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Enhancing Reading Fluency among University Students

A Way to Help them Read

The Case Study of LMD English language Students at Tiaret University

A Dissertation Submitted in Candidacy for the Degree of Master in Didactics

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Dedication One

I would like to dedicate this work to:

My wonderful parents, my caring mother 'fatiha' ,

and fathers 'Abdalslam and Abdalhadi

who hold all my love and gratitude.

My husband 'Mostafa'.

My brothers 'Hamid, Yacine , Amir , and Youcef .

My sisters 'Shahra zed, 2 Fatimas, and Cherifa,

to whom I wish success in their lives.

My second family and all my friends for their support

Soumia

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been by my side giving support and encouragement

to keep finishing my high studies

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Who always pray for me

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My colleagues, and all my friends.

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Abstract

This research work attempts to investigate reading fluency among university students. The study intends, on the one hand, to determine the main obstacles that impede students' reading fluency, on the other hand, to help them overcome their weaknesses towards reading by providing them with different techniques and strategies. 65 university students were selected from different levels as a sample. The present dissertation is based on students' questionnaire and an interview for teachers at the section of English at university of Ibn Khaldoun in Tiaret. The results of the study show that most of the teachers and learners believe that reading fluency depends on equipping the students with effective reading techniques, motivating, and encouraging them to read. Through this study students may care more about their reading level as well as they may find their path to become fluent readers.

Key Words: Reading fluency, language teaching, language learning, efl students,

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

CBM   Curriculum-Based Measurement

CWPM   Correct Word per Minute

DEAR   Drop Everything and Read

NIM   Neurological Impress Method

Wpm   words per minute

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General Introduction

General Introduction

Education is a field of human activity that is renowned of constant change. The never-ceasing change in human needs, the insatiable desire of perfection, and the all-the-time emergence of problems in the educational context, especially the classroom, set education on a course of continual evolution. The improvements brought to the domain are mainly results of the experts' attempts to fix negative phenomena they observe in the very educational settings. Research imposes itself as a never-ending business in the field of education.

The present research work is concerned with a phenomenon that touches an important section of university students, English language students as a case. It will be conducted within the field of didactics. Didactics is the science and the art of teaching. It deals with the formal aspects of teaching methodology and all elements that interact within the classroom. The meaning of the term didactics falls into two main categories. It is primarily understood as the method of teaching; on the other hand, it is considered to cover questions to the discipline about what to teach and why to teach.

The phenomenon undertaken by the study is about students' defective abilities in reading. Many students suffer from the problem of fluency especially when it is a matter of reading. Most learners commit mistakes when they read texts, articles, and books. They demonstrate potential problems in reading texts at a reasonable speed, with enough accuracy, and with proper understanding.

The large extent of the phenomenon of defective fluency among our-university students and the very little concern paid to it makes it a must for every scholar to launch an attempt to do something about it. It is with this rationale that the paper at hand has cropped up into a systematic investigation. The idea of finding practical ways to improve students' reading fluency is tempting, and the feeling that follows the success to contribute effective insights to the phenomenon is worth pursuing. Besides, finding out strategies and ways to help students overcome their reading fluency problems will benefit the researcher, himself, before anybody else.

Reading fluency is a key contributor to independent and successful reading. It is the ability to read texts quickly, accurately, and with proper understanding. The lack of reading fluency makes reading tasks toilsome and boring, which explains most students' departure from reading whether learning assignments or entertaining literature. Such a phenomenon must have causes which have to be tracked and troubleshot. The removal of the causes will certainly contribute to improving reading fluency among students.

The present investigation sets out to achieve three main objectives. First, it aims at providing a clear understanding of the notion of reading fluency, its essence and its importance; second, it seeks to determine the main obstacles that impede students' correct and appropriate understanding of written texts; third, it aims to find out strategies and solutions for students to increase their awareness of effective points that help them improve reading fluency.

The problem that this piece of research sets out to settle consists in the students' defective abilities to read literature in the foreign language, English in our case. It can be summed up in the difficulties that learners find in reading, the way to remove them and the way to enhance efficient reading strategies among University students.

The research problem has been divided up into three questions:

1. Why is reading in EFL classes considered as a difficult activity?
2. What impedes reading fluency among university students?
3. What strategies can help University students develop their reading fluency?

Preliminary reflection on the questions above has led to the ideas that follow.

1. EFL students lack the basic tools necessary for informed reading as well as the motivation to explore foreign language literature.
2. Factors such as psychological or external ones.
3. Equipping students with effective reading techniques, motivating them to read authentic literature, and encouraging autonomous reading among them.

The sum of the hypotheses above can be formulated in the idea that reading fluency is a subtle asset that can be developed through the use of effective reading techniques and the motivation to get engrossed in foreign language literature.

To find out about the problem at hand, difficulties in reading fluency, both of a quantitative and a qualitative research tools are used. A questionnaire is administered to students from the different levels of the LMD system in the section of English at Tiaret University. In addition to the interview which is submitted to a teacher of reading.

Chapter One

Literature Review

1.1 Introduction

Proficient reading skill is critical to success. If the student is not competent reader, he is at risk for academic, social and emotional difficulties. Reading fluently is one of the important abilities that the learner should require for the reason that it smooths his learning process as it privileges him to be successful academically and socially. Reading Fluency, the ability to read a text automatically, accurately, quickly, and with proper expression, is the most comprehensive definition that different scholars agree on. A mass of researchers have interested in the issue of reading fluency and handled it from their point of view. It was disassembles into different components in order to be well treated.

Intrinsic and extrinsic factors obstruct the growth and the improvement of reading fluency. Students with low self-confidence, shyness, fear of making mistakes will not read in ease which leads to disfluency. In addition, to the milieu which will effect students' reading fluency.

Teachers are the first category who should help students overcome their deficiency in reading fluently by intervening early and providing explicit, intensive, and extensive instruction. Moreover, using motivating and encouraging strategies to put an end to that flaw. Extensive reading, practice from the students' side will help them improve their reading fluency.

1.2 The advent of the notion of reading fluency

A small number of researchers have treated the issue of reading fluency in the period of 1900. Huey 1905 was the first scholar who tackled this topic when he described what most cognitive scientists refer to as automaticity in reading. He described in his book "the psychology and the pedagogy of reading", how students become fluent readers which will be achieved just through the action of repetition for the reason that it helps the students acquire the item easily, with a small effort of awareness, and in a short period of time. Otherwise it requires too much time, further thoughtfulness and copious techniques and tricks. He stated that:

"Perceiving being an act, it is, like all other things that we do, performed more easily with each repetition of the act. To perceive an entirely new word or other combination of stokes requires considerable time, close attention, and is like to be imperfectly done, just as when we attempt some new combination of movements, some new trick in the gymnasium or new serve in tennis. In either case, repetition progressively frees the mind from attention to details, makes facile the total act, shortens the time, and reduces the extent to which consciousness must concern itself with the process".

(Huey 1905:55)

In addition, he suggested the importance of practice in learning something new. He described the students' progress from beginner, in this stage the students need far practice and close attention to the details of words required for recognition, to the fluency stage, in

this latter words could be recognized and acquired automatically, with speed, accuracy, and memorized for a long period of time.

This belief would later become automaticity theory. Besides, he described how fluent readers read a text. He stated that:

> ” **fluent readers have the option of using a variety of units as the need arises, ranging from the whole words to the single letter. Beginning readers, on the other hand, do not have these options and are limited to the single letter, at least in the beginning stage of reading development”.**

(Samules, laBerge, & Bremer, 1978;69)

This means that beginning readers lack a lot of options which helps them read fluently and are so restricted to the single letter unlike, those fluent ones who possess the options to use a diversity of units.

According to Richard Allington 1983 reading fluency was one of the most neglected reading goals. He stated that:

> **Reading fluency is more than simply developing proficiency in word recognition. It includes, among other things, the ability to read accurately, quickly, expressively, and in syntactically-appropriate units.**

(In Zutell&Rasinski 2003)

We guess that this this the appropriate definition giving to reading fluency since it involves the fundamental compositions of reading fluency which consist in reading accurately, rapidly, and with proper expression.

At about the same period huey was writing his book on reading, Bryan and Huter started their investigation on how telegraph operators become skilled at sending and receiving Morse code, they found that:

> “**with considerable time and practice the Morse code operators become so automatic at receiving messages that they were able to do this task quickly, accurately, and with little attention. Consequently, they were able to get the meaning of the massage at the same time”**

(SAMUELS, 1978:12)

This means that they had become 'fluent' at the task of reading Morse code. So this leads to the idea or the belief that reading fluency can be achieved through practice, time, repetition, and with patience. Through this latter one can acquire automaticity, accuracy, and rate which compose the reading fluency.

Although various interesting contributions were made by scholars on helping us to understand how fluency develops, not much research on reading fluency was conducted in

the decades following Huey's book. Since the major psychological paradigm from the 1900's until the late of 1950's was Behaviorism.

1.3 The Evaluation of the Notion of Reading Fluency

During this period researchers began to describe the process of reading. La Berge and Samuels developed a theory of reading that focused on the development of automaticity in word recognition, this theory stated that:

"if the student was not automatic at word recognition, the important job of reading for meaning had to be done in two stages. First, the student had to attend to the task of decoding the words in the text because the word recognition task was not automatic. Second, the student had to switch attention to comprehension."

(Samuels2006:28)

He believes that automaticity in word recognition needs two phases to be achieved passing by decoding the word phase to the second phase where the student should pay attention to the meaning of the word so he can understand what the text or the passage is talking about.

La Berge and Samuels (1974) published their influential paper on automatic information processing in reading .It lasted for many years just theory without any practice. Until Samuels' comparison to the way he taught reading and the way athletes and musicians were taught. He realized that there were some important differences. In music and sports, students practice until they get it right .He put this theory into practice where he modified the reading instruction, he asked students to read and reread, a kind of practice, this technique had a positive result. The method of repeated reading became the primary basis of fluency instruction in 1994, where students would read a level appropriate passage over until a particular rate of words per minute (wpm) was achieved. His thoughts were that the repeated reading would increase the students' fluency and that fluency contributes to comprehension. This was the birth of repeated reading a branch of automaticity theory (1997).

The method of repeated reading has even been programmed onto computers (Renaissance Learning, 2005) this method has multiple services, it testes students using the fluency development program to determine their zone of current reading ability, it even determines when the students word-per-minute reading rate has reached the target speed.

Still other interesting developments had significant impact upon fluency. Interesting methods and techniques were created in order to help the students develop and improve their reading fluency as well the teachers to assess their students reading development. The significant method that was developed by Stanley Deno is one of them, it helps teachers to evaluate the week-by-week rate of grouth of students learning to read. He called this method curriculum-based measurement (cbm). CBM is used as a helpful technique to measure the advance in reading because it is fast, easy to administrator and reliable.

Further developments helped to enrich reading fluency. The national research council report, Preventing Reading Difficulties in Yong Children(Snow,Burns,&Griffin,1998) stated that**: " reading fluency should be an important goal of the reading curriculum"** It was followed by the National Reading Panel report(2000) which emphasized that the method of repeated reading was an effective technique for improving word recognition, fluency, and comprehension across grade levels.

