



## The Effectuality of Reading Circle Method on Comprehension and Motivation: A Case Study in A 6th Class

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### Abstract

This study aimed to determine the way and to what extent the reading activities with the reading circle improve the students' reading comprehension skills, vocabulary banks, and their reading skills while learning a new language. The research was planned among 16 volunteer students from the 6th grade of Ishik Brayaty Primary School in Erbil. In the study, the students were asked to choose a literary work to read, and to make the study more productive, the students participating in the research were asked to take the same task with a friend of their choice. Thus, 8 groups were formed. Afterwards, they were asked to discuss their responsibilities with other friends at different meetings. Each student fulfilled his/her own task and opened the discussion at the next meeting. After the end of the readings, the results of the students were evaluated with the exams. At the end of the study, the first observed point is that students' deciding what to read increases their motivation. Afterward, it was a motivating feature for each student to take some responsibility for the story they read and to discuss them in different meetings, which supported their self-confidence. The second observed point is that students benefit from the reading process in many ways if the principles required by the reading circle method are fulfilled. In addition, according to the different test results obtained, it was seen that the students remembered the story they read more clearly and read it successfully. Therefore, it has been determined that students benefit from the reading process in many ways if the principles required by the reading circle method are fulfilled.

*Keywords:* English reading circle, Iraq, literature Circle, reading performance, Tishk University

## Introduction

Language teaching is structured on four basic language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing, as well as grammar and vocabulary teaching. Acquiring and developing four basic language skills at a desired level is one of the main objectives in the language education and teaching process (Burns & Siegel, 2018). Since the development of language skills shapes the entire language learning process of the student, a native speaker should be able to use four basic language skills effectively (Celik, 2019). Reading, which is one of these basic four skills, is an important skill that enables people to make sense of their life, develop themselves, gain new insights, develop their creativity, imagine, learn new words, think and express systematically. Besides the fact that reading is defined as the expression of some symbols audibly or silently, it is based on the process of making sense and inferring (Macalister, 2014). For this reason, improving reading skills has maintained its importance in all societies and at all times. In reading skill, there is a close relationship between the reader and the world on the one hand, and language and its transformative action on the other. The fact that reading is effective in a wide range of aspects such as providing social interaction, providing information, recognizing the world, interpreting events and surviving in a wide range of aspects such as general, academic and scientific, undoubtedly raises the importance of reading in education to an undisputed point (Biemiller & Boote, 2006). In this context, it can be thought that it would be more accurate to carry out reading activities with this awareness in both mother tongue teaching and foreign language teaching. As a matter of fact, in order to maintain the basic language skills in a healthy way in language acquisition, it is necessary to reflect a good level of vocabulary knowledge together with some other skills. (Celik, 2018; Grabe & Stoller, 2018; Hunt & Beglar, 2005).

In addition to fully and correctly understanding what the student reads, he/she should also have sub-skills such as comprehending the events when he reads, establishing cause and effect connections between them, analyzing the behavior of the characters well, evaluating them objectively, seeing the events from the perspectives of different heroes, and having a discussion about the event, and he / she is expected to be able to use them effectively (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). An individual may not reflect all of these skills at once, so they will be acquired and reinforced over time. Moreover, since the acquisition of some emotions or values will only be possible at critical ages, by carrying out an active reading activity in school-age children, a regular reading habit is gained and reading skills are developed, and it is also easier to acquire many affective values. (Patel & Jain, 2008).

For this reason, many different reading methods have been developed in the literature. In this case, using the reading circle method can be considered as an activity that can serve this purpose. The reading circle is the version of the book club practices transferred to the classroom environment, and it is the practice of the book club adapted to the school environment, where the reading of the same book and the part being read are gathered and discussed by the teachers (Thomas & Kim, 2019; Balantekin & Pilav, 2017). The method was first applied by Karen Smith in 1982, and it was named "Reading Circle" by Kathy Short and Gloria Kaufman in 1984 (Daniels, 2002). This method is a student-centered reading method that provides rich learning opportunities, based on the principle of reading a text or book that students have determined by sharing them in small groups and discussing it with groups at regular

intervals (Duncan, 2012; Hathaway, 2011). The main purpose of this method (Daniels, 2006; Day, 2002), whose dominant features are cooperation, selection, research, and responsibility, is for students who read the same book to share their knowledge and experiences by discussing it (Shelton-Strong, 2012). In this method, knowledge is reconstructed by seeing different perspectives through the platform created under the guidance of the teacher and accompanied by peers. In this process, as a result of mutual sharing of ideas, new knowledge is produced in a social environment where entertainment is a part of practice (Elhess & Egbert, 2015; Duncan, 2010).

