COGNITIVE SCIENCES AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Gamification in Improving Reading Skills of Preschool Children: Blending Through Puzzle Game

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the effectiveness of puzzle games in improving the learning of Malay Language reading skills among preschool children. The study focuses on inculcating blending skills through puzzle games since one of the most critical elements in learning reading is phonics which involves the skills of letter recognition and phonemic segmentation. Two teachers and twenty-eight preschool children were involved in this study, consisting of 17 preschool children from one of the primary schools in Serian and 11 preschool children from one of the schools in Padawan. These preschool children between the age of five and six were divided into two teams of red and blue. Their preschool teacher monitored them during playday. Two methods were involved in collecting the data: interview and observation. Teachers' opinions on the interventions were acquired in semi-structured interviews, and preschool children were observed. These two preschools' findings show that blending through puzzle games in improving reading skills displays more significant learning benefits and is effective in collaboration, readiness, understanding, and shared mental models. Preschool children show more interest in participating in puzzle games' learning process. The game could be used for English classes and played in a larger space, such as a hall, to make it easier for preschool children to move. Future enhancements could focus on digitalised gamification that can provide more exciting and interactive gameplay.

Keywords: reading skills, gamification, puzzle game, preschool children