

The Impact of KWL Strategy in Developing Palestinian Eleventh Graders' Reading Comprehension and their Attitudes Towards Learning English Language

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Abstract

This study aimed at investigating the impact of KWL strategy (Know - Want to Know-Learned) in developing Palestinian eleventh graders' reading comprehension and their attitudes towards learning English language. The researchers adopted the experimental approach on a sample of (64) male students from the scientific stream at Al Manfalouti Secondary School for Boys, who were randomly selected from the population of (968) students enrolled in the scientific stream in the Middle-Area Directorate of Gaza, for the school year 2013-2014. The participants were divided into two equivalent groups: one as a control group which consists of (32) students and the other as an experimental one which consists of (32) students. The researchers used the KWL strategy in teaching the experimental group, while the traditional method was used in teaching the control one.

The researchers used three instruments to achieve the study aims: 1) a checklist for teachers to determine the five most important reading comprehension skills, 2) a pre and post reading comprehension test, and 3) a pre and post attitude scale towards English language. The experiment lasted for six weeks (2 lessons per week) in which the researchers implemented the study tools on both the control and experimental groups to investigate the effect of KWL strategy.

The study results indicated that there were significant differences in the mean scores of the experimental group and that of the control group in the post reading comprehension achievement test in favor of the experimental group attributed to the effectiveness of KWL strategy. Additionally, the study results revealed that there were statistically significant differences in the mean scores of the experimental group and that of the control group in the post application of the attitude scale towards learning English in favor of the experimental group attributed to the effectiveness of KWL strategy. In the light of those findings, the study recommended that curriculum designers and decision makers should consider strategies such as KWL strategy to activate students' prior knowledge while building the curriculum activities. The study also recommended that Palestinian English language supervisors should hold training courses to motivate the use of innovative strategies like KWL strategy to develop teacher's abilities in teaching English.

Keywords: KWL strategy, Reading Comprehension, Attitudes

ملخص:

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على أثر استراتيجية KWL (ماذا أعرف؟ - ماذا أريد أن أعرف؟ - ماذا تعلمت؟) في تطوير الفهم القرائي لدى طلبة الحادي عشر في فلسطين، واتجاهاتهم نحو تعلم اللغة الانجليزية. استخدم الباحث المنهج التجريبي على عينة مكونة من (64) طالباً من طلاب الفرع العلمي بمدرسة المنفلوطي الثانوية "أ" للبنين، والتي تم اختيارها عشوائياً من مجتمع يبلغ حوالي (968) طالباً مسجلاً في الفرع العلمي بمديرية التربية والتعليم بالمحافظة الوسطى للعام الدراسي 2013-2014. وزعت العينة إلى مجموعتين متكافئتين: إحداهما ضابطة تتكون من (32) طالباً والأخرى تجريبية تتكون من (32) طالباً. استخدم الباحثون استراتيجية KWL في تدريس المجموعة التجريبية بينما تعلمت المجموعة الضابطة بالطريقة التقليدية.

استخدم الباحثون ثلاث أدوات لتحقيق أهداف الدراسة: (1) استبيان للمعلمين لتحديد أهم خمس مهارات للفهم القرائي، (2) اختبار فهم قرائي قبلي وبعدي، بالإضافة إلى (3) مقياس اتجاه نحو اللغة الانجليزية قبل وبعد التجربة. استمرت الدراسة ستة أسابيع بمعدل درسين في الأسبوع حيث قام الباحثون خلال هذه الفترة بتطبيق أدوات الدراسة على المجموعتين الضابطة والتجريبية وذلك لقياس أثر الاستراتيجية.

أشارت نتائج الدراسة عن وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية في متوسط درجات طلاب المجموعتين الضابطة والتجريبية على القياس البعدي لاختبار الفهم القرائي لصالح المجموعة التجريبية يعزى لفاعلية استراتيجية KWL. إضافة إلى ذلك، أظهرت نتائج الدراسة وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية في متوسط درجات طلاب المجموعتين الضابطة والتجريبية في التطبيق البعدي لمقياس الاتجاه نحو تعلم اللغة الانجليزية لصالح المجموعة التجريبية لفاعلية استراتيجية KWL. في ضوء هذه النتائج، توصي الدراسة مصممي المناهج وصناع القرار بضرورة تبني استراتيجيات كاستراتيجية KWL حال بناء الأنشطة المنهجية لتفعيل الخبرات السابقة لدى الطلبة، كما توصي الدراسة مشرفي اللغة الانجليزية بضرورة عقد دورات تدريبية لإثارة دافعية المعلمين على استخدام استراتيجيات مبتكرة مثل استراتيجية KWL لتطوير قدراتهم في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, learning a foreign language is essential to daily life, as foreign languages serve as important tools for education (Office of Basic Education Commission, 2009:252). Thus, the teaching of English as a foreign language is now one of the most important subjects. Therefore, English has become a global language in the new age of globalization and information technology.

