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EXPLORING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF USING GUIDED READING APPROACH ON PROMOTING ARAB EIGHTH GRADERS' ENGLISH READING FLUENCY

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READING APPROACH ON PROMOTING ARAB EIGHTH
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Rasha Moustafa Mohamed Afandy

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education (Curriculum and Instruction)

Under the Supervision of Dr. Negmeldin Alsheikh

November 2020

Declaration of Original Work

I, Rasha Moustafa Mohamed Afandy, the undersigned, a graduate student at the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU), and the author of this thesis entitled "*Exploring the Effectiveness of Using Guided Reading Approach on Promoting Arab Eighth Graders' English Reading Fluency*", hereby, solemnly declare that this thesis is my own original research work that has been done and prepared by me under the supervision of Dr. Negmeldin Alsheikh, in the College of Education at UAEU. This work has not previously been presented or published, or formed the basis for the award of any academic degree, diploma or a similar title at this or any other university. Any materials borrowed from other sources (whether published or unpublished) and relied upon or included in my thesis have been properly cited and acknowledged in accordance with appropriate academic conventions. I further declare that there is no potential conflict of interest with respect to the research, data collection, authorship, presentation and/or publication of this thesis.

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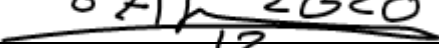
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Abstract

This study aimed at exploring the effect of the guided reading approach on promoting reading fluency skills for middle school students. An explanatory mixed-method design was employed to achieve the purpose of this study. The quantitative phase of the study featured a pre and post-test after the implementation of a guided reading program for six weeks. The qualitative phase of the study featured by a collection of documents of evaluations which were conducted biweekly during the implementation of the program. These evaluative checklists were used to measure the students' progress in reading fluency skills. The participants of this study were eighth-graders students who were selected conveniently and purposively ($n = 27$). Generally, the results collected from the pre-and post-test indicated that there is a significant difference between the pre and post-test in terms of reading fluency skills: word read, word correct per minute (WCPM), and accuracy in favor of the post-test results. The qualitative results revealed that the use of the guided reading program to promote reading fluency skills leads to incremental progress in the word read, word correct per minute (WCPM), and accuracy skills. The study discussed critical issues related to eighth-graders' reading fluency skills including, promoting reading fluency skills, and it suggests some recommendations for teachers, curriculum designers, and proposes some implications for future research.

Keywords: Reading fluency, guided reading, word read, word correct per minute (WCPM), and accuracy.

Title and Abstract (in Arabic)

استكشاف تأثير استخدام القراءة الموجهة في تعزيز طلاقة قراءة الإنجليزية لدى طلاب الصف الثامن

الملخص

هدفت الدراسة إلى استكشاف تأثير استخدام القراءة الموجهة في تعزيز القراءة بطلاقة لدى طلاب الصف الثامن. وقد اعتمدت الدراسة على استخدام المنهج المختلط للحصول على نتائج واضحة وقوية توضح لنا هدف الدراسة من خلال استخدام مواد واستراتيجيات تعزز القراءة بطلاقة. وقد اشتملت الدراسة على مرحلتين حيث كانت المرحلة الأولى من الدراسة تتمثل في الجانب الكمي للدراسة و الذي يتعلق بإجراء الاختبار القبلي لقياس مستوى الطلاب في مهارات عدد الكلمات المقروءة و عدد الكلمات المقروءة بالدقيقة الواحدة ودقة القراءة بعدها تم تطبيق البرنامج القائم على استخدام القراءة الموجهة لمدة استمرت ستة أسابيع و من ثم إجراء الاختبار البعدي لقياس المكتسبات المتحصلة للمهارات القراءة بطلاقة. أما المرحلة الثانية من الدراسة تشتمل على الجانب الكيفي للدراسة ويتضمن تحليل الوثائق التقييم الاسبوعي لقياس تطور الطلبة خلال البرنامج. وقد تم اختيار العينة المتاحة ($n = 27$) من طلبة الصف الثامن. وقد اسفرت النتائج الكمية على وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين الاختبارين القبلي والبعدي في أداء الطلاب لمهارات: عدد الكلمات المقروءة وعدد الكلمات المقروءة بالدقيقة الواحدة ودقة القراءة وكانت لصالح الاختبار البعدي. كما وأكدت النتائج الكيفية على ان استخدام برنامج القراءة الموجهة قد أدى إلى تطور تدريجي في أداء الطلاب لمهارات عدد الكلمات المقروءة وعدد الكلمات المقروءة بالدقيقة الواحدة ودقة القراءة. فنرى أن الدراسة قد تناولت قضايا متعلقة بكيفية تطوير هذه المهارات كمهارات أساسية في تطوير مهارة القراءة بطلاقة لدى طلبة الصف الثامن والتي استنتجت منها بعض التوصيات الموجهة للمدرسين والمختصين في اعداد مناهج اللغة الانجليزية ومحاولة تقديم بعض الاقتراحات عند إجراء ابحاث اخرى مستقبلا.

مفاهيم البحث الرئيسية: القراءة بطلاقة، القراءة الموجهة، عدد الكلمات المقروءة، عدد الكلمات المقروءة بالدقيقة الواحدة، دقة القراءة.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my special thanks of gratitude to Dr. Negmeldin Alsheikh, my academic advisor and thesis director, who saved no efforts to guide me through his formative feedbacks based on his meaningful insights, analytical criticism, and wise direction.

I am overwhelmed in all humbleness and gratefulness to acknowledge my deepest gratitude to the advisory committee. I would like to extend my thanks to the examination committee: Prof. Tharwat El-Sakran and Dr. Badreyya AlKhanbooli. I thank each and every one of them for reading my work and providing meaningful suggestions. I would like to extend my thanks to the Chair and all the faculty members of the Curriculum and Methods of Instruction Department and the College of Education at the UAEU for supporting and teaching me the best methods to conduct research. Thank you to my colleagues who shared their ideas and experiences with me especially Mrs. Najah Al Mohammedi whose advice was precious.

Special thanks to my school family who supported me; especially the school principal, Mr. Nasser Salam, who gave me the golden opportunity to do my study.

I am extending my heartfelt thanks to my daughter, Maya, for taking all the household responsibilities to give me a chance to finish my work. I am extremely grateful to my mother for her love, prayers, caring, and sacrifices for educating and preparing me for my future, and for my lovely sister, Abeer, who believes in my abilities.

Dedication

To my beloved husband for his love, understanding, prayers, and continuing support and my amazing children; Maya, Yousif, Isel, and Essa for their understanding to complete this research work

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List of Abbreviations

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELL	English Language Learners
ESL	English as a Second Language
GR	Guided Reading
MAP	Measure of Academic Progress
MoE	Ministry of Education
NWEA	Northwest Evaluation Association
PISA	Program for International Students Assessment
PM	Price Milburn
RF	Reading Fluency
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UAE	United Arab Emirates
WCPM	Words-Correct-Per-Minute
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Overview

The current chapter serves as an introduction part for the research study. As such, the chapter gives brief background information on the importance of reading in English in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) context in which the students learn English as a foreign or a second language. The chapter also deals with reading fluency, guided reading program and the purpose of the study, the problem statement, the study questions that directed the research, the significance of the study, the delimitation, the limitations, the definitions of the key terms used in the research and finally, it describes the overall organization of the study.