1.4 Reading Fluency from different Perspectives

Researchers in the field of Teaching and Learning have proposed many definitions of reading fluency; because it was considered as an integral part of the complex reading process which involves many elements that students need to do in order to read effectively. Although researchers did not agree on one definition of reading fluency and each one has defined the term reading on his/her points of view but we tried to provide the feasible definition that encompasses the diverse views and it is defined as follows:

Zvia Breznitz in his book fluency in reading Synchronization of Processes divided the existing definitions into three separate positions. The first views reading fluency as an outcome of the quality of the oral reading of words and connected text. As such it has been measured by accuracy, prosody, and in some cases by rate of oral reading. The second view breakers reading into linguistic components, so fluency is perceived as an outcome of the development of accuracy and automaticity in each component. The last view point, the system analysis approach, presents reading fluency as an outcome of the effectiveness of various biological and cognitive systems.

1.4.1 Fluency as an Outcome of the Quality of Oral Reading Skills

Various scholars have seen reading fluency from this angle and they are determined the notion of reading fluency as follows: "**That level of reading competence at which textual material can be effortlessly, smoothly, and automatically understood**"

(Schreiber, 1980:177)

According Schreiber fluency is reaching that level of automaticity, smoothness, and effortlessness in reading, while Meyer define the notion of fluency as reading texts or passages automatically, and accurately without paying much attention to the mechanics of reading such as decoding. "**Accurate reading at minimal rate with appropriate prosodic features (expression) and deep understanding**".

(Hudson, Mercer, & Lane, 2000:16)

These definitions lead to one definition is that, reading fluency is that skill that helps the person to automatically understand a text or a passages, accurately interpret it, speedily read it, and with proper expression tone it.

1.4.2 Reading fluency as an Outcome of the Development of Accuracy and Automaticity in each Component:

Meyer and Felton (1999) argue that the source for dysfluent reading is relates to three linguistic levels: the word level, the syntactic level, and the meaning level. Each level incorporates some aspects of fluency.

1.4.2.1 Word Decoding

At this level, dysfluent reading is an outcome of difficulties in word recognition systems (phonology and orthography). The deficits may arise from phonological, visuospatial, and/or working memory processes that may be manifested in the slowed mapping of verbal labels to visual stimuli(grapheme to phoneme correspondence). Thus, poor readers take more time than regular readers to identify single words. Moreover, the more complex a word, the longer it takes them to learn it

(Manis, Custodio, &Szeszulski, 1993:78)

This means that different features obstruct reading fluency it could be phonological, visuospatial or the working memory. These elements slowed the process of reading fluency for this reason poor readers need to be exposed for a longer time in order to learn a single word or a word pattern, than regular readers because they acquired the habit to read easily those simple, complex or the pattern of the words .

1.4.2.2 The syntactic level

At this level, dysfluency is exhibited in a lack of prosody and rhythm in oral reading, which are caused by the lack of sensitivity to syntactic cues
(Leiken& Schreiber, 1980:97)

The cause behind the lack of fluency among poor readers is that they are unable to recognize the prosodic and rhythmic features of the language in written text. According to Schreiber, the reader's ability to perceive the syntactic structure of the language leads to automaticity.

1.4.2.3 The Meaning level

Researchers agree that there is a connection between dysfluent reading and deficient comprehension. Two models have been suggested to explain the effect of slow word recognition on comprehension.

The first is the information-processing model derived from information-processing theory .According to this model, reading becomes increasingly more fluent as the result of automaticity development within subskills: "When one describes a skill at the macro level as being automatic, it follows that the subskills at the micro level and their interrelations must also be automatic

(LaBerge& Samuels, 1974: 295)

The second model is the verbal proficiency model, it assumes that: **"Readers become more proficient due to learning and practice, which releases cognitive resources for the higher requirements of reading"**

(Perfetti, 1977, 1985:32)

The models mentioned above are about two aspects. First, how automaticity in both the macro and the micro level is improved. Second, stressed the important role of practice and leaning to be able to read fluently.
Perfetti's model claims that slow word recognition interferes with the reader's ability to retain large units of text in the working memory, which prevents reading from being efficient.

1.4.3 The Theoretical Systems Analysis Approach

A new perspective on fluency in reading was developed in Berninger' systems analysis approach. Berninger theorized that:

Fluency is based on several basic biological and cognitive components including: the rate and persistence of visual and speech signals in reading materials; the efficiency and automaticity of the development of phonological, orthographic, and morphological systems; and the coordination of responses by the executive functions system

(Breznitz,2003:98)

Berninger's definition signs to rate, automaticity and coordination as basic components activated to achieve fluency.

1.5 Theoretical Approaches to Reading

There are various theoretical perspectives in reading theory that describe the reading process. The purpose of this fragment is to present the prevailing theories of reading fluency, the most popular ones are: verbal efficiency theory, rauding theory, and schema theory.

1.5.1 Verbal-efficiency theory

Perfetti's (1977, 1985) verbal efficiency theory represents a highly influential perspective in the history of fluency. Like LA Berge and Samuels (1974) and Doehring (1976), Perfetti worked within an information-processing approach.

> **Perfetti tries to explain the reading process by focusing on eye fixations at fast rates. He assumes that each reader has a profile of verbal efficiency theory**

> **(Perfetti, 1980:67)**

As we noticed that Perfetti did not refer to the word fluency, and he did not associate verbal efficiency with fluency. Rather, he discussed fluency-related concepts in terms of an overall account of reading ability in which verbal efficiency theory played a major role. Within this context, fluency is closest to what Perfetti and what Jackson and McClelland (1979) called "effective reading speed," construed as the outcome of comprehension accuracy and reading speed (words per minute).

Perfetti 's (1985) account of verbal efficiency was a theoretical effort to explain how

> **Individual differences in reading comprehension are produced by individual differences in the efficient operation of local processes. The local processes are those by which temporary representations of text are established as he included orthographic, phonological, and semantic processes. Moreover, Learning and practice also were thought to play a crucial role in the acquisition of efficiency in the local processes**.
> **(Perfetti, 1985:100)**

Here he emphasized on the individual differences going back to the idea that each person has a specific profile, where important process should be included such as the study of correct spelling, phonology, and the study of the meaning and use of words.in addition to practice which considered as the core elements of acquiring anything.
This efficiency was considered essential to construct high-quality mental representations, and a central concept in the theory.

1.5.2 Rauding Theory

This theory was proposed and developed by Carver (1977, 1981, 1984, 1990, 1992, 1993, 2000) Carver (1991, 1997), focused on the links between fluency and comprehension, introduced an emphasis on the different purposes of reading and their respective rates. According to Carver:

Most reading is done in the rauding mode, which involves the fastest rate at which an individual can successfully understand complete thoughts in each sentence. A model was included in Carver's work that depicts four levels of factors that affect the achievement of optimal reading rate and accuracy. Age, teaching variables, and aptitude are among those factors (i.e., verbal knowledge, decoding processes, and cognitive speed), decoding speed, and naming speed.

(Spring & Capps, 1974:152)

Carver in this quotation explained how does reading happen where he focused on the notion of accuracy and rate, this latter are the principal features that help in comprehend words and the link between ideas. In addition, to his suggestion of the model that leads to improving students' reading fluency which comprises different aspects such as: age, talent and teaching variables.

In rauding theory, the most important kind of reading comprehension is that Associated with the reading process called "rauding".;rauding was defined as:

In the rauding process, readers make fixations on almost all of the words in the text and comprehend all, or most of the complete thoughts presented in the text .if readers understand less than around 75 percent of presented thoughts, they are said to have been reading, but not rauding.

(Carver, 1997:52)

The rauding process will happen only if a fundamental factor occurs which consist in the simplicity of the material which must be in the disposable to the level of the reader. If the text is at a higher level than the ability level of the reader, reading won't be considered as rauding.

1.5.3Schema Theory

Another current theory of reading comprehension is called "schema theory" or the «schema perspective. Different definitions are suggested to the concept schema. It is defined as: "**An explanation of how readers use prior knowledge to comprehend and learn from text "**

(Rumelhart, 1980:74)

This means that schema has to do with the way the students use their previous information that they had already memorized to understand and acquire new knowledge from the text or the passage they are getting in touch with.

The term "schema" was first used in psychology by Barlett as: **"An active organization of past reactions or experiences"**

(Barlett, 1932:201)

This means how the earlier information and experiences on their memory are organized. later schema was introduced in reading by Rumelhalt (1980), Carrell (1981) and Hudson(1982) when discussing the important role of background knowledge in reading comprehension.

An abstract knowledge structure"(Anderson& Pearson ,1984:42)
While put schema as "a general knowledge structure used for
understanding

(Medin & Russ, 1992:246)

We can realize the general meaning from the previous definitions that schema is the sum of information, knowledge, experiences, and reactions stored in mind to be used at the appropriate time.

The goal of schema theory is to describe interaction between what is in the text and how that information is shaped and stored by the reader. The underlying assumption is that

Meaning does not lie solely in the print itself, but interacts with the cognitive structure or schemata already present in the reader's mind. These schemata represent, in Ausubel's terms, the "ideational scaffolding" or framework for understanding new information. Thus the reader has present in cognitive structure schemata which constitute a cognitive filter through which one views the world and from which one predicts or makes inferences about what is read.

(Sheridan2006, vol: 22)

Schemata, according to Rummelhart and Ortony, represent generic concepts which are stored in memory. The way in which a particular concept is stored is not by remembering that isolated event in its totality down to its most basic components, rather, by identifying those pieces of the event connected to other concepts already stored. We make connections between the information in the text and what we already know (what already has stored in our mind).

(Anderson & Pearson, 1984; Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983) explain how people organize their knowledge using schema or knowledge structures. Thus, it examines reading as a process for studying rather than typical reading.

In other words, their subjects are people who are deliberately reading a text to learn something from it or to memorize it. The fundamental concern of the schema theory is the memorization, identification and the grasping of new words and how they will be remembered as well as the way they will be used when necessary.

1.6 The Core Components of Reading Fluency

Reading fluency includes four major components which consist in automaticity, accuracy, rate, and prosody. These elements are interrelated in order to make sense to reading fluency.

1.6.1 Automaticity

Automaticity is the first and the basic requirement that should be taken into consideration when tackling the issue of reading fluency: **"Automatic word recognition is central to the construct of fluency and fluency's role in the comprehension of text"**

(Samuels, 2006:52)

Automaticity is considered as the core element that contributes in comprehending a text. There are several qualities that make automaticity relates to reading fluency.

According to Logan (1997) processes are considered to be automatic when they possess four properties: speed, effortlessness, autonomy, and lack of conscious awareness.

(Logan, 1997:33)

To start with, the speed which is the first of these properties is thought to emerge in parallel with accuracy as learners engage in practice. As automaticity develops, whether in terms of reading, or another skilled task, the learner's performance becomes both accurate, as it gets faster.

In addition, to the second attribute of automaticity which consists in effortlessness.

According to Logan" it refers to the sense of ease with which a task is performed and to the ability to carry out a second task while carrying out the first, automatic one".

(Logan, 1997:85)

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For instance; if a person is able to accomplish two tasks at once, then at least one of those tasks is, by necessity, automatic. In terms of fluency, effortlessness can be seen in two ways. First, fluent readers lack a sense of struggle in recognizing most of the words they encounter in text. Second, most fluent readers not only decode text, they also at the same time comprehend what they are reading.