Furthermore, English is not only used when people communicate with English speakers, but also used as a lingua franca when people from different nations meet (Abu Armana, 2011:1). Baron (2001:36) confirms that over the past decades there has been a significant increase in the number of people around the world who speak English as a second language. Given the importance of learning a foreign language, the reading skill is one of the crucial skills in learning. It is considered as one of the important areas of teaching and one of the most important academic skills. Riswanto, et al (2014:225) asserts that reading is a major pillar upon which teaching and learning process is built whereas Addison (1996:23) states that the reading ability plays a central role in teaching and learning success at all education stages. Therefore, the students will be on the road to academic failure, if they could not read (Riswanto, et al, 2014:225). Thus, reading comprehension is considered as the real core for reading process. Durkin (1993:52) assumes that comprehension is the peak of the reading skills and the bases for all reading processes. Teaching students to read with a good comprehension must be teachers' highest priority. Mikulecky (1986, p:1) reports that reading helps one learn to think in the new language and helps one build better vocabulary.

Furthermore, the National Reading Panel (2014) asseverates that the reading ability plays a central role in the teaching-learning success at all educational stages and having any difficulty with a skill like reading will result in a variety of consequences on all subjects of study. According to a study by Pearson, Rochler, Dole, and Duffy (1992:15) on "Developing expertise in reading comprehension", a good reader usually uses prior knowledge to make sense of new information; asks question about the text before, during, and after reading; draws inferences from text; monitors comprehension; uses fix up strategies when meaning breaks down; determines what is important, and synthesizes information to create sensory image. To encourage students to develop effective reading skills, there are various teaching and learning strategies that teachers can use in the classroom. Most of the teaching and learning strategies usually focus on a particular strategy or skill. KWL (Know, Want to Know, Learned) strategy is one of teaching and learning strategies used mainly for information text (Ogle, 1986). It helps readers elicit prior knowledge about the topic of the text; set a purpose for reading; monitor their comprehension; assess their comprehension of the text; and expand ideas beyond the text. Ogle (1986) developed the KWL strategy to help students access important background information before reading nonfiction.

The KWL strategy combines several elements of approaches. The first two steps of KWL, students and the teacher engage in oral discussion. They reflect on their knowledge about a topic, brainstorm a group list of ideas about the topic, and identify categories of information. Next, the teacher helps highlight gaps and inconsistencies in students' knowledge and students create individual lists of things that they want to learn about the topic or questions that they want to answer about the topic. In the last step of the strategy, students read new materials and share what they have learned. Wilhelm (2002:122) asserts that KWL strategy is among the easiest and most practical reading strategies, and it is flexible for different usages. Carr & Ogle (in Fritz, 2002, p:1) reported that KWL strategy is a method devised to teach students to read actively by engaging previous knowledge, asking questions, and recalling important information in the text to enhance comprehension. Sampson (2002, p:23) acknowledges that this strategy facilitates engagement and interaction by keeping students motivated through activating their prior knowledge. This clarifies the importance and the essential role of KWL strategy in developing reading comprehension achievement.

Considering the importance of KWL strategy in developing reading comprehension achievement, David (1979:11) stated that KWL is a strategy that models the active thinking needed when reading the expository text. Smaikomusk (2012) conducted a study which showed that students were satisfied with the improved KWL-plus technique. Fengjuan's (2010) study indicated that KWL strategy had improved both the reading comprehension and the writing performance of the experimental group students. Sassoon's (2008) study results brought evidence that the KWL strategy helped the learners to become strategic readers. Szabo (2007) used the KWL strategy to help struggling readers improve their understanding of the topics being studied. The study results revealed that KWL strategy could make reading more accessible and fun in class room. Casey (2009), with the presentation of reading activities through the KWL strategy, found out that the learners improved their ability in grasping meaning whereas Glazer's (1999) study aimed to use the KWL strategy to develop the skills of reading comprehension and report writing of ninth grade students. The study results revealed that students have developed not only the skills of understanding and comprehension of the texts in the target books but also their report writing skills. Jared, (1993) used the improved KWL-Plus strategy to examine if it can significantly improve the sixth-grade students understanding of the transportation system. The study concluded that the

improved KWL-Plus strategy improved the students' reading comprehension of the transportation system, and it contributed to the introduction of the writing skill, particularly in the fourth column. Mandeville's (1994) study concluded that students' understanding and knowledge of the reading text have significantly grown as a result of using KWL strategy.

Based on the observation, interview, and the discussions conducted by the researchers with their colleagues of the Middle-Area Directorate of Gaza concerning the way they teach reading comprehension, it is obvious that the students' ability in comprehending reading texts are at the average level. The researchers also found that the teachers seldom vary their strategies in teaching learning process of English in the classroom. Furthermore, many teachers do not use background knowledge to activate their students' background about what they are going to learn.

Teachers also do not let their students ask questions due to the use of traditional methods, in which teachers take the major role to explain everything while the students' role is restricted to only listening to what is inculcated to them by their teacher. In this situation, students are just listeners to what the teacher explains; they don't have a chance to articulate what they **Know**, what they **Want** to know, or what they have **Learned** which in return may create negative attitudes towards learning English language in general and English language skills in particular. Therefore, Kara (2009:54) states that beliefs, attitudes and opinions towards learning have an obvious influence on students' behaviors and consequently on their performance. It is argued that those students who possess positive beliefs about language learning have a tendency to increase more positive attitudes towards language learning. Consequently, they will expend sound efforts, employ effective learning strategies, and invest time and energy in learning English. Conversely, negative beliefs may lead to class anxiety, low cognitive achievement, and negative attitudes (Victori& Lockhart, 1995:70). Thus, the issue of learners' attitude is acknowledged as one of the most important factors that impact learning a language. Therefore, the researchers assume that English teaching methods that teachers of English use at the Middle-Area Directorate of Gaza should be modified and that teachers should vary their teaching strategies to more current strategies such as KWL strategy which may later positively affect students' attitudes towards learning English.

