Using a Gamification Literature Circles Strategy in Teaching English for Developing Azhari Primary Stage Pupils' Reading Comprehension Skills and Vocabulary Enrichment

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الملخص

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى قياس أثر استخدام استراتيجية تلعيب الدوائر الأدبية في تنمية بعض مهارات الفهم القرائي وإثراء المفردات لدى تلاميذ الصف السادس الابتدائي ولقد استخدمت الباحثة المنهج الشبه تجريبي في هذه الدراسة، حيث تكونت عينة الدراسة من ٥٤ تلميذ من تلاميذ الصف السادس الابتدائي بمعهد منفلوط الابتدائي الشرقي النموذجي، تم تقسيمهم الى مجموعة تجريبية (٢٧) تلميذ تم تدريسهم الفهم القرائي والمفردات باستخدام استراتيجية تلعيب الدوائر الأدبية ، ومجموعة ضابطة (٢٧) تلميذ تم تدريسهم الفهم القرائي والمفردات باستخدام الطريقة التقليدية، تم استخدام اختباري الفهم القرائي والمفردات القبلي البعدي كأداتي للبحث، أظهرت النتائج فاعلية استخدام استراتيجية تلعيب الدوائر الأدبية في تنمية بعض مهارات الفهم القرائي وإثراء المفردات لدى تلاميذ الصف السادس الابتدائي ، لصالح المجموعة التجريبية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التلعيب ، الدوائر الأدبية، الفهم القرائي ، إثراء المفردات

Abstract

The aim of the present study was to investigate the effectiveness of using a Gamification Literature Circles strategy in developing some reading comprehension skills and vocabulary enrichment for primary-six pupils. The research adopted the quasi-experimental approach. The study participants were 54 pupils. The participants of the research were the sixth primary pupils of Manfalout Model Azhari Primary Institute. They were distributed into two groups: the experimental group (27 pupils) taught reading comprehension and vocabulary by a Gamification Literature Circles strategy, and the control group (27 pupils) taught reading comprehension and vocabulary by using the regular method. The instruments of the current research were two pre-post reading comprehension and vocabulary tests. The results demonstrated that there was a statistically significant difference at 0.05 level between the mean scores of the two groups in the post implementation in the results of the reading comprehension test and the vocabulary test in favor of the treatment group. Results also revealed that the strategy has a significant effect on developing some reading comprehension skills and vocabulary enrichment of primary six school pupils. Based on the obtained results, many recommendations, and suggestions were made.

Keywords: Gamification – Literature Circles – reading comprehension - vocabulary enrichment

Introduction

English is used extensively throughout the world as a second and as a foreign language as well. Therefore it is crucial to ensure that it is taught accurately and efficiently. Essentially, learning a language involves the mastery of four major skills, namely, listening, speaking, reading and writing. Despite the fact that it is strongly recommended to help learners acquire these skills in unison, yet for convenience of research as well as for the feasibility of teaching and learning, specialists tend to deal with each of them separately.

Savage (1994) indicated that "Learning to read and write has long been at the heart of education. In any literate society, the issue of how best to teach reading is a topic of great concern, and instruction in this area is a major part of the educational enterprise" (Savage1994: 3). Irujo (2007) also indicated that reading comprehension instruction for English language learners (ELLS) needs to be continually modified to address their needs.

Unlike adults, young learners do not have strong instrumental motivation towards English learning as they are not mature enough to understand the importance of English for their future life. This leads to poor attitudes and weak motivation towards English in general and towards traditional reading activities in particular (Martine, 2000; Komiyama, 2009). In EFL context, reading is a major form of learners' exposure to the target language but it is the least attractive skill for young learners. Unlike the other three skills (i.e. speaking, listening and writing) reading depends on learners' reception of written symbols and transforming these symbols into meaningful words. Such precise process is not attractive for young learners because they are active and full of energy and they like to move all the time   (British Council, 2011).

EFL learners' language problems could be overcome easily only if three students become more motivated to read (Komiyama, 2009). In other words, young students cannot be motivated to read in English because it is important for their future life, but they will be motivated much more when they find internal motivation factors to do so. In fact, EFL students will read more when they read for fun; reading in such situations becomes an interesting, routine-free, and optional activity. Children do not like anything obligatory even if that thing is good or important for them.

