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MASTER

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The Effect of Reading Fluency in Developing Reading

Comprehension:

The Case of First Year Secondary School of Ben

Gella Touati -Mostaganem-

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Dedication

To my parents

To all my classmates

Acknowledgement

First of all, I wish to express my deep gratitude to my teacher and supervisor Dr. Amel Derraz who has patiently read and corrected my dissertation drafts and for his guidance and advice.

I also wish to thank my colleagues for their help; their suggestions and comments were very valuable.

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Abstract

The present research aims at examining the strength of the correlation between reading fluency and reading comprehension. It takes the case of first year secondary school (literary stream) at “Ben Guella Touati” at Mostaganem, and it has been carried out involving 47 participants who study English as foreign language During the academic year 2016-2017. The hypothesis for this study is that enhancing students’ comprehension is affected by providing sufficient instructions to develop their fluency. In order to verify the hypothesis, a questionnaire and practical test are administrated to students to gather data about the influence of reading fluency on reading comprehension. In addition to a questionnaire administrated to teachers in order to investigate the nature of this relationship. The data collected from the materials used indicates that fluency and comprehension are intertwined and achieving fluency contributes to achieving comprehension. On the basis of the conclusions drawn from this experiment, some pedagogical implications are proposed to help students progress their fluency, and some instructions and principles are provided that should be taken into consideration by teachers so as to achieve the reading process.

Key words: reading fluency, reading comprehension, instructions, reading process.

List of Abbreviations and Symbols

EFL: English as Foreign Language

NRP: National Reading Panel

WPM: Word Per Minute

CBA: Curriculum Based Assessment

CBM: Curriculum Based Measurement

IRIs: Informal Reading Inventories

AT: Automaticity Theory

VT: Verbal efficiency Theory

C-ET: Compensatory-Encoding Theory

WM: Working memory

N: Number

%: Percentage

RSI: Reading Styles Inventory

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General Introduction

Reading is considered as a conspicuous skill that has an important role in enhancing the reader's language competency specially in EFL setting. It is a receptive skill in which the reader extracts meaning from a written discourse. Students tend to deal with reading without adequate skillfulness. As a result, it influences their reading capacity and causes comprehension difficulties that are not easy to perceive.

The reading process requires two important tasks to be accomplished: decoding words and comprehension text; since it includes the lower level skills that allow students recognize words automatically, and higher level skills which help them to comprehend and interpret because if they are not able to read fluently, there is a little attention for enjoying a text or a story, remembering and comprehending. Consequently, they will have difficulties in enhancing an education of a successful life in the sense that the lack of fluency leads to limit the learner's ability to achieve the full learning. The research tackles fluency as an issue that should be resolved in a timely manner to diminish the comprehension's deficiencies.

The research is not a random one. It is motivated on one hand, by the fact that poor fluency can have an effect on reading comprehension, on the other hand, by the belief that the training learners in using fluency strategies to decode words is a useful way to reach a full understanding of a text. The idea of evaluating reading fluency instructions in EFL classes is led through these reasons. This study as well, is based on a personal observation as a Master two didactics student at the secondary school. The first year students have to read passages provided in their course books, in addition to the texts of the exam paper. What is noticed there is that it is difficult for them to understand what they read without being able to spell words of the texts frequently. So, it is essential for them to develop an effective reading ability to achieve good comprehension.

The aim of this work is to assess and evaluate strategies to increase learner's ability to read fluently that lead them to the next stage; text comprehension; through the attempt to answer the following questions: what is the relationship between reading speed both orally and silently and comprehension? Can there be fluency without comprehension or vice versa? How can reading fluency strategies improve reading comprehension among struggling readers? In the light of the questions asked above, it is hypothesized that if students were provided with sufficient instructions to develop their fluency, they would be able to enhance their reading comprehension.

The research is organized in three chapters. Chapter one reviews the literature about fluency definitions; how scholars viewed fluency; and the factors that affect fluency. In addition to discuss the teacher's role in enhancing this important area of reading and how fluency should be assessed. This chapter also sheds light on comprehension with its basic processes and factors affecting this component of reading. The significant part of this chapter stresses the link between reading fluency and reading comprehension through surveying the theories about the relationship between those components.

Chapter two includes the field of investigation. It aims at looking closely at the nature of the relationship between reading speed and reading comprehension and attempts to examine the effect of such fluency instructions on comprehension process. This chapter deals with data collection and data analysis with an explanation of the choice of such materials while conducting the research.

Chapter three deals with reporting the findings of research questions and proposing some pedagogical implications and recommendations and eventually providing some suggestions to enhance reading fluency and comprehension.

Chapter One:

Reading Fluency and Reading Comprehension, an Overview

Introduction

Reading is an important skill that learners need to master because it helps them acquire knowledge and experiences. EFL students have many different texts to read to improve their level in English. It is a complex process that involves many components as Gagne & Yekovich (1993:269): «skilled reading is a highly complex capability involving many components processes and extensive knowledge» (as cited in Peter Westwood 2001). These components are: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension (Armbruster et al 2001 as cited in Carla.M. Mc connaughay 2008). The chapter is concerned with two components which are reading fluency and reading comprehension and it seeks to understand the relationship between them to achieve the reading process. Throughout this chapter we review reading fluency from different points of view, which are the main factors that affect it and how to assess this skill in EFL classes. The chapter also attempts to present different definitions that are offered to the concept of comprehension, then we go on to speak about it processes. The correlation between the two concepts is the main concern of this chapter. It shows some theories that explain the link between reading fluency and reading comprehension.

1. Reading fluency

Fluency is considered as key component and essential aspect of reading process that play a significant role in a reader's capacity to comprehend texts. This aspect was neglected in reading curriculum. However, this neglect has been diminished since fluency became viewed as a necessary component for successful reading comprehension (National Reading Panel 2000).

1.1 Definition of fluency

Many definitions have been suggested to conceptualize this phenomenon that led to a debate among researchers to a proper definition of fluency.

According to NRP (2000) fluency is defined as the ability to read text quickly, accurately, and with other expressions. In other words, the fluent reader is the one who has the skill of accuracy and able to read efficiently a given text using expressions and tones. This process is called "expressiveness" (e.g., Cowie & Douglas-Cowie & wichmann 2002) (as cited in Suzan Lutz & John T Guthrie 2008). Another line of definitions proposed by S. Jay Samuels (2006) refers to decode the word in the text easily, rapidly and automatically. Samuels a pioneer in research and theory on reading fluency states that good reading comprehension increased by the reader's ability to identify words quickly and easily.

Similarly, it is argued that accuracy and speed are indispensable constituent of fluency because reading loudly with speed and accuracy help readers mentally divide text into meaningful different phrases that lead them to decode rapidly a group of words (Judi Willis 2008).

One study even claims that fluency is a concept that refers to word recognition. Keith E. Stanovitch & Ruth G. Nathan (2001) says that:

..... Before readers can process at higher level, however, they must be able to get the words off of the page. That is the visual stimulation (i.e. the print) must undergo a transformation in order for the words to make contact with their stored memory codes and meaning. This is the brain process we call word recognition.

in other words, fluency is related to reader's cognitive capacity which is necessarily demanding for unpractised readers.

Another definition of fluency developed by Zvia Brezintz (2006:4) who defines fluency as "an outcome of the quality of the oral reading of words and connected text such as it has been measured by accuracy, prosody and in some case by rate of oral reading". All these various definitions of reading fluency that have been proposed share the same idea that fluency is multicomponent which includes automaticity, prosody and accuracy and reflect effective reading. However, for many students, it is difficult to enhance this skill because of underlying skills that must be mastered to achieve the reading process. For this reason, fluency strategies are designed to help learners develop their competencies to decode words that lead them to comprehend what is being read.

However, even the readers use those fluency strategies, they cannot achieve a great performance if they have not a rich vocabulary, are not aware of the phonemic rules and efficient practice to produce a greatest gain. These important elements are considered as factors that influence the fluency development which is tackled in the following section.

1.2 Factors that affect reading fluency

According to Peter Westwood (2001) & Timothy Rasinski (2006) fluency can be influenced by the reader's world knowledge, the amount of practice reading and phonics. These are considered the three main factors that affect fluency.

1.2.1 The reader's world knowledge

Vocabulary is one of the components of reading, but it is decisive to fluency. The errors made by struggling readers when they attempt to read a text caused by the poor of sight vocabularies, consequently, they cannot recognize words quickly and they encounter difficulties in moving along smoothly. Those struggling readers are forced to decode each word independently rather than impel more to the flow of the author's ideas (Thimothy Shanahan 2006). He claims that:

To read a text successfully a student not only has to recognize the words quickly and easily enough to be accurate but also have sufficient sense of the meaning of the messages to make it sound like language. Vocabulary instructions generally help in initial interpretation by familiarizing students with the meaning of a broad range of words, but it works more specifically in helping students correctly interpret homographs. (p 28).

In other words, vocabulary knowledge is required for the fluency development and performance. Similarly, JoAnne Schudt Caldwell (2008) views that reader's vocabulary should be present in order to achieve fluency. He states that poor readers who do not have a rich vocabulary, are obliged or labour to interpret each word. Unfortunately, this contributes to reading problems specially those related to fluency. "because good readers do not have to think about word identification and can read at an appropriate rate of speed, they can direct their attention to meaning. This focus in meaning in turns allows them to read with proper *intonation*" (p162). In the same point of view, Westwood (2001) proves that vocabulary knowledge is very important for helping readers to be fluent in the sense that the vocabulary of words refers to sight words which is necessary in enhancing automaticity in reading since the meaning of any text is unlocked by the ability to read many words automatically by sight.