1.2 Introduction

As English becomes a global language and it is almost a lingua franca around the world and in the UAE in particular, it becomes imperative to learn it as a second or a foreign language. O'Sullivan (2004) finds that UAE learners have a good opportunity to use English not only in the classrooms but also outside the school as they use the language in their daily lives due to the nature of the context in which different nationalities live together. Many researchers emphasize the importance of English in general and reading in particular and they consider it as a cornerstone for learning (Shihab, 2011; Jenkins et al., 2003; McArthur & MacArthur, 1998; Melchers, Shaw, & Sundkvist, 2019; Qashoa, 2006). For example, Qashoa (2006) stressed the importance of offering opportunities to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in order to acquire the skills that support them in gaining a second language.

Reading is the key to unlock all the important sources for learning and it is a vital method to gain knowledge in different areas, to improve using vocabulary in communication with others, and to support learning in general. In this sense, Roe, Smith and Burns (2011) consider reading ability as the way for performing everyday tasks effectively and it is the foundation of knowledge, pleasure, and recreation. To accomplish these benefits from reading, students need to gain some reading skills, but teachers face challenges to support all students including those with learning difficulties, so educators gave a priority to teaching reading. To improve students' reading abilities, teachers need to implement reading strategies to accomplish this target.

Knowing the vital importance of reading, policymakers intensely recommended that education stakeholders have to create a culture of reading in the UAE context. Highly positioned people in the government encouraged creating a framework for all bodies across the country including educational, social, media, and cultural areas to boost reading among all sections of society and all age groups. Especially recommended for the teachers to have particular approaches by which they can help their students to be better readers (Dubai School Inspection Bureau, 2020; United Arab Emirates Cabinet, 2020).

Guided Reading (GR) is an approach of instructions that provides guidance for the students with various reading levels and needs to improve their reading abilities. GR gives teachers the opportunity to scaffold the students in reading comprehension, reading fluency, word recognition, thus facilitating the acquisition of reading proficiency. In implementing GR, teachers select leveled reading books according to the students' needs and interests to be read in different strategies. To

read effectively, students need to practice reading with the teachers' support, after that students practice reading in groups independently, then after reading, discussions have to be made. Accordingly, this will reinforce the reading skills of the students through repeating the same procedures of GR instructions with a variety of texts that the teachers previously selected to be appropriate for her students' level. Subsequently, GR enables the teachers to observe and assess reading progress through stages; the initial stage when checking the reading level, the middle stage when applying the reading strategies, and the final stage when re-checking the reading level to measure the progress. GR lessons, in this study, are designed to achieve certain purposes through teaching reading particularly improving reading fluency.

Reading fluency is one of the effective reading features. Reading Fluency (RF) is the capacity to read fast, in an accurate way, effortlessly, and with expression, so RF is considered as a link between word recognition and reading comprehension. In this sense, fluent readers read naturally without facing troubles in word recognition while less fluent readers' reading is broken up as they need to focus on both word recognition and the meaning of the text. As a result, reading fluently helps students to focus more on paying attention to the meaning of the context than worrying about decoding words, so fluent readers read and comprehend simultaneously.

The main aim of the study is to explore the effect of using the guided reading approach on improving eighth-graders' English reading fluency in a UAE private school through implementing a 6-week reading program.

1.2.1 The Importance of Reading Skill for Middle School Students

Reading in English in an EFL context is a vital skill in language learning and an interactive process which is strongly emphasized by Neuman and Dickinson (2002) that reading is a back and forth relationship between a reader and a text. In sequence, it supports the students to master the reading skills which will surely, in turn, increase their knowledge and improve their academic achievements when they clearly understand the connection between their real-life experience and the text. In this sense, they will be able to predict and infer the text ideas, intentions, and purposes which will subsequently promote their reading fluency (Afflerbach, Pearson, & Paris, 2008; Cimmiyotti, 2013; Wanzek & Roberts, 2012).

Many studies stated that inappropriate instruction especially in the low-grade levels can cause future reading problems for the students in their future levels. That is why suffering in the middle school return back to the previous suffering of weak reading instructions at early learning years (Wanzek & Roberts, 2012; Chapman & Tunmer, 2003; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2001). Most of the students who are categorized as reading strugglers lack the basic reading strategies in dealing with reading texts (Wanzek & Roberts, 2012). Additionally, Park and Kim (2017) explained that English Language Learners (ELL) need to use the reading skills perfectly to be successful in the international competitive environments (Park & Kim, 2017; Lyon & Moats, 1997).

Eighth graders, who range between 11 to 15 years, are at the stage in which students begin to use their prior knowledge together with employing reading skills to understand the content of various reading texts. Moreover, McCallumore and Sparapani (2010) consider this stage as a basic year for the high school level.

Furthermore, reading is a medium for learning other subjects. That is why, students who have not gained the proper level of reading fluency and reading comprehension skills are at risk of not understanding the content of other content area subjects and doubtfully pass the middle school stage. Reasonably, scholars such as Santa (2006) stress upon well preparing the middle school students to meet the test requirements for the high school stage. That is why it is an overwhelming task for teachers to improve middle school students' reading level because they need to choose the proper and interesting methods that can help students of different reading needs. Advisably, teachers can use various reading approaches that support students with different needs such as GR (Suits, 2003).

1.2.2 Guided Reading as an Essential Approach in Teaching Reading

With respect to Fountas and Pinnell (2003) GR is an instructional approach used with all the students including the struggling readers and the proficient ones. Besides, GR provides instructions based on individual student's reading needs to enrich their abilities and teach them how to read higher-level texts fluently (Iaquinta, 2006). Usually, guided reading revolves around the concept of what the students can read and what will be the following step. Therefore, "The teacher's goal is to strive to provide the most effective instruction possible and to match the difficulty of the material with the student's current abilities" (Iaquinta, 2006, p. 414). Hence, the teacher should select the proper reading levels that support the students' learning. Generally, the GR approach does not aim to enable the students to read selected books, but it scaffolds them in applying different strategies to help them in reading any book. GR program is often designed to support students with specialized strategies in dealing with various reading texts.

GR is a teaching framework that is designed to help students become competent readers who can "process increasingly challenging texts with understating and fluency" (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001, p. 193). During GR classes, the teacher meets the students to read and discuss a text that matches their reading level. Therefore, it's the teacher's responsibility to guide the students to employ the best strategy and to provide a purpose for the task and the discussion. In this sense, GR lesson depends on the teacher's knowledge of his/her students' reading levels, "competencies, interests, and experiences" (Suits, 2003). Knowing the students' zone of proximal development (ZPD) will ease the teachers' text selection to guide them to a higher level of learning (Mckenzie, 2010). Equally, Rupley, Blair and Nichols (2009) assured the importance of teaching reading by using leveled reading texts to support the readers to acquire new information through the interaction between the teachers and students under the teachers' guidance (Rupley, Blair & Nichols, 2009, p. 125). GR is defined by Biddulph (2002) as "an important approach in literacy education. Used in conjunction with other approaches.... it enables teachers to provide very effective support for students' literacy learning" (Biddulph, 2002, p. 2). This can be explained as reading lessons are guided by the teachers showing the students which are the particular strategies that can be used in understanding reading texts until they can independently do it by themselves (Hasbrouck, Ihnot & Rogers, 1999). The latter researchers assured the importance of having reading strategies to enhance reading fluency such as hearing fluent reading modeled, repeated readings, and progress monitoring (Hasbrouck, Ihnot & Rogers, 1999).