Besides, since it gives students certain responsibilities towards each other, it encourages them to read with higher motivation (Bernadowski, 2013). In addition, the meeting of the students several times during the reading and the discussion of the part being read gives more effective results. The fact that each of the students focuses on different points of the story and shares the deductions they make here with others not only increases the interest of the story, but also causes them to understand more deeply. More importantly, each of the students is responsible and finds an opportunity with which they share it with others after fulfilling their responsibilities. Thus, the motivation of the students is higher, and they reach the potential to get more effective results for the next reading. It is thought that this study will guide teachers, students and perhaps families in terms of determining in which direction and to what extent the reading activities carried out with the reading circle affect the students' reading comprehension skills, motivation and reading skills while learning a new language. It will be able to transform the boring act of reading and the reading hours in the school into enjoyable and productive activities. With the roles they take, students can support themselves with individual work and then with group work by discussing the story in their groups. It is a work that teachers can use in schools, which can support not only reading but also speaking, questioning, imagining, expressing, collaborating, and producing. At this point, since the student is active by thinking, speaking, imagining, and producing, it will also be beneficial for families and teachers who guide them.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study aimed to determine the way and to what extent the reading activities with the reading circle improve the students' reading comprehension skills, vocabulary banks, and their reading skills while learning a new language.

1. How does the Reading Circle method affect students' reading comprehension skills?
2. Will the reading circle method improve students' motivation in reading classes?

### **Literature Review**

#### ***Reading Circle Method***

Among the four skills, which have a very important place in foreign language learning, reading, and listening, which are receptive skills, speaking and writing, which are productive skills, are tried to be developed with different activities. Even in modern sciences, new researches are constantly being done

to improve these skills. Among these, it can be said that reading has a priority position over the other three, because students are exposed to sentences with ready-made syntactic and semantic connections (Celik, 2018). Among these skills, receptive skills are easier than the others, and students start to develop these skills from the first time they start learning a language (Masduqi, 2016).

When we look at the development processes of these two receptive skills, we can say that more attractive aspects of the listening skill can be found. However, reading skill is slightly different. First of all, students need to gain a habit and be motivated. In addition, it is important that there is a subject that will attract the attention of the student and that this subject is understandable in the reading passage (Patel & Jain, 2008).

Many different tactics and methods are used to develop reading skills. These may vary according to the needs of the student, the difficulty and diversity of the subject, and the type of activity desired to be done. The aim of all this is to achieve effective understanding and language learning (Ulker et al., 2021).

Intrinsic motivation of the learner is very important in the development of reading skills. However, knowing that this motivation does not develop in the same way for all students has led the experts of this subject to new searches. In this context, new methods are being discovered that will appeal to all students and improve their reading skills. One of these methods is the reading circle method. This method is also called a literature circle. This method, which was designed with the idea of making the reading activity more efficient and attractive, is fundamentally based on technical discussion and group work (Widodo, 2016).

In the reading circle method, first of all, students choose books according to their interests. Students sharing the same field of interest and choosing the same book are brought into a group and these students are provided to read part or all of the book. Students can read a section of the book, but they all need to read the same section and have an idea about that section because the students will discuss this topic later. The purpose of applying this method is to enable students to question and discuss the subject while reading.

Students who choose books according to their interests are divided into a group, then students who choose the same book will fall into the same group. It is appropriate to have 4-5 students in each group to ensure efficiency. If it is less than this number, the content of the next discussion may not be as rich as desired. In addition, the high number of people can negatively affect the division of labor and discipline.

### ***Principles of Reading Circles***

Moeller & Moeller (2007) determined twelve principles that are prior to reading circles. First of all, it should be stated that this reading method is independent reading and collaborative learning. These principles can be listed as follows:

1-) Students should choose the book they will read by themselves. The teacher should not have any involvement here. In this way, students will choose the genre that best suits their interests.

