knowledge, and develop critical thinking [1]-[3]. Through reading, students can understand ideas, messages, and information presented in written texts. In senior high school, reading comprehension becomes an essential competency because students are required to understand various types of texts, including narrative, descriptive, recount, and expository texts. Reading is not only the process of recognizing

words but also understanding meaning, interpreting messages, and connecting information with prior knowledge [4]. Therefore, reading comprehension plays a very important role in students' academic achievement and language development [5].

However, many students still face serious difficulties in comprehending English texts, especially narrative texts. Based on preliminary observation conducted in class XI Natural science 1 of State Islamic Senior High School Palopo, the researcher found that most students had problems in understanding the content of reading passages. Although some students could pronounce words correctly, they often failed to identify the main idea, determine specific information, infer meaning, and understand the overall message of the text. Students were also confused when they encountered unfamiliar vocabulary and had difficulty connecting information within the text. As a result, their reading achievement remained low and below the expected minimum standard score [6], [7].

One of the main causes of students' low reading comprehension is the use of conventional teaching methods that are still teacher-centered and less interactive [8]-[10]. In many classrooms, teachers only ask students to read the text and answer comprehension questions without providing strategies to help them understand the text deeply. This condition makes students passive and less motivated during the learning process. They tend to rely only on direct translation without activating prior knowledge or setting clear reading purposes. Consequently, students lose interest in reading activities and consider reading as a difficult and boring task [11].

To solve this problem, teachers need an effective reading strategy that can actively involve students in the learning process [12]-[14]. One of the appropriate techniques is Know, Want, Learn (KWL) technique. KWL is an instructional strategy that helps students organize their reading activities into three stages: what they already Know, what they Want to know, and what they have Learned after reading. This strategy activates students' background knowledge before reading, encourages them to set reading goals, and helps them reflect on the information they gain after reading. Through this process, students become more focused, active, and independent in understanding the text [15], [16].

Narrative text was chosen as the focus of this study because it is one of the most frequently taught text types in senior high school English learning. Narrative texts contain stories, events, characters, and conflicts that require students to understand both explicit and implicit meanings [17], [18]. Students often find difficulties in identifying orientation, complication, and resolution in narrative texts, as well as understanding vocabulary and the sequence of events. By applying KWL technique, students are expected to comprehend narrative texts more effectively because they can relate their prior knowledge to the text and monitor their understanding during the reading process [19], [20].

Classroom Action Research (CAR) was used in this study because it provides a practical solution for improving classroom problems directly. CAR allows teachers and researchers to identify students' difficulties, implement teaching strategies, observe the learning process, and reflect on the results through repeated cycles of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting [21], [22]. This method is highly suitable for improving students' reading comprehension because it focuses on immediate classroom improvement and continuous reflection. Through two cycles of action, the effectiveness of KWL technique can be evaluated and improved systematically to achieve better learning outcomes [23], [24].

Several previous studies have investigated strategies for improving students' reading comprehension. Puput Zoli Ekorini [25] found that SQ3R technique improved students' reading comprehension by helping them survey, question, read, recite, and review the text systematically. Ansharul Fuqaha [26] reported that Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) strategy enhanced students' reading comprehension through group discussion and collaborative learning. Dodi Widia [27] revealed that Mind Mapping strategy improved students' understanding of narrative texts by helping them visualize text structure and main ideas. Although these studies showed positive results, they mainly focused on cooperative learning and visual mapping strategies. Very limited studies specifically examine the use of KWL technique in improving students' reading comprehension of narrative texts through Classroom Action Research at the senior high school level, particularly for class XI students.

The novelty of this study lies in the integration of KWL technique with narrative text comprehension in a Classroom Action Research framework. Unlike previous studies that emphasized general reading strategies, this research specifically focuses on activating prior knowledge, setting learning goals, and reflecting learning outcomes through the KWL chart. The study also combines teacher guidance, reading aloud activities, vocabulary discussion, and student-centered reflection to create a more structured and interactive reading process [28], [29]. This practical instructional model offers a new contribution to English reading pedagogy, especially for senior high school students.