Based upon the background above, the researchers are interested in investigating the impact of KWL strategy in developing Palestinian eleventh graders'

reading comprehension and identifying their attitudes towards learning English language. The researchers also want to find out whether there is a significant difference in reading comprehension achievement between the experimental group subjects who learned using KWL strategy and that of the control group subjects who didn't.

2. Significance of the study

The study may prove useful for the following:

- a) Teachers of English may benefit from the work and want to use the KWL strategy.
- b) English language supervisors may find the results interesting and useful and may generalize the study findings.
- c) Syllabus designers may find it useful to employ strategies such as KWL strategy when they redesign the syllabus in the future.
- d) Eleventh graders may develop their reading comprehension skills abilities through adopting KWL strategies. Moreover, the eleventh graders are expected to realize the importance of using KWL strategy in developing reading comprehension which in return will give them the ability to be capable of achieving better academic performance.
- e) The study may provide empirical evidence on the effectiveness of the KWL strategy in the Palestinian context where English is taught as a foreign language to students who suffer and dislike English.

3. Statement of the Problem

Through the researchers' experience in the field of teaching English language, they have observed that students face great difficulties in English reading comprehension skills and show an aversion to English. This difficulty might be as a result of ineffective reading comprehension teaching methods which may affect their reading comprehension skills. Thus, the researchers feel that there is a bad need to use new strategies to solve the students' problems they face in reading comprehension, which may later positively affect their attitudes towards learning English. Thus, the study problem can be stated in the following major question: **What is the impact of KWL strategy in developing Palestinian eleventh graders' reading comprehension and their attitudes towards learning English?**

3.1. Research questions

To achieve the purpose of the study, the study addresses the following minor questions emanating from the above major one:

- a) What is the impact of KWL strategy in developing eleventh graders' reading

comprehension?

- b) What is the impact of KWL strategy in developing eleventh graders' attitudes towards learning English?

3.2. Research hypotheses

- a) There are no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group subjects and that of the control group in the post reading comprehension test.
- b) There are no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group subjects and that of the control group in the post application of the attitude scale towards learning English.

4. Methodology

4.1. Research Design

The researchers adopted the experimental approach. Two groups were assigned as the participants of the study, the experimental group and the control group. The experimental group was taught reading comprehension via KWL strategy, while the control group was taught via the traditional method. The experiment lasted for six weeks.

4.1.1. Population of the Study

The study population consisted of (968) male eleventh graders enrolled at the governmental schools in the Middle-Area Directorate of Gaza in the second semester of the school year (2013-2014).

4.1.2. Sample of the Study

The study sample consisted of (64) students who were equally divided into two groups, experimental and control. The experimental group consisted of (32) students whereas the control one included (32) students. The sample of the study was chosen from Al-Manfalouti Secondary School for boys in Deir el Balah and was randomly chosen from the eleventh-grade classes who aged nearly 15. Both groups were equivalent in their general achievement in accordance with the statistical treatment of their results in the first term of the school year (2013-2014). The researchers also conducted a pre-test to check the equivalence of achievement between the two groups.

4.1.3. The Variables of the Study

The study included the following variables

- a) The independent variable represented in the KWL strategy.
- b) The dependent variable represented in the eleventh graders' English reading comprehension achievement, and attitudes towards learning English.

5. Instrumentation

The researchers used three different instruments to achieve the study aims:

- a) A checklist for teachers to determine the five most important reading comprehension skills.
- b) A pre and post reading comprehension test.
- c) A pre and post attitude scale towards learning English language.

5.1. The reading comprehension skills checklist

The reading comprehension skills checklist was prepared by the researchers based on the general aims of the reading comprehension skills for the eleventh graders which were prepared by the English Language Curriculum (1999) in the Ministry of Education.

5.1.1. The aim of the checklist

The checklist aimed at determining the five most important reading comprehension skills for the eleventh graders to be used in the pre and post reading comprehension achievement tests in order to assess the improvement in these targeted skills as a result of the intervention.

5.1.2. The sources of constructing the checklist

The researchers used the aims of the reading comprehension skills for eleventh graders as a reading comprehension skills checklist and was given to teachers and supervisors to choose the five most important reading comprehension skills for the eleventh graders.

5.1.3. Description of the checklist

A checklist of 12 items was used in this study in order to rate the degree of importance of the five most important reading comprehension skills for the eleventh graders. Respondents were asked to rate each item of the reading comprehension skills checklist as follows: (3) = very important, (2) = important, and (1) = slightly important.

5.1.4. Validity of the checklist

To assess the checklist validity, the checklist was given to a jury of specialists to judge the validity of these skills. The researchers took their valuable notes into consideration and made all the necessary modifications accordingly.

5.1.5. Application of the checklist

The checklist was given to two English language supervisors and eighteen expert teachers to rate the degree of importance of the five most important reading comprehension skills for the eleventh graders. After that, relative weight was calculated and the five most important skills which got more than ninety percent were chosen. The results showed that there were five important skills out of the twelve reading comprehension skills.

Table (1)
The five most important reading comprehension skills

No.	Skill	Relative weight %
1.	Make predictions about content.	93.33
2.	Make inferences.	92.00
3.	Skim texts for general meaning.	94.67
4.	Scan texts for specific information.	93.88
5.	Recognize reference words.	92.01

5.2. Reading comprehension test

The reading comprehension test was prepared by the researchers to measure the students' achievement in the following five reading comprehension skills: 1) prediction, 2) scanning, 3) skimming, 4) inference, and 5) recognize reference words. It was used as a pretest, applied before the experiment and as a post-test, applied after the experiment.

