

The Efficiency of Using KWL Strategy in Teaching Arabic for Speakers of Other Languages

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Abstract

KWL strategy is an abbreviation for what students **know**, **what** they want to know and what they learned. It is an educational technique used to improve the comprehension of reading skill through connecting the previous knowledge of the students with what s/he learned. Students start to think about what they know then they start to think of what they want to learn or discover and finally they actively learn new things about the topic.

This study aims at assessing the efficiency of KWL strategy in improving the skills of reading comprehension for the students of the second level in the division of Arabic for speakers of other languages/Language Centre in Jordan University.

To achieve the objective of the study, the researcher applied the empirical method on a sample that contains one group for three semesters. The sample consists of (65) students.

By using the Independent Samples Test, the study revealed that teaching reading skill based on KWL strategy has a positive influence on students. Students got higher marks in the test held after teaching based on this method unlike when they were studying reading skill based on the traditional methods. This means that teaching reading based on KWL strategy enhances the ability of students to learn the reading skill in Arabic better as a second language.

Keywords: reading skill, reading strategy, KWL strategy, teaching a second language.

1. Introduction:

Reading is one of the essential skills in teaching a second language more specifically Arabic language. It was given a great importance in the programs of teaching Arabic for speakers of other languages. It is one of the important skills that must be improved. The improvement of learners in speaking and writing is connected to their ability in improving their reading skill. Once learners improve their reading skill, this will increase their knowledge in the language and its culture.

Reading is a complicated and overlapping process that lies in connecting the written symbols with sounds, comprehending lexicons from context, realizing the relations that connect the

meanings of sentences in paragraphs, abstracting ideas from the text in addition to analyzing the relation amongst the elements of the text and interacting with them (Grabe and Stoller, 2002:9).

The main aim of reading lies in enabling learners to acquire comprehension. Reading is not considered without comprehension. A lot of learners read fluently but once they are asked about what they have just read, they cannot answer. Therefore, they are not considered good readers (Bolain,2008: 2). Accordingly, improving the comprehension of what is read is essential. It is even an activity or a creative process by which the reader is explaining the message of the readable texts based on his/her earlier knowledge (Goodman, 1967: 259).

We as teachers should care about reading for comprehension. Such cares represented in finding methods and strategies that help students in comprehending texts and improve their abilities to organize information and interacting with them. Amongst such methods and strategies is KWL (Know, Want to know, Learn).

1. The problem of the research:

The problem of the research lies in the weakness of the learners in comprehending what is read. This might be attributed to the traditional methods that teachers follow during teaching this skill in addition to their lack to more modern methods and strategies in teaching reading skill that help learners comprehending what is read.

2. Research Questions:

The study in hand tries to find answers to the following questions:

1. What is the impact of using a training program that is based on KWL during the process of teaching reading skill?
2. Are there any differences between teaching reading skill based on traditional methods or based on KWL strategy?

3. The Importance of the research:

The importance of the current research lies in its pursuing to discover the efficiency of using KWL strategy in teaching reading skill, how it is used in teaching Arabic as a second language, what we should consider during its use in addition to observing its influence on the students' progress in acquiring the second language.

The importance of the current research is summarized in the following points:

1. This research represents a reference to depend on so to enrich the teaching process.
2. It is considered a response to modern trends in teaching that might aid to overcome the deficiency found in the traditional teaching methods.

3. Improving the abilities of the students in comprehending the written texts through connecting the previous knowledge with the recent one in addition to acquiring them the appropriate reading skills.
4. Helping teachers in increasing the motivation of the students towards reading.

5. Research objectives:

The objectives of the current research are summarized in the followings:

1. Recognizing the importance of KWL strategy in improving students' performance in reading skills.
2. Recognizing the efficiency of using KWL strategy in improving students' performance in reading skills.