1.2.2 Phonics

The phonemic awareness or phonics were suggested as a predecessor of fluency. Westwood (2001:7) believes that the absence of phonemic awareness contributes to many cases of reading disabilities. He uses the term phonic skills to refer to "an individual's ability to apply knowledge of letter-sound relationship to reading and spelling words". Westwood (2001:6) proposes: "recognizing rhymes, identifying the initial sounds in words, being aware of alliterations, being able to break single syllable into onset and rhymes units" as an examples of phonic skills. However, teaching phonemic rules is not enough. The phonics knowledge that is obtained with a connected text should be applied and practised to achieve

reading process (Learning point associates, 2004). In the sense that there are some children with learning difficulties who appear to know the basic letter-to-sound correspondence but they do not use this knowledge in any systematic way to decode unfamiliar words (Westwood 2001:7).

1.2.3Practice

The opportunities to practise reading help improve fluency because the lack of exposure and practice leads to a continued failure to develop automatic word recognition (Nathan & Stanovich 2001). NRP (2000) argues that poor and good readers differ in the quantity of total time they spend in reading. The effective practice includes making reading passages orally with guidance and feedback. This involved such techniques as repeated reading or choral reading (Tarek Elabsy 2013). Repeated reading helps student focus on accuracy and permit them to read with appropriate expressions and understanding and it is planned to build automaticity through reading the passage several time until the fluency has been increased (NRP 2000). Choral reading can be done in groups or individually which is a helpful way to not just increase fluency, but to build more confidence and to motivate student to be participant in the class (Elabsy 2013).

Problems such as missing words, disregarding punctuation and essentially not comprehending the text are proofs to show that students lack fluency. Building fluency with struggling readers through fluency instruction is the role of teacher who is considered the instrument for enhancing reading fluency that contributes to effective literacy instruction. To know the role of the teacher, the next title explains how the teacher can make reading fluency work for the students.

1.3The role of teacher in enhancing fluency

It is important for teachers to notice that struggling readers share the problems of the ability to read sight words, decode words, and read phrases automatically and rapidly. So those teachers need to assume effective teaching methodologies and strategies to ensure that students reach an acceptable fluency. In other words, the teachers are the implement that should enhance their student's fluency through modelling fluent reading. Rasinski (2005) believes that the teacher is the key who can make all the differences. Through his work with students, he concludes that the lucky students those who are read aloud to by a fluent reader because they have stronger comprehension than students who are not read aloud to regularly.

Some students have the understanding of fluency as reading perfectly without mistakes. For others, it may mean reading quickly as much as possible. The main role of teacher in this

situation is to raise the student's awareness about the sense of fluency and this may be increased by reading orally with appropriate expression and phrasing, changing speed according to the spots of the text or by adding dramatic pause that help readers understand the meaning (Rasinski 2005). In the same line of thought, Willis (2008) through his experience, argues that modelling supportive reading is vital to teaching fluency specially when this modelling includes humour and exaggeration to motivate students and make them interested and discuss that the voice at higher or lower pitches, volumes and speed play an important role in changing the meaning of words of the text. This is what is meant by modelling fluent reading, in other words, fluency awareness (Rasinski 2005).

In order to increase fluency, teacher requires to prepare students for a new text through identifying the new vocabulary to help reinforce comprehension and decoding, in the sense that vocabulary instruction is related to fluency instruction because enhanced vocabulary leads to student's development of skills of fluency and comprehension. Additionally, effective teaching increased by a good assessment. Consequently, the teacher assumes the role of fluency assessor. It is important for the teacher to give feedback, suggestions and strategies to develop the student's fluency because practice without feedback allows errors to be practiced unconsciously. So the successful achievement of fluency demands means to assess fluency that make the teacher able to measure the effectiveness of his fluency instruction, and this involves repeated reading, assisted reading. However, these activities cannot be achieved without resources which sometimes are not provided in classroom; so it is the role of teacher to be a resource collector to support the fluency instruction. (Rasinski 2005, Rasinski 2004).

As teachers, it is necessary to take into consideration that the assessment is integral part of fluency instruction. The next section explores methods and approaches to help those teachers assess their student's fluency.

1.4 Fluency assessment

To achieve the reading process, it is important for teachers to assess the student's fluency for many reasons. First, to help them to decide the appropriate deficiently level of text for each student in addition to allow them to focus on select group of student who lack fluency. Second, the information gathered about accuracy; automaticity and prosody levels through fluency assessment permit teachers to identify where failure occurs and help them to decide whether the strategies used are effective or if the teacher is required to use others. In other words, it allows teacher to guide intervention, strategies and gives them the opportunity to vary techniques for developing student's fluency. Finally, the assessment of fluency is the

key to evaluate more severe reading difficulties and to make decision about appropriateness of special educational placement (J. Miller & C.A. Groff 2008; Marcie P. Wilger 2008).

Reading fluency consists of three important indicators: accuracy, automaticity and prosody. So the assessment should involve all these components to afford valid increase of fluency (Marcie P. Wilger 2008). The researches that investigate the topic of fluency assessment lead to present Curriculum Based Assessment CBA as a method which focuses on student's reading rate which is measured by correct word per minute WPM (J. Miller & C.A. Groff 2008). Firstly, the teacher chooses a target passage or text, then ask students to read loudly. This task requires a stop watch to help teacher to count the correct words in the passage and lead them to judge whether students present acceptable fluency (Caldwell 2008). Curriculum Based Measurement tends to focus in assessing prosody. According to J. Miller & C.A. Groff (2008) the measurement of using expressions and phrasing need much more effort than speed and accuracy. Different scales are established to include prosodic elements such as National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) oral reading fluency scales (as quoted in White 1995). These scales highlight the key element of oral reading:

“(1) The grouping of words or the phrasing and pauses along with the perceived rise and fall in pitch.

(2) the reader's ability to adhere to the syntax and sentence structure of the text, which is critical to smooth oral delivery and indicate the reader's awareness of the ideas being expressed.

(3) the general expressiveness of the oral reading” (J. Miller & C.A. Groff 2008, p 139). Similarly, Caldwell (2008:171) states that using a checklist is a helpful way that allows assessing the progress of student's fluency. He argues that “student can use checklist to evaluate their own and their peer's intonation during oral reading. In fact, they can use the same checklist to evaluate their intonation as the teacher or coach uses”.

NRP (2000) contributes to the discussion of fluency assessment and concludes that “a number of informal procedures can be used in the classroom to assess fluency. Informal Reading Inventories (Johnson Kress & pikulski, 1997) miscue analysis (Goodman & Burke, 1972) pausing indices (Pinnell et al,1995) running records (Clay, 1972) and reading speed calculations (Hasbrouck &Tindal, 1992). All these assessment procedures require oral reading of text, and all can be used to provide an adequate index of fluency” (p3.9). For instance; I R Inventories is made up different passages at different grade levels. The teacher tends to count the accuracy of words of the passages read by the students to indicate their reading level.

However, it doesn't mean focusing only on fluency. It is important to assess fluency with comprehension through asking students to summarize or answer questions about the text. The wide knowledge about these assessments will help teachers to be more effective.

enhancing fluency skills to students successfully should not be the only aim of reading, since students are reading for comprehension which is inseparable part of fluency. The growing body of research continues to shed light on comprehension as an important element in the reading process.

2. Reading comprehension

To help student be effective comprehender, it is important to understand what is included in comprehending. In this part, we will diverse definitions attributed to reading comprehension, we deal also with the processes of comprehension and we point out the factors that influence reading comprehension.

2.1 Definition of comprehension

The importance of reading comprehension is not based only on understanding a text, but for broad learning and achieving successful education employment. Since nowadays people communicate through e-mails texts and social networking sites, reading comprehension is required because of its role in the social life (Jane Oakhill, Kate Cain & Carsten Elbro 2015).

There is a debate among researchers as to the proper definition of comprehension. This term is considered as a synonym of reading. « without comprehension there would be no purpose to reading words. Comprehension is what entices the readers to continue reading». (Caldwell 2008:175). Another line of definition refers to thinking while reading using prior knowledge to filter, interpret, arrange, reflect upon and make a connection with the new information and ideas that are available in the text to reach a true comprehension (Westwood 2001, Mikulcky & Jefferies 2007). Since comprehension is a process, it can be described as an intellectual, active and complex process of building meaning simultaneously by coordinating a number of abilities which involves words reading, fluency, world knowledge because the characteristics of a good reader is drawn in his ability to construct his own sight and understanding through adding details and making inferences that are not provided in the text to the word of author (Westwood 2001 as quoted in Rubin 2000, Klingner, Vaughn & Broadman 2007, Cathrine Snow 2002, Caldwell 2008). Consequently, reading comprehension is a phenomenon that is based on three dimensions: reader, text and activity. In regarding the reader, we involved all the capacities, information and experiences that fetches to the act of readings. Text is broadly made to require any printed or electronic texts. In considering

activity, we contain the goals, processes and results combined with act of reading (Snow 2002).