2-) A sufficient number of groups should be formed among the students according to the book selection.

3-) Care should be taken that different groups do not read the same book. In order for the study to be more original, each group should have a different book of their own.

4-) These groups should meet to discuss regularly, and these meetings should be according to a certain calendar.

5-) Students should keep written notes both to convey what they have read and to contribute to the discussion.

6-) Questions should be asked by the students during the discussion. Teachers should not have any questions about this. In addition, the questions in the reading books should not be asked.

7-) Discussion meetings should be in the form of open and natural dialogues and students should stick to the book in these discussions.

8-) Students should fulfill their duties by taking different roles. Failure of one of the students in the reading circle means that the ring is not completed.

9-) The teacher should not direct the discussions or be an active participant in the discussion. The duty of the teacher should be facilitator and observer.

10-) In the reading circle method, the evaluation is the teacher's observation and the student's self-evaluation.

11-) Reading activity should be motivating, and students should enjoy it. Otherwise, external pressure and the student's feeling of obligation is against the spirit of this reading method.

12-) After this activity is completely finished, students should disperse to their new groups and read new passages (Moeller & Moeller, 2007).

### ***Reader Roles in Reading Circle***

As this is a group work and a comprehensive project, it is necessary to assign different tasks to each of the students in the group. During the reading, students fulfill their responsibilities in accordance with the job descriptions given to them. In the reading circle method, different roles can be given to students according to the content of the reading passage. As a matter of fact, it is seen that different roles are given in the literature. Sometimes, although the content of the roles given is the same, they may be presented in different naming. Also, in some cases, completely different roles can be given. It is possible to define these roles as follows:

*Task 1 Summarizer:* The task of the student who assumes this role is to make a short summary of the chapter that should be read until the meeting to be held and present it to other friends at the beginning of the discussion. In this section, which will take a few minutes, key points, highlights, and general idea of that part is presented by the summarizer (Bernadowski & Morgano, 2011).

*Task 2 Questioner:* It is also called as discussion director. The task of this student is to prepare questions about the subject to be discussed and to guide the discussion on the occasion of these questions. This student is not interested in the details in the story but concentrates on the important issues. For example, this student may question whether the characters in the text are real, symbolic or historical heroes. Likewise, s/he can dig out the reasons that force the characters to take certain steps. S/he may concentrate on points that may be difficult for others to understand. S/he asks questions about the historical context in the reading, if any. S/he can also direct discussion from there by concentrating on specific statements (Ferguson & Kern, 2012).

*Task 3: Connector:* The task of this student is to establish connections between the subject in the book and real life, and to facilitate the understanding of the subject by giving examples from real life. In this context, the student can talk about their own past experiences, talk about similar events from another place and time, or give a friend in a similar situation as a reference (Blum et al., 2002).

*Task 4: Illustrator:* Good readers should also be able to imagine well. What is expected from this student is to draw some places and events in the story and bring them into a way that their friends can devise the situation. Sketch, cartoon, diagram, flowchart can be created to be used here. Likewise, s/he can use drawings to better describe an idea or a feeling in the story (Anderson & Corbett, 2008).

*Task 5: Travel Tracer:* Especially in story-style readings, the characters often change places and therefore the setting in the story changes. This student's task is to follow these changing scenes and put them in order and present them to their friends. In this case, this student will properly describe each setting or explain it with diagrams and maps or orally (Cloonan et al., 2020).

*Task 6: Vocabulary Enricher:* This student is also called word wizard. This student defines the important words s/he sees in the passage s/he reads and shares it with other students. Here, the student is responsible for finding and sharing keywords, words that are repeated a lot in the passage, words that are used in a meaning other than the familiar meaning, or words that have an important role in understanding the subject (Tracey & Morrow, 2017).

*Task 7: Literary Luminary:* The task of this student is to bring the highlights or quotations in the passage into group discussions and make the discussion more attractive. The section chosen by this student can be interesting, funny, confusing, or summative. It is the student's duty to make a choice according to the situation (DaLie, 2001).