Students who suffer from reading difficulty problems gained numerous attention of educators and researchers. For example, Adams (1994) stated that one out of each three students has clear reading difficulties, which was supported by

many research studies that were conducted during the past couple of decades of which the results revealed that poor reading level leads to deeper reading problems (Lentz, 1988; Snow, Griffin & Burns, 2005; Torgesen, 1998; Watson, Neuman & Dickinson, 2001; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2001). According to Fawson and Reutzel (2000), GR can be a good practice in promoting students' fluency.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The Ministry of Education in the UAE put notable emphasis on English reading skills in setting remarkable learning outcomes for eighth graders for example "Learners will develop language skills through a variety of text types including poems, stories, monologues and dialogues, descriptions, informative texts (which may include diagrams and graphs) and instructions" and by the end of the year students must "read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently" (MoE, 2019).

Despite the fact of the overwhelming emphasis stated by many governmental members on the necessity for developing English reading skills in the UAE, unfortunately, students are still facing difficulty to achieve high levels in English reading, mainly, when they undergo standardized tests such as the Program for International Students Assessment (PISA). Therefore, students suffer weakness with reading as a literacy skill and this weakness hampers them to achieve the baseline level of reading proficiency (Ness, 2016; OECD, 2014; PISA, 2015, p. 3). In reference to PISA, achieving the highest level (level 6) in reading means that students must have the ability to understand, interpret, reflect, and interact with written texts (OECD, 2014). In order to reach this level of reading as required in the

PISA test, students' basic skills must be built and empowered with the help of their teachers.

However, the most recent results of PISA show that 57% of test-takers in the UAE reached at least Level 2 proficiency in reading with a band score of 432, which is an average of unchanging score that has been sustained since the first PISA test conducted in 2009. Referring back to PISA, the students who score at this level, are only able to recognize the main idea in a text, find overt information, and can reflect on the purpose when it is explicitly shown in the test instructions (OECD, 2019).

Talking about the context of the current study, the school is employing the Measure of Academic Progress test (MAP) as an international assessment to monitor the growth of the students in reading, language usage, mathematics, and science. What is unique about the MAP Growth assessment is that it is a computer adaptive test in which every student gets his/her own set of questions based on responses to previous test questions. Generally, it is considered to be a good assessment as it pinpoints where the students are in their learning, by giving as many questions as necessary. For teachers, the MAP is beneficial as it helps them tailor their instructions according to their students' needs. According to the report of the test that was conducted twice in 2019 in Fall and Spring semesters, the recent eighth-graders growth (seventh graders before) achieved below in reading compared with the Rasch Unit scale (RIT) the international average score provided by MAP (211) and the local average (199) which reflect their need for support with the specific program, especially in reading. Moreover, the students' results in the MAP test show that none of the students was at or above the norm grade level mean and 96% of the sample students were far below the grade level mean (NWEA, 2020). A rigorous GR

program was the suggested idea by the researcher that may act as a solution to improve the students reading level.

GR is a dynamic part of developing reading skills, and it is important for developing reading fluency (Lagenberg, 2000). It is an approach to reading that was growing in popularity over the past decade. The main goal of GR is "to help students build their reading power—to build a network of strategic actions for processing texts" (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012, p. 272). Similarly, research has revealed that when teachers implement GR benefits will be gained by both students and teachers alike (Degener & Berne, 2014; Hansen, 2016; Hornsby, 2000). This was strongly supported by the study conducted by Hansen (2016) on a heterogeneous group of students when the results revealed the development of the students in fluency and reading comprehension skills. Furthermore, GR helps teachers to recognize the particular instructions that they need to use in each grade level. To maintain the need for using the GR in the classroom on a regular basis, the researcher of the current study conducted an informal interview with a focused group consisting of five English teachers teaching different grade levels and of various lengths of teaching experience. Upon asking them about GR, most of the teachers gave shallow knowledge about it. None of these teachers use the GR frequently in their classrooms as it is not included in the curriculum, and their other justification was its time-consuming. Additionally, they mentioned some points about guided reading such as their ignorance of the procedures and steps of implementing and they stressed upon not having any training course in this regard. Furthermore, the different levels of the students cause a kind of confusion, meaning that they may need more than one program according to some of them. When the researcher asked about its benefits

whether may include all the students, most of the teachers thought that it can be used with struggling readers only.

According to Degener and Berne (2014) and Hansen (2016), reading fluency is getting little attention from international tests. Because of the difficulty to be measured in the national and international identical tests, to some teachers, it is not considered to be a vital part of their teaching instructions of reading, despite the fact that it is a mid-way between the word recognition and comprehension (Rowe, 2005). Moreover, it has many steps that may support students to improve their reading skills. That was the rationale behind specifying fluency in this study.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of this research study is to explore the effect of the GR approach on promoting eighth-graders reading fluency skills in English through implementing a six weeks guided reading program. Furthermore, this study is to measure the progress of the students throughout the implementation of the program. Finally, the purpose of this research study is to examine how the qualitative results explain the quantitative results.

1.5 Research Questions

This current study addresses the succeeding research inquiries:

1) Does the use of the guided reading program make a difference in eighth-graders' English reading fluency?

2) How does the use of the guided reading program promote the eighth-graders' reading fluency?

3) How do the qualitative results confirm the quantitative results?

1.6 Significance of the Study

Because literacy standards have become more demanding for 21st-century learners, reading fluency as a key area in reading development is meant to be a robust indicator of students' reading success. Providing various reading instructions may have a powerful influence on the eighth grader's ability to manipulate reading strategies in understanding texts. Thus, this study may contribute to knowledge and instructional bases for UAE schools, teachers, and parents because it indicates to all the stakeholders the practical use of the guided reading approach in real classrooms. For instance, it may enhance the field of pedagogy by showing how teachers can use GR to promote reading skills specifically reading fluency. For instance, some of its contributions might include: the appropriate selection of materials, and tasks to serve eighth-graders' needs and development in reading fluency, and ways of implementing these tasks through using various pedagogical strategies.

In terms of the research, there is a clear lack of experimental studies that explore the role of using guided reading in improving eighth-graders' reading fluency. Therefore, this study attempts to fill a gap in the research literature by addressing the role of the guided reading approach in improving eighth-graders' fluency by employing an explanatory sequential mixed method design to capture a deep understanding of the area of reading fluency in the middle school stage.

1.7 Delimitations of the Study

Owing to the nature of the study, some delimitations were identified. They consist of the following: the participants of the study were selected according to their availability and willingness. Therefore, the participants were limited to eighth-

grade students in one of the private schools in the UAE context. Furthermore, this study aimed at investigating only one component in reading skills, which is reading fluency. As a result, it was guided by pre and post-tests and a designed program for six weeks was implemented to explore the role of the GR approach in promoting eighth-graders' reading fluency. Moreover, this study targeted the students' reaction to the program, while the teachers' views are not taken into consideration.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

This study was mainly directed to explore the effect of using the GR approach on reading fluency skills. Hence, it employed an experimental measure that was implemented on the sample selected conveniently and purposively based on the availability and willingness of students. This may limit the generalization of the study results since it is only implemented across one classroom in one school. Besides, the study was conducted within a short time frame which may limit the understanding of some of the issues that may be revealed if the implementation time was longer.

1.9 Definition of Terms

The following are explanations of the keywords used in this study:

Guided Reading: Guided reading is defined by Fountas and Pinnell (1996) as "an instructional context for supporting each reader's development of effective strategies for processing novel texts at increasingly challenging levels of difficulty" (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, p. 25).