Reading comprehension is the interaction between the reader and the text. It is based on such processes to reach a full understanding which will be covered in the following part.

2.2 The processes of comprehension

When one reader tries to comprehend what he is reading, he follows five essential strategic cognitive processes that complete each other and help reader build a mental representation of a given text. These are: microprocesses, integrative processes, macroprocesses, elaborative processes and metacognitive processes (Irwin 1991 as cited in Klingner et al 2007). Let define them briefly.

2.2.1 Microprocesses

In this process the ideas of the text are chunked initially into isolated sentences, group of words into phrases. On the other hand, vocabulary and syntax should be understood (Klingner Vaughn & Broadman 2007, Paula J 2014). During this process, it is important for the reader to identify the main idea and select the important section text deeply to remember (Westwood 2001).

2.2.2 Integrative processes

In order to understand a text, it is not enough to process individual meaning units within sentences, the reader is actively making inferences and linking across sentences (Klingner Vaughn & Broadman 2007). This process requires linking personal pronouns to their referents to link up the ideas and to integrate the new information with what already is known (Oakhill, Cain & Elbro 2015, Blachowicz & Ogle 2008). The coherent text is individual sentences connected together meaningfully using text connectives. The reader needs to be able to identify sentence structures to interpret how words are linked, to connect sentences to each other since there are linking words that may change the meaning relations among those sentences and clauses (Oakhill, Cain & Elbro 2015).

2.2.3 Macroprocesses

This process is based on summarizing the essential ideas in a coherent way through selecting the most important points to remember, avoid the minor or repeated details and organize them (Klingner, Vaughn & Broadman 2007, Beatrices et al 1996). Because the proficient reader is skilful to follow the organizational patterns used by author to arrange his thought. Summarizing is helpful for student at all levels of comprehension specially when the

classroom discussion about the text occurs, because it helps student do achieve the summary. It is better for those students who have problems with summarizing to develop this strategy through scaffolding practice (Willis 2008).

2.2.4 Elaborative processes

The elaborative process activates reader using his previous knowledge and inferences because the reader in addition to the information that is presented in the text needs to shape a complete overview of the text by means of inferences and prior knowledge (Oakhill 2008, Klingner, Vaughn & Broadman 2007). In other words, a good reader achieves his comprehension process when he exploits his background knowledge that is brought to the act of reading which help him make the interpretation of the text, creating visual image and evaluating the author’s point of view (Caldwell 2008).

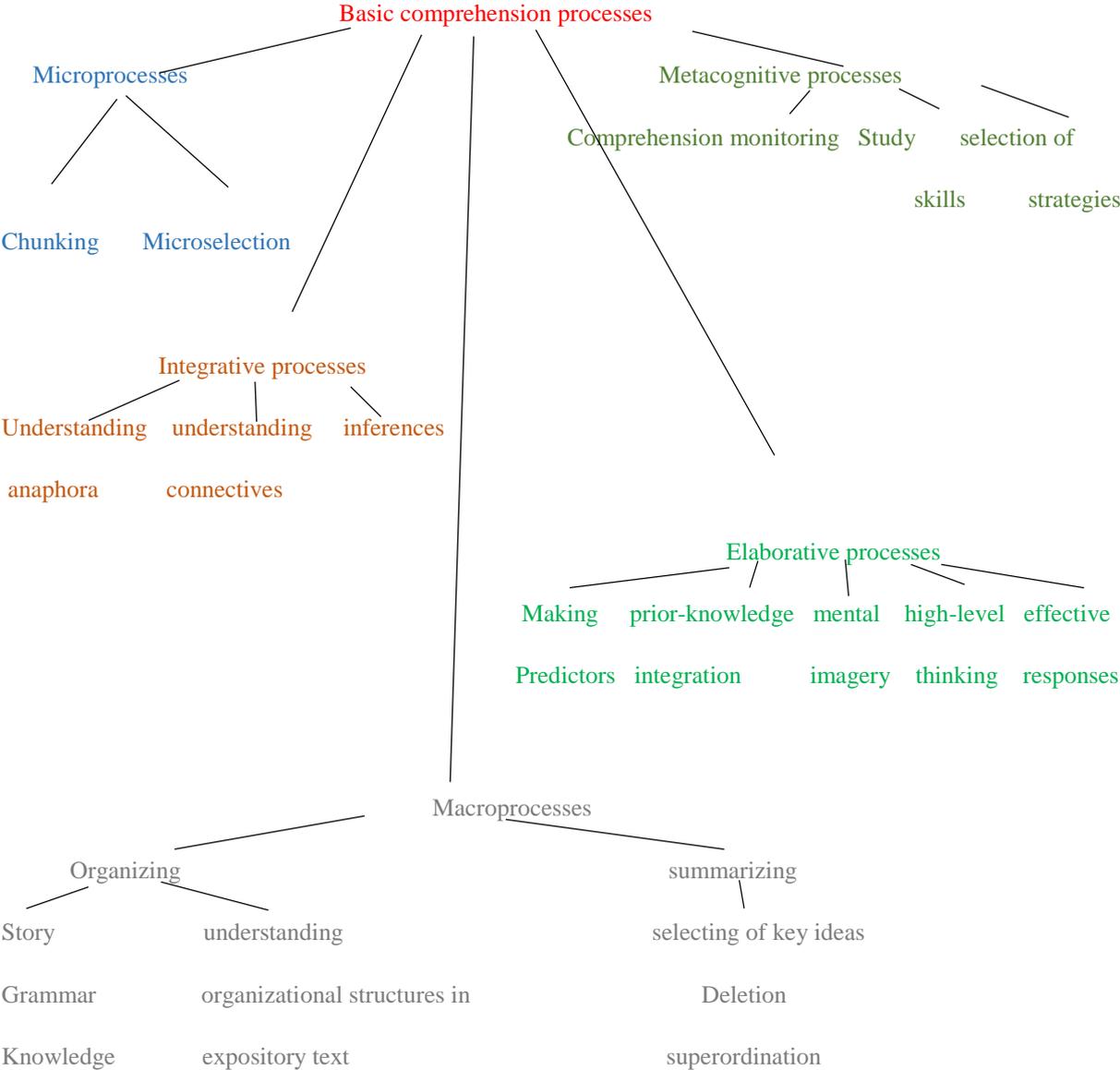


Figure 01: Irwin’s five basic comprehension processes 1991(as cited in Klingner et al 2007).

2.2.5 Metacognitive processes

Metacognition is defined as the conscious awareness one's thinking and cognitive processes (Kristin Lem, Leah D. Miller & Tenena M. Soro 2010; Klingner et al 2007). Since readers are aware of their comprehension and consciously know what kind of strategies apply if their comprehension fails, they are considered metacognitive (Caldwell 2008). The metacognitive strategies include: monitoring understanding by "keeping track of our comprehension and making attempts to remedy it if it goes off track" (Oakhill 2008:17) through "rereading, retelling, paraphrasing, looking for alternative explanation, looking for connections to own experiences, checking the illustration or stopping and asking ourselves questions (Lem et al 2010:182). The metacognitive processes may also involve: selecting the important section to remember, checking understanding; underline the key words, reviewing, notetaking...etc. (Klingner et al 2007). All these actions that are used by reader aim at establishing and achieving the comprehension task.

It common that readers encounter such reading difficulties especially those related to comprehension because of many factors that make readers either effective comprehenders or ineffective comprehenders. In the section that follow, the elements that affect reading comprehension are discussed.

2.3 Factors influencing comprehension

Reading comprehension can be affected by a variety of elements either positively or negatively in the sense that the absence of these elements leads to poor comprehension while its presence characterizes the good reader, involving the reader's motivation and interest, vocabulary and fluency, comprehension strategies and background knowledge (Westwood 2001, Caldwell 2008).

2.3.1 Vocabulary and fluency

Students with poor vocabulary and fluency encounter such difficulties when attempting to understand a text. This lack leads to inability of knowing the meaning of many words of the text, and causes short-term cognitive capacity of the task. Consequently, comprehension requires students to be able to understand on one hand, the familiar words and its relationship with other words in the text, so they have to recognize a word's part of speech, definitions, useful context clues and how it functions in a sentence. Moreover, it needs students to be automatic word recogniser to permit short-term memory capability to be zealous almost completeness to comprehension (Westwood 2001, Klingner et al 2007).

2.3.2 Background knowledge

Background knowledge has a large role in comprehension processes since the ability of reader of comprehending depends on the knowledge he possesses about the topic. According to schemata theory which attempt to improve reading comprehension « what we know about the topic or construct influences how much we can or will learn by reading passage that addresses that topic» (Anderson & Pearson 1984 as cited in Klingner et al 2007:2). Thus the readers remember better about what they read when they have a previous knowledge and experiences which makes a relationship with the ideas of the text (Klingner et al 2007).

2.3.3 Comprehension strategies

Considering the comprehension strategies, to be a good reader or poor reader is based on how to use these strategies to reach a full understanding. According to Klingner et al (2007:3) these strategies are: rapid and accurate word reading, setting goals for reading, noting the structure and organization of text. Monitoring their understanding while reading, creating mental notes and summaries, making predictions about what will happen, checking them as they go along, and revising and evaluating them as needed.