6. The study:

The participants are (65) students. All of them are studying in the general program in the language Centre/Jordan University. The language centre was established in Jordan University by royal decree in (1979). It includes three divisions; Arabic language division, English language division and the division of Arabic for speakers of other languages. Each semester, the division of Arabic for speakers of other languages provides a range of curriculum and supportive language programs in order to teach Arabic for such speakers. The curriculum programs represented in the general program that includes more than eight levels to teach Arabic for speakers of other languages. Students study a series of educational books that focus on the basic linguistic skills. Moreover, language centre offers programs of special courses held based on special principals and based on agreements held with academic institutions, embassies and international institutions. There are also other supportive programs aimed to engage students in the campus and acquaint them with the Jordanian culture thus giving them the opportunity to practice the language and connects it with life and surroundings. Such programs represented in language partner, cultural, artificial, sport and language clubs in addition to picnics, visits and different activities.

The study in hand was applied on the students of the second level whose number was (65). The study continued three semesters. Students were given a test before teaching them based on KWL strategy. They studied reading earlier based on traditional methods. When the semester is over, a test is held for them after applying KWL strategy.

7. Study Hypotheses:

The hypotheses of the study can be clarified as follows:

Null Hypothesis: There are no differences between the average of the tests held before and after using KWL strategy during the process of teaching reading skill.

Alternative Hypothesis: There are differences between the average of the tests held before and after using KWL strategy during the process of teaching reading skill.

8. Theoretical Framework:

KWL strategy (Know, Want to know, Learn) is one of the strategies that deals with what is beyond knowledge and is used during visual learning. It is dated back to Graham Dettrich (1980) who inspired this strategy from the ideas of Biajeh (1964). Mason (1982) made it part of his model in solving problems (Hafith, 2008:195).

Danna Olge (1987) developed this strategy and framed it like we see it today. It aimed at activating the former knowledge of the students and made it pillar for building new knowledge through the readable text. Perez (2008:12) believed that this strategy incorporates brainstorming, classification, asking questions, and directed reading. Students determined what s/he would like to know about a specific topic, then s/he writes what they know about the topic and at the end s/he seeks to find answers for the questions that they have risen earlier. Kopp (2010:10) pointed out that teachers used this strategy to activate students thinking concerning the topic of the lesson before the new learning took place. It further helps teachers to keep students concerned about what they have learned and what they are learning as well (Sasson, 2008).

To summarize, KWL strategy includes a group of procedures and systematic steps that help language learners understand reading texts and engage with them through connecting their previous information with the new information that they get during learning. Therefore, this strategy activates the previous knowledge of the students and at the same time eases acquiring new information so to connect it with the previous information.

This strategy includes three knowledge steps according to Peregoy and Boyle (2001) and Conner (2006):

1. K: stands for "Know" in the question what I know about the subject?
2. W: stands for "Want" in the question What I Want to know about the subject?
3. L: stands for "Learned" in the question What I Learned about the subject?

These can be represented in the following table:

K	W	L
What I know about the subject?	What I Want to know about the subject?	What I Learned about the subject?
Previous knowledge	Intended Knowledge	Acquired Knowledge

9. The stages of teaching a text based on this strategy:

In order to achieve reading comprehension for the students and improve it, the three stages of reading Arabic for speakers of other languages must be applied (Juan, 2007: 20-21):

1. Before Reading:

Brain Storming: The previous knowledge of the students is activated pertaining to the reading topic. Before the teacher distributes the intended text and draws KWL diagram, students are invited to think about the text topic. The teacher at this stage raises questions to motivate them to provide their previous knowledge about the determined topic. The students share their knowledge and discussed them, the teacher jots down the information s/he gets from students on the board and the students write down what they know in the (K) column. This stage aims to help students remind what they know about the topic and recall it.

The expectations: Students predict the information that the text might discuss through raising questions from the teacher about the information that the text may project.

Forming questions: The teacher asks students to write questions that they are expected to find answers for in the text. Students are supposed to write such questions in the (W) column. This step helps students to read the text effectively.

2. During Reading:

The students' mission in this stage is represented in looking up new information, so to seek answers to their questions. During reading, they can also raise more questions and add them in column (W) and write down the new information in column (L).

3. After Reading:

In this stage, students connect what they have read with their previous knowledge. Then, they are supposed to evaluate whether or not they have achieved the purpose of reading. Students also highlight the main ideas and discuss what they have learned. Further, they revise the questions that they have raised before reading and during reading. Moreover, students should find relation between what they have known with what they have studied. They could also do search in the internet concerning the questions that the text has not answered.