Consequently, a good teacher is one who can assist learners to achieve the learning objectives and tasks without making them feel that they have to do this or that. Additionally, young learners learn more when they feel safe but this is not the case in most of the in-class reading activities in which they must complete reading in a limited time without choice. Teachers who understand the reading process nature and deal with it as a cognitive and communicative activity will provide appealing atmosphere for learners to read and to enjoy in the same time.

Comprehension is the culmination and the overwhelming indication of the success of the reading activity. Without comprehension, reading is a frustrating, pointless exercise in word calling. It is no exaggeration to say that how well pupils develop the ability to comprehend what they read has a profound effect on their entire lives.

A major goal of teaching reading comprehension is to help pupils develop the knowledge, skills, and experiences they must have if they are to become competent and enthusiastic readers.

A lot of studies have investigated the effectiveness of using different strategies to improve the teaching of reading comprehension. One of these studies was conducted by Baier (2005). It examined the use

of self-questioning reading strategy to improve reading comprehension skills, and the pupils subject to the treatment demonstrated improvement on the reading comprehension post-test. Another study was conducted by Weijnman (2013) using a programme to determine the influence of word decoding, language comprehension and phonological awareness on reading comprehension.

Vocabulary is also reported to be central to English language teaching because without sufficient vocabulary, pupils cannot understand others or express their own ideas. Irujo (2007) explained that "vocabulary is difficult for ELLs; even for quite proficient learners, the extent of their knowledge of vocabulary is only a fraction of what it is for native speakers of English", she also stated that the failure to understand even a few words of a text can have negative effects on comprehension. Teachers always resort to different techniques to help ELLs improve their reading vocabulary and enrich their pupils' knowledge of English vocabulary. Efficient reading of written material of any kind such as literary works, newspapers, journals articles and magazines can be the best source for gaining vocabulary.

The Council for Learning Disabilities (2018) indicated that vocabulary knowledge is the- single most important factor contributing to reading comprehension. The Council also indicated that The National Reading Panel of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development identified vocabulary instruction as an essential skill that pupils need to improve reading performance. Vocabulary instruction is proved to be very essential not only to improve pupils' reading comprehension and writing quality, but also to enrich pupils' knowledge of vocabulary necessary for listening and speaking. Vocabulary knowledge learners can gain either through oral or written activities, is critically important for a child's success in school.

Glende(2013) conducted a study testing the effect of vocabulary and word study to increase comprehension in content areas for struggling readers. The study emphasized the connection between reading comprehension and vocabulary. The research was carried out in a special education classroom with four pupils. Also, through surveys, interviews, and observation, it was found that strategies used for teaching vocabulary positively impacted pupils' ability to comprehend social studies content. It attempted to improve the teaching of reading, specifically at the primary stage, with a major concern for developing pupils' some reading comprehension skills. It also attempted to enrich their knowledge of vocabulary.

This research focused on teaching some sub-skills of reading comprehension . It also focused on some vocabulary sub-skills. In order to achieve the purposes of the research, the researcher used a Gamification Literature Circles strategy for developing some reading comprehension skills and for enriching primary stage pupils' knowledge of vocabulary.

It is important to mention that Duffy (1992) identifies advantages of combining literature-based instruction with more structured approaches (Duffy 1992:445). As for the research, it adopted a new technique by combining two powerful teaching / learning strategies: Literature Circles and Gamification. The researcher combined the two strategies to become one which is Gamification Literature Circles Strategy; in other words, the researcher "gamified" the Literature Circles Strategy: Gamification Literature Circles strategy is a strategy which combines Gamification elements and Literature Circles rules to develop pupils' reading comprehension skills and enrich their vocabulary. The Literature Circles Strategy was applied through Gamification. They are both collaborative and student-centered strategies which depend on

problem solving. Also they are two of the hottest trends in language arts teaching. The true intent of combing Gamification and Literature Circles is to give the opportunity for collaborative problem solving and allows pupils to practice and develop reading comprehension skills and enrich their vocabulary.

that Literature Circles introduce the opportunity for teachers to motivate and arouse their pupils' interest in learning, thus achieving better gains in schooling. And Gamification is "the use of game design elements in non-game contexts". A common implementation of Gamification is to take the scoring elements of video games, such as points, levels, and achievements, and apply them to a work or educational context.