Eighth Graders: In the UAE context, eighth- graders are students that range between 13 and 14 and it is a transitional stage between secondary and preparatory.

Reading Fluency: Fluency is defined by Rasinski (2006) "it deals with reading words accurately and with appropriate speed, and it deals with embedding in one's voice elements of expression and phrasing while reading" (p. 18). Another definition of fluency was developed by Kuhn, Schwanenflugel, and Meisinger (2010):

> Fluency combines accuracy, automaticity, and oral reading prosody, which, taken together, facilitate the reader's construction of meaning. It is demonstrated during oral reading through ease of word recognition, appropriate pacing, phrasing, and intonation. It is a factor in both oral and silent reading that can limit and support comprehension. (p. 240).

Accuracy denotes the student's skill to read words in an accurate way. Automaticity discusses the ability of the student to read words correctly and without any effort. Prosody means the ability to read with proper reading expression and good phrasing (Young & Rasinski, 2009).

1.10 Organization of the Study

The current study includes 5 chapters. The first chapter introduces the research topic, the problem statement, the research purpose, the research questions, and the significance of the study. Chapter two contains the conceptual framework, theoretical framework, and significant studies related to the research topic and the purpose of the study. Chapter three explains the research design as an explanatory mixed-method design, the participants, the instruments, the data collection, and data analysis procedures. Chapter four reveals the main results concerning the research questions: including the quantitative and qualitative results, shown through tables and graphs. Then, chapter five presents the discussion which reveals the

connections and variations between the results and the relevant studies discussed in the literature review. Finally, recommendations and implications for future research are introduced.

Chapter 2: Methods

2.1 Introduction

The second chapter introduces a conceptual framework, theoretical, and historical features. Primarily, a conceptual explanation will be presented on the GR approach as a pedagogical form. The chapter also investigates the theoretical framework that enhances the topic of the study, the literature conducted on the same topic, and the various studies that offer evidence on its different learning, social, and pedagogical results. The researcher will explicitly explain the supportive context in which reading and reading fluency should favorably take place. In this respect, the GR approach and reading fluency in reading is revised in relation to theories, such as the sociocultural theory of Vygotsky, and the automaticity model of LaBerge and Samuels (1974). Related studies are mentioned to support and underline the use of the GR approach in promoting reading fluency for middle school students. Besides, the researcher will provide a reliable description of studies that were conducted in the Arabian nations in general and the UAE in specific.

2.2 The Conceptual Framework of the Study

The current study explores the effect of using guided reading approach on promoting Arab eighth graders' English reading fluency and the following section gives more details about the key elements of the study which are guided reading and reading fluency with its main indicators.

2.2.1 Guided Reading Approach

The approach of the GR is used by teachers to enhance their students' skills and strategies used to interact with different reading texts. It is the approach anchored in different theoretical perspectives for example a product of Maine and Hofmann (2016) enhances the notion of reading as a transactional process. The idea went back to Rosenblatt's (1938) theory of transaction, which suggests that there is a relationship between the reader and the text. Considering this connection is an essential part of GR. In this sense, in a GR lesson, the teacher asks the students to show the relations and predictions related to the text understanding based on their schemas. Additionally, GR highlights the significance of differentiated instructions, the vital use of the student's prior knowledge, and the significance of social interaction while learning, and practicing strategies in an actual reading context.

Before implementing the GR program, there is an urgent necessity to know how to demeanor a GR lesson. Teachers ought to know the premises behind GR because it is the basis of why the GR works in the way it does. Essentially, teachers should "be aware of and appreciate the basic understandings or underlying theoretical perspectives on which the approach is based" (Biddulph, 2002). This issue is crucial because the means by which guided reading is being applied can differ significantly (Ford & Optiz, 2008). Therefore, being knowledgeable, the teacher can tailor the lessons to suit the needs of the student rather than applying the one-method-fits-all approach (Scull, 2010). In this sense, differentiated instructions will be implemented as a necessary part of the GR lesson. Clearly, GR outlines the role of the teacher as a guide, able to assist the students while they are constructing their understandings and developing a mastery of skills, strategies, and the content of

the text. Therefore, the main objective of GR in due course is to support the students to be autonomous readers armed with a store of strategies and skills they know how to use (Iaquinta, 2006; Morgan et al., 2013).

GR enables all students at varying levels, independent or striving to learn strategies based on the teacher's support (Ford & Opitz, 2008). Typically, it can be implemented in the primary and intermediate grades according to Denton et al. (2014). This method of instruction is "planned, intentional, focused instruction where the teacher helps students, usually in small group settings, learn more about the reading process" (Ford & Opitz, 2011, p. 229). According to Iaquinta (2006), there are various purposes behind using the GR approach: meeting the students' different needs and help them acquiring reading skills that enable them to read difficult texts fluently; the second one is to let the students practice using these strategies in order to effectively know what to do with difficult words and structure; lastly, to understand thoughts and concepts of any text they may encounter in the future.

Usually, students are clustered homogeneously based on the placement assessment that was used to group students accurately. In this respect, Iaquinta (2006) stated that making ongoing assessments enables teachers to group their students according to a particular instructional outline. For example, teachers use necessary reading skills with struggling students and refine and strengthen the skills of independent students.

Regarding the text difficulty level, it is based on the general level of the reading abilities of the group. The books selected for GR groups should be "just right" for the student's level, not too easy, not hard, but a level of Krashen's (i+1)

where the student is still in need of the teacher guidance (Krashen, 1982; Iaquinta, 2006).

The usual timing of a guided reading lesson can nearly be 20-30 minutes long. This timing may differ depending on the manner the reading lesson is arranged in the classroom timetable (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Usually, a typical guided reading lesson included a common outline of introducing the text, supporting actual reading, handling strategies, and deliberating and reconsidering the text (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Normally, the teacher states the purpose, presents the introduction, and then shows the teaching point. Then students can reread the text by themselves to increase fluency. After that teachers listen to the students' reading aloud, they assist them when necessary, with problematic words. They do that by scaffolding them and common reading strategies used (Denton et al., 2014). Furthermore, the teacher can directly understand how the students create meaning and comprehend the reading material and be able to identify the needs (Goodman, Fries, & Strauss, 2016). Additionally, guided reading seems to offer teachers with openings to meet students' particular necessities with straight instruction. Furthermore, teachers must use discussions and queries to guide their students to understand meaning of texts, instead of telling them to be better readers (Burns et al., 2011; Gambrell, Malloy & Mazzoni, 2007).

Generally, in the GR lesson, the teacher's role is imperative and effective. Surely, students are given personalized reading instruction from specialized guidance (Berne & Degener, 2010). For instance, the most effective method of teaching is modeling for various skills, to assist the student performing the task later on individually (Berne & Degener, 2010). According to Fountas and Pinnell (2013)

teachers must "pause and ponder" which means that to be highly effective, teachers must have a thorough reflection on their practices in order to have high quality and productive teaching. Effective teachers must thrive to prepare themselves in knowing how to introduce guided reading and changing in and out of roles for students learning reading strategies.

