The Effect of Literature Circles on Enhancing Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary Acquisition of Official Language Preparatory School EFL Students

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Introduction

In fact, reading is a process or an activity of receiving and interpreting information in a written language to create meaning or gain information. Reading is a circle process because the learners link between the previous information they knew with the new knowledge they acquire. Also, reading expands the learner's vocabulary and thus will eventually help them to communicate with other people in life. Thus, reading encourages students to think. It gives them new perspectives in comprehending any reading materials. Not only students get new ideas and inspiration, but also they develop their knowledge (Urquhart & Weirt, 2009, Jonhson, 2008, Taylor, 2015).

In addition, reading helps learners develop critical thinking skills. They become better observers. When students begin reading, they make a summary about the key ideas, they try to make inferences about what is being read then they give feedback about what they read. Reading also helps students to improve their scope of knowledge, expand their cultural awareness. Reading transfers the students into a fictional world where they can imagine freely. Teachers can make this process easier by telling students to "close their eyes and open their imaginations, while the story is being read" (Wells, 2017).

Although, there are many benefits which students can get from reading, it has been a great struggle for many classroom students because they lack the necessary skills to comprehend any informational texts. That is why one of the most successful strategies that have largely contributed in creating an environment of collaboration among students in the EFL reading classroom is literature circles. Through adopting literature circles

in the reading classroom, students can positively participate in their learning process where they have control over choice of literature, discussion and topics. Daniels defines literature circles as, "small, peer-led discussion groups whose members have chosen to read the same story, poem, article or book" (Daniels, 2002, p.6).

In addition, literature circles develop students' motivation, encourages collaborative work among students. They become responsible for their own learning and when the students learn by themselves, the effect of learning remains (Gall, 2010). Also, Brabham and Vilaume (2000) state students who participate in literature circles should take responsibility for their reading, understanding, interpreting, creating discussions about texts, and engaging in complex levels of thinking .Students must work in groups to discuss the reading material, so there will be interaction between them about the text. When discussion is a fundamental part of the class, students should learn how to collaborate with each other , how to participate in a meaningful discussion, and how to maintain attention during the discussion.

Statement of the problem

There are many benefits that students can get from reading, but several studies have shown that there are problems which students suffer at various stages. Some of these problems go back to difficulty in reflecting, drawing conclusions, recognizing unstated assumptions, comprehending the main idea of the text, scanning the specific information, summarizing, paraphrasing, synthesizing, or acquiring meaning of new words .(Abdelrasoul,2010) .In order to overcome some of these problems, this study was attempted to investigate the effect of the

literature circles on enhancing the reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition for second year official language preparatory school students. The current study attempted to answer these questions:

1- What is the effect of literature circles on EFL reading comprehension of Official Language Preparatory School students?

 Sub questions:

1-(a)-What is the effect of the literature circles on the literal meaning comprehension of official language preparatory school students?

1-(b)-What is the effect of the literature circles on the inferential meaning comprehension of Official Language Preparatory School students?

1-(c)-What is the effect of the literature circles on the evaluative meaning comprehension of Official Language Preparatory School students?

 2-What is the effect of literature circles on vocabulary acquisition of Official Language Preparatory School students?

3-How do literature circles affect reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition of Official Language Preparatory School students?

Significance of the study

This study may be significant to curriculum designers because it may assist and help them to use a new technique that enhances the students' reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition through using the literature circles Also, students should be trained on how to learn, acquire new learning strategies so that they would use the best strategy that suit their learning styles. Effective thinking can be modeled during

read-aloud discussions with the teacher, which may also serve to broaden the discussions in literature circle groups. It could help us gain a deeper knowledge of how student interactions will be centered on how students rely on one another to elaborate, confirm, and explain their opinions about the texts they are reading.