Statement of the problem

Based on the researcher's observation it was found that the pupils had poor reading comprehension skills. They also had problems finding the main idea and specific information the author wanted to convey to the reader and the pupils could not predict what the text was about. With regard to the initial observation, it was found that the unsatisfactory results of pupils' understanding of the reading text resulted from several factors. First, most pupils did not know many of the meanings of the words in the text. Second, they could not understand the content of the text, which made it difficult for them to understand important information such as the main idea, the details mentioned and not mentioned, and references. Third, they were unable to learn how to do the reading process, as they were not trained in how to use reading strategies to understand the text effectively. Fourth, teachers still use traditional teaching methods, briefly explaining the text and asking students to answer questions about the text. Finally, students did not feel motivated to do so.

All these problems hinder the development and progress of language learning. Therefore, the current study was an attempt to investigate the effectiveness of using Gamification Literature Circles Strategy on enriching primary six pupils' vocabulary and developing some reading comprehension skills.

Definitions of terms:

Reading comprehension:

Wolley defined reading comprehension as a complex process of making meaning from the text. The goal is then to gain a general understanding of the details in the text rather than understanding every word in isolation.

Also defined reading comprehension as the ability to read a text, process it and reach a certain level of understanding. (Wolley2011)

Reading comprehension is the ability to read text, process it and understand its meaning. It relies on two, interconnected abilities: word reading which is being able to decode the symbols on the page. And language comprehension which is being able to understand the meaning of the words and sentences.

Vocabulary Enrichment:

Vocabulary enrichment is a process of acquiring new words to use in daily life, and more specifically, the basis for learning any language. Vocabulary enrichment focuses on helping pupils learn the meaning of new words and concepts in various contexts and across all academic content areas. (Council for Learning Disabilities 2018)

Literature circles:

Literature circles is an instructional approach in the classroom that has the potential to create a positive and interactive environment that sustains the kinds of pupils' motivation and involvement that are essential to reading development through interactive discussions and collaborative tasks. (Elhess & Egbert 2015:20)

Daniels defined literature circles as a form of literary engagement that is widely used in classrooms today. Essentially, literature circles are formed when a group of readers gather to discuss a book in-depth.

Daniels also defined literature circles as the engagement of pupils in rich conversations about shared readings. Pupils can express their opinions, predictions, and questions about a text in a productive, structured way. Also the engagement of pupils in critical thinking and reflection as they read, discuss, and respond to books. (Daniels1994)

Gamification:

Werbach and Hunter defined Gamification as "the use of game elements and game design techniques in non-game contexts."(Werbach and Hunter 2012)

Deterding et al. defined Gamification as "the use of game design elements in non-game context." Also defined as the use of video game design and game elements. It occurs only when learning happens in a non-game context such as a school classroom. (Deterding et al. 2011)

Gamification Literature Circles Strategy: (Operational Definition)

The combination of two strategies: Literature Circles and Gamification. The Literature Circles strategy will be applied through

Gamification; Gamification Literature Circles strategy is a strategy which combines Gamification elements and Literature Circles rules to develop pupils' reading comprehension skills and enrich their vocabulary, thus Literature Circles will be gamified in order to develop primary stage pupils' reading comprehension skills and vocabulary enrichment.

Aims of the study

This study aimed at:

1. Developing some reading comprehension sub-skills of primary six pupils' through using Gamification Literature Circles Strategy.

2. Enriching vocabulary of primary six pupils through using Gamification Literature Circles Strategy.

Questions of the study

1- What is the effectiveness of using a Gamification Literature Circles Strategy in developing primary six pupils' some reading comprehension sub-skills?

2- What is the effectiveness of using a Gamification Literature Circles Strategy in enriching primary six pupils' vocabulary sub-skills?

Hypotheses of the study

To answer the questions of the study, the researcher tested the following hypotheses:

1- There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the pupils of the control and experimental groups in the post-administration of the Reading Comprehension Test in favor of the experimental group.

2- There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the pupils of the control and experimental groups in the post-administration of the Vocabulary Test in favor of the experimental group.

Delimitations of the study:

The present study was limited to:

- Some reading comprehension sub-skills.

(Reading for details, Synthesizing, Reading for gist, Deduce meaning of words from the context, Scanning, Recall details, Inferring, Prediction, Summarizing, Making connections, Visualizing, Skimming and Drawing conclusions)

- Some vocabulary sub-skills.

(Antonyms, Synonyms, Multiple meaning, Analogies, Homographs, Homophones, Base word, Family Root word, Specific meaning, Written form and Shades of meaning)

- Two groups of primary six pupils at the Eastern Manfalout primary Azhari Institute, the experimental group and the control group. Each group consists of 27 primary six pupils.

- The experiment was carried out during the second term of the school year 2022 -2023. It lasted for four weeks , three hours a week, for a total of 14 hours, including testing time.