5.2.1. The aim of the reading comprehension test

The test was one of the study instruments which aimed at measuring the impact of using KWL strategy in developing reading comprehension skills for the 11th graders. The objectives of the test were to examine the students' ability to:

- a) Make predictions about content.
- b) Skim texts for general meaning
- c) Scan texts for specific information
- d) Make inferences.
- e) Recognize reference words.

5.2.2. The sources of constructing the reading comprehension test

The researchers referred to many resources in designing the test. In addition to their own experience, the researchers depended on English for Palestine 11 textbook to construct the reading comprehension test. Furthermore, the researchers consulted English supervisors and experienced teachers.

5.2.3. Items of the reading comprehension test

One reading comprehension passage was used in the pre-test. The passage was selected from the students' book, which is taught in the Palestinian schools. The passage was about trade. It was selected from the reading text in unit 4, lesson 7 & 8, pages 42-43. The items of the test were distributed into five questions as follows:

- a) A multiple choice exercise in which students are going to expect what the text is about and choose the correct answer form a-d. It consists of three items; one mark is given for each correct answer. **(Prediction)**.
- b) A multiple choice exercise, in which students are going to read the passage flipping through the pages fairly fast and choose the correct answer form a-d. It consists of five items; one mark is given for each correct answer. **(Skimming)**.
- c) A multiple choice exercise, in which students are going to read the passage seeking specific information in order to choose the correct answer form a-d. It consists of five items; one mark is given for each correct answer. **(Scanning)**.
- d) A multiple choice exercise, in which students are going to use clues from the text combined with readers' previous knowledge to find out about something that is not directly stated and choose the correct answer form a-d. It consists of three items; one mark is given for each correct answer. **(Inference)**.
- e) A multiple choice exercise in which students are going to read the passage in order to determine certain items of language which have the property of reference and choose the correct answer form a-d. It consists of five items; one mark is given for each correct answer. **(Recognize reference words)**.

5.2.4. The pilot study

A pilot study was required to find out whether the test is well constructed or not. The results of the pilot study can be a good indicator for making any necessary modifications in the final version of the test. So, the reading comprehension test was applied on a random sample of (30) eleventh graders from Al Manfalouti Secondary School for Boys, who have the same characteristics of the study sample. The results were recorded and statistically analyzed to assess the validity and reliability of the test. The clarity of the questions was checked. The misleading items were also modified. The researchers found that students are suffering from low achievement in reading comprehension skills.

5.2.5. Time estimation

The trial application helped in estimating the time needed for answering the questions according to the following equation: Time of the first student + time of the last student $\div$ 2. Therefore the time of test was (50) minutes

5.2.6. The validity of the reading comprehension test

Al Agha (1996: 118) states that a valid test is the test that measures what it is designed to measure. The study used the referee validity and the internal consistency validity.

5.2.7. The referee validity

The test was introduced to a jury of specialists in English language methodology in Gaza universities, experienced supervisors and teachers in governmental schools. The items of the test were modified according to their recommendations.

5.2.8. The internal consistency validity

Al Agha (1996:121) asserts that the internal consistency indicates the correlation of the score of every item with the total average of the test. It also indicates the correlation of the average of each item with the total average of the dimension to which it belongs. Table (2) below shows the correlation coefficient calculated by using Pearson Formula.

Table (2)
Correlation coefficient of every item of the reading comprehension skills test

Skill	No.	Pearson Correlation	Skill	No.	Pearson Correlation	Skill	No.	Pearson Correlation
1. Prediction	1	**0.771	3. Scanning	1	**0.528	5. Recognize reference words	1	*0.433
	2	**0.765		2	**0.627		2	**0.737
	3	**0.863		3	**0.647		3	**0.679
2. Skimming	1	**0.834		4	**0.627		4	**0.697
	2	**0.581		5	**0.544		5	**0.681
	3	**0.581	4. Inference	1	**0.769			
	4	*0.411		2	**0.717			
	5	**0.841		3	**0.756			

*r table value at df. (28) and sig. level (0.05) = 0.361

**r table value at df. (28) and sig. level (0.01) = 0.463

Table (2) shows that correlations of the test items were significant at (0.05) and (0.01), which indicates that there was a consistency between the items which means that the test was highly valid for the study.

5.2.9. Reliability of the reading comprehension test

To determine the reliability of the test, the researchers has applied the Kuder Richardson formula (KR20) and the Spilt-half technique to find out the

extent of test reliability. Table (3) shows (KR20) and Split half coefficients of the reading comprehension test.

Table (3)
(KR20) and Split-half coefficients of the reading comprehension skills test

Skill	No. of items	KR20	Split half coefficients of the test domains
Prediction	3	0.719	0.810
Skimming	5	0.634	0.657
Scanning	5	0.500	0.518
Inference	3	0.560	0.571
Recognize reference words	5	0.619	0.414
Total	21	0.870	0.869

The results showed that the Spilt-half coefficient is (0.869) and KR20 is (0.870) and this indicates that the reliability of the test was high and strong.

5.2.10. Scoring of the test

The test was scored by a simple traditional way. Each correct answer was given one point. The maximum score was (21) and the minimum was (zero). So, the total points for the whole test were (21).