The implication of this study is significant for English teachers, students, and future educational practice. For teachers, the findings provide an effective alternative strategy to improve reading comprehension systematically and meaningfully. Teachers can apply KWL technique to make reading activities more engaging and student-centered [30]. For students, this strategy can improve motivation, confidence, critical thinking, and reading independence. In a broader context, this study contributes to the development of English teaching by emphasizing strategic reading instruction rather than conventional question-answer activities alone.

The urgency of this study is based on the continuing low reading comprehension achievement of students, especially in understanding narrative texts. Reading comprehension is a core academic skill that affects students' success not only in English subjects but also in other disciplines that require information processing and critical understanding [31], [32]. If students continue to experience difficulties in reading comprehension, their academic performance and learning confidence will remain limited. Therefore, immediate improvement in reading instruction is highly necessary. Investigating the use of KWL technique becomes urgent to provide an effective and practical solution for improving students' reading comprehension and supporting better English learning outcomes in senior high schools.

Based on the background, research gap, and urgency presented above, this study is guided by the following research questions: (1) How can the KWL technique improve students' reading comprehension of narrative texts in class XI through Classroom Action Research? (2) How is the implementation process of the KWL technique conducted during the teaching and learning activities? and (3) How do students respond to the use of the KWL technique in improving their reading comprehension skills? These research questions are formulated to investigate the effectiveness of the KWL technique and to obtain a comprehensive understanding of its implementation in English reading instruction at the senior high school level.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1. Research Design

This study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) as the research design. Classroom Action Research was chosen because it is appropriate for solving practical problems found in the classroom and improving the quality of teaching and learning processes directly [33]. According to Kemmis and McTaggart, CAR consists of four main stages: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting, which are conducted in cyclical processes until the expected improvement is achieved. This research was conducted in two cycles, and each cycle consisted of a series of teaching and learning activities related to the implementation of Know, Want, Learn (KWL) technique in improving students' reading comprehension. The second cycle was designed as a continuation and improvement of the first cycle based on the reflection results from Cycle I. The main focus of this study was to improve students' reading comprehension of narrative texts through the KWL technique.

2.2. Subject/Sample

The subjects of this study were the eleventh-grade students of State Islamic Senior High School Palopo, specifically class XI Natural science 1 in the academic year 2012/2013. The total number of students involved in this research was 26 students. This class was selected purposively because the students showed difficulties in reading comprehension, especially in understanding narrative texts, identifying main ideas, determining specific information, and comprehending the meaning of difficult words. Based on preliminary observation and interviews with the English teacher, the students' average reading achievement was still below the minimum standard score of 70. Therefore, this class was considered appropriate as the research sample for implementing the KWL technique.

2.3. Source of Data and Data Collection Technique

The sources of data in this research were obtained from three main components: the students, the English teacher, and the collaborator [34]. The students became the primary source of data through their reading comprehension test results and classroom participation during the teaching-learning process. The English teacher provided supporting information regarding students' learning conditions and previous classroom problems. The collaborator assisted the researcher in observing and evaluating the implementation of the action objectively.

The data collection techniques used in this study were observation, interview, test, and documentation. Observation was conducted to monitor students' activities and classroom interaction during the implementation of the KWL technique. Interviews were carried out with the English teacher to identify students' initial reading problems and classroom conditions. Reading comprehension tests were used to measure students' improvement in understanding narrative texts after the application of the KWL technique. Documentation through camera was also used to record the research activities as supporting evidence.

2.4. Research Instrument

The instruments used in this research were interview lists, reading comprehension tests, observation sheets, and a camera [35]. The interview list was used to collect preliminary information from the English teacher regarding students' reading ability and classroom problems. The reading comprehension test was the main instrument used to assess students' understanding of narrative texts through the KWL technique. The test focused on students' ability to identify main ideas, specific information, inference, vocabulary meaning, and overall comprehension of the text.