Design & Methodology

The following research used an experimental approach based on a quasi-experimental design with both experimental and control groups; (control group) where pupils learned within their group reading comprehension skills and vocabulary through the usual method, and (experimental group) in which pupils were taught reading comprehension skills and vocabulary through a Gamification Literature Circles strategy

Instructional Materials and Instruments

A) Instructional Materials:

A suggested Gamification Literature Circles strategy for teaching some reading comprehension skills and vocabulary enrichment (designed by the researcher):

-Teacher's guide

-Pupils' activity book.

The following instruments was designed and employed for research purposes:

A reading comprehension and vocabulary pre- posttests (prepared by the researcher) to measure sixth year primary pupils' performance in some reading comprehension skills and vocabulary.

Participants

The researcher selected 54 pupils from among the 6th year primary school pupils at Manfalout Eastern Institute, Asyut Governorate. The researcher chose two classes; the first class of (27) pupils as an experimental group and the second of (27) pupils as a control group. Furthermore, the participants were chosen from the same school to be equivalent in the social, cultural, economic and academic level.

Studies Related to Gamification and Literature Circles:

A lot of studies concentrated on "Literature Circles" and Gamification for teaching reading comprehension ; for example, McElvain (2005) study which explored the effects of the Transactional Literature Circle (TLC) model of literacy instruction on the reading comprehension of mainstreamed English learners who had been identified at-risk by their local educational agency.

Stabile (2009) conducted an interesting study to assess whether or not literature circles help struggling readers become engaged and reflective. Another study was conducted by Varita (2017); the objective of this study was to find out if the use of Literature Circles could improve the pupils' reading comprehension more than the teacher-centered (Reading-Aloud) approach.

Garland (2015) lead a study entitled " Gamification and Implications for Second Language Education: A Meta-Analysis". The study was a meta-analysis of Gamification of education research that set forth to determine what aspects of Gamification are important in educational settings, and how this information can be used to successfully use Gamification in second language education. This study used the analytical research design. The findings suggested that Gamification typically had a positive effect. Additionally, several moderator variables were of importance, including the length of instruction, inclusion of competitive aspects, and usage of time on task elements.

Greijdanus (2015) conducted a study to analyze the effect of using Gamification as a method of teaching English literature. The study also explored different theories of motivation as a theoretical framework for analyzing Gamification and teaching literature.

Jackson's (2016) study entitled " Gamification in Education: A Literature Review" sought to explain the growing phenomena of integrating Gamification into education through a literature review of relevant work and to provide educators insight into how to integrate Gamification principles into existing curriculum. The study used the

descriptive research design**.** The results indicated that Gamification can be integrated effectively into education to motivate pupils and enhance learning. However, effectively integrating Gamification into education demands a thoughtful analysis of the pupils involved, the course material and learning objectives, the holistic structure of the learning experience, then consideration of what specific elements and mechanisms will most effectively guide the student through a meaningful learning experience.

Study Procedure

In order to investigate the significant results of reading comprehension achievement by using Gamification Literature Circles strategy, a group of 54 pupils from Manfalout Eastern Institute has been sampled for the purpose of this study. The pupils were then divided into two groups – the control group and the experimental group. The following procedures were followed:

1. Pre- tests

Both experimental and control groups were given two pretests before the presentation of the material to find out the mean score of both groups before receiving the treatment. Both groups were administered an identical Pre-Test that showed the two groups had similar reading performance and vocabulary knowledge.

2. Treatment

After having the pre-test, the experimental group was taught by using Gamification Literature Circles strategy, while the control group was taught by the conventional method for a period of three months.

Dr. Hanan Ahmed Abdel Hafez

Using a Gamification Literature Circles   Dr. Salwa Mohamed El Sayed
Hala Mohamed Gadelrab
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3. Post test

After the experiment, the post-tests were given to each group. It was exactly the same as pre-test in terms of time and the contents. It was intended to find out the mean scores of experimental and control groups. The researcher interpreted the results and provided conclusions and recommendations of the study for further research.

Data Analyses and Results

Two independent t-tests were used to compare the mean scores of the experimental group, and the control group on the pretests. Means and standard deviations of both groups' results on the pretests were computed. As shown in Table (1) all (t) values were statistically insignificant at 0,05 which means there was not any significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups' on the pretests of reading comprehension and vocabulary. Thus it can be concluded The two groups are homogeneous in reading comprehension skills and vocabulary knowledge before the experiment.