1-Reading comprehension

As concluded from Raphael (2010) and Snow (2002):Reading comprehension is a process of extracting, constructing and gleaning meaning through involvement and interaction with written texts. Comprehension consists of three elements: the reader, the text, and the transaction between them. When we read, we read for a purpose which is to understand what is described in the text generally not to get meaning from isolated words. We read any text as a whole with different perspectives of each one of us (Woolley, 2007) .

As the reader starts reading, he may face difficult texts, get involved in different experiences, and this will develop his cognitive abilities during reading like memory, visualization, attention, knowledge ,motivation , and inferring Also, levels of comprehension mean different depth of understanding and analysis of meaning. When the reader reads he /she tries to extract the meaning from the text and uses the mental abilities to understand it (Ahmed, 2018). According to Roundy (2003), there are three levels of understanding in reading comprehension: literal, inferential, and evaluative meaning.

1-Litreal meaning

It involves the comprehension of the surface meanings within the context which readers comprehend. Literal comprehension consists of

two strategies: recall, and recognition. Literal meaning is the ability to comprehend a low level type of understanding by utilizing the written information that is stated directly in front of the reader (Hammond,2018, Eissa,2009, Perfetti, Landi, & Oak, 2005).

2-Inferential meaning

According to Kurland (2003), when students begin applying this level of comprehension, they should understand the written text, interpret information, beliefs, and arguments that are presented across the text. Then, students apply their own background knowledge and experience to the text to enhance and facilitate their comprehension.

3-Evaluative meaning

Knott (2001) identifies evaluative meaning as a reflective skill which requires reader to be neutral and be able to form judgments about how a text is developed. The critical comprehension's sub skills are differentiating between facts and opinions, reacting to the ideas, agreeing or disagreeing with the given information, judging the accuracy of information, and identifying the author's purpose.

2-Vocabulary Acquisition:

As concluded from Laufer & Hulstijn(2013), it is defined as the incidental learning of vocabulary which learners do not attend purposely to the words during the task. Students may acquire the meaning of new words although the main goal may be to comprehend the main idea of a text. Hence, the process of acquiring new words involves three stages. In the beginning, learners concentrate on the formal requirements of a specific lexical item and may connect the provided L2 forms to their L1 translations.

Second, as their knowledge of the language and its vocabulary grow, speakers add the semantic and syntactic components of their L1 translations to the L2 lexical entries. Semantic, syntactic, and morphological information which are related to the L2 word, are absorbed into the associated lexical entry when the learner has significant L2 experience. (VanPatten et al., 2004; Robinson & Ellis, 2008).Once students begin to recognize the new words in the list, teachers introduce the components of vocabulary acquisition to the students. The components are pronunciation, definition, and use.

1-Literature circles :

Daniels (2002) defined literature circles as small groups of four or five students who chose to read the same story, poem, article or book. The students gather together to discuss any piece of literature and each one of them has specific role to be implemented (Thrathen, &Dass, 2007, Straits, Kucan, Montoya 2006,and Miller,2006).Hence, there are some characteristic of true collaboration: Student-initiated, inquiry, choice, self-direction, mutual interdependence, face to face interaction, and self- and group assessment" (p.35). This means that literature circles not only increase reading comprehension skills, but also has encourage students to become active listeners not passive recipients .Hence, applying literature circles develops the students' communication skills and their thinking abilities (Brown, 2002).

According to Farris (2007), literature conversations encourage students to become more involved in their surroundings. Also, students engage in higher level thinking when discussing literature with their peers; they

create connections like text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world. Literature circles encourage the use of some strategies such as inferring, connecting, questioning, analyzing and reflecting which are essential to deep comprehension (Daniels and Steineke 2004). Additionally, when the teacher divides the class into groups and assigns specific roles for each one of the students, these roles in require students to draw the events, create questions, and summarize the text (Elhese and Egbert ,2015).

When teachers encourage students to apply literature circles, this creates a sense of ownership and responsibility. Literature circle enhance students' motivation, social interaction which have a great effect on their achievement (Burner, 2007). On the other hand, teacher's roles in the literature circles classroom are more different from traditional reading classes. In a traditional classroom, teachers provide the students with the background knowledge about every piece of literature.