5.2.11. Difficulty coefficient

The difficulty coefficient of each item was calculated on a pilot study counting (30) according to the following formula: Difficulty coefficient = Number of students who gave wrong answers ÷ the total number of students × 100. Table (4) below shows the difficulty coefficient for every item of the reading comprehension skills test.

Table (4)
Difficulty coefficient for every item of the reading comprehension skills test

No.	Difficulty coefficient	No.	Difficulty coefficient
1	0.69	12	0.69
2	0.75	13	0.38
3	0.63	14	0.63
4	0.69	15	0.75
5	0.75	16	0.56
6	0.69	17	0.69
7	0.56	18	0.75
8	0.63	19	0.63
9	0.63	20	0.69
10	0.69	21	0.75
11	0.56		
Total difficulty coefficient		0.65	

Table (4) shows that the difficulty coefficient of the test items varied between (0.38 – 0.75) with total average (0.65), which means that every item is in the normal limit of difficulty according to the view point of assessment and evaluation of specialists. Thus, all the items were accepted and the test is suitable to be used as a tool of the study.

5.2.12. Discrimination coefficient

Discrimination coefficient means that the test is able to differentiate between the high achievers and the low achievers. The discrimination coefficient was calculated according to the following formula: $\text{No. of the student who has the correct answer from high achievers} \div \text{No. of high achievers students} - \text{No. of the student who has the correct answer from low achievers} \div \text{No. of low achievers students} \times 100$. Table (5) shows the discrimination coefficient for every item of the test:

Table (5)
Discrimination coefficient for every item of the reading comprehension skills test

No.	Discrimination coefficient	No.	Discrimination coefficient
1	0.63	12	0.63
2	0.50	13	0.50
3	0.75	14	0.75
4	0.63	15	0.50
5	0.50	16	0.63
6	0.63	17	0.38
7	0.38	18	0.50
8	0.75	19	0.75
9	0.50	20	0.63
10	0.63	21	0.50
11	0.63		
Total Discrimination coefficient		0.58	

Table (5) shows that the discrimination coefficient wobbles are between (0.38 – 0.75) with a total average of (0.58), which means that every item is in the normal limit of discrimination according to the view point of assessment and evaluation specialists.

5.3. The attitude scale towards learning English

The researchers adopted Abidin et. al.'s (2012) attitude scale to investigate the impact of KWL strategy in developing Palestinian eleventh graders' attitudes towards learning English. The attitude scale is considered an instrument in this

study to get data and information. This scale was used before and after the experiment for both control and the experimental groups.

5.3.1. The aim of the attitude scale

The attitude scale aimed at measuring the students' attitudes towards English language before and after the experiment for both control and experimental groups.

5.3.2. Steps of constructing the attitude scale

The researchers adopted the attitude scale depending on:

- a. Reviewing related literature as Abidin et. al.'s (2012) study who divide the attitude scale into three domains; behavioral, cognitive, and emotional.
- b. The previous related study helped in forming the domains and the statements of the attitude scale.
- c. Consulting specialists about attitudes in general.
- d. The scale includes (45) positive and negative items distributed in three domains. Each domain has (15) items.
- e. The scale was presented to the referee committee in order to measure:
 - Suitability of the number of the items for eleventh graders.
 - Clarity of the meaning of the statements to the respondents .
 - Language used in the scale.
 - Extent to which each item of the scale represents the intended domain.
6. The scale was refereed by university professors, specialists, and experts, as well as some colleagues.

5.3.3. Description of the attitude scale

The scale consists of three domains (1) Behavioral aspect of language attitude, (2) Cognitive aspect of language attitude, and (3) Emotional aspect of language attitude. The scale items were constructed to measure students' attitudes towards English language. The researcher took into consideration that the scale items were specific and included one idea in order to express specific attitude, they are related to scale domains and attitude subject, and were simple, easy and suitable for the students' level. The five-point Likert scale (1932) was used to measure students' responses. The levels of the scale responses varied between strongly disagree, disagree, Neutral, agree and strongly agree. The students were asked to put (✓) sign under their responses.

Scores from 5 to 1 were assigned for positive responses and from 1 to 5 for the negative ones.

5.3.4. The pilot study

The attitude scale was applied on a random pilot sample of (30) eleventh

graders from Al Manfalouti Secondary School for Boys in Deir El Ballah. It was applied in order to emphasize the clarity of the scale items and instructions. It was also applied to identify the scale validity and reliability.

5.3.5. *The attitude scale validity*

After applying the scale on a pilot sample of (34) students, the results were recorded and statistically analyzed. The researcher used the referee validity and the internal consistency validity.

5.3.6. *The referee validity*

The scale was introduced to a jury of specialists in English language, methodology and psychology university professors in Gaza universities, Ministry of Education and experienced supervisors. The items of the attitude scale were modified according to their recommendations.

5.3.7. *The internal consistency validity*

Table (6) below shows the correlation coefficient of every item of the attitude scale towards learning English language.