2.2.2 Reading Fluency

Reading fluency is viewed as an oral reading construction of the written text that has the same features of speech. Oral language or fluency is a vital factor in interpreting the purpose of guided reading (Fountas & Pinnell, 2013). It assists students in understanding the text they are reading (Fountas & Pinnell, 2013). Generally, the fluency structures are the accuracy of words, suitable speed, and appropriate expression (Rasinski, 2004). Therefore, Rasinski (2004) and Richards (2000) postulate that reading fluency has to do with the suitable use of fluency features used in a speech by the reader at a fitting speed during the oral creation of a written text. However, from LaBerge and Samuels (1974) automaticity point of view, fluency, accordingly, refers to the word recognition automaticity. In this sense, Shanahan and Beck (2006) consider reading fluency, as "the ability to read texts aloud with sufficient speed and accuracy" (p. 30). Subsequently, apt speed and accuracy feature in the identification of words are the key elements of fluent reading, and this automatic word recognition enables the reader to construct the meaning of the text (Pikulski & Chard, 2005). Sometimes, reading fluency is strongly connected with comprehension, as according to Samuels (2006), Pikulski (2006) and Rasinski (2006) it is the process of decoding and comprehending the written text simultaneously.

Regarding reading fluency nature, it has been considered by Rasinski (2004) as a multifaceted concept in which each aspect focuses on a single constituent of reading fluency. One underlines the prominence of the accuracy of the word in reading; the second emphasizes the unconscious word recognition in a text, and the third aspect focuses on the meaningful understanding of the text. That is to say that reading fluency, then, is composed of "accuracy", which means reading with ease or at a relaxed rate indicated as the rate or pace of reading, and reading with a proper expression which is known as "prosody". According to Samuels (2006), these are the indicators of a student's fluency development. In the following some details about each of the components:

2.2.2.1 Fluency and Word Accuracy

The accuracy of the word recognition throughout the reading task is one of the vital skills of a fluent reader. Accuracy is defined by Hudson, Pullen, and Lane (2005) as "the reader's ability to recognize or decode words correctly" (p. 703). According to their description, the successful role of accuracy in reading is to correctly recognize the words that would enable the reader's understanding and clarification of the text being read. When the reader is incapable of recognizing the word correctly or reads with poor accuracy, then, that would affect negatively reading fluency and comprehension. Hudson et al. (2005) argue that inaccurate word recognition may lead to misinterpretation and subsequently to frustration.

Unfortunately, when readers were able to accurately decode words in a text is inadequate to be considered fluent readers. As Kuhn and Stahl (2013) find that accurate word recognition is essential in building fluency, but it can never stand alone as an indicator of a fluent reader. To accomplish fluency in reading students

should be able to improve the ability to recognize written words not only accurately but also rapidly. A fluent reader, then, is the one who recognizes words correctly and quickly; or rather says it is the one who achieves automaticity in reading processes (Ewan, 2002). When the reader has the ability to do the two tasks simultaneously without conscious attention they will meet the criterion of automaticity of LaBerge and Samuels (1974).

2.2.2.2 Fluency and Reading Rate

Many researchers such as Bamford and Day (1998), Rasinski (2004), Samuels (1979), Shanahan and Beck (2006) agree that fluent decoding is a subject to the readers' skills to achieve what they call "automaticity" or the accurate and rapid word recognition. Accordingly, fluent readers should be able to manipulate the speed of reading. In this sense, he reads at the speaking rate or in the rate of speakers when they talk normally. Similarly, Hudson et al. (2005) assume that reading rate is a necessity to excel in making meaning. They postulate that the speed rate with which the information is processed in the brain will directly influence the speed of interpretations of ideas and concepts of the text. Additionally, the reading rate is not only recognized as a fundamental constituent of effective reading, it is also considered to be an accurate measure of reading fluency.

Both speed rate and accuracy of words or the automaticity of recognizing the word should be stressed during reading fluency practice. Students should be taught how to combine the accurate recognition of words with the speed of reading. With this respect, Snow, Griffin, and Burns (1998, p.14), point out that "Fluency should be promoted through practice, with a wide variety of well-written and engaging texts, at the child's own comfortable reading level" Similarly, Minskoff (2005) indicated that

students reading a text on their level will help to promote fluency through practicing, and subsequently avoid frustration (as cited by Berkeley et al., 2011). Therefore, GR lessons offer opportunities for students to practice reading fluency with a suitable leveled text while engaging them in an interactive reading context. Particularly, the role of teachers is to assist students to move gradually, from the accurate decoding of words to the automatic recognizing of words by employing the proper instructional guided reading program. Hence, fluency is more than reading rapidly and accurately; it usually goes further to how does the reader manipulates the prosodic features of speech while reading a text.

2.2.2.3 Fluency and Prosody

Referring back to the definition of fluency, it was stated that fluency is reading with expression; the reading with expression is called by reading specialists prosody. It is the third vital constituent of fluent reading which describes the rhythmic and intonation features of reading (Hudson et al., 2005). Although it is not included in the scope of the study, the researcher finds it important to state it together with the fluency components. Prosody is the final stage of fluency that leads directly to comprehension (Hudson et al., 2005). Simply, it is adding the tonal aspect while reading the text to make it sound as natural as speaking. The prosodic features are including the variations in intonation pitch; pacing or duration and stress. Additionally, Hudson et al. (2005) elucidate that the prosodic features must be clearly applied when requests, amazements, screams, and other meanings encountered in the text while reading. Usually, these features are used in combinations, stress, pitch, and duration in a natural way reflecting the reader's understanding. Similarly, Richards (2000) assures that effective and expressive

reading is produced only when the reader applies the rules of speech to the text. Furthermore, Rasinski (2004) postulates that reading with proper sound volume, phrasing, tone, stress, and other oral features, reflects the reader's successful construction of the meaning of the written text.

The three vital elements of reading fluency: accuracy, speed rate, and prosody are complementary to each other. Regarding to Rasinski (2004), they have interconnected: accurate and automatic reading generates the environments for communicative reading. All of them are significant gauges of fluency development (Pikulski, 2006). Consequently, it is required that all of them must be monitored and enhanced, and students need to realize that their development in reading fluency is inevitably linked to their progress in these three essential constituents. Sometimes, Students may gradually become faster in reading, but that does not reflect that there is development in all areas of fluency. When readers speed up in a particular text, they may be ignoring main words in the text which greatly influence their fluency and a general understanding of the text (Fountas & Pinnell, 2013). While students are reading loudly, the teacher is required to deliver fluency comments through using modeling strategy. To ensure quality, teachers can reread the text in a way sounding as if someone is talking. When students still face difficulty, the teacher can provide additional modeling (Lipp & Helfrich, 2016).

That is why when teachers implement GR, they provide students with strategies that help them improve fluency in each of its elements. Usually, teachers present text introductions, strategy instructions, and individual reading, together with offering the opportunity for returning back to the text and discussing it (Simpson & Smith, 2002).

2.3 Theoretical Framework

This section is to highlight the key theories that are related to the current study and link to the importance of guiding the students while learning.

2.3.1 Vygotskian Sociocultural Theory

The Russian psychologist, Vygotsky (1978) was predominantly famous for his concept of guided and interactive learning when he indicated that children can do things as a group today, they can do them autonomously tomorrow. Definitely, he concluded a vital positive product of the guided reading approach which is the building of a future autonomous and fluent reader. The importance of Vygotsky's concept in this study comes from its calling for the cooperative effort of learning with the aim of paving the way for an independent fluent reading experience.