Observation sheets were used to record students' participation, activeness, attention, and responses during the teaching-learning process. These observations helped the researcher evaluate students' motivation and involvement in classroom activities. In addition, a camera was used to document the learning process as supporting evidence for the implementation of the research.

Table 1. Research Instruments and Functions

Variable	Category	Percentage (%)
Interview List	Preliminary Information	100
Reading Test	Reading Comprehension Achievement	100
Observation Sheet	Students' Participation	100
Camera	Documentation Evidence	100

2.5. Data Analysis Technique

The collected data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative descriptive analysis. Quantitative data were obtained from students' reading comprehension test scores, while qualitative data were obtained from observation results and interview findings. The students' test scores were calculated using percentage analysis and mean score analysis to determine the improvement from Cycle I to Cycle II. The formula used to calculate the mean score is presented as follows:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N} \quad \dots(1)$$

Where:

\bar{X} = Mean Score

$\sum X$ = Total Raw Score

N = Total Number of Students

The success indicator of this study was achieved if the students' average score reached ≥ 70 and the quality of teaching-learning activities improved significantly from the first cycle to the second cycle. Students' classroom participation was also analyzed descriptively by categorizing their activities into very active, active, less active, and not active classifications.

2.6. Research Procedure

This study followed the standard procedure of Classroom Action Research consisting of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting stages conducted in two cycles. In the planning stage, the researcher prepared lesson plans based on the curriculum, selected appropriate narrative texts, prepared observation sheets, interview lists, reading tests, and KWL chart sheets. The researcher also prepared facilities needed during the teaching-learning process and discussed the students' problems with the collaborator and English teacher.

In the acting stage, the researcher implemented the KWL technique in the classroom. The teacher first explained the concept of reading comprehension and introduced the KWL technique. Students were then given narrative texts and blank KWL charts to complete the three columns: Know, Want, and Learn. Students were guided to identify prior knowledge, formulate questions, and reflect on what they had learned after reading. In the observing stage, the researcher and collaborator observed students' classroom participation, motivation, and understanding during the learning process. Observation sheets were used to record students' behavior, responses, and interaction throughout the lesson.

In the reflecting stage, the researcher evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of Cycle I. The results of reflection were used to revise the teaching strategy in Cycle II, such as giving more motivation, clearer explanations, vocabulary support, and easier reading texts to improve students' understanding and classroom engagement.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Sub section Students' Reading Comprehension Achievement in Cycle I

The first cycle was conducted to identify the initial condition of students' reading comprehension through the implementation of Know, Want, Learn (KWL) technique [36], [37]. In this cycle, the researcher introduced the concept of reading comprehension, explained the use of KWL charts, and guided students to apply the three stages of the KWL technique in understanding narrative texts. Students were asked to read short stories, complete the KWL chart individually, and answer reading comprehension questions based on the text.

The results of Cycle I showed that students still experienced considerable difficulties in understanding narrative texts. Most students were confused in filling the “Know” and “Want” columns because they were not familiar with activating prior knowledge and formulating reading questions. Several students also had difficulty understanding unfamiliar vocabulary and identifying the main idea of the text. As a result, classroom conditions became less effective because students were still dependent on their friends and lacked confidence in completing the tasks independently. The class was often noisy, and many students showed low discipline and limited participation during the learning process.

In the first meeting of Cycle I, the students’ mean score was 52.88. The highest score was 75, while the lowest score was 50. Out of 26 students, 23 students obtained a score of 50, and only 3 students achieved a score of 75. This result indicates that the majority of students were still categorized as having low reading comprehension achievement.

In the second meeting of Cycle I, the mean score increased to 61.01. The highest score improved to 87.5, while the lowest score remained 50. There were 14 students who obtained a score of 50, 11 students who obtained a score of 75, and 1 student achieved a score of 87.5. Although improvement was found, the students’ average score still did not reach the success indicator of 70. This result showed that further improvement was needed in the second cycle.