Table (6)
Correlation coefficient of every item of the attitude scale

Domain	No.	Pearson Correlation	Domain	Pearson Correlation	Domain	Pearson Correlation
Behavioral aspect of language attitude	1	**0.668	Cognitive aspect of language attitude	**0.530	Emotional aspect of language attitude	**0.815
	2	**0.484		*0.384		**0.612
	3	**0.798		**0.596		**0.490
	4	**0.654		**0.522		**0.607
	5	*0.364		**0.679		*0.454
	6	**0.709		**0.748		**0.757
	7	**0.521		**0.630		**0.747
	8	**0.723		**0.599		**0.793
	9	**0.620		**0.541		**0.643
	10	**0.531		**0.674		**0.715
	11	**0.671		**0.611		**0.632
	12	**0.675		**0.686		**0.813
	13	**0.546		**0.780		**0.612
	14	**0.693		**0.662		**0.561
	15	**0.641		*0.411		**0.723

*r table value at df. (28) and sig. level (0.05) = 0.361

**r table value at df. (28) and sig. level (0.01) = 0.463

The results of table (6) show that the value of these items was suitable and highly consistent and valid for conducting this study. The researcher also made sure of the correlation between items with the total score of the scale as shown in table (7) below.

Table (7)**Pearson correlation coefficient for every domain of the attitudes scale**

Domain	Pearson Correlation
Behavioral Aspect Of Language Attitude	**0.942
Cognitive Aspect Of Language Attitude	**0.907
Emotional Aspect Of Language Attitude	**0.940

*r table value at df. (28) and sig. level (0.05) = 0.361

**r table value at df. (28) and sig. level (0.01) = 0.463

Table (7) shows that all the domains of the scale achieved statistical significant correlations with the total score of the scale which indicates a high internal consistency of the scale which reinforces its validity.

5.3.8. Construct validity

The construct validity of the scale was calculated by measuring the correlation between the score of each domain with the total score of the scale.

5.3.9. The attitude scale reliability

The researchers used the pilot study to calculate the reliability of the attitude scale which was measured by Cronbach-Alpha and split-half methods. The researcher calculated the correlation between the first, the second, the third and the whole of the attitude scale. Then, the researcher used Guttman Formula to modify the length of the scale to find out the reliability coefficient as shown in table (8).

(Table 8)**Correlation coefficient between the two halves of each domain before modification and the reliability after modification**

Domain	No. of items	Split-half methods	Cronbach-alpha
Behavioral Aspect Of Language Attitude	15	0.844	0.813
Cognitive Aspect Of Language Attitude	15	0.878	0.849
Emotional Aspect Of Language Attitude	15	0.844	0.870
Total	45	0.938	0.939

6. Results: Data Analysis

To answer the first question, the researcher tested the following null hypothesis: There are no statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the mean scores of the experimental group and that of the control group in the post reading comprehension test. To examine the first hypothesis, means and standard deviation of both groups' results on the post reading comprehension test were computed. T-test independent sample was used to measure the significant differences. Table (9) below presents the result.

Table (9)

T-test independent sample results of differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and that of the control group in the post reading comprehension test

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. value	Sig. level
Experimental	32	18.094	1.957	10.874	0.000	sig. at 0.01
Control	32	10.844	3.224			

"t" table value at df. (62) at (0.05) sig. level equal 2.00

"t" table value at df. (62) at (0.01) sig. level equal 2.66

Table (9) shows that the T. computed value (10.874) is larger than T. table (2.00) in the test, which means that there are statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.01$) between the total mean scores of the experimental group and that of the control group in the post reading comprehension test in favor of the experimental group. The mean scores of the experimental group in the post-test were (18.094), whereas the mean scores of the control group were (10.844). This result indicates that using KWL strategy is more useful than the traditional method in developing the students' reading comprehension achievement skills.

To show the size effect of KWL strategy on the experimental group achievement in the reading comprehension skills test, the study applied the Effect Size technique. The researcher computed " η^2 " using the following formula:

$$\eta^2 = \frac{t^2}{t^2 + df}$$

And "Z" value using the following

$$d = \frac{\sqrt{2 \eta^2}}{\sqrt{1 - \eta^2}} \quad \text{formula:}$$

Table (10)

The table references to determine the effect size level (η^2) and (Z)

Test	Effect Size		
	Small	Medium	Large
η^2	0.01	0.06	0.14
d	0.2	0.5	0.8

The results of " η^2 " and "d" values shown in table (10) indicate the large impact of using KWL strategy in the post test. Table (11) shows the effect size of KWL strategy in the post reading comprehension skills test.

Table (11)

The effect size of KWL strategy on the experimental group in the post reading comprehension skills test

Test	t value	η^2	d	Effect Size
Post-test (total)	10.874	0.656	2.762	Large

Table (11) shows that the effect size of KWL strategy is large on students' reading comprehension skills, which means that the effect of KWL strategy is significant. This large impact is due to the activities and techniques which were used to develop students' reading comprehension skills using the KWL strategy.

To answer the second question, the researcher tested the following null hypothesis: There are no statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the mean scores of the experimental group and that of the control group in the post application of the attitude scale towards learning English. To investigate the second hypothesis, mean and standard deviation of the experimental and that of the control groups' results were computed. T-test independent sample was used to measure the significant differences.

Table (12)

T-test results of the differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and that of the control group in the post application of the attitude scale towards English

Domain	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. value	Sig. level
SUM	Experimental	32	187.531	10.788	5.889	0.000	sig. at 0.01
	Control	32	153.719	30.638			

"t" table value at df. (62) at (0.05) sig. level equal 2.00

"t" table value at df. (62) at (0.01) sig. level equal 2.66

Table (12) shows that T. computed value (5.889) is larger than T. table (2.00) in the test, which means that there are statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.01$) between the mean scores of the experimental group and that of the control group in the post application of the attitude scale towards English in favor of the experimental group. The mean scores of the experimental group in the post application reached (187.531), whereas the mean scores of the control group reached (153.719). This result indicates that using KWL strategy is more beneficial than the traditional method in enhancing the students' attitudes towards English language.