Guided learning is essentially deep-rooted in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which understands learning as a social procedure that formulate the source of people's intellectual social, and cultural capacities. The principal theme of this framework is that guidance and assistance within a social interactive context plays a crucial role in the creation and improvement of understanding. In this frame, Vygotsky (1978) anticipated that learning occurs on two levels: through interaction with others such as teachers, parents or peers and then through the inner interaction that happens within a learner's mind, and he principally emphasizes the cognitive abilities that the learner shows to interprets and make sense of everything around him or her. Similarly, Vygotsky explained that the improvement that learners can make within the frame of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is determined by the interaction that takes place between learners, teachers, or peers.

With respect to Vygotsky (1978), ZPD is a measuring scale for each learner who is developing cognitively. ZPD was defined by Vygotsky (1978) as:

> It is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. (p. 33).

In this sense, the difference shows that the learner acquires more actively and punctually when accompanied by a mentor or a teacher. Additionally, this suggests that there is a big change in the development of the learner when he/she is learning with more knowledgeable peers. Therefore, the main idea of Vygotsky is to describe the development of the learner when he/she acts independently, but the difference is made when he/she is guided or supported by the more experienced person. The theory of Vygotsky states that the development of the learner is possible with the guidance of a teacher, parent, or any peer. Moreover, the concept of ZPD is explained by Mitchell, Myles, and Marsden (2019) as the sphere of abilities or knowledge wherein the learner is unable to independently working; however, the learner can catch the targeted result when he is scaffolded by an expert.

Another important concept in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory is the idea of scaffolding. It is defined as the support which is given to the learner to reach his cognitive potential. According to Donato (2000), this context of support and guidance is meaningful because he defined scaffolding as a position which is generated by an expert, or peer within which the learner can participate and increase his/her existing skills and knowledge to more developed stages of performance. Moreover, Baleghizadeh, Memar, and Memar (2010) interpreted scaffolding to be a

situation wherein learners are provided with academic help in their language learning which is gradually reduced until stopped to make the learner more independent. That is the way to develop independent learners and improve autonomy in language learning. Concurrently, Verity (2005) considered scaffolding as cognitive guidance given to the learner that help in reducing his/her cognitive load in functioning in the learning task.

In the construction of the GR approach, the student will always be accompanied and sustained by more knowledgeable friends that are at the same or slightly higher level of reading. Regarding the notion of Vygotsky's ZPD in the GR approach, the teacher gives lessons that are somewhat very difficult for students to do independently, but it is simple enough for them to do with adult help (Wass & Golding, 2014). In guided reading lessons, the teacher is always ready to support the students in promoting their fluency as they are working in texts that will move them to the next level of reading fluency. Similarly, scaffolding is a crucial and important part of teaching students in their ZPD and it is the fundamental basis of guided reading lessons. Apparently, the societal nature of learning which is supported by Vygotsky is included in the construction of guided reading lessons. The idea of earning in an interactive context is imperative because learners "grow into the intellectual life of those around them" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 88).

2.3.2 Automatic Information Processing Model in Reading

The essential role of fluency in effective and successful reading returns back to a theory of reading called the Automatic information processing model (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974). It is a theoretical model based upon three characteristics:

summarizing the past which is done by the explanation of the eye processes print which was taken from past research related to visual processing; explaining the present depending on how the model brings the researchable findings and use them to explain the present, like understanding the critical variance between the beginner readers and the fluent reader and thus it helps in understanding the types of difficulty that beginner readers have; and predicting the future which represents the different investigations and assumptions that are being built based on this model (Samuels, 2007).

According to Johnson and Proctor (2004), the acceptable enactment of some skills is often based on the way of giving proper consideration while doing of the task. The concept of attention in the automaticity model is emphasized strongly as a main component of processing in reading. Additionally, LaBerge and Samuels (1974) assums that there are two levels of attention: external attention which can be described and observed as it is seen physically such as the directions of the eyes toward the reading text; the internal attention which is processing the information on the page and trying to construct meaning. Despite the fact that external features such as the orientation of sensory organs are vital to reading, the internal aspects such as alertness, selectivity, and limited capacity are the core element of the automaticity model (Samuels, 2007).

In details, Samuels (2007) describes the way in which the beginning reader deals with a text, he assumes that while reading a text the intellectual method of a beginner is mainly concentrated on word recognition which takes a big portion of attention, leaving little or no attention for extracting the ideas and concepts from the written text. In this sense, the beginning reader becomes in a difficult situation due to

the unbalanced distribution of attention. That is why non-fluent readers lose a lot of time processing the information and subsequently read at a slow rate. Clearly, there is a robust connection between attention and fluency in reading. This means that when the reader can quickly switch his/her attention between more than one task simultaneously for example decoding and comprehension, the reading will be performed fluently. Simply, automaticity means that performing two tasks with little or no attention at least for one of them. Therefore, referring to automaticity in reading and for the reader to be described as fluent, he/she is able to do decoding automatically and thus attention is available to construct meaning from the text (Samuels, 2007).

According to Samuels (2007), alertness refers to the active ability to contact with sources of information. While selectivity is the ability to direct the attention to work on two or more tasks at the same time. However, the limited capacity refers to the limited extent of attention existing for processes of information. When mastering the attention students can be automatic readers. For Samuels (2007), the problem of reading difficulty lies in the ability to switch attention to reading.

2.4 Previous Studies

Guided Reading instruction is a designed framework to be used to promote different reading skills and a lot of researches were conducted to investigate its impact on different reading skills. The following section is to give a glimpse about the most related studies to the current study either in the western or in the Arab world.

2.4.1 The Effect of Guided Reading in Promoting Reading Fluency

GR is reading out loud to the teacher or peer after which they give feedback. It is an advantageous approach that offers to the students differentiated, and tailored instructions, and it is critical to developing the reading abilities and tactics of students when they are provided with successful reading experiences. Additionally, the key part of the effectiveness of applying the guided reading approach is guidance. Therefore, teachers and researchers overemphasize the importance of guided reading in improving the proficiency of reading (Burns et al., 2015; Evenstad, 2019; Young, 2019). For example, a study conducted by Young (2019) in Hong Kong that lasted for a year-long in which he employed a quasi-experimental research design. He divided 79-second graders into two groups: controlled and experimental. Young used pre and post-tests to measure the effect of implementing the guided reading program. The results revealed a very large effect in favor of the experimental group.

GR is one of the most effective tools not only to improve a student's essential reading skills but also to help the student promote higher level comprehension skills. While the teachers implement the procedures of conducting a GR lesson. Usually, they begin with the introduction of the text. They make use of the title and the pictures and other keys that help in nourishing the prior knowledge of the students and establish some connections to help in comprehending the text notions and concepts. This issue acquired overwhelming attention from teachers and researchers such as (Burns, Kwoka, Lim, Crone, Haegele, Parker & Scholin, 2011; Erlika, 2017; Kopic, 2018; Ugonnaya, 2018). For instance, Burns et al. (2011) wanted to investigate the effect of using the minimum of fluency needed to achieve comprehension by applying for a guided reading program. They randomly selected

84-second graders to be assigned to one of the conditions of grade-appropriate text with 0%, 10%, 20%, or 30% scrambled words and comprehension questions. Results indicated the positive effect of using guided reading as R=0.54 of the comprehension questions were answered correctly when 63 words per minute were the minimum need for oral reading fluency to comprehend the text.