It is concluded that the role of the teacher during applying KWL strategy represented in the followings:

1. Direct students and supervise them.
2. Determine the previous knowledge of the students as the basis for the new learning.
3. Dividing students into small groups to work based on the cooperative learning.
4. Organize the knowledge of the students using the strategy diagram.
5. Stimulate the curiosity of the students by brainstorming and discussion.

It is clear after reviewing the stages of teaching reading skill based on KWL strategy that this strategy helps activating the previous knowledge in a specific topic. It also helps them improving their skills in understanding texts and interacting with them through analyzing texts, organizing knowledge as well as being able to critique and comprehend the texts. Moreover, applying such strategy encourages students to seek new information and helps them find answers to any of their questions so to make the learning process more effective.

9. Literature Review:

A lot of research studies touched on teaching reading whether in Arabic or English, but only rare studies focused on the idea of teaching the comprehension of reading based on KWL in the second language.

Al-Yaseen and Maqableh (2018) conducted a study aimed at tracing the influence of KWL strategy in teaching reading texts at the level of improving critical reading skills for the female tenth graders in Jordan. The researchers conducted a test in critical reading. The sample included (53) students from two sections in 2014/2015. One group was chosen to be an experimental group and consists of (26) students taught by KWL strategy, and the other group is a control group that consists of (27) students taught by the traditional method described in the teacher book for eight weeks. The study revealed that there are differences with statistical significance at the significance level of ($\alpha = 05.0$) between the arithmetic means of the performance of the two groups at all the critical reading skills⁶⁶. Such difference is attributed to the variable of teaching strategy for the benefit of the experimental group.

Maulida and Gani (2016) tried to figure out how the right execution for KWL strategy helps increase the students' ability at the level of reading skill. To carry the study on, the researcher used the experimental method which was applied on one group of the first graders who consist of (30) students arbitrarily chosen from the school of Banda Aceh in Indonesia. The data are analyzed using T test. Results revealed that the Null Hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative Hypothesis (H_a) is accepted. Therefore, the researcher showed that teaching reading based on KWL strategy has a good impact on the reading comprehension of the students.

Sinambela & Manik & Pangaribuan (2015) conducted a study to improve student achievement in reading comprehension using KWL strategy. The data are collected from the experimental group and control group of the fifth-year university students in the department of English Language/ Faculty of Education in Indonesia. The data are analyzed by using T test. It is found out that students' achievement taught by applying KWL was higher than those taught without applying the strategy. The study proved that the students' score of the experimental group taught by KWL was higher and better than the control group.

Riswanti & Lismayanti (2014) conducted a study aimed at discovering the influence of KWL in reading comprehension for students during learning English as a foreign language in Indonesia. The sample consisted of (40) students from the eighth grade splitted into two groups; one is control and the other is experimental. The experiment continued to six weeks. After conducting the post-test, results showed that there are differences with statistical significance in achievement for the good of the experimental group more specifically in deduction and evaluation skills.

Abu Youniss (2013) study aimed at ensuring the efficiency of the KWL strategy in improving the reading comprehension for the eighth graders in Khan Yonis. In order to achieve the research objectives and answer the study questions, the researcher applied the experimental method on a sample consisted of two equivalent groups from the eighth graders in Daliyat Al-Karmal school. The sample consisted of (82) students; (41) in the experimental group taught by KWL strategy and (41) in the control group taught by the traditional method. The study continued for two months in 2012. Results revealed that there are differences with statistical significance at the

level $\alpha \leq (05.0)$ in the performance of the experimental group in the pre-test and post-test for the good of the post-test.

Stahl (2003) held a study that aimed at discovering the influence of three strategies; thinking, KWL and photo motion in improving the reading comprehension for the sixth graders in America. The study consisted of (150) students distributed in three groups; (50) students for each. Each group is taught based on one strategy for (9) weeks. They all undergo a standardized test. Results showed that there are differences as to the improvement in the reading comprehension for the good of the group who studied based on this strategy.

The researcher of the study in hand made use of previous studies in improving the theoretical framework, raising the teachers' awareness of the importance of using this strategy in teaching students reading skill during teaching Arabic as a second language in addition to the steps of applying it.