2.3.4 Culture and motivation

Comprehension is also influenced by the reader's culture. The culture presented in the text is matched to reader's comprehension according to the degree of what he knows about this culture in the sense that the less cultural background contributes to miscomprehension. Motivation is another factor that impact comprehension because high motivation helps using more strategies to construct meaning while low motivation this meaning is not as powerful as built by high motivation (Laura S. Pardo 2004).

3. The relationship between reading fluency and reading comprehension

The learning of literacy depends on multiple dimensions which involve the simultaneous organization of the text's ideas into a cohesive way and decode words successfully (Mahapatra Das, Stack & Parrila 2010 as cited in Crystal Boyt 2014). In other words, the aim of reading is to comprehend what one is reading and learn from it. However, it is difficult to comprehension to occur without being able to recognize words of written text because poor fluency can have an effect on reading comprehension which means that fluency and comprehension are positively correlated. Caldwell (2008) states that comprehension can take place if fluency is measured by the reader. So it is important to consider that fluency is a vehicle for reading comprehension.

3.1 Fluency as a cognitive skill in reading comprehension

Fluency which is defined as the recognition of words automatically, is a condition skill to comprehension. Less fluency leads to inability to understand the text and make connections. According to Taylor & Genter (2006) (as cited in Julie Adele Wright 2011) struggling readers with less automaticity in reading focus their efforts trying to get the correct pronunciation of words rather than focusing their power on comprehension, it means that they spend much more time to divide words which consequently contribute to misinterpretation and misunderstanding of the text. Similarly, Klingner, Vaughn & Boardman (2007) argue that reading comprehension is obstructed by the difficulties on reading areas such as vocabulary, fluency and decoding, and the reasons behind this obstruction includes that readers have so much short-term cognitive or thinking ability for an activity when the most effort are exploited to decoding, whereas there is little or no capacity available on comprehension. By contrast, the fluent readers are able to interact with the text easily with high level in the sense that they focus more on the content of reading than concentrating on decoding words individually because « reading words quickly and accurately allows students to “free up” their thinking so that they can concentrate on text meaning» (Klingner; Vaughn & Broadman 2007) (as cited in Perfetti, 1985; Perfetti & Lesgold, 1977).

Fluency is a significant skill that should be mastered by the readers in order to create a platform to reading comprehension and this is based on theories which are discussed in the next section to explain the link between fluency and comprehension.

3.2 Theories about the relationship between reading fluency and reading comprehension

There are several theories established and researches conducted to discover to what extent fluency can impact reading comprehension. Caldwell (2014:186) (as cited in Crystal Boyt 2014) points that «there is a complex relationship between fluency and comprehension. Fluency can result from comprehension as well as contribute to it. Adequate fluency can contribute to comprehension and lack of fluency can limit it». To paraphrase, the achievement of fluency leads consequently to the achievement of comprehension and the full understanding of what is being read depends on those skills of decoding. The fluency and comprehension tie is supported by three important theories which are: the automaticity theory AT, the verbal efficiency theory VT and the compensatory-encoding theory C-ET. Let examine them briefly.

3.2.1 The automaticity theory

It is an important theory proposed by reading researchers Laberge & Samuels in 1974 which highlights the correlation between reading fluency and reading comprehension. According to Samuels (2006), to enhance a successful reading two complementary tasks should be done: the first one is word recognition and the second one is understanding the decoded words. He hypothesizes that the efforts concentrated on word recognition process contributes to limit the construction of meaning since the process of decoding absorbs all the capacities of the mind in which the student cannot easily move to the following task which is shifting attention to meaning. May be one's situation is a difficult and an effortful process for memory. It means that decoding words unconsciously and automatically help student effectively construct meaning while reading in which the efforts are balanced between the two tasks to achieve the reading skill (Lem et al 2010). Automatic recognition of words is a key for comprehending the text and when the readers achieve both activities simultaneously, are described as fluent readers.

3.2.2 Verbal efficiency theory

The construction of meaning of a given text is increased by the effective and efficient word recognition skills. Verbal efficiency theory (which is suggested by Perfetti 1985) proves that inefficient skills have a hurtful influence on comprehension. This theory points that modelling the meaning of the text by readers require an interaction between set of processes which are listed in Perfetti's work as four dimensions of reading comprehension and the integration of them make up the text work. It involves lexical access which includes word recognition and recall, proposition assembly which refers to collecting single proposition from only a few words, proposition integration means that fusion of proposition within and across sentences or to fill in the text gap at high level. Text modelling refers to use the information described in the text to develop a mental model (Arthur VanderVeen and Kristen Huff, Mark Gierl, Danielle S. McNamara, Max Louwerse, & Art Graesser 2007).

The lower lexical skills play a significant role in processing information at different positions of reading comprehension. It is suggested that before higher level performance processes, the lower level processes (word recognition) must be increased a minimum performance to make reading skill simultaneously achieved (David J. Chard John J. Pikulski Sarah H. Mcdonagh 2006). Verbal efficiency theory is established to show that the occurrence of comprehension based on such processes primary lexical access which is focused on accuracy and speed.

Both AT theory and VE theory shared the view point that automatic decoding of words leads to better comprehension. It means that there is a positive relation between subcomponent efficiency and comprehension. Kintsch (1998:23) supports this view when he states that:

Rapid decoding is important because better word recognition frees up resources for higher level processing (Perfetti's verbal efficiency hypothesis). Thus, better decoders build more accurate and complete representations of text content.

In contrast to these two theories Compensatory-encoding theory proposed to tackle the damaging influence of the confusions that happen when "automatic processes encounter such unfamiliar words or difficult texts These confusions called data limitations" (peffeti 1999, Frederksen & Warren 1987 as cited in Jeffrey J. Walczyk, Min Wei, Peijia Zha et al 2009).

3.2.3 Compensatory- encoding theory

This theory claims that readers require low comprehension with inefficient skills. The theory represents that those readers from the failure of automatic processes can be more efficient through using such ways or actions called "compensations". Jeffrey J. Walczyk, Min Wei, Peijia Zha et al (2009: 126) define these compensations as:

reader actions, intentional or unintentional, that (a) assist an automatic process in providing timely, accurate data to WM that is needed to comprehend a text literally or (b) provide timely, accurate data to WM by an alternative means when an automatic process cannot.

It may also include repeated reading, pausing, adjusting reading rate to control the inefficient skills. Compensatory-encoding theory considers that improving comprehension cannot be based only on improving decoding in the sense that readers need immediate solutions to lower comprehension by suggesting such actions they use when facing data limitations.

Conclusion

Fluency and comprehension are the essence of reading which are defined by different researchers who all of them agree that fluency is an automatic word recognition. In other words, reading with speed is meaningless without comprehension which is a process of extracting meaning from text based on such comprehension processes. Through this chapter, various conclusions can be drawn. The first asserts that vocabulary knowledge, practice, phonics, background knowledge and motivation are the keys to any fluency and comprehension

achievement. In addition to that, it is important for teachers to assess their student's fluency through such methods. The second conclusion, however, stresses the fact that from the literature review, the relationship between reading fluency and reading comprehension is tackled through different theories which are: The automaticity theory and the verbal efficiency theory which argue that comprehension requires automatic decoding of words. While compensatory-encoding theory claims that when subcomponents fail, readers can avoid the automatic processes that fail through using such actions to improve their comprehension. In the light of the theories about the relationship between reading fluency and reading comprehension earlier delineated, the next chapter examine this relationship through an experimental study via the student's questionnaire, the teacher's questionnaire and the comprehension test as materials used to carry out this study.

Chapter Two:

Field Work

Introduction

The present research is designed to investigate the nature of the relationship between the student's reading fluency and reading comprehension when reading a print written in English as foreign language. In order to test the research hypothesis, student's questionnaire and teacher's questionnaire and the comprehension test are used as means of data collection. This chapter opens with a brief description of the population of the study, and is followed by a massive description of the materials used during this research. The final section provides the analysis of the information obtained from those materials.

1.The population and the sample

The population of this study have been selected from 1st year secondary school pupils of literary stream at "Ben Guella Touati" at Mostaganem. During the academic year 2016-2017, the total number of 1st year literary stream pupils are 100. Most of them are 16 years' old who perceive the English language as subject with all its aspect (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and the four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing). Sometimes during this course they are asked to read certain texts from their coursebook followed by questions to answer. The representative population is targeted for two reasons. The first is that The English module in this stream is one of the necessary subjects in which its coefficient is high since they will be supposed in the second year to choose between the philosophy stream and languages stream. The second reason is that those pupils will be prepared for the final exam BAC since all the questions of the English exam are related to the texts given, in other words, check their understanding of the text through these questions.

The study consists of 64 participants as a sample from 1st year secondary school literary stream and they are selected from 3 classes, but due to the number of absentees (17), the results of 47 out of 64 students were used for analysis. The participants were tested about their comprehension and asked to fill the questionnaire.

2.The questionnaire

The quality of data collected is based on the data collection methods. The questionnaire is the main procedures used for gathering information in any research which is adopted in the present study to inquire if there is a significant relationship between reading fluency and reading comprehension.

2.1 The aim of the questionnaires

The main purpose of the questionnaires is to obtain information about the strength of the link between fluency and comprehension. It gathers data about the student's fluency and comprehension, and fluency instruction that is used by the teachers to achieve the reading process.