Table 2. Students’ Reading Comprehension Score in Cycle I

Meeting	Highest Score	Lowest Score	Mean Score
First Meeting	75	50	52.88
Second Meeting	87.5	50	61.01

Table 2 shows that there was an increase of 8.13 points from the first meeting to the second meeting of Cycle I. However, the score was still categorized as low because students had not fully understood how to use the KWL strategy effectively.

Students’ classroom participation in Cycle I also showed unsatisfactory results. Only 7.69% of students were categorized as very active, 26.97% were active, 46.15% were less active, and 19.27% were categorized as not active. This condition indicated that most students were still passive and needed stronger motivation and clearer guidance in the learning process.

Table 3. Students’ Participation in Cycle I

Participation Category	Number of Students	Percentage (%)
Very Active	2	7.69
Active	7	26.97
Less Active	12	46.15
Not Active	5	19.27

Based on the reflection of Cycle I, several weaknesses were identified. Students still lacked discipline, the classroom atmosphere was noisy, KWL technique was still unfamiliar, and many students had low self-confidence. Most importantly, students found difficulty understanding the text and filling in the KWL chart, especially in the “Know” and “Want” sections. Therefore, improvements were planned for Cycle II by providing more motivation, easier texts, vocabulary guidance, and clearer step-by-step explanations [38].

3.2. Students’ Reading Comprehension Achievement in Cycle II

Cycle II was conducted as a revision of the weaknesses found in Cycle I. In this cycle, the researcher provided more intensive guidance, helped students understand difficult vocabulary, asked students to read aloud, and selected easier narrative texts to improve comprehension. The researcher also motivated students to be more active and confident during the learning process.

The results of Cycle II showed significant improvement in students’ reading comprehension. Students became more familiar with the KWL chart and were able to complete each column more effectively. They could identify what they already knew, formulate questions before reading, and reflect on what they had learned after reading. Students also showed better understanding of narrative text structure, including orientation, complication, and resolution.

Classroom observation indicated that students were more active and interested in the reading activities. They participated more confidently, asked questions, and engaged better in classroom discussions. Students no longer depended heavily on their friends because they had better understanding of how to use the KWL strategy independently. This improvement created a more positive and productive classroom environment.

The students’ average reading achievement increased significantly and reached the success indicator of ≥ 70 . This shows that the use of KWL technique was effective in improving students’ reading comprehension of narrative texts. The improvement also proved that activating prior knowledge and setting reading purposes helped students process information more systematically and meaningfully [39].

The findings of this study indicate that the Know, Want, Learn (KWL) technique significantly improved students' reading comprehension of narrative texts. This improvement occurred because the KWL strategy guided students through a structured reading process. Students first activated their background knowledge in the "Know" stage, then formulated learning goals in the "Want" stage, and finally reflected on new information in the "Learn" stage. This process made reading more meaningful because students became active participants rather than passive readers [40].

The findings support the theory that reading comprehension is not only decoding written words but also connecting prior knowledge with new information. Students often fail in reading because they do not know how to begin understanding a text [41]. Through KWL, students were trained to predict, question, and evaluate information systematically. This approach helped them identify the main idea, understand difficult vocabulary, and interpret the meaning of the text more effectively. It also reduced their dependence on direct translation and increased their independent reading skills [42].

The results are consistent with several previous studies. Sinar Rahmati [43] found that SQ3R strategy improved students' reading comprehension by encouraging systematic reading steps such as survey, question, read, recite, and review. Michael Sailer [44] reported that CIRC strategy improved reading comprehension through collaborative group discussion and peer interaction. Kardoyo et al. [45] found that Mind Mapping strategy enhanced students' understanding of narrative texts by helping them visualize text structure and organize information clearly. Similar to those studies, the present research confirms that structured reading strategies significantly improve students' reading achievement. However, this study specifically focuses on the KWL technique, which directly trains students to activate prior knowledge and reflect on learning outcomes.