Table (13)

The effect size of KWL strategy on the experimental group in the post application of the attitude scale towards English

Domain	t value	η^2	z	Effect size
Behavioral Aspect Of Language Attitude	6.065	0.372	1.540	Large
Cognitive Aspect Of Language Attitude	5.806	0.352	1.475	Large
Emotional Aspect Of Language Attitude	4.646	0.258	1.180	Large
total	5.889	0.359	1.496	large

Table (13) shows that the effect size of KWL strategy is large on students' attitudes towards English, which means that the effect of KWL strategy is significant. This large effect is due to the activities, which are used in the KWL strategy which in return affected students' attitudes towards English language.

7. Findings

Based on the findings of this study, the following results were observed:

- a) There are statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the mean scores of the experimental group subjects and that of the control group subjects in the post reading comprehension test in favor of the experimental group.
- b) There are statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the mean scores of the experimental group and that of the control group in the post application of the attitude scale towards English in favor of the experimental group.

8. Discussion

The research questions in the present study wereset out to determine whether the use of the KWL strategy will develop the students' reading comprehension achievement and if it will positively change their attitudes towards learning English language.

Based on the findings of this study, the results show that using the KWL strategy has a significant effect on the students' levels of reading comprehension skillsand students' attitudes towards learning English in favor of the experimental group, who were taught using the KWL strategy compared with the results of their counterparts of the control group, who were taught using the traditional method. This means that KWL strategy is considered effective in improving students' reading comprehension skills since it leads to activate their prior knowledge and leads to enhance the students' ability to interpret the reading texts and adapt it to cope with their cognitive background. Furthermore, the KWL strategy is considered effective in enhancing the students' attitudes

towards learning English language since it indicates a positive change in their attitudes towards learning English.

The study revealed that the experimental group subjects showed an increase in their performance in the five reading comprehension skills namely (prediction, skimming, scanning, inference, and recognize reference words), in all achievement posttests. Furthermore, the experimental group subjects showed an obvious positive change towards learning English language in the post application of the attitude scale after implementing the KWL strategy, which indicates that using the KWL strategy was functional in enhancing the students' attitudes towards English language.

Students' results of the experimental group in the pre reading comprehension test pointed out that 43.7% of the students succeeded in the test, while 56.3% failed. The highest score in the test was 14 out of 21 and the lowest was 4. The results showed that 25% of the students succeeded in the first skill, which is prediction while 75% failed. The results also showed that 28.2% of the students succeeded in the second skill, which is skimming while 71.8% failed. Results of the pre reading comprehension test also revealed that 93.7% succeeded in the third skill, which is scanning while 6.3% failed. Regarding the fourth skill, which is inference, 62.5% of the students succeeded while 37.5% failed. The results also indicated that 43.7% of the students succeeded in the fifth skill, which is, recognizing reference words while 56.3% failed.

These results emphasize the importance of the current study and confirm that Palestinian students face great difficulties in English reading comprehension skills. This difficulty might be as a result of ineffective reading comprehension teaching methods. The above-mentioned results also indicate that teachers need to employ classroom instructional strategies that facilitate students' construction of their own meanings. Thus, the researcher implemented the current study using the KWL strategy to investigate its effectiveness in developing the students' reading comprehension skills.

Consequently, and after using the KWL strategy in teaching the student's reading comprehension, the results of the experimental group subjects in the post reading comprehension test pointed out that 100% of the students succeeded in the test, while no one failed. The highest score in the test was 21 out of 21, and the lowest was 14. The results showed that 84.3% of the students succeeded in the first skill, which is prediction whereas 15.7% failed. Results also revealed that 100% of the students succeeded in the second skill, which is skimming while no one failed. Results of the post reading comprehension test

also indicated that **96.8%** of the students succeeded in the third skill, which is scanning while 3.1% failed. Regarding the fourth skill, which is inference, 100% of the students succeeded while no one failed. The results also pointed out that 96.8% of the students succeeded in the fifth skill, which is, recognizing reference words while 3.1% failed.

These results can be interpreted in the light of the first step of the KWL strategy represented in the students' demonstration of their knowledge about the topic to be learnt. This step contributes in improving the students' comprehension level and in achieving meaningful learning through activating prior knowledge related to the reading text. Hence, KWL strategy calls for teaching students how to process the information; and how to think independently and effectively. This shows the significance of KWL strategy in developing the students' reading comprehension skills.

The results of this study can also be interpreted in the light of the "Top-Down Model" of comprehension, whose advocates believe in the previous knowledge in their explanation of how students understand a text. They think that the meaning is there in the students' mind and their comprehension of the text's ideas depends on the information they have got about the topic. Thus, if a great deal of information is available or previous background knowledge is activated, readers will be able to recall more information related to the text when they have read it; hence, they will reach a higher level of comprehension than any others who have less previous information about the same topic or whose previous knowledge had not been activated. This what has been done in the care of the experimental group.