10. Data Analysis:

This research study was held to investigate whether or not KWL strategy has a positive influence in teaching students. The data were collected and analyzed via (SPSS) for the sake of extracting the different statistical procedures like the descriptive statistics represented in estimating the average and standard deviation for the study variables. This was done so to describe and summarize the data. Statistical analysis was also held.

11. Results and Discussion:

For the sake of conveying the differences of using KWL strategy in teaching, this study based on using the statistical and descriptive analysis via the Independent Samples Test.

1. Descriptive procedures:

Table (1) showed the descriptive analysis for the data. It is noticed that the highest mark students achieved before applying KWL strategy, represented by the variable (Before), was (40) and the lowest mark was (19). On the other hand, once KWL strategy was applied the highest mark, represented by the variable (After), was (50) and the lowest was (29). Furthermore, the highest value for the Mean went to the variable (After) then came the variable (Before). The values were (40.4769) and (30.0923), respectively. The highest value for the Standard Deviation was registered to the variable (After) then came (Before). The values were (5.37095) and (4.44312), respectively. Therefore, we notice there was a noticeable progress in the students' grades once KWL strategy was applied.

Table (1): The Descriptive Statistics for the data.

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Before	50	9.00	30.00	20.1000	4.71753
After	50	19.00	40.00	30.4800	5.45198
Valid N (listwise)	50				

Source: prepared by the research via (SPSS)

2. The Statistical procedures:

Upon completion of collecting the needed data for the study based on the students' grades before and after applying KWL strategy, the Independent Samples Test was carried out. This is to see whether or not there are differences between the two tests and to assess whether or not using this method was successful. Table (2) clarifies the results of the test.

Table (2): The Results of the Independent Samples Test on the study variables.

Group Statistics											
	Typy_exam	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean						
Exam_marks	Before	65	30.0923	4.44312	.55110						
	After	65	40.4769	5.37095	.66618						
Independent Samples Test											
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
										Lower	Upper
Exam_marks	Equal variances assumed	6.684	.011	-12.011	128	.000	10.38462	86459.	-12.09535	8.67388	
	Equal variances not assumed			-12.011	123.657	.000	10.38462	86459.	-12.09593	8.67330	

Resource: Done by the researchers using SPSS.

The results of the Independent Samples Test clarify the followings:

1. The quality of data use and the study sample were accepted. This is evident via the (T-test for Equality of Means) in the value of (F). It reaches (6.684). Therefore, it is intangible and less than 5%.
2. The result of the (T-test for Equality of Means) shows that the influence of using KWL strategy on students is intangible and represented in T-test. In the assumption of (Equal variances assumed or not assumed) it reaches (-10.38462) and it is intangible in the value (sig.) as it reaches (0.000). It is also less than (0.5%). Accordingly, the null hypothesis is refused, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted which assumes that there are differences between the average of the tests held before and after applying KWL strategy.
3. The mean of differences between the variables in the (T-test for Equality of Means) with the assumption of (Equal variances assumed or not assumed) approximately equals (-10.38462).
4. The deviation of the differences mistakes in the (T-test for Equality of Means) with the assumption of (Equal variances assumed or not assumed) approximately equals (0.86459).

Based on results of the study, we notice that using KWL strategy is effective when teaching reading skill. These results meet with the study of Maulida and Gani, (2016) which states that teaching reading skill based on KWL strategy has a positive influence on students. Students got higher marks in the test held after teaching based on this method unlike when they were studying reading skill based on the traditional methods. This means that teaching reading based on KWL strategy enhances the ability of the students to learn the reading skill in Arabic better as a second language. When comparing the means of marks via T-test, the statistic difference was apparent. This meets with the study of Lismayanti and Riswant (2014).

12. Recommendation:

Below are some recommendations that might be carried on for further research studies:

1. Conducting more future research on the perspectives of teachers as to using KWL strategy in their classes in addition to their opinions about its influence in improving the productive skills for students.
2. Carrying on more research papers that tackles the perspectives of students in employing this method in their classes in addition to their reactions about their linguistic performance after learning based on this method
3. Holding training courses for teachers regarding how they should use this strategy in their classes.

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