Besides, to rate and effortlessness, automatic processes are also autonomous:

> "**They occur without intention, beginning and running to completion independent of the direction or intent of the person undertaking the act**"

(Logan, 1997:92)

In contrast, a no autonomous process is slow, letting an individual to keep control over the act and deciding whether it occurs. In the case of reading, fluent readers have little choice but to recognize words as they encounter them whereas beginning readers do not find reading to be an obligatory act. For more clarification, fluent readers often find themselves carelessly reading the text that runs along the bottom of a news program. Disfluent readers, on the other hand, are either unable to process the text at all or may find their attention overly pensive by it.

Indeed, continued lack of autonomy of vocabulary processing is an indicator that the reader is not yet a fluent reader.

The final characteristic of automaticity is a lack of conscious .The conscious awareness of the subskills disappears; once lower level word recognition skills become automatic. Fluent and disfluent readers can be differentiated by this lack of conscious awareness in word recognition. Disfluent readers make a hard effort in order to determine the words in a text and find the process to be slow and deliberate. While, fluent readers are able to identify nearly every word they encounter without conscious effort because word recognition has become automatic for them.

Although each of these four properties can be applied to automatic word recognition, it is important to remember that these aspects develop on a continuum, as well as at different rates.

1.6.2 Accuracy

Accuracy is another needed condition in achieving fluency. Different definitions are suggested to accuracy: "**The ability to effortlessly name words or to draw on a mediated process when unfamiliar words cannot be automatically recognized**"

(Evanchan, 2010:101)

Inaccurate word reading will logically break the meaning. Reading will be accurate if the sub-skills of reading are secure. As it is impossible to be fluent if the reader is continually stopping to work out what a word is, therefore fluent readers have moved beyond the decoding stage and are accurately reading whole words. A fluent reader has a huge store of words that are immediately recognized, and can be accessed in different contexts. These words constitute the reader's "sight vocabulary". This term does not just refer to those irregular high frequency words like said and put, but to all those words that are immediately recognized. Even words that originally had to be decoded. This also requires that the reader knows the meaning of the words – that they are part of the reader's receptive vocabulary.

The greater range of accessible texts can be increased through the greater number of words that are understood and recognized on sight. We find that one of the best ways to develop both fluency and reading comprehension is to develop children's receptive vocabularies and number of words that can be immediately recognized.

1.6.3 Rapid Rate of Reading

When a reader is both accurate and rapid, it means that the word identification processes have become automatized– they no longer require conscious attention.

> **The rate at which readers can access connected text has been found to be almost as important as word reading accuracy and is strongly correlated with reading comprehension.**
>
> **(Fuchs et al, 2001:71)**

A rapid reading rate is one of the key indicators of fluency, some people confuse rate with the entire package of skills that contribute to fluency.

> **"Reading rate is comprised of the speed and fluidity a reader uses as he/she reads a text"**
>
> **(Evanchan, 2010:12)**

For further clarification, two ingredients make reading rate, rapidity on the one hand, and flexibility on the other hand.

However, fluency is not just about reading quicker because putting emphasis on speed may lead the students to think that speed is the ultimate aim of reading- at the expense of comprehension.

Allington makes the point that **"…glued-to-print, word-by-word reading is an important step in becoming a "real" reader" and that most students appear to move quite readily into phrase reading during the early years of school"**.

> **(Allington, 2009: 17)**

Some scholars agree that reading too slowly is an indicator of poor reading but over-reliance on increasing rates is not an appropriate interpretation of reading fluency research. On the other hand, Reading quickly but without regard for punctuation, expression and comprehension does not constitute fluency. Focusing on the development of rapid reading can, make students believe that speed is the ultimate goal.

Rasinski indicated that: "Students can become faster readers without the corresponding improvements in comprehension".

(Rasinski, 2006:22)

To clarify; many teachers will attest to the fact that some students can read very quickly without a clear understanding of the text material. The fact that reading rate is easily measured, and is often used as the only measure of this important aspect of reading, further complicates the issue.

So building students' reading rates is important but not at the expense of comprehension.

1.6.4 Prosody

The notion of prosody has to do with the ability to make sense to the text. Prosody adds up nice sounds to the text, as it helps successfully understanding the passage. Even though automaticity, accuracy, and rate have a basic role in improving the students' reading fluency, prosody is the fourth requirement that make sense to reading fluency.

Several definitions are proposed to the term "prosody":

The prosody component of reading fluency stresses the appropriate use of phrasing and expression

(Dowhower et al, 1987)

The quotation leads to the idea that the suitable usage of expressions is considered as prosody.

"The ability to read with expression and with reading that sounds like speaking"

(Evanchan, 2010: 12)

We realize that prosody is the way words are read and interpreted and so can directly impact the students' comprehension, whether they understand what they are reading or have read. This is to say, it is the proficient use of prosody that provides the nuances and interpretations when reading.

In other words, when readers enrich the oral expression with different components such as appropriate volume, tone, emphasis, phrasing. They convince the audience or the hearers that they are effectively understanding the passage they are reading.

It is the same to those fluent musicians who interpret or construct meaning from a musical score through the strain, style of verbal expression , and fluctuation in tone and volume, expressive interpretation of the text are alike used by fluent readers .

reading fluency is multidimensional – one dimension stresses automaticity, a second dimension centers the importance of accuracy in word decoding, a third dimension focuses on quick and automatic recognition of words in connected text, and the final one stresses expressive and meaningful interpretation of text. These dimensions are related to one another – accurate and automatic reading creates the conditions for expressive reading.

All these features must be encompassed in order to build the effective comprehension and overall good reading. If one element lacks; the meaning of reading fluency will be not accomplished

1.7 Aspects of Prosody

1.7.1 Intonation: has to do with the tone of the reader, the way he rises and falls his voice. When the reader uses intonation properly; this means that he is aware about the meaning of the expression.

1.7.2 Punctuation: has to do with the stops and the pauses they should respect in order to influence the listeners' attention. Punctuation has an efficient role in inspiring the readers' comprehension.

1.7.3 Phrasing: is the process of expressing in words.

1.7.4 Stress: helps to make the difference between the parts of speech.
 Such is the importance placed on prosody that Dudley & Mather assert that

When readers are able to mirror the inflections of spoken language, they are demonstrating their abilities to comprehend the text, self-monitor, and self-correct their reading errors".   **(Dudley & Mather, 2005:22)**

1.8 Assessment of Reading Fluency

Assessment in general is a process that happens to measure to which point or level a particular activity is attained. The measurement can be done in different ways. Tom Rasinski talked a lot about reading education and according to Tom, in reading fluency, assessment is usually done to check students' achievement in reading fluency and have an eye on the progress that's happening at that level.

Assessment is the process of generating, gathering, recording, interpreting, using and reporting evidence of learning in individuals, groups or systems, which relies upon a number of instruments, one of which may be a test. Educational assessment provides information about progress in learning.   **(NCCA, 2007: 4)**

But before this assessment should have particular characteristics. First, it must be reliable and valid, this means to be sure from the results obtained and these results must be coordinated to the general measures of reading proficiency. Second, assessment should also be quick and easy to permit teachers to measure students' progress, and in our opinion assessing reading fluency frequently ends up with improving reading fluency.

Since experts agreed on the three components of reading (accuracy, automaticity, and prosody), assessing reading fluency means assessing these three major components: First, assessing accuracy, accurate decoding of words. Second, assessing automaticity, the spontaneity in decoding words. Finally, assessing prosody, the use of expressions when reading.

1.8.1 Assessing Accuracy

Assessing accuracy means measuring students' accurate decoding of words. Measurement of students' word-reading accuracy can take numerous forms. Simply listening to oral reading and counting the number of errors per 100 words can provide invaluable information for the selection of appropriate text for various instructional purposes for an individual or group of students. A running record and miscue analysis (Clay, 1984, 1993) provides more detailed information about the student's accuracy.

Through careful examination of error patterns, a teacher can determine which strategies the student is using and which strategies the student is failing to use. For example, observation of a student's attempts to figure out a strange word might yield evidence of phonemic blending, guessing based on context, or a combination of decoding and contextual analysis. These observations can provide information about areas in need of further instruction to improve word-reading accuracy.

1.8.2 Assessing Rate

Jenkins et al, (2003) suggest Contextual reading rather than reading words in a list, while **Fuchs et al, (2001)** prefer oral reading rather than silent reading. These suggestions were both found to be the best measures of reading rate. Reading rate is measurement of word recognition automaticity .Measuring reading rate should encompass consideration of both word reading automaticity and reading speed in connected text. Assessment of automaticity can include tests of sight-word knowledge or tests of decoding rate. Tests of decoding rate often consist of rapid decoding of non-words. Measurement of non-word reading rate ensures that the construct being assessed is the student's ability to automatically decode words using sound–symbol knowledge.

Measurement of reading speed is most typically accomplished through timed readings. Timings of a student's reading of connected text allows a teacher to observe the number of words read correctly and the number of errors made in a given time period. Data from timed readings are usually recorded on a timing chart. Timed readings (Samuels, 1979) can be used to measure and increase word-reading accuracy and passage-reading rate. Timed readings are conducted using books or passages the student has read before

that are at an independent reading level (i.e., books the student can read with 95% accuracy or above). To conduct timed readings, follow these steps:

Record a baseline rate on a new passage by having the student read the passage without knowing that he or she is being timed. The number of words read correctly for that minute are recorded as the baseline. Note the errors as the student reads. After the reading, discuss any errors and work on them by rereading the parts that were difficult or by doing word-study activities. Set a goal for the next reading by asking the student to read five or six more words, or maybe another line. The goal should be a reasonable one that can be attained within the next few attempts. If the student made three or more errors in the first attempt, the goal may be to decrease the errors and keep the correct word per minute (CWPM) the same.

Record the goal on the graph with a highlighter. Time the student again for one minute and record the CWPM and errors. Discuss the errors; set another goal and repeat the process. Timings should be done at least three times per week in order to build consistency. When the student levels off and is no longer increasing the CWPM, it is time to select a new passage. Select a new passage and begin the process again by taking a baseline reading. Once students become familiar with the procedures involved in timed readings, they can record their own progress on the timing chart, record an audiotape of their own oral reading and chart their progress, or work in pairs to listen and record the reading rate and accuracy of their peers.

1.8.3 Assessing Prosody

A student's reading prosody can be measured only through observation of an oral reading of a connected text. During the reading of a passage, a teacher can listen to the student's inflection, expression, and phrase boundaries. The following is a simple checklist of oral reading prosody observation:

Student placed vocal emphasis on appropriate words.. Student's voice tone rose and fell at appropriate points in the text. Student's inflection reflected the punctuation in the text (e.g., voice tone rose near the end of a question). In narrative text with dialogue, student used appropriate vocal tone to represent characters' mental states, such as excitement, sadness, fear, or confidence. Student used punctuation to pause appropriately at phrase boundaries.

Student used prepositional phrases to pause appropriately at phrase boundaries. Student used subject–verb divisions to pause appropriately at phrase boundaries. Student used conjunctions to pause appropriately at phrase boundaries.

A more quantifiable scale that provides a score that can be used to compare a student against him or herself across time or between students in a class or school can be found in Zutell and Rasinski (1991). Prosody in oral reading should signal reading comprehension of the reader and enhance listening comprehension of the listener. That is, prosodic readers understand what they read and make it easier for others as well.