- The independent samples t-test was used to reveal the significant differences between the mean scores of the pupils of the control and experimental groups in the post-measurement of the Reading Comprehension Test with its dimensions. The following table shows the results of the "t" test for detection on the significance of the differences between the mean scores of the pupils of the control and experimental groups in the post-measurement of the Reading Comprehension Test:

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Table (1)

The results of the "t" test to reveal the significance of the differences between the mean scores of the pupils of the control andexperimental groups in the post-measurement on the Reading Comprehension Test

	Variables	Con. Post (n=27)		Exp. Post (n=27)		T	Sig.
		M	Std.	M	Std.		
	Reading Comprehension Test						
1	Reading for details	3.18	1.05	4.37	0.69	4.92	0.01
2	Synthesize	1.26	0.66	1.79	0.42	3.53	0.01
3	Reading for gist	1.81	0.96	2.74	0.53	4.41	0.01
4	Deduce meaning	1.30	0.82	2.29	0.82	4.42	0.01
5	Scanning	3.11	1.12	5.04	0.71	7.58	0.01
6	Recall details	4.04	1.32	6.89	1.16	8.46	0.01
7	Inferring	1.56	0.80	2.39	0.89	3.60	0.01
8	Prediction	1.44	0.85	2.37	0.74	4.29	0.01
9	Summarize	0.89	0.70	1.67	0.48	4.78	0.01
10	Making connections	1.11	0.51	1.67	0.56	3.87	0.01
11	Visualize	3.22	1.02	4.89	0.93	6.27	0.01
12	Skimming	3.22	1.17	5.04	1.09	5.91	0.01
13	Drawing conclusions	0.59	0.50	1.52	0.58	6.31	0.01
	Total Score	26.73	3.08	42.67	4.07	16.23	0.01

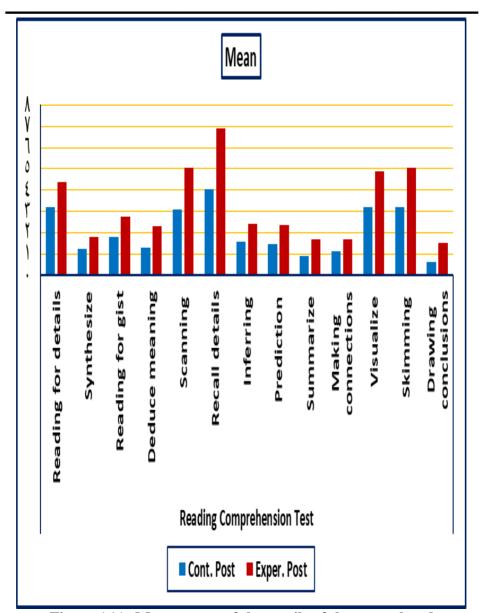Note: M = Arithmetic mean, Std. = standard deviation, degrees of freedom (DF) = 52

Figure (1): Mean scores of the pupils of the control and experimental groups in the post-measurement on the Reading Comprehension Test

It is clear from the previous table that:

• There is statistically significant difference at the level of significance of 0.01 between the mean scores of the control and experimental groups in the post-measurement of the total score of the Reading Comprehension Test in favor of the experimental group, where the value of "t" was equal to (16.23), which is a statistically significant value at the level of significance (0.01).

• There is statistically significant difference at the level of significance of 0.01 between the mean scores of the control and experimental groups in the post-measurement of the dimensions of the reading comprehension test (Reading for details, Synthesizing, Reading for gist, Deduce meaning, Scanning, Recall details, Inferring, Prediction, Summarize, Making connections, Visualizing, Skimming, Drawing conclusions) where the T values were (4.92, 3.53, 4.41, 4.42, 7.58, 8.46, 3.60, 4.29, 4.78, 3.87, 6.27, 5.91, 6.31), respectively, and the differences were in favor of the experimental group.

🞣 The independent samples t-test was used to reveal the significance of the differences between the mean scores of the pupils of the control and experimental groups in the post-measurement of the Vocabulary Test with its dimensions. The following table shows the results of the "t" test to detect on the significance of the differences between the mean scores of pupils of the control and experimental groups in the post-measurement of the Vocabulary Test.