*Task 8: Researcher:* This student searches for the background information about the literary work and presents it to other students in group discussions. Any issue on the subject can be investigated. For example, the story in the book may have geography, climate, culture, or the historical background of that

region. Likewise, the author's life can be discussed. In addition, other works written on the same subject can be brought to the agenda. If the passage read is a story, the characteristics of the period in which the story took place can be given. Ideas that have influenced the author can be brought up. Materials that will facilitate the understanding of the subject can be presented. For this, this student can benefit from libraries, books, magazines, and the internet. He can also interview people who are experts in the subject (Varita, 2017).

### ***Textual Relationship in Reading Circle***

Within the reading circle activity, there are different links to the text that the students read. Just as there is a connection between text and students, there is also a connection between text and peers. There is also a link between text and the teacher. These links, centered entirely on the text, are intended for students to best understand the material read. For this, a network of relations is established that provides the opportunity to make maximum use of the text, because there is a dimension in a text that everyone can understand according to their own character. In addition, everyone can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding by combining their own understanding with what someone else understands.

Considering the student's relationship with text, it is expected that the meanings that the student acquires from the reading text will connect with real life and s/he understands the text more effectively. In this case, the student reshapes the meanings with what s/he understands from that text and what his/her friends convey to him/her and learns to look at the world around him from a different perspective. Likewise, the student who enters an active relationship with text adopts a worldview and a stance for himself/herself (McElvain, 2010).

In addition, peers, who help the student to understand, provide scaffolding for the student. Understanding is easier for the student who draws the general framework of the subject with the help of other friends. Thus, the student has the opportunity to develop higher level cognitive skills. In addition, it is very difficult for a person to extract cultural content from text. However, with the help of other friends and collective work, it is easier to understand this content. An effective help that friends can give to the student through the text is to encourage the use of authentic oral language (McElvain, 2010).

In the reading circle method, there are sections where the teacher also helps the student. First of all, the teacher plays a role in determining the reading strategy in accordance with the content. In addition, the teacher is the person who will enable the student to benefit effectively and keep him/her in the zone of proximal development. The teacher can play an active role in presenting cultural perspectives to the students. The teacher's assistance is important in the student's development of textual schemata (McElvain, 2010).

## **Methodology**

### ***Research Model***

In this study, students read Arthur Conan Doyle's story "The Speckled Band" and shared the tasks required by the Reading Circle Method. A total of 12 students agreed among themselves and decided to

read this book. Later, as they read every 10 pages, they came together and discussed the chapter they had read. Each student did their part and expanded the discussion. After finishing the whole book in this way, a comprehension test was applied to the students. The results of the test and the performance of the students during the reading were evaluated within the study.

### ***Sampling***

In this study, 6th grade students of Ishik Brayaty Primary School /Erbil were used. This is because this book is suitable for the level of students. Gender factor was not considered in this study.

### ***Data Collection***

After the students decided to read this book, 16 students were asked to form a small subgroup with a friend of their choice and 8 different tasks were assigned to 8 groups and they started to read. The materials and discussion topics brought by the students to the class were observed with the students and a total of 6 meetings were held. In these meetings, the students' discussions, questions, and the subjects they drew attention to were recorded. Finally, a test about the story was applied and the results were evaluated.

### ***Findings***

In this study, the story "The Speckled Band" by Arthur Conan Doyle was used. In the story, a young lady who comes to Sherlock Holmes wants her sister's death to be investigated. Her sister's death occurred when she and her stepfather moved into a House. The young lady thinks that her sister was killed by her stepfather because they were entitled to a share of the inheritance from their mother if they got married. Because of this, she suspected that their stepfather might have wanted to kill them. Sherlock Holmes, who came to the young lady's house to investigate this, was faced with a very different situation. He found that the snake that had entered through the vent had poisoned the young lady's sister.