However, in literature circles, the teachers can play new roles; a facilitator, a manager, a fun creator, and a process observer, participant, mediator and active listener .As for students' roles in literature circles, they became of the learning process. They were divided into groups of five students. Each one of them had a specific role to apply .These roles were: Discussion leader, Literary Luminary, Illustrator, Vocabulary Enricher, and Summarizer.

Review of related studies:

1-Studies related to reading comprehension

Scott (2009) applied the experiment upon seven students of fourth and fifth grade. The tools which were used in this study were interviews, videotaped lessons, and artifacts. The results of this study showed that there were improvements in verbal comprehension, visual and auditory processing, logic & reasoning, working memory, and following directions through using Comprehend RX.

Besides, Hermida (2009) explored the effectiveness of training teachers to apply various reading techniques to help students use a deep approach in reading academic texts .The participants were ten students from first-year college in the Legal Studies course. The researcher used reading journal, concept mapping, double entry journal, and apprentice activity as tools to evaluate students' performance. After applying this study, the results showed that teacher encouraged students to participate in activities that encouraged students to use higher-order cognitive skills to construct meaning from academic texts.

Furthermore, Jacobs (2015) conducted a study to examine the effectiveness of using literature circles on enhancing reading comprehension and students' motivation towards reading. The researcher applied this study on his 40 students in the classroom. The researcher used some tools to collect data like pre / posttest, student interviews, field notes, and observation checklist. The results showed that the students' level increased remarkably, and they became aware of how to choose their roles, schedule and discussion topics.

Additionally, Sari (2017)'s participants were thirty six students from eight grade. The researcher used kurt lewin design as a procedure of the classroom action research. Observation sheets, interviews, documentation, pre and post reading comprehension test were the tools the researcher used to collect data. After applying this study, the researcher concluded that there was an improvement on the students' improvement in reading comprehension from each cycle.

2- Studies related to vocabulary acquisition:

Ying He's study (2010) investigated learners' attitudes on L2 vocabulary acquisition strategies. The participants were thirty Chinese students. After applying this study, results showed that students began to use more strategies in acquiring second language. Also the researcher suggested that while teaching vocabulary, teachers could teach students acquire strategies and guide them to use these strategies in their learning process based on their English abilities.

As stated by Schwarz (2012), the participants were seventy six students. The tools were pre, posttest, and the Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS). The researcher used pretest to know how much the students could recall meanings of words while listening to pop songs. After applying this study, results showed that intermediate Austrian students acquired vocabulary incidentally from pop songs outside school.

Also, Alves (2014) applied his study to teach twelve words in the word-writing condition and twelve words in the non-writing condition during word-picture vocabulary acquisition. The tools were pretest, a language background questionnaire, a worksheet with general instructions, twenty –four numbered flashcards for the learning phase, twenty –four

numbered flashcards for testing, an audiotape, a word-writing worksheet and posttest. After applying the study, copying target words negatively affected productive L2vocabulary acquisition.

3--Studies related to literature circles:

Whittingham (2014) applied his experiment on 34 students enrolled at a regional university. The researcher used sheets of roles of the students, questionnaire, and survey questions. This study indicated that literature circles promoted collaboration, increased reading motivation, and provided a reason for finishing reading assignments even upon the college students who did not have enough time to complete their assignment at university

Serag (2014) explored the effect of literature circles on six teachers. These participant teachers were eager to participate in the experiment. The researcher used the semi-structured interview and teachers' journal entries as techniques for collecting data. After applying the experiment, the researcher found that literature circles enhanced students' motivation and students' sense of independence.

Hence, the study of Pambianchi (2017) tried to investigate the great benefit of literature circles on developing students' engagement in the instructional practices in the classroom. The researcher used surveys, field observations and interviews to collect the data. After applying the study, results indicated importance of using literature circles on enhancing motivation whether towards reading or instructional practices. These practices helped students to think deeply and carefully, have evidence based discussion, and justify their thoughts and ideas.