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Table (2)

The results of the "t" test to reveal the significant differences between the mean scores of the pupils of the control andexperimental groups in the post-measurement on the Vocabulary Test

	Variables	Con. Post (n=27)		Exp. Post (n=27)		T	Sig.
		M	Std.	M	Std.		
	Vocabulary Enrichment Test						
1	Antonyms	3.78	1.31	6.63	0.84	9.51	0.01
2	synonyms	5.56	1.38	9.11	1.05	10.64	0.01
3	Multiple meaning	1.24	0.71	1.93	0.27	4.71	0.01
4	Analogies	3.56	1.25	4.81	0.40	4.95	0.01
5	Homographs	1.41	0.69	1.89	0.32	3.26	0.01
6	Homophones	2.44	0.80	3.85	0.60	7.31	0.01
7	Base word family	1.30	0.67	1.81	0.48	3.21	0.01
8	Root word	2.22	0.89	3.74	0.86	6.38	0.01
9	Specific meaning	1.19	0.74	1.93	0.27	4.91	0.01
10	Written form	4.56	1.53	7.85	1.17	8.89	0.01
11	Shades of meaning	1.63	0.93	2.67	0.83	4.34	0.01
	Total Score	28.89	3.62	46.22	5.28	14.07	0.01

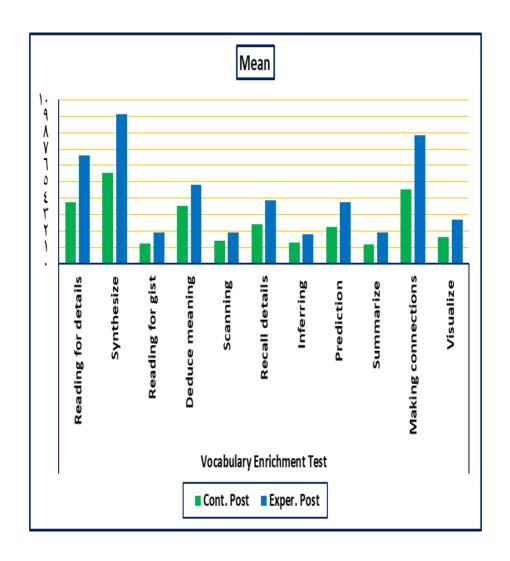Note: M = Arithmetic mean, Std. = standard deviation, degrees of freedom (DF) = 52

Figure (2): Mean scores of the pupils of the control and experimental groups in the post-measurement on the Vocabulary Test

It is clear from the previous table that:

• There is statistically significant difference at the level of significance of 0.01between the mean scores of pupils of the control and experimental groups in the post-measurement of the total score of the Vocabulary Enrichment Test in favor of the experimental group, where the value of "t" was equal to (14.07), which is a statistically significant value at the level of significance (0.01).

• There is a statistically significant difference at the level of significance of 0.01 between the mean scores of the control and experimental groups in the post-measurement of the dimensions of the Vocabulary Test (Antonyms, Synonyms, Multiple meaning, Analogies, Homographs, Homophones, Base word family, Root word, Specific meaning, Written form, Shades of meaning), in favor of the experimental group, where the value of "t" was equal to (9.51, 10.64, 4.71, 4.95, 3.26, 7.31, 3.21, 6.38, 4.91, 8.89, 4.34), respectively, and all these values are statistically significant at the level of Significance (0.01).

In the light of the previous results, it can be concluded that the Gamification Literature Circles was effective in developing some reading comprehension skills and vocabulary enrichment among primary six EFL pupils.

Combining Gamification with another strategy which is Literature Circles was based on the advantages which Duffy (1994) stated of combing literature-based instruction with more structured approaches. These results are consistent with some important concepts regarding language learning, for example, Varita (2017) indicated that Literature

Circles can be a better ways for teaching English reading comprehension. McElvain (2005) conducted a study which indicated that the Literature Circles program had a positive impact on the academic and psychosocial aspects of reading in the pupils who participated in the program. Also Clower (2006) indicated that the level of the pupils enrolled in the Literature Circles program were higher in reading comprehension after the program finished.

Thus, the researcher concluded that implementing Gamification Literature Circles Strategy in the teaching\ learning process is significant as it turns the direction of the education system towards a new trend that is based on the pupils themselves, their abilities and their capabilities. And based on the result of data analysis using independent t-test, it is concluded that applying Gamification Literature Circles Strategy has positive effect on pupils' reading comprehension skills and vocabulary enrichment. Pupils who experience Gamification Literature Circles tend to comprehend texts better than those who do not experience it. Gamification Literature Circles is more effective than teaching reading using the traditional methods. The research results give English teachers evidence that is worth considering Gamification Literature Circles in the teaching of reading comprehension and vocabulary enrichment.

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