1.9 Factors that hinder Reading Fluency

Multiple factors impede students to be fluent in reading here are the most important factors:

1.9.1 Intrinsic Factors

Intrinsic motivation: This deals with all what is internal means comes from the inside of the student .when finishing reading this study everyone will understand that motivation is selected as the main solutions to overcome some of the obstacles that do not allow students to go on their ways to become fluent readers. No external rewards are required to incite the intrinsically motivated person into action. The reward is the behavior itself. Logically, this seems like an ideal, for people to act as "origins" of their behavior rather than "pawns" (de Charms, 1968). However, it is certainly not the case that every real world behavior stems from an intrinsic energy.

1.9.2 Physical and Physiological Factors

Reading a text requires visual and auditory qualification.

1.9.2.1 Visual Adequacies: Reading requires the sense of sight

1.9.2.2 Visual acuity: What a reader must do visually in order to read efficiently (Dechant,1964):
- Coordinate the eyes
- Move the eyes along line of print
- Make proper return sweeps
- See clearly and distinctly both near and far
- Change focus
- Fuse the impressions of each eye into a single image
- Have a visual memory for what was seen
- Sustain visual concentration
- Have good hand-eye coordination
- Accurately perceive size and distance relationships

1.9.3 Visual Defects

Refractive errors: myopia (nearsightedness) & hyperopia (farsightedness) Astigmatism Binocular difficulties -Strabismus -Aniseikonia Symptoms of Visual Difficulty (Rubin, 1982) Complains of constant headaches. Has a red or watery eye or eyes with red rims, swollen lids and frequent sties. Squints while reading. Asks to sit loser to the chalkboard and cannot seem to sit still while doing close work

Holds the books very close to his/her face while reading .Skips lots of words or sentences while reading. Makes many reversals while reading. Confuses letters, Avoids reading, Mouths the words or lip reads, Confuses similar words, Makes many repetitions

while reading, Skips lines while reading, Has difficulty remembering what he/she just read silently

1.9.4 Auditory Adequacies

There are four major ways in which hearing loss affects: first, it causes delay in the development of receptive and expressive communication skills (speech and language).

Second, the language deficit causes learning problems that result in reduced academic achievement. Third, Communication difficulties often lead to social isolation and poor self-concept. Finally, it may have an impact on vocational choices.

1.9.5 Specific Effects

These effects consist in the vocabulary, the sentence structure, speaking and academic achievement.

1.9.5.1 Vocabulary

Vocabulary develops more slowly in children who have hearing loss. Children with hearing loss learn concrete words like cat, jump, five, and red more easily than abstract words like before, after, equal to, and jealous. They also have difficulty with function words like the, an, are, and a. The gap between the vocabulary of children with normal hearing and those with hearing loss widens with age. Children with hearing loss do not catch up without intervention.

Children with hearing loss have difficulty understanding words with multiple meanings. For example, the word bank can mean the edge of a stream or a place where we put money.

1.9.5.2 Sentence Structure

Children with hearing loss comprehend and produce shorter and simpler sentences than children with normal hearing. Children with hearing loss often have difficulty understanding and writing complex sentences, such as those with relative clauses ("The teacher whom I have for math was sick today.") or passive voice ("The ball was thrown by Mary.") Children with hearing loss often cannot hear word endings such as -s or -ed. This leads to misunderstandings and misuse of verb tense, pluralization, non-agreement of subject and verb, and possessives.

1.9.5.3 Speaking

Children with hearing loss often cannot hear quiet speech sounds such as "s," "sh," "f," "t," and "k" and therefore do not include them in their speech. Thus, speech may be difficult to understand. Children with hearing loss may not hear their own voices when they speak. They may speak too loudly or not loud enough. They may have a speaking

pitch that is too high. They may sound like they are mumbling because of poor stress, poor inflection, or poor rate of speaking.

1.9.5.4 Academic Achievement

Children with hearing loss have difficulty with all areas of academic achievement, especially reading and mathematical concepts. Children with mild to moderate hearing losses, on average, achieve one to four grade levels lower than their peers with normal hearing, unless appropriate management occurs.

Children with severe to profound hearing loss usually achieve skills no higher than the third- or fourth-grade level, unless appropriate educational intervention occurs early. The gap in academic achievement between children with normal hearing and those with hearing loss usually widens as they progress through school. The level of achievement is related to parental involvement and the quantity, quality, and timing of the support services children receive.

1.9.6 Social Functioning

Children with severe to profound hearing losses often report feeling isolated, without friends, and unhappy in school, particularly when their socialization with other children with hearing loss is limited. These social problems appear to be more frequent in children with mild or moderate hearing losses than in those with a severe to profound loss.

1.9.7 Perceptual Factors

The perceptual factors in reading: a quantitative study of the psychological processes involved in word perception / by Francis Marion Hamilton.

1.9.8 Internal Factors

They consist in self-concept, beliefs, expectations, inner needs, and response salience and they are described as follows:

1.9.8.1 Self-concept

The way a person views the world depends a great deal on the concept or image he has about himself. The concept plays an internal role in perceptual selectivity.

1.9.8.2 Beliefs

A person's beliefs have profound influence on his perception. Thus, a fact is conceived not on what it is but what a person believes it to be.

1.9.8.3 Expectations

These affect what a person perceives. A technical manager may expect ignorance about the technical features of a product from non-technical people.

1.9.8.4 Inner Needs

The need is a feeling of tension or discomfort, when one thinks he is missing something. People with different needs experience different stimuli. According to Freud, wishful thinking is the means by which the Id attempts to achieve tension reduction.

1.9.8.5 Response Salience

It is the set of disposition which are determined not by the familiarity of the stimulus situations, but by the person's own cognitive predispositions. Thus, a particular problem may be viewed as a marketing problem by marketing personnel, a control problem by accounting people and human relations problem by personnel people.

1.10 Strategies to Develop Reading Fluency

Learning to read includes more than just decoding words. Students need to build fluency to be a solid reader .to be so there are several strategies that teachers as well as students can follow whether to teach or to learn reading. A student's fluency develops in steps and over time. At first readers are simply less choppy. With strategies and practice, they soon become more confident. They'll begin reading in short phrases, then longer and more complete sentences. Reading fluency can be improved if students follow one of the coming strategies:

1.10.1 Repeated Reading

one of the best methods to help students improve their reading is by making them repeat the same passage or text for many times or practice repeated reading, This latter provides the rehearsal required to build accuracy, speed and confidence, and was one of the major recommendations of the NRP to develop fluency. Teachers can apply repeated reading as follow: collect several books that should be appropriate to the level of students and in which the majority of words are familiar to students. Teacher chooses a specific text that shouldn't be too long in order not to make students get bored. The text contains between 200 to 250 words. The teacher must varies the types of text used for repeated reading, including poems, short stories and even jokes. After that teacher asks students to rad the selected passage and here reading can be silent at their desks, library or at home.

1.10.2 Partner and Choral Reading

This includes the part of students who learn from hearing others read , In this case teacher should provide learners with much opportunities to hear each other ,this is a sort of partner reading .It can be between two or more students , One student reads aloud the text the others listen and then take their turns to read too. Teacher matches students on the same level so they can both succeed and help each other. This strategy can be used with sections of story books, poems, and non-fiction books.

1.10.3 Timed Repeated Readings

It was described by Samuels in 1979; this strategy is used so often today. According to him timed repeated reading consists of selecting a short passage at the student's instructional level, setting a rate criterion, and having the student read and reread the passage over time until the rate criterion is reached.

1.10.4 Poetry Reading

Here the work is based on poetry; there is huge amount of poetry that can be used for improving reading fluency. Samuels saw that poetry assists reading fluency because it has a natural rhythm when read aloud. Phrases written onto sentence strips can serve as cue cards, to show students how good readers cluster portions of text rather than saying each word separately. The exercise is even better if the students are able to present the well-practiced poem to another class or school assembly.

1.10.5 The Oral Reading Rate

It is determined by timing the student for one minute and then counting how many correct words were read. Charting of the rate is recommended as a means of record keeping and of maintaining motivation with the student. This method, which focus on increasing rate and accuracy, typically measure the number of words correctly read in one minute and involve the student in charting data. For example, Great Leaps Reading uses phonics timings to increase decoding automaticity, sight-phrase timings to increase recognition of high-frequency words, and story timings to increase the rate of reading connected text.

1.10.6 Read Naturally

It is a repeated reading method that includes both audio-taped and computer models. Read Naturally combines supported oral reading and independent repeated reading. The student begins with a one-minute "cold" reading to the teacher or computer. Then, the student practices reading the same passage three or four times while listening to a recorded fluent model. The student then continues independent practice without the recording. Finally, the student reads to the teacher or computer again. In the computer

version, the student can receive feedback during the independent reading by clicking on difficult words and noting where they stopped during each timed reading.

1.10.7 Radio Reading

Radio reading is a variation of Readers Theatre for older students that add sound effects to make the performance sound like an old time radio show. Groups of students can create recorded versions of their "radio shows" that can become listening center readings for their classmates. Students can even generate questions to pose to listeners at the end of the recording. Radio reading reinforces the importance of prosody, because so much information from the story must be communicated through vocal variation. National Public Radio has an old-time radio show called Theatre of the Mind. For struggling readers, having the opportunity to record, listen, and rerecord can be a powerful method for increasing reading fluency. This approach promotes independent judgment and goal setting, along with ownership of the process. Amplification. Whisper phones or phonic phones are a low-tech method of amplifying one's own voice.

1.11 Conclusion

Reading fluency took the attention of several experts, who were looking for good readers. Many researches had been done to provide clear understanding of the issue of reading fluency. Scholars did not agree on one definition, there used to be numerous definitions concerning that issue since it includes different components which are the fundamental elements of reading fluency. As, they provide students with good guidance, but unfortunately not too many solutions had been taken into consideration to improve the reading fluency level. Researchers end up by figuring out the reasons behind the instant level and the factors that hinder reading fluency rather than solutions for ameliorating reading level and giving birth to fluent readers.

However, different strategies were found and suggested by researchers to help the students to be fluent such as repeated reading which as students believe is the most appropriate technique that help ameliorate the level of reading proficiency, choral, poetry, radio reading and different ways are seen as helpful ones. These methods are designed to increase rate and automaticity, students can benefit from them. So, each reader must get an appropriate technique that may be suitable for him in his path towards fluency.

Chapter Two
Field Study

2.1. Introduction

So far, we have presented a review of related literature to reading fluency. The next step of any research design is to move to something more practical. As long as our research is concerned, the most suitable method is the descriptive one. However, the researcher may have to draw on range of different procedures for collecting needs data, such as: observations, meetings, tests and questionnaires. It is really necessary to employ all these procedures and the choice will obviously depend on the aim of the research work, the sample under investigation, the time available and the nature of the data collected. The questionnaire is perhaps the most widely used for eliciting information from some target informants relative to their goals, attitudes and backgrounds. In this study, we have made use of a questionnaire for Students which is designed for inviting them to contribute information on their actual state of learning. In addition to an interview for a university teacher of reading.

This chapter clarifies the research design in terms of the aim, the administration and the description. Moreover, it also contains the analysis of students' questionnaire.

2.2 Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire is delivered to first, second and third LMD students at Tiaret University.

2.2.1 Aim of the Questionnaire

This questionnaire is mainly designed to diagnose the students' evaluation of their obstacles in reading fluency.