The Methodology of the study

Participants

The participants in the current study were second year official language preparatory EFL school students. The age of the sample was fifteen years old. Two intact classes were selected at random from "Sebrbai Official Language School Students "in the scholastic year 2022.The participants were assigned to experimental and control groups, 30 students each. The participants had been studying English for seven years. The experimental group was taught the novel through the literature circle instruction. However, the control group was taught the novel through the traditional way in teaching.

Instruments

The present study made use of quantitative tools like: reading comprehension pre and posttests, vocabulary acquisition pre and posttests, and qualitative tools like sheets of literature circles, reading response journal, and the frayer model. These instruments were used to assess the effect of using literature circles on enhancing reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition.

1-Reading Comprehension Pre and Posttests:

Two equivalent forms of reading comprehension tests were prepared .In each test, students were asked to read narrative and expository texts then answer the questions. Each reading passage was followed by 10 multiple choice items with four options. The pre reading comprehension test included 20 items each was assigned one mark. The total marks for the pretest were 20 marks and for the post test were 20 marks. The Barrett Taxonomy of Reading Comprehension (2009) was adopted in the

study. It classifies skills into three levels of meaning: the Literal skills, inferential skills, evaluative skills.

2–Vocabulary Acquisition Pre and Posttests

Two equivalent forms of vocabulary acquisition tests were prepared .In each test, students were asked to read twenty multiple choice sentences then choose the correct answer. The tests were applied to measure the ability of the students in acquiring the words. The pre and post vocabulary acquisition test included 40 sentences with four multiple choice .There were 20 sentences for each test .Each item was assigned one mark so the total mark of each test was 20 marks.

Study design

This study adopted a pre-and-post-tests -experimental mixed-method design (Webb & Doman, 2016). Both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods were used. The researcher applied a pre-and –post-tests to measure the effect of using the literature circles on developing reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition. In addition, qualitative tools were; sheets of literature circles, reading response journal, and the frayer model.

Implementation of the treatment

This instruction aims at enhancing both reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition for second year preparatory Official Language School students through using literature circles .By the end of the instruction, students were expected to develop the three levels of reading comprehension skills (literal, inferential, and evaluative) and have the ability to acquire new vocabulary. The three basic stages for teaching literature circles are discussed below:

The three basic stages for teaching literature circles

1-Pre reading stage:

Before implementing literature circles, there were some activities, questions, objectives to be implemented in each session; Students were divided into groups of five students by their choices. Each one of these students chose a specific role. These roles and the groups were rotated each session so that the whole group would have a chance to experience all roles.

Also, students were asked to prepare the page in each chapter that they read before the literature circle meeting and also the assignment they prepared to be discussed next meeting. In addition, students gathered with each other on whatsapp application to decide the members of each group which rotated each time and also they determined the role of each one. They met on a regular schedule to discuss the reading materials they prepared.

Students were asked to guess questions to encourage them to recall details, or main ideas, or cause and effect, or sequences. Also, students were asked inferential questions so that they could practice how to infer figurative language, character traits, supporting details, out coming events. In addition, students were asked open ended questions to enhance their evaluative skills to judgments of reality or fantasy and judgment of fact or opinion. As a result, students discussed and shared ideas, experiences with each other; also they cooperated to fulfill the requirement of each role. Copies of sheets of the students' roles were distributed.

2-During reading stage:

Students began reading alone silently the chosen pages in the chapter. Reading silently helped students to monitor their comprehension and enhance the ability of overcoming problem they faced during reading. After ten minutes of reading silently, students began discussing with each other what they understood from the pages they read, what problems they faced during reading and how they solved it. They used sticky notes while reading to record their thinking, make brief notes and highlight things they wanted to come back to either in their journal and/or the literature circle. e.g. this could be a great quote or a new word that they wanted to find out more about.