***Task 1 / Subgroup 1 Summarizers:*** They summarized the story up to the point they had to read, so They presented the summary They extracted from the passage and gave an overall account of what went on during the story. The summarizers put the scaffolding of the story so as to make the main points clear to everybody. The other friends came up with their predictions about how the story would proceed, and the summarizers gave the account of how they went wrong with their guesses in previous sections. This is a sample summary by students: "In this story, Sherlock Holmes solves a mystery brought to him by a woman whose sister died after they moved in with their stepfather. The woman thinks her sister was killed by the stepfather, but it didn't show in the autopsy. She also tells Sherlock and Watson that her sister died a few weeks after announcing that she would get married. Now that she was going to get married, and there were a few things happening to her just like they did to her sister, she was concerned to be the next target of the stepfather."

**Task 2 / Subgroup 2 Questioners:** These students prepared questions about the story and asked other students. The purpose of these questions is to guide other students correctly throughout the discussion. With each question, a new discussion was opened, and other students answered these questions.

- Do you think this death was a murder?
- Do you suspect the stepfather? Why is that?
- What could be the unexpected result at the end of the story? How could the story end unexpectedly?
- How could air-vent have anything to do with this murder?
- Why did Helen Stoner move to her sister 's room?
- What two things in Julia's room caught Sherlock's attention?
- Where did the whistle come from?
- What is the “speckled band”?

**Task 3 / Subgroup 3 Connector:** Expressing that his stepfather may have committed this murder when looking at his real-life stories, these students stated that such situations also occur in normal human relations and that the murder may have been committed by the stepfather. They said that he had valid reasons for this and that the fact that the girls would get a share of the inheritance if they got married could be a reason for the stepfather to commit the murder. However, he also stated that in the course of real life, unexpected results emerge quite often. In a story he told himself, he stated that the families of a bride and a groom argued over who decided over a wedding day. Both families thought that the wedding day was decided by the other party, and they argued with each other. However, at the end of the discussion, they learned that the groom and bride made a decision without asking the parents' opinion on this issue. They stated that such an end could occur in the story they read, as in this story. They stated that at the end of the story an unexpected result appeared.

**Task 4 / Subgroup 4 Illustrator:** These students had found a simpler version of the story and brought the pictures from there to the class. They started a discussion over these pictures and asked their other friends what the pictures meant and where they were in the story.



*Figure 1. Picture from the story*

These students first asked what this picture was telling and where it might be in the story. One student stated that it was Helen Stoner and that she had come to Sherlock Holmes to tell her complaint. Another student said it could be Helen Stoner who had an argument with her stepfather. In addition, other students said that the woman was very worried and that she had come to tell something important, and the other two people were listening to her very carefully. Therefore, they said the worried woman was Helen Stoner, while the two people who were listening carefully were Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson.

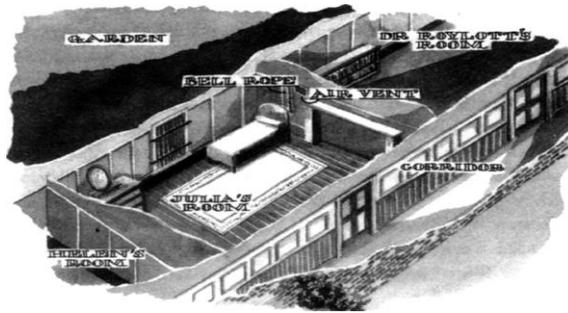
In the continuation of the story, these students put another picture in front of her friends and opened it for discussion.



*Figure 2. Another picture from the story*

A student identified this girl as Helen Stoner's sister. He thought of the other person as one of the gipsies, from whom she was very surprised when she saw her, because she was already afraid of gipsies. The other student stated that these girls could be Helen Stoner and her sister. She was afraid because she heard some strange whistle, and Helen did not take her seriously.

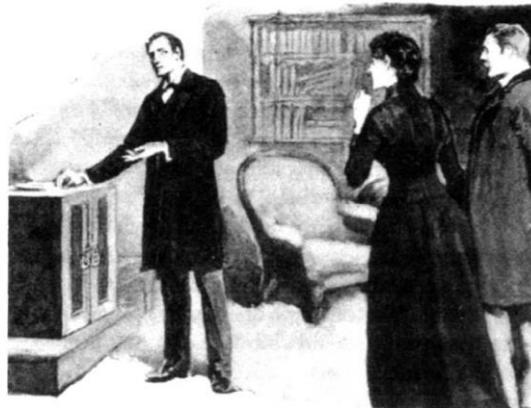
The next picture was showing the parts of the house, and it helped much to the students to identify the house where Helen's sister, Julia, was killed.