2.2.2 Administration of the Questionnaire

Given the impossibility to conduct the research on the whole population under investigation, we have administered the questionnaire to first, second and third-year LMD students. It is worthy to mention that the questionnaire took placeon 13/05/2018, with a totality of (65) sixty five students. The questionnaire wasadministered to eighty (80) students, among of which we have not taken into consideration the answers of fifteen (15) students because open-ended questions were not answered. The questionnaire was administered in a friendly and relaxed environment. The questions were clear enough in order to help the students understand and thus provide appropriate answers.

2.2.3 Description of the Questionnaire

In designing the present questionnaire for research purposes, the items required answers with dichotomies (yes/no question), or picking up the most appropriate answer from a range of options, or open-ended questions asking the students to give their opinions or to explain their choices. The questions were divided into four sections each one of which covers the variables selected and each particular aspect of our study.

Section One: personal information (Q1–Q2):

In this section the students were asked to indicate theirage in (Q1). In (Q2), students were asked to indicate their sex.

Section two: general questions (Q3_ Q5):

Students were asked toclassify the four skills in terms of importance(Listening, reading,speaking andwriting) in Q3.in (Q4) students were asked how do they find reading in English: four (04) rating options were proposed ranged from very easy, easy, difficult or very difficult. In (Q5) they were asked they find it difficult to understand (words, ideas, or other)

Section three: students' perception of the reading skill (Q6-Q15):

This section seeks information about some aspects of the readingskill. In the first place, students are asked if they read in their free time in (Q6).in (Q7) they were asked what do they generally read(stories, novels, or articles).students were asked about their reading difficulties in (Q8).Then, in (Q9) they were asked when did this problem start .In (Q10) students were asked if this problem has become(worse, better, or remained the same).students were asked how they feel when they are about to read in (Q11). In (Q12) they were asked how do they consider their reading ability(very weak, weak, average, or good). They were asked how often do they practice reading in classroom In (always, sometimes, rarely, or never) in (Q13). In (Q14), students wereasked about whether they are given the opportunity to read in class or not. In (Q15) students were asked if teachers encourage them to read or not.

Section four: students' difficultiesand strategies (Q16-Q17)

In the (Q16) students were asked about the factors that may hinder reading fluency. In (Q17) they were asked to suggest any strategy that may help them overcome their reading difficulties.

2.2.4 Data collection and analysis:
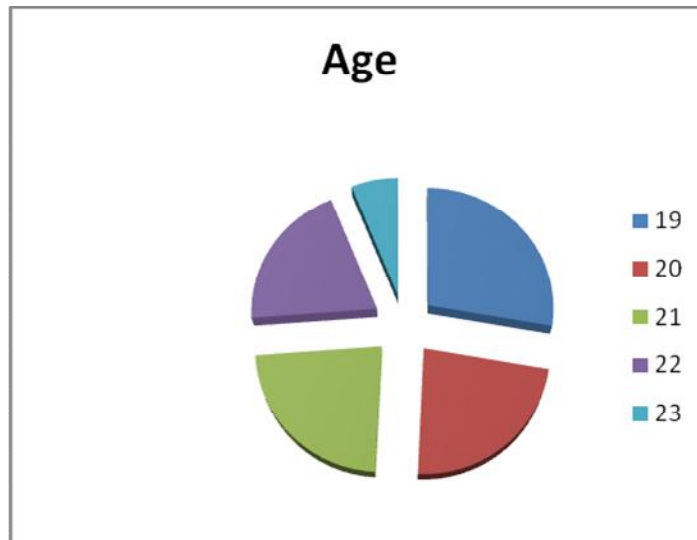
Section One: personal information

Q1. Age

Age	Subjects	%
19	18	27,69
20	15	23,07
21	15	23,07
22	13	20
23	4	6.15
Total	65	100

Table01 Students' Age

29

Graph Students' Age

Age subject

  The age of students wobble between 19 to 23 years old. From the result, we noticed that most of learners are approximately at the same age wobble between 19 and 23 year old also we noticed that there are five age groups in our selected sample, we have the group of 19 years old represented 27, 69% which make the whole population .both 20 and 21   years old presented 23.07 %. In addition, 22 years old represented 20% and the students that their ages 23year old are only 6.15% of the students.

Q2. Sex

Sex	Subjects	%
Male	18	27.96
Female	47	72.31
Total	65	100

Table 02: Respondents Distribution on Basis of Gender
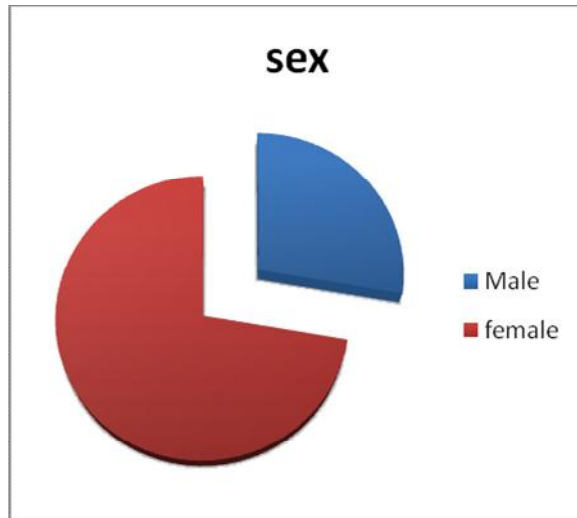
Graph 02 Respondents Distribution on Basis of Gender

A quick glance at this table will show that female students outnumber males. In fact we have recorded 18 male subject (27, 69%) out of total of sixty five students, whereas the rest was of female sex, that is forty seven (72, 31%) are female subject. This adds nothing to this work except that girls are expected to be more interested in collaborating.

Section tow: general questions

Q3 Classify the following skills in terms of importance

Options	Subjects	%
Listening	5	7.96
Reading	12	18.46
Speaking	35	53.84
Writing	13	20
Total	65	100

Table03 The Importance of skills
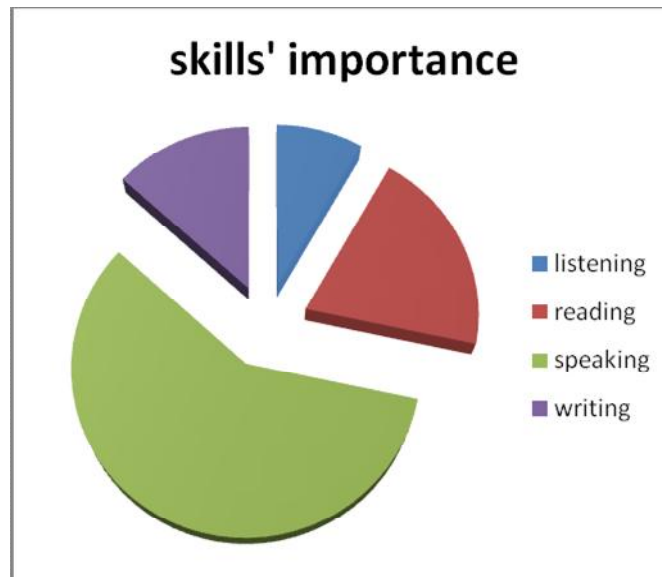
Graph03: The importance of Skills

For this section, the third question was to ask subjects to classify the four skills in terms of importance. The most important skill for them is the speaking skill (53.84%) of the respondents (N=35) picked the speaking skill first, while (18.46%) of the respondents put the reading skill first. Then, it is followed by the writing skill (20%) and listening skill (07.96%). The final classification we get from table N°3 is the following: the speakingskill first; the reading skill second; the writing and the listening skill are third and fourth respectively. The aim of this question is to know to what extent the reading skill is important for them. From the result we notice that the reading skill is their second choice may be reading provides them with a large supply of vocabulary items.

Q4. How do you find reading in English?

Options	subjects	%
Very easy	7	10.76
Easy	41	63.07
Difficult	14	21.53
Very difficult	3	4.61
Total	65	100

Table 04: Students' Attitudes toward Reading
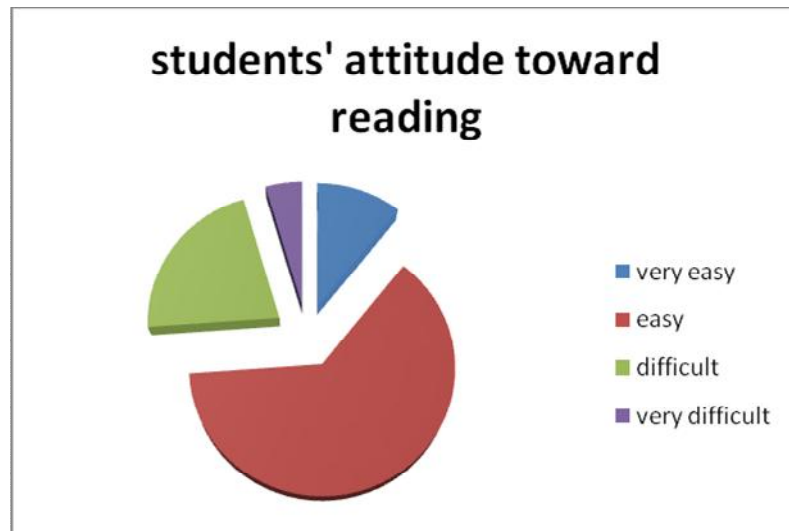
Graph04 Students' Attitudes toward Reading

Subjects, here, are asked to say whether they find reading easy, very easy, difficult or very difficult. The majority of respondents 41 orabout (63.07%) believe that reading in English is easy, about (10.76 %) said it is very easy, against (21.53%) who find it difficult and Only 3 of them finds it very difficult.

For ranking reading by difficulty, most students (63.07%) find that reading is easy. This, however, does not necessarily mean that they are good readers. Those, who find reading difficult and very difficult, might represent the proportion of students who never read, or participate in reading sessions.

Q5. You find it difficult to understand:

Options	Subjects	%
Words	27	41.53
Ideas	38	58.47
Other	0	0
Total	65	100

Table05 Students' major Reading Difficulties
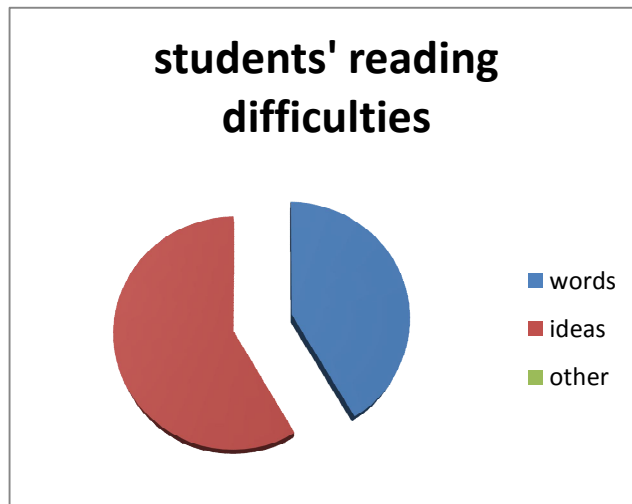
Graph05 Students' major Reading Difficulties

The majority of students or about (58.47) find difficulties in understanding ideas this, however, does not mean that they do not find difficulties in understanding words, sine (51.43) face problem in understanding words.

Section three: students' perception of the reading skill

Q6. Do you read in your free time?