While students were reading the page, they began to apply certain requirements for each role for example; the discussion leader developed about four questions that the group might want to discuss. After the group discussed the question the leader developed، he /she continued leading the discussion with the teacher. The leader must not look for right or wrong answers but help the rest of the group to understand what they were reading.

Then, the literary luminary found two paragraphs in the text that the students would want to hear aloud. The main responsibility for the literary luminary was to help the rest of the group remember some important, funny or interesting sections. After that, illustrator drew some kind of picture relating to the reading. It could be a diagram, cartoon or sketch. The illustrator drew a picture that conveyed any idea or feeling the students could get from the reading.

Also, the vocabulary enricher looked for new words. If the vocabulary enricher found words that were unfamiliar, he/ she should mark them with a sticky note while reading then look up the definition in the dictionary or glossary. Finally, the summarizer prepared a brief summary of today's reading. The other members of the group depended on the summarizer to give a brief statement that conveyed the main ideas,the moral of each lesson.

Besides, the researcher provided students with ten short stories. The students chose only five short stories that met their interests: The bee, sharks, the beauty and the beast, Oliver Twist, Oldman and the sea. These short stories were adopted from Susan B., and Cartier, KY. (2012).The texts which were selected were expository and narrative in order to be suitable for the nature of literature circles. In each story, they described the setting, the main events, the main characters. The students used information from the text and connected it to their previous knowledge.

3-Post reading stage:

 After finishing discussion, each one of the students completed his sheets of students' roles, and the teacher checked the sheets of students. Students reflected on what they did in the literature circles for example they asked themselves. The researcher adopted the Rainbow's reflection sheets so that students could express freely their thoughts about literature circles

Assessment of the treatment:

The researcher used formative and summative evaluation tools like Literature Circles Role Sheets, reflection sheets, and Faryer Model.

1-Literature Circles Role Sheets:

These sheets were adopted from Daniel (2004)and Mac(2016). The researcher wrote some guidelines of how students implemented each role. The roles are Discussion leader, Literary Luminary, illustrator, vocabulary enricher, and summarizer .After each session, students are asked to fill in these sheets to gather all information regarding each role. Following each discussion, group members switched who was in charge of creating a different comprehension answer for the subsequent literature circle meeting. Up until the chapters were finished, students read the book, wrote thoughtful responses to show to their peers, and

Reading comprehension skills	Group	Test	N	Mean	SD.	Df.	"t"	Sig.	Cohen's d
the literal meaning	Experimental	Pre	30	8.06	1.74	29	٥.٥٢	0.630	1.00
		Post	30	9.40	1.10				
	Control	Pre	30	7.46	1.97	29	٠.٤٨٦		
		Post	٣٠	7.63	1.97				
the inferential meaning	Experimental	Pre	30	1.30	0.83	29	٢٦.٠١	0.795	4.74
		Post	٣٠	5.90	1.09				
	Control	Pre	٣٠	4.90	1.74	29	٠.٢٦٢		
		Post	٣٠	5.00	1.64				
the evaluative meaning	Experimental	Pre	30	1.30	.836	29	٤.٩٤	0.297	.90
		Post	٣٠	2.10	.480				
	Control	Pre	30	١.53	.860	29	١.٠٦		
		Post	٣٠	1.73	.63				
Total	Experimental	Pre	30	14.56	3.20	29	٧.٢١	0.603	1.31
		Post	٣٠	17.40	2.35				
	Control	Pre	30	١3.90	4.38	29	٠.٥٢		
		Post	٣٠	14.30	3.06				

switched roles in literature circles.

2- The reflection sheets:

The researcher adapted Rainbow (2020) reflection sheets .After each session, students were trained on how to reflect on what they understood in each chapter, how they felt towards the events of the novel, how they reacted if they were in the place of the characters, their

opinion towards the behavior of the characters. Students were asked to fill in the literature circles reflection sheet individually expressing their opinions whether they liked the collaborative work or not.