*Figure 3.* The picture shows the house

This picture was illustrative, and it put a clear picture in front of them. In this way, the other students clearly understood what the house was like and where the things were. This picture gave them the opportunity to imagine the setting much more clearly. They were already reading all these descriptions of the setting, but this picture made it easier to see the setting. One student said that there had been some points in the description of the setting for her, but this picture vividly showed the house to her. After seeing this picture, some students put links between the stepfather and the murder because there is an air vent between two rooms. Although it was illustrative, it was also misleading for some students.

The next picture opened new discussions, and the students tried to insert this picture somewhere inside the story.



*Figure 4.* A picture in which they discuss.

The illustrator asked where this conversation could have taken place and got some answers. One of the students stated that this painting is a dialogue between Sherlock Holmes and Helen Stoner. He said Holmes was asking questions about the metal box in Helen's stepfather's room in this picture, which shows some of the questions Sherlock Holmes asked her when he visited Helen's house. Another student pointed to the plate he saw in the picture and reminded that Sherlock Holmes pointed this out in the story and asked if Helen's stepfather kept a cat and stated that this picture represents that situation.

The next picture had the content to clearly summarize the ending of the story.

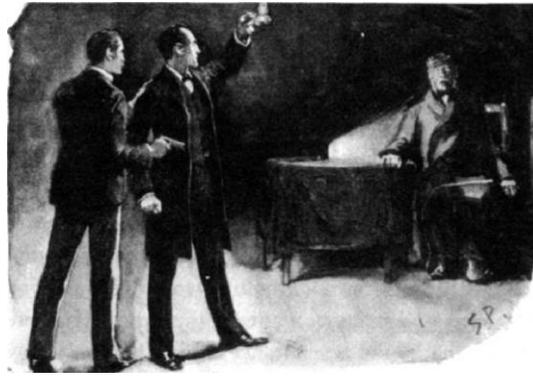


Figure 5. The picture showing the end of the story

One student was able to make a close connection between the end of the story and this picture. At the end of the story, Sherlock Holmes said that he thought it might be the gipsies who had committed the murder, but later realized the situation. According to this, something passing through the air vent went down the bell-rope to the room and drank the milk in Dr Roylott's room, and it was a snake. Dr Roylott was feeding the Indian animals. The reason he chose the snake here was that the venom of the snake could not be found in the body of the person it killed. So instead of committing the murder directly, he was sending this snake to Julia's room. Indeed, this was the reason why the snake's venom did not come out of Julia's body. The snake was passing through the air vent and descending into the room over the bell-rope and poisoning its victim. The metal box in Dr Roylott's room was this snake's home. After Sherlock Holmes hit the bell-rope hard, the snake returned and bit Dr Roylott to death. Already in the picture, the snake was hanging around his neck. Therefore, all these plans were made by Dr Roylott to kill the girls, but in the end he himself died. That's why Sherlock Holmes said that Helen nearly died, too. Sherlock Holmes also expressed that he was not saddened by the death of Dr Roylott while describing the event. The reason why Julia said "speckled band" was that she could not identify this snake in the dark but expressed it as she saw it. In other words, the snake in the dark appeared to Julia as a speckled band.

Associating the picture with the story, the student said that this picture tells everything very clearly. Thus, this example shows how illuminating the picture brought to the classroom is.

**Task 5 Subgroup 5 Travel Tracer:** These students informed their friends about the changing scenes and their description in the text if any. They divided the story into the scenes and explained the scenes step-by-step to their friends. In this way, it was easier for the others to follow and even to comprehend.

**Task 6 Subgroup 6 Vocabulary Enricher:** These students brought the important words they saw in the story to the class, explained them and sometimes discussed them with others. Here are some words this student brought to class:

Violent

Gipsies

Servant

Whistle

Speckled

Mending

Bell-rope

Air-vent

Poison

These students specifically opened up a discussion about what a "speckled band" might be. They also asked how this has to do with bell-rope and air vent. They also questioned what it might indicate in the story by giving the meaning of the word "whistle" and got some answers from his friends. Where the students pointed at the snake, he stood on it more and asked them to continue the story over the snake. Thus, when the students put forth the expression "speckled band", a snake came to their minds. That's why at the end of the story, everything was easily understood.