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	25	38.47
No	40	61.53
Total	65	100

Table6: Reading in Free Time
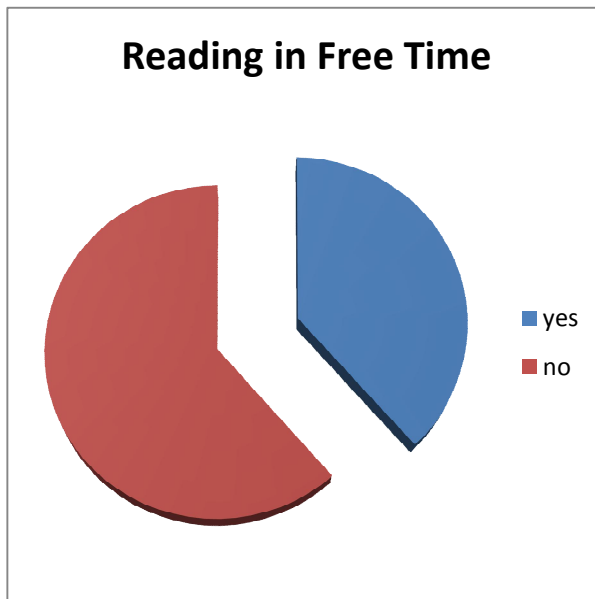
Graph06 Reading in Free Time

Students here are asked whether they read in their free time or not. 40 students of the population answered by "no"; this means that this is one among the reasons that let them find difficulties while reading. On the other hand, (38.47) subjects answered by "yes".

Q7.What do you generally read?

Options	subjects	%
Stories	35	53.84
Novels	16	24.61
Articles	14	21.53
Total	65	100

Table07 Reading Material
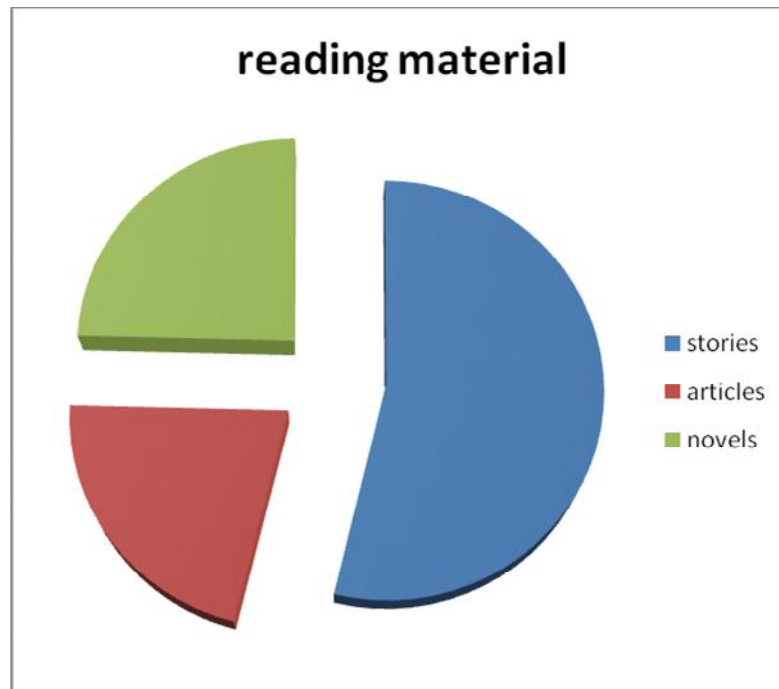
Graph 07 Reading Material

Students were asked what do they read in their free time. (53.84ofrespondents answered by stories. Students who read novels were about (24.61).the rest which is about (21.53) read articles; this is a small number comparing to those who read stories.

Q8. What is your reading difficulty?

Most of students answers were the new word (unfamiliar words) .some of them find difficulties in understanding the general meaning of the idea even if they understand the meaning of all words. Others difficulty was the weak vocabulary; since they have weak vocabulary they cannot read the word and understand the meaning at the same time. Only one student among them does not find difficulties, this means that he probably reached reading fluency.

Q9. When did this reading problem start?

The majority of students faced this problem in the middle school, which means when they are asked the first time to read .others responses were in the secondary school; this problem occurs may be because they face new words .In addition to the level which is getting difficult. Some students face this problem at university due to the difficult context especially when they immerse in the details.

Q10.Over time, this problem has become (please check one)

options	subjects	%
worse	20	30.76
better	35	53.84
Remained the same	10	15.38
total	65	100

Table08 Students Level of Reading
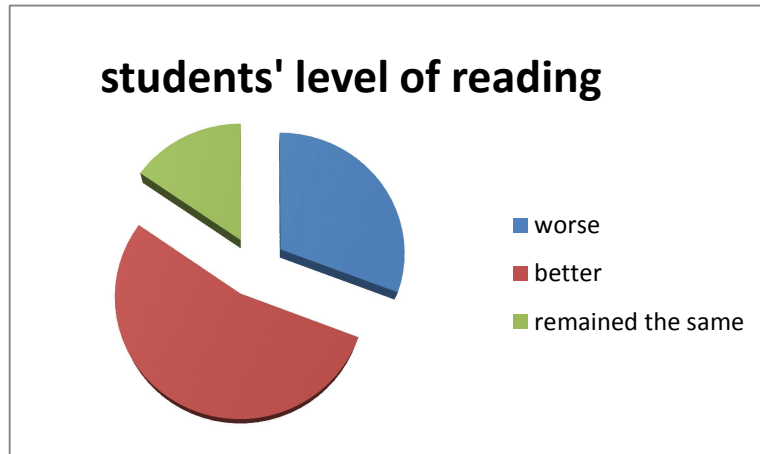
Graph08 Students' Level of Reading

The aim of this question was whether their problem of reading has become worse, better or remained the same. 35 (53.84) of respondents answers were better. (30.76) of students responded with worse. And only 10 of them their problem remained the same.

Q11. How do you feel when you are about to read?

Options	subjects	%
Relaxed	20	30.76
Comfortable	25	38.46
Anxious	10	15.38
Annoyed	3	4.61
Fearful	7	10.76
Total	65	100

Table09 Students' Feeling
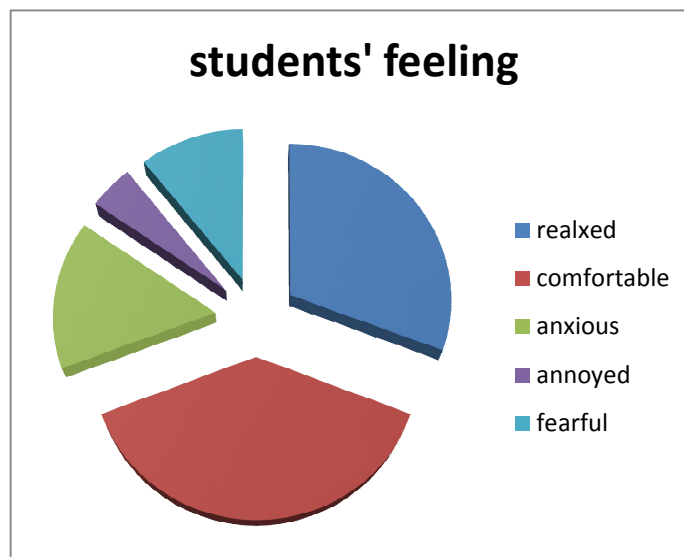
Grapg09 Students' Feeling

From the analysis of the questionnaire, students who feel comfortable are about (38.46). 20(30.76) of them feel relaxed. Those who feel anxious are about (15.38). 7 students feel fearful and only 3 students feel annoyed this may be because they are not interesting in the reading lessons.

We notice that majority of students feel relaxed (30.76) and confortable (38.46) they are about to read.

Q12.How do you consider your reading ability?

Options	subjects	%
Very weak	0	0
Weak	10	15.38
Average	35	53.84
Good	20	30.76
Total	65	100

Table10 Students' Reading Ability
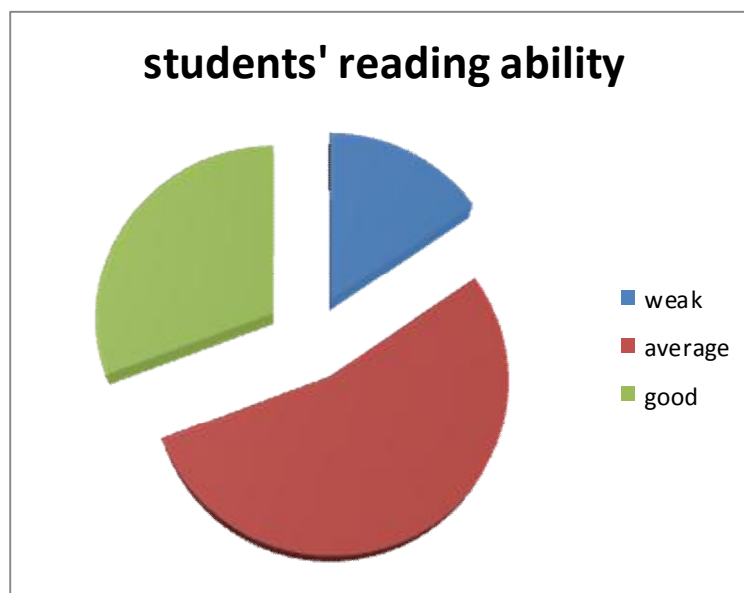
Graph10 Students' Reading Ability

Students, here, are required to describe their reading ability. It seems to us that a majority of students 35, translating into (53.84) %, agree that they have an average level in reading. However, 20students out of 65 believe that their level in reading is good, 10 of them consider their reading ability weak. No one has opted for the 'very weak' option. If we lend ourselves to these results, it seems to us that the majority of students havean average command of reading, probably, because they are not interested in reading , This means that students need practice in reading to be able to develop their reading skill to be better.

Q13.How often do you practice reading in classroom?

Options	subjects	%
Always	**10**	**15.38**
Sometimes	**35**	**53.85**
Rarely	**15**	**23.07**
Never	**5**	**7.70**
Total	**65**	**100**

Table11 Students' Practices of Reading
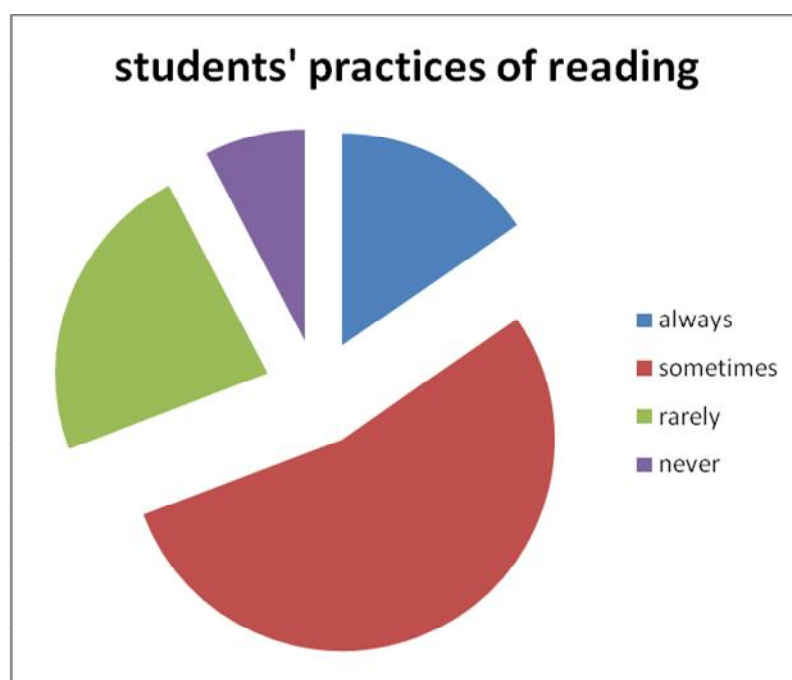
Graph11 Students' Practices of Reading

The majority of the learners 53.85% responded with 'sometimes', 23.07% participants responded by 'rarely'.15.38% of students responded with always and this small number if we compare it with the number of population, in addition to 7.70% are answered by 'never'.