2.2 The description of the questionnaires

2.2.1 The students' questionnaire

The questionnaire contains 14 items. The format selected for the items is "multiple-choice" and "Yes/ No" questions in which students are supposed to answer according to their level in reading, since this kind of questions is useful and easy to analyse by the researcher in order to clarify the various shades of opinions.

When planning the body of the questionnaire the questions are organized from general to specific in order to familiarize students with the topic of the research and gradually refine their thought.

The first section {*Q1-3*} aims at obtaining background information about students: their age, level and gender. The second section {*Q4-5*} aims at gathering information about the students reading: what they prefer (Q4) and if they like to read alone or with others (Q5). The third section {*Q6-12*} attempts to collect data about the student's comprehension (Q6) their speed when reading loudly (Q7) and when reading silently (Q8), when they remember a text better (Q9) which materials they prefer to read (Q10) and whether pictures reduce their speed during reading (Q11) and their fluency level (Q12). The final section {*Q13-14*} concerned with the effect of fluency on reading comprehension which is the main object of the study.

2.2.2 The teachers' questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of 12 questions divided into four sections. Most of the questions are multiple-choice while the others are open questions in which the teachers are free to answer according to their experience in teaching English as foreign language.

The first section {*Q1-3*} concerned with the teacher's personal information: their age (Q1), the number of years they have been teaching English (Q2) and which degree they have (Q3). The second section {*Q4-5*} deals with reading process generally: the difficulties that the teachers encounter while teaching reading (Q4) the strategies that they use when teaching this receptive skill (Q5). The following section {*Q6-8*} aims at gathering data about fluency in reading: the teacher's assessment of student's fluency (Q6), whether fluency instruction is

integral to learning (Q7), the methods used for fluency instruction (Q8). The last section {*Q9-12*} attempts to conclude the relationship between fluency and comprehension: the teacher's point of view about the correlation between fluency and comprehension (Q9), the strategies that are utilized the most for comprehension to assist silent fluency (Q10), the type of fluency do students exhibit the strongest comprehension (Q11) and the comparison between slower readers and fluent readers in showing their comprehension (Q12).

2.3 The analysis of the questionnaire

The data of the questionnaire is analysed in the form of table after stating the items.

The abbreviation **N** stands for the number of respondents, **%** stands the percentage this number represents.

2.3.1 The students' questionnaire

Question 01:

❖ Age:

15		16		17		18		19		20		Total
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	100%
14	29.78	15	31.91	10	21.28	04	08.51	02	04.26	02	04.26	

Table 01: Student's age

The table shows that 29.78 % of the total population are 15 years old, 31.91% are 16 years old, 21.28% are 17 years old, while 8.51% are 18 years old, only 4.26% are 19 years old and also 4.26% are 20 years old.

Question 02:

❖ Gender:

Male		Female		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%
22	46.81	25	53.19	47	100

Table 02: Gender distribution

The table indicates that 46.81% of the population are males and 53.19% of them are females.

Question 03:

❖ Level:

All the population are first year secondary school literary stream.

Question 04:

❖ When you read, do you prefer?

Silent reading

oral reading

Silent reading		Oral reading		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%
26	55.30	21	44.70	47	100

Table 03: student's preference

The table shows that 55.30% of the population prefer silent reading, 44.70% of them prefer to read orally.

Question 05:

❖ Do you like to read?

Individually

in pairs

in groups

Individually		In pairs		In groups		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
26	55.32	07	14.89	14	29.79	47	100

Table 04: Student's like of reading

The table indicates that 55.32% of the total population like to read individually, 14.89% of them like to read in pairs and 29.79% of them like to read with more than one person, it means in groups.

Question 06:

❖ When reading a passage, do you understand the text from?

The first reading the second reading more

The first reading		The second reading		more		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
03	06.38	26	55.32	18	38.30	47	100

Table 05: Student's understanding of text

The table shows that 6.38% of the population understand a passage from the first reading, 55.32% from the second reading, while 38.30% need more than two readings.

Question 07:

❖ When reading loudly do you read?

Quickly Slowly

Quickly		Slowly		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%
18	38.30	29	61.70	47	100

Table 06: Student's rate of reading loudly

The table point out that 38.30% of the students read quickly when they read loudly, 61.70 of them read slowly when they read loudly.

You don't have a rich vocabulary		You don't know the phonemic rules (eg; syllables, rhymes)		You don't practice		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
08	27.58	10	34.49	11	37.93	29	100

Table 07: Student's reason of reading loudly

The table shows that 27.58% of the students read slowly because they don't have a rich vocabulary, 34.49% of them because they don't know the phonemic rules (eg; syllables, rhymes.... etc.), and 37.93% of them because they don't practice.

Question 08:

❖ When reading silently do you read?

Quickly

Slowly

Quickly		Slowly		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%
27	57.45	20	42.55	47	100

Table 08: Student's rate of reading silently

The table indicates that 57.45% of the students read quickly when they read silently, while 42.55% of them read slowly when they read silently.

Question 09:

❖ Do you remember better if you read?

Aloud

Silently

Aloud		Silently		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%
13	27.66	34	72.34	47	100

Table 09: the type of reading in which student remember better

The table shows that 27.66% of the population remember better if they read aloud, while 72.34% of them prefer to read silently since the silent reading helps them remember better.

Question 10:

❖ Do you prefer reading on?

Computer

Book

Computer		Book		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%
24	51.06	23	48.94	47	100

Table 10: Student's preference

The table points out that 51.06% of the students prefer to read on computer, and 48.94 they are comfortable when they read on book.

Question 11:

❖ Do pictures slow you down when you are reading?

Yes

No

Yes		No		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%
30	63.83	17	36.17	47	100

Table 11: The effect of picture on student's reading

The table indicates that 63.83% of the students state that pictures slow them down when they are reading, while 36.17% of them declare that pictures doesn't reduce the speed of their reading.

Question 12:

❖ How do you consider your reading fluency?

Very weak

Weak

Average

Excellent

Very weak		Weak		Average		Excellent		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
01	2.12	06	12.77	34	72.34	06	12.77	47	100

Table 12: Student's level of fluency

The table demonstrates that 2.12% of the population have a very weak level on reading fluency, 12.77% consider their fluency weak, while 72.34% of them have an acceptable level and 12.77% have excellent reading fluency.

You don't read		You have reading difficulties		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%
03	42.86	04	57.14	07	100

Table 13: Student's reasons for weak level

The table shows that 42.86% of the students are very weak or weak level on reading fluency because they don't read, while 57.14% because they have reading difficulties.

Question 13:

❖ Do you think that your fluency affects your reading comprehension?

Yes No Little almost

Yes		No		Little		Almost		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
08	17.02	16	34.04	23	48.94	00	00	47	100

Table 14: Student's appreciation for the effect of fluency on comprehension

The table indicates that 17.02% of the students their fluency affects their comprehension, 34.04% of them state that reading fluency doesn't influence their comprehension. 48.94% think that somehow their fluency has an impact on their reading comprehension, while no one declares that almost reading fluency effects their reading comprehension (0%).

Question 14:

❖ When you face unfamiliar words in a text?

You ask the teacher to explain

Read those words again and try to pick up the meaning

You ask the teacher to explain		Read those words again and try to pick up the meaning		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%
33	70.21	14	29.79	47	100

Table 15: Student’s strategies for identifying the unfamiliar words

The table demonstrates that 70.21% of the students ask their teachers to explain when they face new words, only 29.79% they read the words and attempt to guess the meaning of those words.

2.3.2The teacher’s questionnaire:

Question 01:

❖ Age:

18-25

25-35

35-40

40-55

18-25		25-35		35-40		40-55		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
00	00	04	80	01	20	00	00	05	100

Table 16: Teacher’s age

The table shows that 80% of the teachers are between 25-35 years old while 20% of them are between 35- 40 years old. There is no teacher claims that his age between 18-25 years old or between 40-55 years old.

Question 02:

❖ How many years have you been teaching English?

5-15 15-25 25-30 30-35

5-15		15-25		25-30		30-35		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
03	60	02	40	00	00	00	00	05	100

Table 17: Teacher’s years of teaching English

According to the table, 60% of teachers have been teaching English between 5-15 years and 40% of them have been teaching English between 15-25 years. However, there is no teacher who states that he has been teaching English more than 25 years.

Question 03:

❖ Which degree do you have?

Licence of English

Magister (specify the specialty)

Other (please specify)

Licence of English		Magister (specify the specialty)		Other (please specify)		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
04	80	01	20	00	00	05	100

Table 18: Teacher’s degree

The table above reveals that 80% of the teachers have Licence in English, only 20% have Magister without specifying the specialty.

Question 04:

- ❖ Which kind of difficulties do you have while teaching the reading skill?

The lack of motivation

Vocabulary

Fluency

Language

Comprehension

Topic genre

The lack of motivation		Vocabulary		Fluency		Language		Comprehension		Topic genre	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
3	60	0	0	2	40	1	20	2	40	3	60

Table 19: Teacher’s difficulties when teaching reading

The table shows that 60% of the teachers encounter the lack of motivation and topic genre difficulties when teaching reading, while 40% of them face fluency and comprehension problems. Only 20% of them encounter language problems.

Question 05:

- ❖ What are the strategies that you use in teaching reading?

Bottom-up

Top-down

Bottom-up		Top-down		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%
03	60	02	40	05	100

Table 20: teacher’s strategies used for teaching reading

The table demonstrates that 60% of the teachers use the “Bottom-up” strategy to teach reading, while 40% of them use the “Top-down” strategy in teaching reading.