Mostly, teachers use their students' needs to identify the instructional strategies to be implemented in the classroom. Logically, they care much about those who struggle and stay behind in comparison with their colleagues. They try their best to find methods that serve in promoting the students' reading abilities. Researchers investigated the area of using guided reading in improving reading fluency for those suffering reading difficulties such as (Cunningham, 2018; Hansen, 2016; Gerdes, 2001; Martin, Elfreth, & Feng, 2014; Suckow, 2019; Ugonnaya, 2018). For example, Ugonnaya (2018) guided reading in providing third graders who were struggling in reading appropriate level text. The researcher used running records to measure the impact of the reading program on fluency and comprehension abilities. Results of the study showed a considerable change in the students' fluency skills.

Fluency often draws the attention of researchers for its importance in constructing meaning while reading texts. Additionally, using effective instructional strategies was the point of their interest. Therefore, many researchers explore the role guided reading approach plays in promoting fluency such as (Bengtson, & Fritchman, 2019; Bowling, 2011; Cunningham, 2018; Chmela, & Johnson, 2018; Kolness, 2018; Reis, McCoach, Little, Muller, & Kaniskan, 2011; Ugonnaya, 2018). For example, Bengtson and Fritchman (2019) selected first and second graders in two public classrooms. They were divided into two groups. All the students had a

guided reading program one group practice it daily and the other group practice it biweekly. The findings revealed that there was a general growth in fluency for all the students taking into consideration the few variations in favor of the daily group. Therefore, the researchers recommended to include guided reading for all students. Another study was conducted by Kolness (2018) including eight first graders were selected based on their performance in an "aimswebPlus" fluency assessment. They were divided into two small groups: four of them were given guided reading lessons for 20 minutes in a day 4 days each week for five weeks, while the other groups were given general reading instructions fifteen minutes a day for four days a week for five weeks. Results revealed that those who practiced guided reading showed more growth in reading fluency than those who practiced general reading.

According to all the studies above mentioned some important issues were noticed by the researcher that shows the significance of the current study such as the main focus of most of the studies was using guided reading to promote comprehension or fluency and comprehension while this study focus, is mainly directed toward the improvement of reading fluency. Additionally, the majority of the studies used GR as an intervention for struggling readers, however, the use of the guided reading approach in this study was an instructional method to promote reading fluency for all students. Regarding the research tools, most of the studies employed experimental design, through implementing pre and post-tests and making some evaluations monitoring the students' progress throughout the program which referred to the right decision taken by the researcher to do the same design in conducting the current study. For the participants selected, for most of the studies

were low primary and emergent readers, however, for study middle school students were selected as participants.

2.4.2 Studies on the Effect of Guided Reading on Promoting Reading Fluency in the Arabic Context

Due to the scarcity of studies and despite the overwhelming need for more research exploring the role of GR in promoting reading fluency, still, there are some hopes to find important studies in the Arab and UAE context, in particular, were conducted (Al Jaffal, 2014; Bouguebs, 2005; Salhyyah, 2011). The most closely related research to the current study was conducted by Bouguebs (2005) when she implemented the guided reading program for six weeks in Algeria to examine its impact on sixteen second-year undergraduate students' reading fluency. She employed an experimental design by conducting pre and posttest. Consequences of the study demonstrated that the experimental group has outpaced the control group which underlined the beneficial role of GR. Moreover, Al Jaffal (2014) used the guided reading approach as an intervention to promote reading fluency for a fourth-grader who suffers reading difficulties while Salhyyah (2011) employed the approach to promote reading comprehension.

All these studies dealt with guided reading from a different perspective. For example, Bouguebs (2005) sample were undergraduate students and she applied a pre and post-test on two groups: control and experimental, while the current study implemented a guided reading program on middle school students. For the pre and post-test, it was implemented upon one group only. The pre-test was conducted then the program was implemented after which a post-test was made to show the differences. Regarding Al Jaffal (2014), the guided reading was used as an

intervention for only one student who was suffering from reading difficulties. However, this study was used as an instructional methodology to support all students in promoting their reading fluency skills. In respect to the study conducted by Salhyyah (2011), the main focus was using guided reading to promote reading comprehension skills, while the current study's major focus was on the reading fluency skills which are the midway between the word recognition skills and the reading comprehension skills. Hopefully, this study may add a useful account that draws the attention of all interested stakeholders to the important role of the guided reading approach in promoting middle school students reading fluency.

2.5 Summary

The essential investigation of using the GR approach is revealed in many studies. Previous literature shows that the guided reading approach can be valuable to the reading skills of students. Additionally, it also shows that the guided reading approach may impact the students' word recognition and decoding, reading comprehension, and reading difficulties positively. However, the gap, which this study addresses is the exploration of the role of the guided reading approach in promoting reading fluency for middle school students considered to be a vital need. The idea of investigating guided reading to promote fluency in the Arab context is uncommon specifically in the UAE where students are learning English as a second language. Henceforth, it is vital to address the pedagogical characteristics of using a guided reading approach for the sake of producing improvement in eighth-graders' reading fluency.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Chapter three addresses the methods and procedures employed for investigating the role of guided reading in promoting reading fluency skills. It comprises a detailed account of the research design, the sample selection and the participants, and the instrumentation. Additionally, it describes in detail the data collection procedures through which both quantitative and qualitative instruments were used and the data analysis techniques. Other issues including validity establishment and reliability of the instruments and the ethical considerations were also comprehensively discussed. The three guided research questions are:

1) Does the use of the guided reading program affect eighth-graders reading fluency?

2) How does the use of the guided reading program promote the eighth graders reading fluency?

3) How do the qualitative results confirm the quantitative results?

3.2 The Research Design

This research study employed an explanatory sequential mixed method design in two successive phases (QUAN→qual), in which this study was featured to be quantitative-oriented more than qualitative. The underlying principle behind using the explanatory sequential design was to enhance the quantitative results by providing an additional in-depth qualitative explanation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2009). In the first phase, quantitative data were

collected by using a pre-and post-test. The qualitative phase featured the use of document analysis, in which the researcher evaluated the students' performance during the implementation of the program to track and monitor their progress.

3.3 Participants

The participants in this study were purposively and conveniently selected. The main criteria for selecting them was their availability and willingness to participate which is according to Bryman (2012), is one of the main structures of convenient sampling. Therefore, the participants in this study were 27 eighth-graders from one of the private schools in the UAE context, who were selected according to the placement test conducted for the eighth-grade classes in the school. The (n=27) were homogeneous in terms of their abilities according to the grade-level test. The rationale behind selecting eighth grade is the importance of the level as a mid-transitional between the primary and secondary stages.

In Table 1, demographic information for the participants was presented where all the participants were male students. Most of them were 13- year olds and 8 out of the total number, 27, were 14- year olds. The majority of the participants have Arabic nationality and 7 of them were local (Emirati) students.

Table 1: Demographic Information

category	Sub-category	frequency	percentage
Gender	Male	27	100%
	Female	0	0%
Age	13 years	19	70%
	14 years	8	29.6%
Nationality	Arabic	20	74%
	Emirati	7	25.9%
	Other	0	0%

3.4 Instrumentation

Owing to the nature of the study, the researcher implemented a program by applying guided reading lessons by using various materials. The instruments used in this study had the following order: A) Pre- and post-test; B) Document analysis taken from the program implementation.