Q14. Are you given the opportunity to read in the class?

Options	subjects	%
Yes	55	84.61
No	10	15.38
Total	65	100

Table12 Opportunity Given to Students to Read
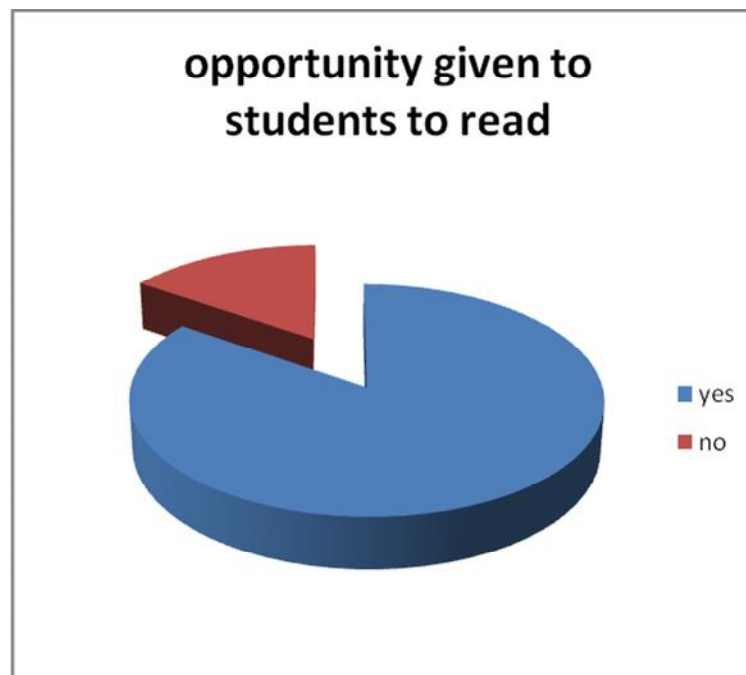
Graph12 Opportunity Given to Students to Read

  (Q14) was whether they are given the opportunity to read or not, this question aims whether their abstaining during the reading course is due to internal or external factors. It was not surprising that fifty five (84.71%) of the subjects picked "yes" as an answer while only ten (15.38%) said "no". so, the number of yeses shows that respondents are given the opportunity to read in the class and that those who do not take part in reading is due to some internal factors.

Q15. Do teachers encourage students to read?

options	subjects	%
Yes	48	73.84
No	17	26.15
total	65	100

Table13 Teachers' Encouragement
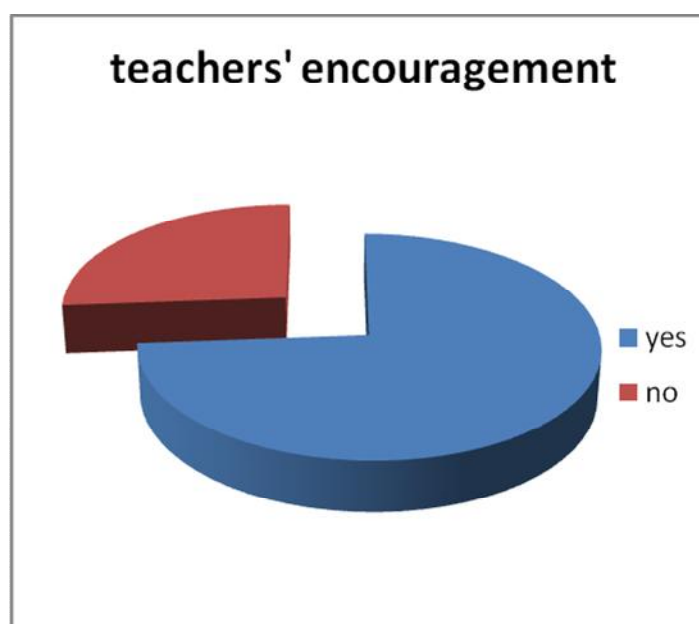
Graph13 Teachers' Encouragement

From the result, we formed that 73.84% of the students answered by 'yes' while the rest of participants 26.15% answered by 'no' but it is important on the part of the teacher to encourage his/her students to read for the sake of improving their level of reading.

D) Students difficulties and strategies:

Q16. What are the factors that may hinder reading fluency?

The aim of this item is to investigate the factors that may hinder students' reading fluency. Only (40%) of the students have answered this question, maybe the rest of students do not have enough knowledge to notice such factors. The students who answered have mentioned few factors such as the lack of confidence, shyness, deficient vocabulary, lack of background knowledge, the uncomfortable environment ,lack of motivation and most importantly the lack of practice.

Q17. How can you overcome your reading difficulties?

This question aims at providing strategies to reach reading fluency. (43%) of participants have answered this question, they mentioned some strategies which consist in: using easy materials, the repeated reading method, partner reading, group reading, and reading in free time. When analyzing these replies, we notice that most of students are not aware about the strategies that should be used to help them overcome their reading obstacles.

2.3 Interview

This interview was conducted for a university teacher of reading .it contains different types of questions concerning the issue if reading fluency.

Question 1: How many years have you taught reading?

Answer 1: I taught reading for 6 years.

Question 2: Did you do a research about reading during your high studies?

Answer2: Yes i did advanced research on reading during my high studies.

Question 3: According to your experience, how would you describe the reading level among university students?

Answer3: Reading is not giving as much importance. So the majority of students don't have a good level in reading. They also lack the techniques to read well.

Question4: About how much time in total do you devote to reading practice?

Answer4: 3 hours per week devoted for reading skill.

Question5: Why do many struggling readers have difficulty becoming fluent readers?

Answer5:

There are a great many easy answers to this question and some not so easy. The most important thing to keep remembering is the fact that not all learners learn to read in

the same way. A good teacher has to be something of a quick-eyed, quick-eared detective to sleuth out the reasons for each individual learner.

The most common reason for not being a fluent reader is that the some students do not yet know how to decode very well yet. They lack automatic decoding skills and this prevents them from being able to read accurately, much less smoothly and quickly. Decoding accuracy is the first prerequisite to fluency. It is important to understand what is impeding your student's acquiring the letter-sound rules that underlie decoding. Two major possibilities are: 1) a poor match with the student's reading program — some programs spend too little time with learning phonics rules. These programs assume most learners will infer the letter-sound rules.

In addition, there are other learners whose decoding skills are accurate but halting, and who simply need a great deal of practice. For these learners the best resource for a teacher is to supply your student with every opportunity to practice — from story books to cook books to comic books. During this period of honing fluency, I advise keeping video games and television as "out of sight" as possible, or on the back burner. If you do allow some games, make them ones dependent on print! Find every avenue possible that encourages print reading (For example, make spontaneous visits to interactive museums where directions need to be read; have a weekly library trip; make a habit of list making; write notes to this learner with directions and instructions; play games with the family that encourage these skills like scrabble, etc.)

Question 6: What contributes to making a fluent reader?

Answer6:

First, keenly developed phoneme awareness skills in middle and secondary school. Second, the learner needs to become as automatic as possible in learning to decode. Every opportunity to practice is a gift to the developing reader. Practice, practice, practice, in every form and medium.

Now these three things: phoneme awareness, automatic decoding skills, and practice you probably already knew before you came to this course. But there are two or three areas that you might not know that can contribute mightily to the development of fluency. First, vocabulary development: believe it or not, the more you know about a word, the faster you can read it. And the converse is true. If you don't know what a word means, it can slow your system down. One of the easiest most rewarding contributions you can make to your student's growth of fluency begins with word knowledge. The student who knows that the same words can be used in multiple ways depending on the context is already bringing more knowledge to what they read that will translate into more speed and thus more fluency and comprehension in reading. It's all in knowing all that goes into a word.

Question 7: How does fluency develop?

Answer 7:

Most research viewed fluency as an outcome. And for years most people have used something called "repeated reading" techniques as the best way to increase fluency. It is a method where the reader is given a passage at his/her level or just above (90-95% accuracy), and reads it repeatedly till their reading becomes smooth, accurate, and faster. This is a great method for the student who already has some skills, but you can tell it is aimed at an outcome view of fluency, not a whole developmental process perspective.

2.3.1 Discussion

The analysis of students' questionnaire stated that students are not aware about the factors that hinder their reading fluency that is why the majority of them could not provide us with the most important techniques that help them improve their reading fluency. We collect data about background information of each student from the sample selected, and then in part two reading was their second choice in terms of importance.

In this section the majority of respondents believe that reading is easy. In part three, minority of students read in their free time, consequently they face multiple difficulties which consist in: deficiency in understanding the new words because they do not have much vocabulary. Besides, the deficiency in understanding the general meaning of the idea especially when get through the details. This questionnaire stated that the majority of students' problems started in the middle school. Although they are encouraged and given the opportunity by teachers to read, they do not have a good level in reading. Finally, the last section analysis stated that the students' problem is due to various factors such as, students' background, lack of practice, lack of motivation, shyness, and fear of making mistakes. Respondents have suggested different strategies for instance, choosing easy material, for beginners, repeated reading, autonomous reading, partner reading, and exploiting the free time in reading short enjoyable stories.

2.4 Conclusion

Reading fluency is the concern of every student who wants to fortify his capacities and be one of those fluent readers. This fluency in reading can be achieved through serious practice and constant repetition. Being university students help us to find out the major difficulties and the factors that obstruct the path to reading fluency.

Our participants were melange of first, second, and third year LMD students. Some of them helped us in a serious way by providing us with the different answers, and enriching the work positively. Oppositely, others were not cooperative since they did not seriously answer the open ended questions.

All in all, the positive results revealed in this study concerning the reasons behind the deficiency of reading, the factors that impede reading fluency, and the strategies that can help students develop their reading fluency have confirmed our hypothesis.

Lack of motivation, lack of practice, students' background, and other various features obstruct reading fluency. There are multiple helpful techniques for improving students' reading fluency such as; motivating students to read authentic material, encouraging autonomous reading, partner reading, and choosing easy material.

Chapter Three
Suggestions
&
Recommendations

3.1 Introduction

The fruit of this work is provided in this chapter since it is loaded with helpful, crucial and serious suggestions can serve individuals, learners, and teachers to both enquire basic abilities, and improve the skill of reading fluency.

We think our Reading Fluency scores need to be interpreted with caution. For example, a consultation with the Reading Teacher may be needed to distinguish slow, deliberate readers, who use prediction and context strategies, from those who concentrate on word identification.

3.1.1 Some Report Recommendations for Slow, Deliberate Readers

(This student) needs to practice reading as much as possible. A daily period of DEAR - Drop Everything And Read (alternatively, Uninterrupted, Sustained Silent Reading (USSR) is highly recommended. Many opportunities should be created for him/her to read aloud in school and at home. It would help to expose him/her to as many different magazines as possible and to continue providing additional copies of any magazines that seem to grab his/her interest. As it would be helpful to follow up (this student's) interests and hobbies with related catalogs and books. If we can find any fiction or non-fiction books that seem to interest (this student), we should seek similar books for him/her.