Question 06:

❖ Do you assess your student’s reading fluency?

Yes

No

Yes		No		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%
04	80	01	20	05	100

Table 21: Teacher’s assessment of student’s fluency

The table shows that 80% of the teachers assess their student’s reading fluency in order to make students know their level and evaluate their reading fluency. Only 20% of them don’t assess their reading fluency because they claim that exams are written not oral so there is no need to assess reading fluency.

Question 07:

❖ Do you think that fluency instruction is integral to learning?

Yes

No

Yes		No		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%
05	100	00	00	05	100

Table 22: Teacher’s opinion about fluency instruction

According to the table, all the teachers (100%) agree that fluency instruction is integral to learning.

Question 08:

❖ Which method do you use for fluency instruction?

Repeated reading

Voluntary reading

Model fluent reading

Others?

Repeated reading		Voluntary reading		Model fluent reading		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
01	20	03	60	01	20	5	100

Table 23: Teacher’s methods used for fluency instruction

The above table shows that 20% of the teachers use repeated reading method for fluency instruction, and 60% of them use voluntary reading, while 20% use model fluent reading. Some teachers use silent reading as another useful method.

Question 09:

- ❖ To what extent do you think that fluency and comprehension are related?

Concerning this question, all teachers agree through their responses that fluency and comprehension are inseparable in the sense that when the student is fluent, his comprehension will be easier. In other words, students should read correctly and fluently so that they will be able to understand the content of the text.

Question 10:

- ❖ What are the strategies are utilized the most for comprehension to assist silent fluency?

Think-aloud

Predicting

Others?

Think-aloud		Predicting		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%
03	60	02	40	05	100

Table 24: Teacher’s strategies for comprehension to support silent fluency

The table reveals that 60% of the teachers claims that “think-aloud” is the most utilized strategy for comprehension to assist silent reading. 40% of them state that they use

“predicting”, in addition to “asking-answering” tasks in order to attract students (other strategy).

Question 11:

- ❖ Which type of fluency do students exhibit the strongest comprehension?

Silent

Oral

Silent		Oral		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%
03	60	02	40	05	100

Table 25: Fluency types that show strongest comprehension

From the above table, it is seen that 60% of the teachers state that the silent fluency which exhibit the strongest comprehension, while 40% of them state that the oral fluency that exhibit the strongest comprehension.

Question 12:

- ❖ How do slower readers exhibit comprehension in your classroom?

Stronger than more fluent readers

equal with more fluent readers

less than more fluent readers

Stronger than more fluent readers		equal with more fluent readers		less than more fluent readers		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
01	20	02	40	02	40	05	100

Table 26: teacher’s comparison between slower readers and fluent readers

The table indicates that 20% of the teachers claim that slower readers exhibit stronger comprehension than more fluent readers in their classroom. 40% of them claim that they

exhibit equal comprehension with more fluent readers, while 40% of them state that their slower readers exhibit less comprehension than more fluent readers.

3. The comprehension test

The comprehension test that is administered to pupils in this study aims at providing an evaluation of student's understanding. This test consists of one exercise (The number of the exercise is selected because of the limitation of time). The exercise is taken from a book entitled as "Teach English: a training course for teacher". It requires students to read a descriptive text of 193 words followed by four questions: The first three questions include short answers questions while the fourth one is "true false" statement. The text is divided into three paragraphs in which it describes the common foods in Thailand and the traditional ways of serving and eating food in Thailand. The reading comprehension task is neither too easy nor too difficult, it is selected according to the student's level. In general, the test asks students to read a descriptive text and indicate their comprehension of that text through such simple questions.

3.1 The analysis of the test

Question 01

The students have been asked about the cause why rice is a common food in Thailand. The reason is clearly provided in the text so it is expected a high number of correct answers. The response of the students is differed according to their accuracy. Only few students have given the exact and complete answer. Some students have answered simply that rice is a common food because all dishes are eaten with rice, but sentences as a whole does not really answer the question. Four students have given no answer; it means that those students haven't understood the point.

Question 02

The students have been required to answer the question that asks about why fish is a common food. Although it is clear that the "why" question needs students to give the reason, not all students have succeeded in the answer. Most students have extracted the appropriate reason while some of them answer that the real reason is because fish plays an important part in Thai cooking, it seems that they don't know the meaning of the words "coastline" since this words is the key words for that answer.

Question 03

Through this question it is required for students to justify why knives are not needed to eat food. Students tend to explain that “there is no need to use knives and forks instead, special spoons and forks are used”. It seems that students understand that the Thai people eat with special spoons that leads them to think unconsciously that knives are not required. It is noticed through this answer that students responded hastily. Very few students have indicated a good comprehension of the question.

Question 04

Unlike the previous questions, in this question there are three statements about the traditional way of eating in Thailand in which students have been supposed to answer with “true” or “false”. It is appearing that the task has not been easy for the students since there are very few students who were able to state which statement is true and which one is false. About the other students, it seems that they were confused because it is observable that they have been answered randomly. Two of the respondents have not answered the question.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, the combination of reading fluency with reading comprehension are examined. Also the motives behind selecting the population and the sample are highlighted. As why an explanation of the materials used in the study and the analysis of the data collected from those materials are also provided. The next chapter will present a summary of the findings with some suggestions for teaching reading.

Chapter Three:

Pedagogical Implications

Introduction

This chapter circles the various findings in the current study. Some pedagogical implications for teaching reading and for those teachers who want to achieve fluency instruction through using methods in English as Foreign Language are highlighted. Moreover, the chapter presents the limitation of the study and provides some suggestions for future research.

1. Discussion of the findings

Based on the analysis of the data, the first conclusion that can be drawn from the students' responses concerning the reading habit, and in a general manner, one could say that there are students who prefer to read silently, whereas others show their preference to be oral readers. However, the majority of the students like to read to themselves and only few of them assert that they enjoy reading if someone share their readings, furthermore, if they are reading silently or loudly, those students show their understanding of the text from the second reading or more; it means that it is difficult for them to understand what is read from the first reading.

It has been found that the majority of the students read slowly when they read orally. It is proved that they lack oral fluency because some of them don't have enough vocabulary while others are less aware of the pronunciation rules in addition to the lack of practising reading outside the classroom. Concerning silent fluency, it can be said that most of the students read faster when they read silently and this is evidenced through their responses. They claim to remember better if they read silently either when they read from a book or a computer. These results indicate that students have average fluency which according to them somehow affects their comprehension. Yet, those students need to develop their oral fluency for better understanding and for being good readers.

Concerning the teacher's responses and after analysing the data, fluency, comprehension and the lack of motivation are the common difficulties encountered by teachers who follow the bottom-up strategy more than the top-down when they teach reading.

The findings show that the majority of the teachers assess their student's fluency because all of them agree that fluency instruction is fundamental to learning since it is a bridge for reading comprehension. Those teachers use voluntary reading in their instruction but they rarely use repeated reading or model fluent reading which are important methods for developing fluency.

Throughout the results of the comprehension test in which students show their inability to understand without being fluent and which support the previous findings, it confirms what has already been said in the literature review, i.e., that fluency and comprehension are interrelated in the sense that the learners became autonomous when great level of fluency is enhanced (Paris 2005; as cited in Katherine A. Dougherty Stahl 2008).

The outcomes of this study tend to confirm the hypothesis of the research that reading comprehension is difficult to be achieved without measuring reading fluency because it is approved that when developing fluency in reading, comprehension is very important as Nation (2009:71) states: “there is no point in reading faster if little is understood”. In other words, increasing comprehension is based on increasing fluency.

Both Automaticity theory and Verbal efficiency theory that are described in (Arthur VanderVeen and Kristen Huff, Mark Gierl, Danielle S. McNamara, Max Louwerse, & Art Graesser 2007; Jeffrey J. Walczyk, Min Wei, Peijia Zha et al 2009) propose the influence of fluency on comprehension. While compensatory-encoding theory could not be evidenced by this study. According to the findings, students when facing unfamiliar words, most of them directly ask the teacher to help them extracting meaning so the compensations that are described previously are not used by students when reading.

2. Pedagogical Implications

Grounded on the findings from the current study, several recommendations can be arranged for instructional practice. As FL instructor, it is necessary to be aware of the pedagogical implications to create good readers.

2.1 Reading Instruction

Learning a foreign language means expanding the knowledge about that language, the cultures and the world. In order to achieve that learning, several skills are required. Reading is one of them which is a crucial skill for students of English as a foreign language to master since it is a necessity in the student's lives to do many things such as reading newspaper, maps, magazines, etc. So it is important for teachers to develop their students' reading skills especially those with reading disabilities. According to Marie Carbo (2007) the following principles are effective to be a great teacher of reading:

Principle 01: *learning to read should be easy and fun*

It is noticed that reading difficulties lead struggling readers to avoid reading because of their thought of being stupid. The role of teacher is to make the reading process more enjoyable and funny through finding attractive ways to engage students emotionally in the text because when the students are highly involved, the stress is abridged gradually.

Making students see people enjoy reading is a key strategy to help them experience that enjoyment themselves. In addition, it is preferable to provide time for students to share reading with their friend if they want.