**Task 7 / Subgroup 7 Literary Luminary:** These students brought some quotations from the story and discussed them with others. For instance, when Sherlock Holmes saw Dr. Roylott's death, he said: "I am not sorry for that." They asked the others why he was not sorry and got answers from them. The others explained it well because they were already familiar with the story and what was going on because of other discussions.

At the beginning of the story, Holmes asked several questions and tried to urge Helen to elaborate on what she told. These students brought along these quotations and asked the others what Holmes was trying to do with these questions and what we should understand from that. As they got answers, they asked them in what way their assumptions contribute to the solution of the problem. The others discussed over it, and they got familiar with the story more during different sessions.

When she brought Helen's quotation to the class, they asked what it could mean to them. This was the quotation: "Maybe I sleep better than you do." One student said it could be the reason why she did not hear anything. Another student said that Helen might have taken it easy and did not find it important to focus.

**Task 8 / Subgroup 8 Researcher:** These students gave information about the author of the story, Sir Arthur Canon Doyle, and mentioned his style in the stories he wrote. They also presented short summary of another story to clarify the author's style. In the end, the students who participated in the discussion found this task very interesting and there was a different empathy towards the author. The story was also greeted with interest by the students. Some studnets stated that they will definitely read other books by the author.

At the end of reading circle, we gave two different exams to the students. One is writing a summary of the story and what their guesses were for the next stage throughout the story, and they wrote very detailed essays about. Another one was a test about factual information in the story. The test included independent questions and evaluation criteria prepared by the University of Oxford, which published the story.

Table 1. *Test Results / Writing a Summary*

	Mark (Out of 10)
Student 1	10
Student 2	10
Student 3	9
Student 4	10
Student 5	10
Student 6	10
Student 7	10
Student 8	10
Student 9	10
Student 10	9
Student 11	10
Student 12	10
Student 13	10
Student 14	10
Student 15	10
Student 16	9

Since the students were familiar with all the details, they could answer almost all the questions correctly. In addition, it was determined that many students did not miss any details in their answers to the questions and wrote them completely. It was observed that they used the new target words and structures they learned in the book without any mistakes in their own sentences. This shows that they understand the texts read very well and that they can use the newly learned words and structures in

practical life. Those who got 9 (only 3 student) could not remember some factual information during the test, but later, they also realized their mistakes.

Table 2. Test Results

Before Reading			While Reading			After Reading					
#	Activity 1	Activity 2	Activity 1 THE SPE CKL ED BA ND	Activity 2 A SCA ND AL	Activity 3 THE FIV E OR AN GE	Activity 1	Activity 2	Activity 3	Activity 4	Activity 5	Activity 6
Student 1	C	B	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Student 2	B	A	A	A	B	A	A	A	B	A	A
Student 3	C	B	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Student 4	A	B	A	A	A	A	A	A	B	A	A
Student 5	A	A	B	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Student 6	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Student 7	A	B	B	A	A	B	A	A	A	A	A
Student 8	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Student 9	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Student 10	A	B	A	A	A	A	A	B	A	A	A
Student 11	B	B	A	A	B	A	A	A	A	A	A
Student 12	B	A	A	A	A	A	B	A	A	A	A
Student 13	C	A	A	B	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Student 14	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	B	A
Student 15	A	B	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Student 16	B	A	A	A	B	A	A	A	B	A	A

This test is in 3 parts: Before, While and After Reading. It tests students' ability to understand what they read, find the meaning of the text read, think about it and make inferences with different activities. The results of the activities were coded and evaluated in 3 categories as Successful (A), Sufficient (B) and Insufficient (C). Most of the students passed all three parts of the test. It has been determined that students who realize that they are successful are more motivated and more self-confident and willing to work on activities. In addition, it was observed that some students were less successful in the first part, before reading, but were more successful and competent afterwards.