Results

The data of the study findings were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.The scores of the students on the pre and post tests were statistically analyzed by applying the paired sample t –test to compare the means of the pre and post tests from the experimental group. In addition, the independent two samples t –test was used to compare the mean scores of the experimental and control groups on the post reading comprehension test and post vocabulary acquisition test.

Data findings related to question one: What is the effect of literature circles on EFL reading comprehension of Official Language Preparatory school students? revealed significant differences in the overall reading comprehension as indicated in table (1) below.

Hypothesis 1

There are no statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups on the overall reading comprehension test.

 Table (1) Descriptive statistics for the reading comprehension pre and posttests scores on the experimental and control groups

Table (1) shows that the mean scores were 17.40 and 14.30,the SD were 2.35 and 3.06 for the experimental and control groups respectively; (df = 29, t =7.21,p<0.05). Hence, results showed that there was a significant

difference between the experimental and control groups mean scores on the overall reading comprehension at the 0.05 level in favor of the experimental group. Accordingly, the first hypothesis was rejected. This meant that students significantly performed better in the posttest of the experimental group on reading comprehension. Further, as the effect size coefficient (cohen's *d=1. 31*) Indicated, literature circles largely affected students' overall performance on reading comprehension.

Hence, this is the data findings related to question 1-(a) what is the effect of literature circles on literal meaning comprehension of Official Language Preparatory school students? These study findings revealed significant difference in the literal meaning comprehension as indicated in table (1) before

Hypothesis 1-A

There are no statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups on the literal meaning of reading comprehension.

Table (1) shows that the mean scores were 9.40and 7.63, the SD were 1.10 and 1.67 for the experimental and control groups respectively; (df = 29, t =5.52,p<0.05).Hence, results showed that there was a statistically significant difference in favor of the experimental group on the mean scores of the post test on the literal meaning of reading comprehension at the 0.05 level. Accordingly, the second hypothesis was rejected. This meant that students significantly performed better in the posttest of the experimental group on the literal meaning of reading comprehension. Further, as the effect size coefficient (Cohen's *d=1.00*) meant that

literature circles largely affected students' performance in the literal meaning of reading comprehension.

Here are the data findings related to question 1-(b) what is the effect of literature circles on the inferential meaning comprehension of Official Language Preparatory school students? The study showed significant difference in the inferential meaning comprehension as indicated in table (1) before

Hypothesis 1-B

There are no statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups on the inferential meaning of reading comprehension.

Table (1) shows that the mean scores were 5.90and 5.00, the SD were 1.09 and 1.10 for the experimental and control groups respectively; (df = 29, t =26.01,p<0.05).Hence, results showed that there was a statistically significant difference in favor of the experimental group on the mean scores of the post test on the inferential meaning of reading comprehension at the 0.05 level. Accordingly, the third hypothesis was rejected. This meant that students significantly performed better in the posttest of the experimental group on the inferential meaning of reading comprehension. Further, as the effect size coefficient (Cohen's *d=4.74*) revealed that literature circles largely affected students' performance in the inferential meaning of reading comprehension.

Besides, these are data findings related to question 1-(c)What is the effect of literature circles on the evaluative meaning comprehension of Official Language Preparatory school students ? The study results

showed significant difference in the evaluative meaning comprehension as indicated in table (1) before

Hypothesis 1-C

There are no statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups on the evaluative meaning of reading comprehension.

Table (1) shows that the mean scores were 2.10and 1.73, the SD were.480 and.63 for the experimental and control groups respectively; (df = 29, t =4.94,p<0.05).Hence, results show that there is a statistically significant difference in favor of the experimental group on the mean scores of the post test on the evaluative meaning of reading comprehension at the 0.05 level. Accordingly, the fourth hypothesis is rejected. This means that students significantly performed better in the posttest of the experimental group on the evaluative meaning of reading comprehension. Further, as the effect size coefficient (Cohen's d=0.90) means that literature circles largely affected students' performance in the evaluative meaning of reading comprehension.

