

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter presents the review of related literature. It discusses the definition of reading comprehension, the importance of reading, teaching reading, problems in teaching and learning reading, KWL Strategy, and the use of KWL strategy in teaching reading.

A. The Definition of Reading Comprehension

Snow stated that Reading comprehension is the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. The words extracting and constructing are to emphasize both the importance and the insufficiency of the text as a determinant of reading comprehension. Comprehension entails three elements; *the reader* who is doing the comprehending, *the text* that is to be comprehended, *the activity* in which comprehension is a part.¹

According to Mc Namara, Reading is an extraordinary achievement when one considers the number of levels and components that must be mastered. The words contain graphemes, phonemes, and morphemes. Sentences have syntactic composition, propositions, and stylistic features. Deep comprehension of the sentences requires the construction of referents of nouns, a discourse focus, presuppositions, and plausible inferences. The reader

¹ Catherine Snow, *Reading for Understanding: Toward An R&D Program In Reading Comprehension*, (Pittsburgh: RAND, 2002), 11.

needs to distinguish given versus new information in the text and implicitly acknowledge what is shared among most readers in a community.²

Based on Frank Smith, Reading is frequently overemphasized. The eyes don't see at all, in a strictly literal sense. The eyes *look*; they are devices for collecting information for the brain, largely under the direction of the brain, and it is the brain that determines what we see and how we see it. Our perceptual decisions are based only partly on information from the eyes, greatly augmented by knowledge we already possess.³

B. The Importance of Reading

Reading as a field of teaching that is considered as one of the important areas of teaching. It is certainly not easy to present the English reading to Indonesian students whose language system is different. Reading in their own language is much easier than that of the language learned because they have mastered the vocabulary and the structure of their own. To understand a text student must have a good command of the vocabulary of the target language. The reader uses knowledge, skills and strategies to determine what the text meaning is.

Moreover, the reading ability plays a central role in the teaching and learning success at all educational stages. Having any difficulty in this skill will result in variety of consequences on all subjects of study. Weakness in the reading ability constitutes one of the biggest problems that encounter students

² Mc Namara, *Reading Comprehension Strategies: Theories, Interventions, And Technologies*, (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 2007), 3.

³ Frank Smith, *Understanding Reading: A Psycholinguistic Analysis of Reading and Learning to Read*, (London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 2004), 72.

at all educational levels. Thus, teaching Reading is viewed as a teaching objective at the different educational stages and the key to success in other subjects of study.

C. Teaching Reading

In the teaching of reading, the teacher cannot directly just teach reading to the students by giving texts and asks them to understand it. There are some principles which have to be considered by the teacher. As it is proposed by Harmer, there are six principles in teaching reading.⁴ They are described as follows:

1. Reading is not a passive skill.

Reading is an incredibly active occupation. To do it successfully, we have to understand what the words mean, see the pictures the words are painting, understand the arguments, and work out if we agree with them. If we do not do these things- and if students do not so these things- then we only just scratch the surface of the text and we quickly forget it.

2. Students need to be engaged with what they are reading.

As with everything else in lessons, students who are not engaged with the reading text- not actively interested in what they are doing- are less likely to benefit from it. When they are really fired up by the topic or the task, they get much more from what is in front of them.

⁴ Jeremy Harmer, *How to Teach English: An Introduction to The Practice of English Language Teaching*, (Essex: Pearson Education Limited, 1998), 70-71.

3. Students should be encouraged to respond to the content of a reading text, not just to the language.

Of course, it is important to study reading texts for the way they use language, the numbers of paragraphs they contain and how many times they use relative clauses. But the meaning, the message of the text, is just as important and we must give students a chance to respond to that message in some way. It is especially important that they should be allowed to express their feelings about the topic- thus provoking personal engagement with it and the language.

4. Prediction is a major factor in reading.

Prediction is one of the strategies in reading comprehension. Before the students come into the text, they can do prediction by looking at the title of the text. The title sometimes gives clues at what the text is about. By doing this, the students will actively start the process of reading. Indeed, the teacher should give clues to make the students comprehend the text easily.

5. Match the task to the topic.

Tasks are one of ways to check the ability of the students in comprehending a text. Good tasks are those that are suitable for the topic being discussed. Tasks can be made by questions and puzzle. In this case, the teacher has to consider choosing or creating the right tasks for the students.