Principle 02: *It is natural for student to be motivated to read*

Motivation is one of the keys to decode reading difficulties because when the students are motivated, they will be responsible about their reading. According to Sprenger (1999) when student's emotions and reading in addition to deepest attention are brought together many storage areas in the brain will be activated (as cited in Carbo 2007). From this point, it is important for schools to provide motivated and relaxed circumstance for readers in order to meet student's interests and curiosity and support their new interests. As a teacher, asking students about their interests create sense of motivation in addition to the attempt to help struggling readers moving from low level to high level through starting from short texts to the long ones.

Principle 03: *Good reader spend time practising reading*

Without practice, reading cannot be achieved. Nowadays students circumvent reading and they use library less. Creating lifelong readers require students to spend more time in reading especially when the materials are selected according to students' interests.

Practice measure reading accomplishment in all its areas. However, practice should not be based only inside the classroom. It is necessary to encourage students to read outside the class through helping them to take books home and advise them to exchange books among them to know the interest of each other.

Principle 04: *Reading styles*

Differentiating reading instruction according to students' reading styles leads to successful teaching in the sense that the sensitive teachers take into consideration their students' reading styles. Carbo (2007) in her research findings notes that reading instruction can be enhanced when teachers attempt to match the students' reading styles that lead unconsciously to the enjoyment of the text in a short time.

Matching students' reading styles requires observing students, and utilizing checklist which guide the teacher to select materials and methods for reading instruction appropriately. This is called "reading style inventory RSI" (Carbo 2007). In other words, teachers are asked to integrate methods so that to achieve the reading process.

2.2The importance of developing fluency

"Fluency may be a necessary condition for good comprehension and enjoyable reading experience" (Stanovich & Nathan 2001:176 as cited in Caldwell 2008:163). Through this statement, it is clear that fluency is an essential skill for readers to move from decoding to comprehension. In other words, fluency may function as a pointer of complete reading comprehension (Fuchs, Fuchs, Hosp, and Jenkins 2001 as cited in Caldwell 2008). So it is important for teachers to take into consideration the development of their students' fluency in the sense that for students, fluency enhancement is one of the phases to move in the journey concerning good reading (Elizabeth B. Meisinger and Barbara A. Bradley 2008).

Developing reading fluency requires students spend time as much as possible practising reading because practice is a significant element that provide opportunities to develop their automaticity (Elizabeth B. Meisinger and Barbara A. Bradley 2008). As a teacher, it is necessary to be able to measure the effectiveness of fluency instruction because if teachers offer the kind of instruction that works then fluency, comprehension and rate will improve. For such reason, Carbo (2007) outlines the following instructions for building fluency:

- Emphasize both automaticity (Perfetti 1985; Stanovich 1980) and prosody, or reading with expression (Dowhower 1991).
- Strain comprehension, not speed because when the focus is only on speed comprehension can be decreased.
- Use fluent models of reading to encourage non-fluent readers to listen and practise reading aloud until they can read the passage fluently (Samuels 1988).
- Avoid using the same method in order to not get bored and try to vary methods such as assisted reading methods.

Teachers should continue to focus on fluency due to the fact of how it is closely related to comprehension and they need to consider the importance of including fluency instruction with reading programs. The common issue in our classroom is that teachers follow the course-book and they devote their time more for grammar lessons since they think that students need grammar for their final exam. Reading tasks is secondary, followed by text

comprehension activities, and is practised rarely because students are less motivated and the reason behind this uninspiring as one of the teachers said “because the texts of the coursebook are not of the interest of the students”.

2.2.1 Echo reading

It is a strategy in which teacher and student read together; teacher reads aloud a given text as the students follow silently. When the teacher completes reading, students are supposed to read the same text orally. This strategy helps students develop their fluency and encourage them since the teacher makes the students involved in the sense that reading aloud to students provides them with a model of how to pace reading, accurate word reading, inflection tone of voice (Elizabeth et al 2008; John Pikulski & David Chard 2003).

To achieve echo reading in the classroom, teacher needs to give each student his own copy of the text to be read. However, before starting the echo reading, it is important to provide students instructions; it means that explaining to them the procedures of reading in order to make it clear. It is necessary for teacher to monitor the student’s reading through walking around the class to check whether students are reading. Nevertheless, the selection of reading material should be appropriate with students’ level. Facilitating comprehension should be included in echo reading step since the aim of reading is to understand what is being read because if comprehension is neglected the reading process will not be achieved. So to increase comprehension, the discussion of new vocabulary is required.

2.2.2 Assisted reading

In order to understand the connections between the ideas of the text, students need to read accurately and rapidly with good expression (Stanovich & Nathan 1981 as cited in Pikulski & Chard 2003). To help students enhance fluency, controlling the difficulty of the text close to providing feedback for missing words are an important tasks that contribute in improving the reading performance of struggling readers through giving the students chances to read widely and directing specific elements of fluency (Kuhn & Stahl 2000 as cited in Pikulski & Chard 2003). It means to test their voice on different passages: the passages are read in different ways to show the intonation of the meaning by the author. By receiving feedback from others, expressive and meaningful reading is developed in the sense that communicating the intended meaning may help students recognizing the language of the text to understand.

2.2.3 Chunking text

Fluency instruction develops rate accuracy, rate word recognition. Also it improves two reading skills which are: chunking (parsing) and prosody. Chunking refers to student's capacity to separate or combine written text into meaningful phrases or clause units in which students need to be familiar with the syntax. The effect of chunking text into phrase units help students reading with using variation of intonation or pausing for stress (prosody), so that it can be said that prosody works properly beyond the capacity to chunk words in sentences. In other words, prosody during reading process is based on effective word recognition and comprehension (Lem et al 2010). So, for struggling readers, dividing text into meaningful parts or phrases is a helpful way for building fluency and comprehension that should be taken into account by teachers when teaching fluency.

2.2.4 Repeated reading

When students in the class have different levels of fluency, repeated reading strategy is required to be used. This method is the basis of several methods available to progress reading fluency (Roxanne F Hudson; Holly B Lane; Paige C Pullen 2005; Willis 2008). Repeated reading strategy consist of:

- a) choosing short passage at the students' instructional level
- b) setting a rate criterion and c) having students read the passage several time until reading rate is reached (Hudson et al 2005).

The practice of repeated reading includes: firstly, model fluent reading by the teacher by reading loudly the passage selected to be read (Willis 2008; Westwood 2001). Samuels (2002) proposes that, in this technique, three reading or four are sufficient because in four readings, the benefits of the rereading are grasped (as cited in Barbara J. Walker, Kouider Mokhtari, Stephan Sargent 2006). Secondly, students reread the same passage until the words are read correctly, and that they can attend to more than sounding out individual word and look ahead at the sentence to use word and punctuation cues to add expression to their voice and comprehension to their reading. The reading material should be interesting to students and be properly stimulating (Willis 2008).

According to Nation (2009), there are four conditions that should be met in order to reach truly fluency. Repeated reading gathers these conditions. The first condition is that students should have a listener to emphasize on the message through converse this message among them. The second one required is reading material should be easy; i.e. the lexis of the

text is familiar. The third one is that there should be some pressure to perform at a faster than normal speed. The repeated reading offers this support. The fourth condition there should be an amount of practice.

2.2.5 Choral reading

This strategy provides student reading loudly in harmony with all students in class without stress. This method is a very helpful method since it helps student to build confidence in their selves, and provides them with the opportunity to practise reading with groups before reading on their own. The objective of this method is that student will be able to read aloud individually with the whole class. It aims at making students active participants in the reading process to enhance fluency while contributes to better reading comprehension and reading proficiency (Elabsy 2013; Willis 2008).

2.2.6 Modelling supportive reading

When students are not embarrassed or bored and comfortable with the activity fluency can be developed because modelling supportive reading groups contributes to motivate students to persevere. The environment should be low stress and opportunities to work together encouragingly in addition to practise the proper responses to classmates' error and success should be provided. Before the rereading activities, students need to develop their capacity to listen respectfully. Also the teacher needs to model the variation between smooth, fluent and expressive reading through using their voice, at higher or lower pitches, volumes and speed as well as explaining how these things have a great influence on the meaning of the words. By choosing volunteers to sound a sentence the way they like and opening a discussion about their intent makes students practise the aspects of fluency (Willis 2008).

2.3 Enhancing fluency through intelligence strengths

Throughout the intelligence theory which is developed by Gardner (1983), teachers can help students to build their fluency. It means that intelligence is considered as guide that allows teachers to differentiate fluency activities in order to make their students involved (Willis 2008). Let us explain them briefly.

2.3.1 Linguistic intelligence

Students who are linguistically intelligent use language to comprehend and convey information, practise activities that involve rhymes, verbal word games, telling stories. reading silently and reading aloud seem to be appropriate for them because those students

process strengths in vocabulary building, memorizing, learning foreign languages and have the ability to recall what they hear. Furthermore, they are good spoken instruction's followers.

2.3.2 Musical-rhythmic intelligence

Pitching and rhyming sounds are the characteristics of the students who have this kind of intelligence. Using fluency strategies where learning is connected to rhythmic constructs in which students parse and chunk words appropriately when reading it would be of great benefit.