Thus, these data findings are related to question two: What is the effect of literature circles on vocabulary acquisition of Official Language Preparatory school students? Also the study results revealed significant difference in the acquiring of language as indicated in table (1) below

Hypothesis two:

There are no statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups in overall score of the vocabulary acquisition test. Relevant data to this hypothesis are provided in table 2:

Table (2): Descriptive statistics for the pre-and Post –vocabulary acquisition tests scores on the experimental and control groups

Test	Group	Test	Descriptive statistics			"t"	Df	Sig.
			N	Mean	Std. Deviation			
Vocabulary acquisition test as a whole	Experimental	Post	30	١٦.٥٣	٢.٣٤	٦.٢٦	٢٩	
		Pre	٣٠	١٢.٧٠	٤.٥٣			
	Control	Post	30	١٢.٨٦	٣.٤٩	٥.١٧	٢٩	.015
		Pre	٣٠	١٠.٨٧	٤.٧٢			

Table (2) shows that the mean scores were 16.53and 12.86, the SD were 2.34 and 5.17for the experimental and control groups respectively ; (df = 29, t =6.26,p<0.05) Hence, results showed that there was a statistically significant difference in favor of the experimental group on the mean scores of the post test on the vocabulary acquisition at the 0.05level. Accordingly, the fifth hypothesis was rejected. This meant that students significantly performed better in the posttest of the experimental group on the vocabulary acquistion. Further, as the effect size coefficient (cohen's *d=1.14*) meant that literature circles largely affected students' performance in the vocabulary acquisition.

Discussion

The study concluded that the experimental group achieved significant progress in the overall comprehending reading passages and the students who applied literature circles became more successful readers than those of the control group. This improvement could be attributed to a number factors :Literature circles provided students with various opportunities to enhance comprehension by eliciting connections to previous knowledge .When students were divided into groups, each one

of them was responsible for a role in the teaching process, they began to discuss information with each other. As a result of applying literature circles, students were able to visualize, form questions, make connections, prepare for literature discussions, and draw conclusions.

Moreover, the experimental group achieved a significant improvement in the literal meaning of reading comprehension and this improvement could be attributed to some reasons: The post-test mean scores showed that literature circles increased student's ability to acquire the literal sub skills in reading comprehension. After distributing the roles among the students, the discussion leader formed questions about the most important parts in the novel .These questions mostly were about recalling main ideas or specific details, recognizing cause and effect, or recognizing sequences. Asking literal questions encouraged students to start their discussion because they could find the answer directly in the text .then they had the ability to discuss their thoughts, feelings and concerns while reading.

Also, the experimental group achieved a significant improvement in the inferential meaning of reading comprehension. Students were able to infer about figurative language .That was shown when students knew the reference of each pronoun and the inferential meaning of a word in the context. Determining inferential meaning required the students to think about the text and draw conclusions .When students applied this level of comprehension, they were able to understand the reading material. Also, students were able to link between their own prior knowledge and the new information they acquired while reading. That is

why there were significant differences between the experimental and control groups on the inferential meaning of reading comprehension.

In addition, the experimental group achieved a significant improvement in the evaluative meaning of reading comprehension. Literature circles improved the students' ability in comprehending the evaluative meaning and its sub skills like judgment of reality or fantasy and judgment of fact or opinion. Students were trained on how to check reality or fantasy, differentiate between fact or opinion. Students assessed the good sense of what he or she is reading, its clarity, and accuracy. Hence, Literature circles offered students with opportunity to use their voice and make their own choices based on interest rather than reading what they are told.

Besides, the experimental group achieved a significant improvement in acquiring meaning of vocabulary. This improvement could be attributed to some factors like: The students were exposed to new words, which enhanced their learning. In each group, there was a vocabulary enricher. This role required that the student looked for new or important words. If the vocabulary enricher found words that were unknown, he /she marked them with stick notes while reading. That is why, students should learn from each other within their group through the meaningful discussions while applying the roles.