6. Good teachers exploit reading texts to the full.

Any reading text is full of sentences, words, ideas, description, etc. it does not make sense just to get students to read it and then drop it to move on to something else. Good teachers integrate the reading text into interesting class sequences, using the topic for discussion and further tasks, using the language for study and later activation.

D. Problems in Teaching and Learning Reading

Teaching reading is a part of the activity in teaching English that must be done by the teacher. Some teachers find problems in teaching reading comprehension. The first problem is that the teacher cannot know exactly the students' prior knowledge.⁵ Although the teacher has taught some materials which are related to the topic that will be discussed, she or he cannot make sure that all the students can understand the material well. It becomes a serious problem in teaching reading comprehension as prior knowledge is very important to the students' reading comprehension.

Teachers find the fact that deciding suitable tasks of reading are complicated. It is reasonable enough as tasks will influence the students in comprehending a text. When the teacher can give good and suitable tasks of reading, the students will engage in reading and comprehension can be easily achieved. Indeed, appropriate tasks and texts help students in understanding texts.

⁵ National Research Council, *Engaging Schools: Fostering High School Students' Motivation to Learn*, (Washington DC: The National Academies Press, 2004), 62.

Another problem that might be faced by the teacher is that teachers feel that finding the best method and strategies to teach the students is quite difficult. It is because they face students with different characteristics and levels of intelligence. In fact, the method and strategies chosen by the teacher may affect the students in achieving their reading comprehension. That is why suitable methods and strategies are needed to conduct by teachers in teaching reading comprehension.

From the description above, it is clear that the condition of not knowing exactly the students' prior knowledge, the difficulty in designing suitable tasks, and the difficulty in choosing the appropriate technique and strategies are problems which appear in teaching reading comprehension. In relation to the last problem, the difficulty in choosing appropriate methods and strategies, the researcher feels necessary to apply certain technique in the teaching of reading comprehension.

E. KWL Strategy

According to Ogle, KWL strategy stands for what I Know, determining what I Want to learn, and recalling what I did Learn as a result of reading.⁶

1. Step K- What I know.

This opening step has two levels of accessing prior knowledge.

The first is straightforward brainstorming of what the group knows about the topic for reading. The second part of the brainstorming (or eliciting

⁶ Ogle, "K-W-L: A Teaching Model That Develops Active Reading of Expository Text", *The Reading Teacher*, 39(1986), 565-567.

what is already known) that will be useful to students in reading involves them in thinking of the more general categories of information likely to be encountered when they read.

2. Step W- What do I want to learn?

As students take time to think about what they already know about the topic and the general categories of information that should be anticipated, questions emerge. Before students begin to read, each writes down on his/her own worksheet the specific questions that she/he is most interested in having answered a result of the discussion.

3. Step L- What I learned

After completing the article, direct the students to write down what they learned from reading. Have them check their questions to determine if the article dealt with their concerns? If not, suggest further reading to fulfil their desires to know. Each reader should have the opportunity of having his/her questions answered or at least addressed. This is what reading is really about.

F. The Use of KWL Strategy in Teaching Reading

Reading is an active process. It involves interaction between the reader and the text. To encourage students to develop effective reading skills, there are various teaching and learning strategies teachers can use in class.

KWL Strategy is one of those teaching and learning strategies used mainly for information texts. Its aims are more diverse, it helps readers:

1. elicit prior knowledge of the topic of the text;
2. set a purpose for reading;
3. monitor their comprehension;
4. assess their comprehension of the text; and
5. expand ideas beyond the text.

Using a KWL chart in different phases of teaching, the teacher can monitor your students' reading process:

1. Before reading, ask students to complete the "I know" column.
2. After students have completed the "I know" column, ask students to complete the "What I want to know" column.
3. After reading, ask students to complete the "What I have learnt" column.

Table 2.1
A KWL chart

I know	What I want to know	What I have learnt
Tell me everything you know about ... (pre-reading activity, help elicit prior knowledge)	Tell me what you want to know about... (pre-reading activity, set a purpose for reading)	Tell me what you have learnt (post reading activity, monitor students' comprehension, assess their comprehension and expand their ideas)