2.3.3 Logical-mathematical intelligence

The students who belong to this kind of intelligence are considered as analytic learners, in the sense that, they make their decisions focusing on logic and they emphasize more on details and facts. For these learners, fluency activities should be presented in chronological steps; it means that, setting rules and examples, directing lessons and providing clear goals because students with this intelligence tend to analyse the reasons behind these rules and punctuation especially when modelling reading.

2.3.4 Visual-spacial intelligence

Since students of visual-spacial intelligence have the ability to understand the combination of objects, concepts or images in various fields or dimensions, they may have more progressed occipital lobes visual processing and relational memory connections to objects and words they see. Those students can learn more and develop their fluency when they see fluent reader model the facial and lingual movement of associated oral reading in which teacher provides visual observations of the punctuation and text.

2.3.5 Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence

Those students tend to use gross motor skills in performing arts, physical play, sports and object manipulative activities. When they read with expressions, they respond to actually feelings the movement in their lips and faces. Consequently, their fluency will be developed. Bodily students are more enjoyable and excited when adding movements to their verbal expressiveness. Reading theatre is more appropriate method used for those students since they use their body to connect with the text and convey expression.

2.3.6 Interpersonal intelligence

The characteristic of the interpersonal students is that they work in social context; it means that, with others and in groups, in the sense that they percept and response to other's

moods and feelings. So that, they can work perfectly when choral or paired reading is provided because of their ability to interact with others, and interpret their classmates' behaviours.

2.3.7 Intrapersonal intelligence

Those students excel with their ability to combine the text with their personal experiences and make emotional connection positively. For successful relational memories, they are independent workers for fluency practice because they prefer to use metacognition notes in writing rather than expressing them when fluency assessment occurs.

2.4 The necessity of balancing between reading fluency and reading comprehension

The present study seeks to determine the relationship between reading fluency and comprehension. It should be noted that fluency is a reading issue that appears in elementary grade and still appears in middle and high school (Rasinski Nancy D. Padak, Christine A. McKeon, Lori G. Wilfong, Julie A. Friedauer, Patricia Heim 2005). However, although reading fluency requires high priority in reading programs, it is important to recall as Blachowicz & Ogle state that «fluency is highly correlated with comprehension. A fluency measure can tell you whether students can handle the word level a prosody demand of a text» (2008:66). That is to say, fluency has a significant impact on comprehension because good comprehension is experienced when the reader is able to identify words quickly and easily (Samuels 2002 as cited in Helen Abadiano and Jesse Turner 2005).

In the same line of light, D. Ray Reutzel (2006) argues that providing high quality fluency instruction leads to high quality comprehension instruction. So that, in order to make EFL learners excited in reading skill, it is necessary to focus on fluency and comprehension as inseparable skills. In other words, support students read fluently in order to increase good comprehension simultaneously through teaching them decoding skills using phonemic awareness instruction and engaging them in repeated reading or modelling fluent reading as it was said previously. Since background knowledge is necessary for comprehension, teachers should help students to bring their previous knowledge to the text which reinforces the comprehension (Laura Pardo 2004).

3.Suggestions for future research

The current research tests the hypothesis that claims that reading fluency affects reading comprehension which is confirmed through the results gained.

However, it is noticed that text structure plays an important role on comprehension. Klingner et al (2007) state that different text structure should be thought while reading since it has an influence on student's comprehension. In the sense that through extracting meaning from text is not enough for comprehension to be occurred. Comprehension needs reader build representations of the text which include the surface code (the exact wording of the texts) and text base (idea units representing the meaning) (Snow 2002). So the role of text structure on reading comprehension is an issue suggested for future research:

How can the text structure guide readers to identify key information?

Other future investigation may involve studies on the students' reading styles.

To what extent identifying students' reading styles helps teachers to select materials for fluency instruction?

4.The limitations of the study

The current study highlights several limitations that are needed to be underlined.

The first limitation is related to the number of subjects from which these results are obtained. A total number of the whole population is 100. Only 47 of them participate in the study instead of 64 participants which are selected as a sample of this study because of the absences. Those participants contributed only to filling the questionnaire, while most of them didn't do the test.

Time is a very important factor in this study. For this reason, students' reading fluency would not be assessed even if it is planned to be assessed since the researcher needs time and effort to calculate reading speed for each participant.

Another problem faced in this study is matching students' levels to passage level of the comprehension test. To decrease the criterion of text difficulty, lexical deficiency is reduced through selecting a simple passage with less familiar words followed by simple questions in order to make students comfortable while doing the test.

Conclusion

The hypothesis that is suggested in this study is confirmed through this chapter that presents some pedagogical implications in the light of the result obtained. It includes some principles that should be taken into consideration when teaching reading. In addition, it provides some instructions for fluency building.

General conclusion

Reading is a familiar skill that helps learners to extract information from a written text. However, reading in an effective way requires such subskills which should be enhanced to achieve the main goal of reading which is comprehension. Fluency is one of those skills which many learners lack. The lack of this skill causes reading difficulties which may be an obstacle in improving readers' language proficiency. The dissertation aims at casting light on the significant relationship between reading fluency and reading comprehension. It is concerned with examining the effect of reading speed on first year secondary school students' comprehension. This research advances from two principal research questions:

1. what is the relationship between reading speed both orally and silently and comprehension?

2. Can there be fluency without comprehension or vice versa? How can reading fluency strategies improve reading comprehension among struggling readers?

Reading is considered as a cognitive activity which requires the accomplishment of two important tasks: decoding words and comprehending text. For this reason, the theoretical chapter sheds light on these skills. In order to test the hypothesis, triangulated approach is adopted via three research methods.

On the basis of the findings gathered, two conclusions related to the hypothesis and research questions are provided:

Students need to improve their oral fluency which is considered as one of the difficulties that is encountered by teachers when teaching reading and that leads to less comprehension as the results of the test show.

Fluency instruction is integral to learning because it leads to effective reading. In other words, it is necessary for achieving the central goal of reading which is comprehension.

Through these results, the hypothesis of the research is confirmed that reading comprehension could be achieved throughout sufficient fluency instructions to develop students' automaticity in reading.

On the light of the findings obtained, some pedagogical implications are proposed to enhance students' fluency and to increase the reading process. These guidelines are grouped into a number of principles including some reading instructions, the importance of developing reading fluency by suggesting some instructions and methods that can be used in the classroom which are useful for teachers as well as students.

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8. When reading silently do you read?

Quickly

slowly

9. Do you remember better if you read

Aloud

silently

10. Do you prefer reading on?

Computer

book

Why?.....
.....
.....
.....

11. Do pictures slow you down when you are reading?

Yes

No

12. How do you consider your reading fluency?

Very weak

weak

average

excellent

If very weak or weak because:

You don't read

You have reading difficulties

13. Do you think that your fluency affects your reading comprehension?

Yes

No

little

almost

14. When face unfamiliar words in a text?

You ask the teacher to explain

Read those words again and try to pick up the meaning

Appendix II

Teacher's Questionnaire

This questionnaire aims at gathering data about the relationship between reading fluency and reading comprehension. We would be grateful if you could answer all the questions, which will provide us with information concerning the effect of reading speed on the student's comprehension. Thank you for your contribution.

1. Age: 18-25 25-35 35-40 40-55

2. How many years have you been teaching English?

5-15 15-25 25-30 30-35

3. degree do you have?

Licence of English

Magister (specify the specialty)

Others (please specify)

4. Which kind of difficulties do you have while teaching the reading skill?

The lack of motivation

Vocabulary

Fluency

Language

Comprehension

Topic genre

5. What are the strategies that you use in teaching reading?

Bottom-up

top-down

6. Do you assess your student's reading fluency?

Yes

No

Why?

.....
.....
.....

7. Do you think fluency instruction is integral to learning?

Yes

No

8. Which methods do you use for fluency instruction?

Repeated reading

voluntary reading

model fluent reading

Others?.....
.....
.....

9. To what extent do you think that fluency and comprehension are related?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

10. What strategies are utilized the most for comprehension to assist silent fluency?

Think-aloud

predicting

Others?.....
.....
.....

11. Which type of fluency do students exhibit the strongest comprehension?

Silent

oral

12.How do slower readers exhibit comprehension in your classroom?

Stronger than more fluent readers equal with more fluent readers

less than more fluent readers

Appendix III

The comprehension Test

Read this text and answer the questions:

When you are invited to a meal in Thailand, the words of the invitation literally mean 'come and eat rice'. Indeed, nearly all Thai dishes are eaten with rice, which grows there very easily as the climate is warm and there is plenty of rain.

The food is always served in neatly cut up pieces, so there is no need to use knives and forks but, instead, special spoons and forks are used. The Thai used to eat with their hands and there are still some people who eat this way. There is a particular way of doing it. First they wash their right hand in a bowl of water- they only eat with their right hand. They are careful not to let the food touch the palm of their hand. After the meal, the hand is again carefully washed.

The meal is usually made up of several different dishes, all of which are spicy. They are served in bowls which everyone shares, though each person has their own bowl of rice. As Thailand has a long coastline, it is not surprising that fish and shellfish play an important part in Thai cooking.

Questions:

1. Why is rice a common food in Thailand?
2. Why is fish a common food?
3. Why are knives not needed to eat food?
4. Here are some statements about the traditional way of eating in Thailand. Which are *true*, and which are *false*?
 - a) You should wash both hands before eating in Thailand.
 - b) You should eat with the fingers of the right hand.
 - c) You should wash your right hand after eating.