Conclusion:

The current findings provided evidence that the use of literature circles was effective in enhancing second year Official Language Preparatory School students' overall reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition .Students achieved improvements in the literal, inferential,

and evaluative meaning. literature circles were proved to have many advantages like increasing the collaboration among students, created a social interaction during implementing the requirement of each role .Students helped each other if they encounter any problems .Solving the problems enhance the concept of achievement.

Moreover, literature circles helped students to comprehend literary texts instead of memorization. Also, they helped students to achieve their reading goals. Some students like reading aloud, reading quickly, reread slowly, retelling events, predicting the outcome, and guessing meaning of new words .Some students preferred using sticky notes during reading to highlight the important parts.

Besides, literature circles encouraged students to become responsible of their learning .i.e. literature circles enhanced self-learning for students. They were the ones who formed questions, read aloud, summarized the important events in each chapter, drew figures represent a crucial event in the chapter, extracted and acquired meaning of new words. Students chose the pages they read, the schedule of meting, even they chose some reading passages that matched their interests.

Hence, literature circles developed some reading comprehension skills like recalling main ideas, details, sequences, cause and effect relationships, inferring details, main ideas, figurative language, predicting outcome, character traits, synthesizing, judgment of reality and fantasy, and judgment of fact or opinion.

Recommendations:

1. EFL teachers' roles as facilitators, managers, participants, mediators, or monitors, and silent observer are crucial for

encouraging students to take responsibility of their own learning, and leading discussion through implementing literature circles. With the teachers' guidance and support, there will be an interaction between the students and teachers.

2. EFL teachers could provide students with opportunities to practice any comprehension strategies while implementing the requirements of each role. Through literature circles, students applied some comprehension strategies like predicting, questioning, and making personal connections with the text.

3. Teachers should provide students with engaging activities to foster their motivation towards reading. This can be accomplished by providing opportunities for students to read, discuss, and make text to text, text to self, text to world relations. As students read and discuss each chapter of the novel through literature circles, students improved their capacity to respond to texts at different levels of comprehension, interpreting, or making evaluative comments.

4. Teachers should provide students with supplementary reading passages to develop their ability in practicing reading in their daily life. The use of fiction and non-fiction books may enhance creativity, self-learning, and motivation. Literature circles provided students with the ability to choose the books or reading materials that met their interests.

5. The reading aloud discussions could be used to model effective thinking. They may help students to speak fluently. While implementing literature circles, students discussed the reading

materials with each other. This meaningful discussions encouraged students to reflect on what they read, give evaluative comments, and express their opinion.

6. EFL teachers are recommended to reinforce the importance of collaboration among students. They should share the information with each other to implement any activity. Through literature circles students should be divided into groups to implement the requirement of the roles; they should share information, and help each other if they encounter any problems.

7. As for syllabus designers, students should be trained on how to learn, acquire new learning strategies so that they would use the best strategy that suit their learning styles. That is because literature circles improves the students' ability to think critically, respond, discuss, and reflect on what they read. Students should practice other reading comprehension skills like visualization, paraphrasing, summarizing, and synthesizing.

Suggestions for further research

 Based on the findings of the current study, the following areas of research might be investigated and explored:

1) Investigating the use of video and/or audio recordings of the students' conversations to measure the students' progress throughout the implementation of the literature circles.

2) Investigating other strategies of reading comprehension like visualizing, retelling, making connection, and synthesizing to cope with varied learning styles.
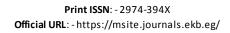
3) Online literature circles could be searched to cope with the requirements of the digital era .Face book club or bogs could be used to facilitate communication between students.

4) Further research is needed to investigate the impact of literature circles on enhancing students' fluency in speaking.

5) Investigating the effect of using literature circles on decreasing anxiety for shy students or struggling readers.

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