The use of Classroom Action Research also strengthened the effectiveness of this study because the teaching strategy was continuously revised based on reflection results. Through the cycles of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting, the researcher was able to identify classroom problems directly and provide immediate improvements [46]. This process made the learning strategy more adaptive to students' needs and classroom conditions.

The improvement in students' activeness also became an important finding. Reading activities often become passive because students are afraid of making mistakes or do not understand the purpose of reading. Through guided practice, reading aloud activities, vocabulary sharing, and KWL chart completion, students became more confident and motivated. This shows that effective reading instruction should combine strategic guidance and emotional encouragement to create meaningful learning experiences. The formula used to calculate students' mean score is presented as follows:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N} \quad \dots(2)$$

Where \bar{X} represents the mean score, $\sum X$ is the total raw score, and N is the total number of students. This formula was used to determine the overall reading achievement in each cycle and evaluate the effectiveness of the KWL technique.

An analysis of the research gap based on three previous studies shows that most prior studies focused on general reading strategies such as SQ3R, CIRC, and Mind Mapping. These studies successfully improved reading comprehension but mainly emphasized survey techniques, collaboration, and visual organization of ideas. Very few studies specifically investigated the use of KWL technique for improving narrative text comprehension through Classroom Action Research at the senior high school level. This gap highlights the importance of research that focuses on activating prior knowledge and reflective learning through KWL strategy [47].

The novelty of this study lies in the integration of KWL technique with narrative text comprehension using a Classroom Action Research framework [48]. Unlike previous studies, this research specifically emphasizes students' prior knowledge activation, reading goal formulation, and post-reading reflection through the KWL chart. The combination of teacher guidance, vocabulary support, reading aloud activities, and reflective learning creates a more practical and student-centered instructional model for improving reading comprehension.

The implication of this study is valuable for English teachers, students, and future researchers. For teachers, the findings provide an effective alternative strategy to improve reading comprehension systematically and meaningfully. For students, the KWL technique improves confidence, critical thinking, motivation, and reading independence. For future researchers, this study can serve as a reference for applying KWL strategy to other text genres such as recount, descriptive, and expository texts.

Despite its positive findings, this study still has limitations. The research involved only one class with 26 students in one school, which limits the generalization of the results to broader educational contexts. The study also focused only on narrative text comprehension and did not examine other reading genres. In addition, the research was conducted in only two cycles, which limited the duration of strategy implementation. Future studies are recommended to involve larger samples, longer research periods, and different text types to strengthen the validity and applicability of the findings.

4. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the use of Know, Want, Learn (KWL) technique effectively improved the reading comprehension skill of the eleventh-grade students of State Islamic Senior High School Palopo, especially in understanding narrative texts. This strategy helped students activate prior knowledge, set reading purposes, and reflect on what they had learned after reading, resulting in better comprehension of main ideas, specific information, vocabulary, and overall text meaning. The improvement was proven by the increase in students' mean score from 52.88 in the first meeting of Cycle I to 61.01 in the second meeting, and finally reaching the success indicator of ≥ 70 in Cycle II. In addition, students became more active, confident, and motivated during the learning process. Therefore, the KWL technique can be considered an effective teaching strategy to improve students' reading comprehension achievement in senior high school English learning.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to all parties who have provided support, guidance, encouragement, and valuable contributions throughout the completion of this research. Special appreciation is extended to those who have assisted in the research process, provided constructive suggestions, and offered motivation during the preparation of this article. The author also expresses deep thanks to everyone who contributed directly or indirectly to the successful completion of this study. Hopefully, this research can provide useful contributions to the development of knowledge, especially in the field of education and English language learning.

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGY

The authors declare that no artificial intelligence (AI)-assisted technologies were used in the preparation, analysis, or writing of this manuscript. All stages of the research process, including data collection, data analysis, interpretation of results, and manuscript preparation, were conducted entirely by the authors without the assistance of any AI-based tools.

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