The results of this study can also be interpreted in the light of the second step in the KWL strategy, which is specifying what the students want to learn, and filling in the gap between what they already know and what they want to know through a particular text. This has a great impact on developing the students' reading comprehension since through this gap-filling process the students' knowledge about that particular subject is complemented; hence, better reading comprehension is attained. In this sense, comprehension is considered as a bridging process between the new information and the prior knowledge. Accordingly, one cannot claim that students have comprehended a text if they have memorized only the information presented in the text. One can claim this when the students build up logical relations among the thoughts in the text. That is why the students' self-made questions about the subject, along with their own evaluation of what they want to learn, is considered a significant step

towards improving the reading comprehension skills.

The results of this study can also be interpreted in the light of the third step of the KWL strategy, which is interested in organizing and summarizing knowledge, reading beyond the lines, finding new methods of thought presentation and interpretation, and reorganization of learning situations into perceptive types, or generalizations or new relationships. The KWL strategy's interest in such elements support the students' ability to discover deeper, more meaningful thoughts; thoughts of more semantic features, more capable of being applied in the new life situations and more ways for problem-solving.

Regarding the students' attitudes towards learning English, results of the experimental group showed an obvious positive change towards English compared with their counterparts of the control group, who showed negative attitudes towards English. The mean scores of the experimental group were (187.531) whereas the mean scores of the control group were (153.719), which indicates that using the KWL strategy is more effective than the traditional method in enhancing the students' attitudes towards learning English language. These results show that most students were feeling well towards English language and this may be due to the use of KWL strategy, which made students more active in the learning process since it focuses on the student-centered classroom role in which the learning process is based on their interests and needs. In the KWL strategy, the teacher does not direct learners but provides support for them to be able to learn on their own. While in the traditional method, there is a teacher-centered classroom which neglects the students' role, which as a result makes students show an aversion to English language.

9. Conclusion

- a) Based on the findings derived from the results of this study, the following conclusions were reached:
- b) Students were clearly engaged in learning with the KWL strategy than the traditional way as the KWL strategy was more interesting and commanded their attention longer.
- c) The KWL strategy increased the students' interaction in class as it was a new strategy for them and very easy to use.
- d) The KWL strategy improved the teacher's instruction.
- e) The KWL strategy increased the variety of lessons when preparing lessons for instruction, which of course reduced the students' boredom.
- f) The KWL strategy also increased the students' motivation and involvement in the classroom.

- g) The KWL strategy was suitable for all good and poor students.
- h) The KWL strategy was easy to use in presenting the lessons.
- i) The KWL strategy considers the individual differences among learners.

10. Recommendations

In the light of the study results, the study provides recommendations for curriculum designers and decision makers, school administrators and supervisors, teachers of English, students, as well as recommendations for further research.

10.1. Recommendations for curriculum designers and decision makers

The study suggested the following recommendations to the curriculum designers and decisions makers:

- a) Considering strategies such as KWL strategy to activate students' prior knowledge while building the curriculum activities included in the curriculum textbooks.
- b) Decreasing the students' number inside the classroom to enable teachers to care for individual differences among students and implement modern strategies of teaching such as KWL strategy.
- c) Developing and enriching the teacher's guide with activities and modern strategies such as KWL strategy which activate and increase prior knowledge.

10.2. Recommendations to school administrators and supervisors

The study recommend the following:

- a) Holding training courses to motivate the use of innovative strategies like KWL strategy and to develop teachers' abilities in teaching English. Providing English teachers with modern strategies such as the KWL strategy providing them with lesson plans.
- b) Encouraging teachers to exchange visits and hold periodical meetings to discuss new strategies of teaching such as KWL strategy.

10.3. Recommendations to teachers of English

The study recommended the following:

- a) Providing support for the learners to be able to learn on their own through using new strategies such as the KWL strategy.
- b) Implementing modern strategies that activate students' prior knowledge such as KWL strategy.
- c) Holding training sessions on how to use the KWL strategy in teaching.

- d) Adopting KWL strategy to improve students' reading comprehension skills.

10.4. Recommendations to the students

The study recommended the following:

- a) Using the KWL strategy to activate their prior knowledge.
- b) Learning how to build positive attitudes towards learning English because they motivate students and help them expend the necessary effort to learn English.
- c) Learning to employ effective learning strategies such as KWL strategy to learn English.

10.5. Recommendations for further studies

In the light of the study findings, the study recommends the following:

- a) Conducting studies to investigate the effectiveness of using KWL strategy on spoof text to increase students' reading comprehension.
- b) Conducting studies to investigate the impact of KWL strategy on other variables such as creative thinking, critical thinking, and self-conception.
- c) Conducting studies to investigate the effectiveness of using KWL strategy on gender differences.
- d) Conducting studies to investigate the impact of using KWL strategy by good and poor English language learners.

11. Pedagogical implications

In the light of the study results, the following suggestions are put forth:

- a) Using the KWL strategy in the teaching learning process encourages the students to be active and motivated when doing an activity.
- b) Teachers should be aware of the importance of the KWL strategy in developing students' reading comprehension skills.
- c) Using KWL strategy develops students' reading comprehension skills.
- d) Using KWL strategy enables students to enhance their attitudes towards learning in general and towards learning English language in particular.
- e) The KWL strategy helps to reduce the gap between teachers and learners when interacting together.
- f) The KWL strategy is suitable for less able learners and also for all ages.
- g) The KWL strategy instructions provide students with immediate feedback and different types of reinforcement.
- h) Using KWL strategy activates students' prior knowledge and this operates students' thinking and restores their experience about the topic.

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