It would be helpful for teachers and parents to read aloud in tandem with (the student); that is, simultaneously. This may help make the reading experience more pleasant for (the student), and the practice with tandem oral reading may help increase the student's reading speed

"Some students have learned basic phonics, but need instruction in syllabication skills so they can quickly and easily break unfamiliar, long words into correctly readable chunks. A recommendation to this effect could be added."

3.1.2. Some Techniques for those Students who Rely too Heavily on Phonics

(This student's) need is not for more instruction in basic word attack skills, but for as much tandem oral reading practice as possible. In fact, as a suggestion; he/she no longer read independently - at all - either during formal reading lessons or at home, until the habit of sounding out each word is replaced with significantly more fluency. The following are some suggestions:

Read in tandem with the student, so that he/she is forced to follow along. Use a top-down marker so that the student can see the text that's coming.

"The teacher uses a recipe card. Others use a pencil or a finger to point to words. So it is important that the marker does not cover the upcoming text. Adapt the pace according to the student's comfort level. When students simply mimic my words, he sometimes inserts funny phrases such as "And then (student name) stopped reading and began daydreaming about recess."

Read together for five to ten minutes per day. "These students may not know what fluency is. Start with passages at their "independent level" of reading ("easy level" - 95 to 99% of the words are easily identified, no difficulty with comprehension). Gradually increase the difficulty level to an appropriate instructional level (at least 95% word recognition and 75% comprehension (simply derived - e.g., correctly answering 3 out of 4 reading comprehension questions.) Try to select passages with appropriate language. Basal readers and high- interest, low-vocab. materials may not offer "predictable" language patterns for some students"

Sit close to the student and read with exaggerated expression; e.g., stressing exclamations and questions, and reading phrases clearly "as phrases." "With a younger student, the teacher tries to read directly into his or her ear, as per the old but newly re-discovered NIM method (so-called Neurological Impress Method). With small groups, he sits in the middle or behind, twisting myself around and among them s o that they all get the pleasure of his close, exaggerated, expression-filled speech

Do not interrupt the five- to ten-minute session with discussion. Simply read (in order to "impress" the fluency aspect). "Since fluency typically involves comprehension as well as rate and accuracy (e.g., as assessed on the WJIII reading fluency test), reading with expression (prosody) will assist with comprehension. The teacher often will react to the uninterrupted reading as we read together, in order to emphasize that they are reading for meaning; e.g., chuckling, commenting briefly"

Use either new material (e.g., an ongoing novel), or repeated readings of the same pages a few times before using new material.

3.1.3 Variations of the Same Theme

Repeated reading; Students read one brief text several times until fluency is achieved. "Teachers may wish to cycle back to previously practiced texts". Timed reading; Use a stop watch or stove-top buzzer and chart progress over a week with respect to one passage;

or calculate the reading rate (number of words X 60, divided by the total number of minutes), and then set goals (e.g., a goal of 75 to 85 words per minute)

Tape-recorded books (for "follow-along" in tandem reading) are useful but monitoring is often needed to ensure that the student is following along.

Echo reading, Student reads (and re-reads several times) same sentence or paragraph directly after teacher (good opportunity for modeling rate, phrasing, expression and intonation). Paired repeated reading. Each student reads a given passage several times to his partner. The partner provides feedback.

3.1.4 Other Reading Fluency Tips

Avoid asking the sound-outers to sound out a word or to apply a phonics rule, even if you know they know the rule well. Instead, try to use context to develop fluency (e.g., ask, "What makes sense?")

Teach the student to "rerun" text. This refers to rereading a sentence or part of it in order to re-establish the flow. This can be easily taught with modeling, and then prompting ("Let's return to the start of this paragraph to get the flow back.")

Language experience stories are great for building fluency (when based upon high interest topics). Cutting up sentences and having the kids re-assemble them helps with fluency, too, especially when phrases are grouped together and punctuation is pointed out. Even older kids seem to like re-assembling sentences this way.

Making a game of reading words on flash cards as quickly as possible is a valuable exercise. However, the use of phrases is even better, because the goal is to help the student substitute other strategies such as use of context and automatic recognition, for word attack strategy. (e.g., "said; come with me" instead of "come" alone)

Cloze reading activities (fill-in-the-blank reading) may help with fluency. Worksheets can be easily made by whiting out words in order to create "blanks" for filling in intuitively. Use unambiguous text that highly supports the deleted words, when beginning this strategy. Later, specific things can be deleted (e.g., verbs, prepositions), in order to show how context helps establish what belongs in the blanks. Students can also be taught to say "blank" if they do not know a word (depending on the situation).

3.2 Conclusion

Reading fluency needs different techniques and tricks in order to be improved. In this part various recommendations and solutions were proposed that can help both students and teachers to work hand in hand to overcome the deficiency of reading fluency.

These recommendations should be taking into consideration by both teachers and learners especially those who have hard deficiency with reading in general, since we have provided crucial and practical ways that can put an end to the problem of reading fluency.

General conclusion

General conclusion

We are going to the close of the present study which aims at investigating reading fluency among students at IbenKhaldoun University. This study highlights some important aspects of the process of reading fluency. Through this research, we tried to know what are the reasons and he factors that impede reading fluency among university students. Besides providing those students with efficient strategies that can help improve their reading fluency.Studies have proved that using effective techniques and the constant encouragement and motivation given by teachers lead to reading fluency.

This study was conducted on LMD students. Our participants were both students and teachers. We use on the one hand a questionnaire for students, on the other hand an interview for a teacher in the English department in order to collect answers to our research problem which was about students' defective abilities in reading.

For answering the questions of the study, this latter has been divided into three chapters. The first chapter mainly outlines some of the theoretical issues related to the nature of reading fluency talking about various elements concerning the notion of reading fluency: history, definitions, different approaches, components, assessments, difficulty factors, and strategies. The second chapter is concerned with analysis of the obtained data gathered from a questionnaire that has been submitted to first, second, and third year students at the English department in Tiaret University, besides to the interview that has been delivered to a university teacher of reading.

Through this study we notice that most of students overlook reading even in their free time which consequence in the difficulties that they face through their learning process. Besides, the multiple factors that obstruct their reading fluency which consist generally in the intrinsic factors which come from the inside of the students such as self-concept, the beliefs, the inner needs…in addition, to the external factors.

In this thesis, we look for the possible ways for overcoming the obstacles that face reading fluency among university students, through some light on the problems and issues that come upon learners while reading, according to many teachers these problems refer to the lack of encouragements and the lack of motivation for reading. Research has shown that there are different techniques that lead to better reading in which practice is the basic way.

Actually most of the results confirmed our hypotheses, taking the hypothesis of motivating and encouraging students to read in order to reach the level of reading fluency as an example, from the analysis of students' questionnaire, we found that the majority of them suggest this idea as effective strategy to improve reading fluency.

To overcome these difficulties in reading, various solutions and recommendations were suggested to those students. The student needs to practice reading as much as possible. A daily period of "Dear" drop everything and read is highly recommended as it

would be helpful for the teacher to read aloud in tandem with the student that is simultaneously.

Overall, this study is useful not only for the learners helping them to improve their Reading fluency as well as to teachers contributing to their understanding of the rules and the conditions necessary for effective learning.

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Appendixes

Appendix one

Dear peers, we kindly ask you to help us through your considerate contribution to our research work on reading fluency. Your responses to the following questionnaire about Reading Fluency among University Students are undoubtedly of great importance and will certainly be revealing as to important issues relating to reading fluency among university students and the way to enhance it. We thank you in advance.

A/Personal Information:

Age: _____

1. Sex: male ☐   female ☐

B/General Questions:

2. Classify the following skills in terms of importance in your viewpoint:

   Listening ☐   reading ☐   speaking ☐   writing ☐

2. Do you read in your free time?

   Yes ☐   No ☐

3 what do you generally read?

   Stories ☐   Novels ☐   Articles ☐

3. How do you find reading in English?

   Very easy ☐   Easy ☐   difficult ☐   Very difficult ☐

4. You find it difficult to understand:

   Words   ☐   ideas   ☐

Other…………………………………………………………………

5. when you difficulties in reading, you

   Persist ☐   let it for another time ☐   you drop ☐

C/Students Perception:

13. Are you given the opportunity to read in class?

            Yes ☐   no ☐

14. Do teachers encourage students to read?

                Yes ☐   no☐

7. Do you willingly practise reading in the classroom:

   Always ☐   sometimes ☐   rarely ☐   never ☐

8. What is your reading difficulty in class?

……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………

9. When did this reading problem start?

……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………….

10. Over time, this problem has become –(please check one)

Better☐   remained the same☐   Worse☐

11. How do you feel when you are about to read:

   Relaxed ☐   comfortable☐   anxious☐ annoyed☐   Fearful ☐

12. How do you consider your reading ability?

good☐   quite good ☐   average ☐   weak ☐   Very weak ☐

15. What are the factors that may hinder reading fluency?

……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………

16. How can you overcome your reading difficulties? (Suggest any strategy)

……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………

Appendix two

Question 1: How many years have you taught reading?

Question 2: Did you do a research about reading during your high studies?

Question 3: According to your experience, how would you describe the reading level among university students?

Question4: About how much time in total do you devote to reading practice?

Question5: Why do many struggling readers have difficulty becoming fluent readers?

Question 6: What contributes to making a fluent reader?

Question 7: How does fluency develop?

TIARET 2018

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ملخص

الفصاحة بشكل عام وفصاحة القراءة على وجه الخصوص تجذب الكثير من الباحثين. تتناول الدراسة الحالية موضوع فصاحة القراءة بين طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في جامعة ابن خلدون في تيارت. تعرض الدراسة نظرة عامة حول الموضوع ثم تناولت مستوى الفصاحة بين مجموعة محددة من الطلاب من خلال دراسة وتحليل استبياناتهم. في النهاية، يختتم الباحثون الدراسة ببعض التوصيات والاقتراحات التي قد تكون مفيدة لأولئك الطلاب الذين يرغبون في البـــــــدء فـــــي طـــــريقهم نحـــــو فصــــاحة القـــــراءة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: فصاحة القراءة،

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Résumé

La maîtrise de la langue en général et la maîtrise de la lecture en particulier attirent de nombreux chercheurs. La présente étude aborde le sujet de la fluidité de la lecture chez les étudiants d'EFL de l'université IBN Khaldoun à Tiaret. L'étude présente un aperçu général du sujet puis aborde le niveau de maîtrise d'un groupe spécifique d'étudiants en étudiant et en analysant leurs questionnaires. À la fin, les chercheurs ferment l'étude avec des recommandations et des suggestions qui peuvent être bénéfiques pour les étudiants qui souhaitent commencer leur chemin vers la lecture.

Mots clefs: La Maîtrise de la lecture**,**

Summary

Fluency in general and reading fluency in particular attract so many researchers .The current study addresses the subject of reading fluency among EFL students at university of IBN Khaldoun in Tiaret . The study presents a general overview on the subject then it tackled the level of fluency among a specific group of students by studying and analyzing their questionnaires . At the end researchers close up the study with some recommendations and suggestions that may be beneficial for those students who want to start their path towards reading fluency

Key words: Reading Fluency,