### Discussion

Reading comprehension is about recognizing new words and collocations, finding the meaning of the text read, thinking about it, and making inferences (Sesma et al., 2009). Reading comprehension skill,

which is found in different degrees in individuals, has a nature that can be improved by working on it. It is frequently encountered in the acquisition of mother tongue and foreign language. An individual's reading comprehension skill is affected by variables such as learning new words and then using them, attention, using memory, ability to make logical inferences, the reason for reading the book, interest in the subject, self-efficacy perception, vocabulary, command of the rules of the language, and foreknowledge about the subject. When an individual begins to read, many of these skills develop. For example, vocabulary expands, content knowledge increases, and reading speed increases. According to the content of the book, there is an increase in the interest and self-perception of the subject. Motivation to read is also important in reading comprehension. Texts that attract the attention of the individual have a positive effect on reading comprehension (Malloy et al., 2009).

The reading circle provides detailed reading, the fulfillment of different tasks, the sense of responsibility, the student's reflection on the subject through departmental discussions and making evaluations to reach their own conclusions. As a result of these effects, the reading circle directly and positively improves the reading comprehension skills and vocabulary of the individual both in their native language and in foreign language acquisition.

In this study, the reading circle improved the reading comprehension skills and vocabulary of the students in parallel with the previous similar studies. In the reading circle, unlike individual book readings, students read the book in depth throughout the process and share what they understand with their friends. In the meetings where sharing is made, each student has the opportunity to learn the meanings that their other friends have deduced from the chapters they read, because according to the reader response theory (Rosenblatt, 1978), students understand and gain different things from the book they read, as they interpret the book according to their own life (March, 2019; Savolainen, 2019).

On the other hand, reading circle contains some difficulties for students. Especially where there are high-performing students, it presents some difficulties for low achievers to keep up with them. However, the students read the story with high motivation in this way. Meeting and discussing between the sections increased their interest for the next section and the students increased their performance in each consecutive session. An important reason for this is that the discussion environment is very productive, and students become curious about the next stage.

First of all, it was very effective for the students to choose a story they wanted. In addition, the student is required to conduct research from different sources according to the task. For example, the task of the connector is to associate the event in the book with daily life, historical events, etc. This task directs the student to acquire new knowledge. From this point of view, it can be said that the reading comprehension skill of the student who reads the book with the reading circle develops due to the reasons such as trying to read the book with a deep understanding, doing research for his task, writing down his findings and sharing it with his friends. Thus, they read the story and did the necessary research without any force from outside. Students who read with the reading circle method read like a professional critic beyond being an ordinary reader and took notes for themselves. They even shared the subtle points they caught during reading with their friends.

Clearly specifying the roles of the students made the reading process much easier for them. Thus, the students knew where to focus and focused only on their task. In this way, the students discovered the points that others did not pay attention to and shared them with their friends. It was also a motivational reason for the next session.

As the discussion continued, we observed that the students became more curious about what would happen next. In fact, the fact that the students had already read other Sherlock Holmes stories was a motive. That's why they decided to read this story. Since all these students had not read this story before, they chose this story together throughout this research.

It has been an effective brainstorming activity for them to express their predictions about what will happen in the next phase of the story. Thus, the students remembered the chapters they read more clearly. Therefore, they achieved very high results in the exam.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, according to the research, it can be said that the reading circle can be used to gain or improve this skill in sixth grade students with low reading comprehension skills. However, this study is limited to the practice in only one school, so research can be conducted on the reading circle regarding its applicability in different schools and levels, even in universities and adult education. It has been seen in this study that the reading circle method gives very effective results when applied to willing students. It is an important factor for students to choose the work they will read, and their willingness to read and discuss is also very important for the success of this method. If all students fulfill their duties, they both learn better and become more motivated. Therefore, the teacher should follow it closely. However, it should be noted that this method is time-consuming, and it is very difficult to find willing students for this kind of reading. In addition, this activity requires students to work harder. Therefore, as this study reveals, the more successful and responsible students of the class accept such a reading method.

There is also a need to conduct case studies on the use of the reading circle in acquiring academic knowledge in lessons. In this way, a constructivist learning environment can be created in which the student learns himself and permanent learning takes place, by preventing the information from being taken as it is, learning only for exam purposes, and being teacher-centered. It is thought that the studies to be carried out with the reading circle will also be organized for adults and will contribute to lifelong learning skills.

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