3.4.1 The Pre and Post-Test

The pre-and post-test as a quantitative instrument was vital in this study, which was used to measure the students' reading fluency skills before and after implementing the guided reading program. The general features of the pre-and post-test were adapted from a test used in the school to evaluate the students reading fluency according to each grade level. The test was adopted from a program of reading called Price Milburn (PM) Guided Reading Collection. This program was officially selected and provided by the school as an extracurricular material. Most of the teachers neglect using this program and some of them use it luxuriously when they finish the demanded materials for the semester as previously mentioned in the statement of the problem. The pre and post-test (see Appendix A) contains a story entitled "Why Possum's Tail is Bare" which consists of 174 words that the researcher makes them the maximum number of words that the students can read per minute. Additionally, a table of the criteria used to count the fluency errors was located under the story. These criteria were adopted from MAP reading fluency assessment (see Appendix B); to make it easy for the researcher and the rater researcher, an English subject teacher in the same school, to fix the code of the errors on the text, for example M for mispronouncing. Later the errors distributed in the table below the text, each according to its classification. These criteria are:

mispronunciation, substitution, omission, insertion, repetition more than once and self-correction. After counting errors, specific equations are calculated the rate (word read and the WCPM) and accuracy of fluency. It is important to mention here that the researcher and the rater researcher have to code everything the student reads on the text form without teaching or correcting any error.

3.4.2 Document Analysis

The evaluation document was conducted three times throughout the implementation of the guided reading program. Generally, it was done biweekly to track the students' development regarding reading fluency. The evaluation checklist includes (See Appendix C) the same six criteria for counting the fluency errors in the pre and post-test used by the researcher to track the students' progress in the reading fluency skills. The equation for calculating the rate and accuracy also made by the researcher and the rater researcher. For each evaluation different text is used; however, all the selected texts in the whole program includes repetition of 160 high-frequency words occurring throughout the text specified for this level. In this sense, the words that students make mistakes with are repeated in all the texts of the series. The rationale behind using the document analysis is to have a more in-depth understanding of the quantitative results.

3.4.2.1 The Description of the Program

The guided reading program was implemented in one of the private schools in the UAE where 27 eight graders were the participants. Therefore, the researcher's pedagogical approach passed through two main stages in this program in order to make it more doable, applicable, and easy to be gauged. The first stage was the construction of a pre-and post-test in which the researcher adopted the test from the

reading collection provided by the school as an extracurricular activity. While the second stage was the choice and collection of the materials, activities, and assessment tools used in the program. The researcher was careful in focusing on the participants' interests and needs. Therefore, the researcher adopted reading texts that suit the students' level, which made students more engaged in their learning process for the sake of promoting reading fluency skills. Through practicing the adopted activities and through scaffolding provided by the researcher, the students started to develop incrementally.

Guided reading is informed by Vygotsky's (1978) ZPD and Bruner's (1986) concept of scaffolding. Scaffolding is defined by many researchers such as Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) as a kind of control over the targeted task or activity by an instructor, wherein students focus on completing the elements of the task or the activity, which are within their levels, through their teacher's support. The practice of guided reading is built on the certainty that the best learning for a reader happens when they are supported by an adult, to read and understand a text with direct but limited guidance. In this sense, guided reading enables the students to practice and merge effective reading strategies.

Usually, students were challenged and expanded in their knowledge by grownups. Therefore, the most effective learning happens when students are guided by teachers towards doing things that they could not attempt on their own.

Guided reading lessons are prepared of three parts: early reading discussion; during reading; and after reading discussion. In the before reading part the teacher activates the prior knowledge of the students regarding the topic to familiarize them

with the text and she strongly encourages them to make reasonable predictions in order to help them formulate comprehensive notions about the text. Usually, she sets the scene by briefly summarizing the plot to enable them to imagine and predict correctly. Then the teacher demonstrates for the students some questions that readers may ask about any text. For further help, the teacher identifies the key paragraphs in the text that refer to the meaning and main ideas of the text and goes through them with the students to show them how to detect the main ideas of a text. Of course, it is very important to introduce and explain any new vocabulary that the teacher thinks is difficult for her students according to her knowledge of their level. While the teacher in the process of clarifying meaning, she has to bring to the students' attention relevant issues such as text layout, punctuation, text headings and subheadings, and illustrations that help them to understand the text. In each lesson, the teacher clearly articulates the learning intention for example what reading strategy students will focus on to support them read the text at this particular lesson. Finally, the teacher explains for the students the success criteria for implementing the strategy of the lesson. For example, they will know that they have learned prediction when they are able to guess what is going to happen next correctly. It is important here to mention that the choice of a range of text types will expand students' reading practices.

During the GR lesson, the students practice the group reading or paired reading within the group so that they can have additional peer scaffolding. Then the teacher listens to individual student's reading, mainly to observe the student's reading behaviors looking for evidence of the implemented strategy use. While the individual student is reading, the teacher gives appropriate and explicit feedback to help students achieve the lesson concentration.

In the part of the after reading activities, the teacher talks about the text with the students and tries to call personal reactions such as asking students to make associates to themselves and their daily life, other texts they have read, or world knowledge in general. It is a good opportunity to return to the text to clarify some vocabularies or teach the students the technique of random word attack skills by asking them about any word the teacher thinks may be difficult for them. It is essential at the final stage of the lesson to check the students' understanding of what they have read by asking them to order, repeat, and retell or summarize some incidents in the text. Furthermore, the teacher tests the students' understanding by giving questions about the text or encourages students to exchange questions among themselves. Also, the teacher helps them develop an understanding of the author's purpose and consciousness of contradictory explanations of a text. Additionally, the students are guided to develop insights regarding the characters, settings, and themes, and their attention is constantly drawn to critical features of text organization such as characteristics of a non-fiction text. Finally, the teacher revisits the learning emphasis and encourage students to state whether they achieved the achievement criteria explained at the beginning of the lesson.

Originally, the researcher is the teacher herself that is why she has a clear understanding of the students' interests and needs. However, she selected the materials according to the results of the placement test she made together with a research assistant evaluating the students' levels before implementing the program. The placement test was adopted from PM Guided Reading Collection which is a leveled reading series of books. The PM collection contains over 1000 levelled fiction and non-fiction texts, organized by series strand and by color band according

to the levels (Appendix D). The levels are divided into 16 groups starting from level 1 till level 30. The collection provides an assessment kit by which the teacher can determine the exact level for the students. According to the results of the pre-level test, the students were in the green color, ranging among 12-15 levels in which they are below the expected reading age. The results of the placement test were useful in terms of using them to select the most appropriate texts for the students' level. The texts were similar to the pre and post-test in terms of the theme (animals) and the length of the text (no more than 174 words) which is the highest expected number to be read per minute.

3.4.2.2 The Purposes of the Program

This program aimed mainly at exploring the role of guided reading in promoting reading fluency skills for eighth-graders by using different materials and activities. The participants in this program were expected to achieve some outcomes, such as reading a good number of words correctly and accurately per minute and understand the meaning of the text they are reading. Additionally, they acquire the skill of uniting different reading strategies to achieve reading fluency and understanding. Hopefully, the students develop the capability to connect what they read to real life and their prior knowledge.

3.4.2.3 The Program Time and Duration

This program was held over a period of six weeks in the first semester of the academic year (2019-2020) where the participants attended two classes a day per week. This means that the total hours per week were two hours. During the lesson, the researcher implemented a rich designed plan to serve the program. Therefore,

the participants had wide exposure to a rich environment of reading strategies implementation.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

The data collection continued for six weeks. In this study, data were collected through two phases. The first phase included the collection of the quantitative data by implementing the pre-and post-test to measure the participants' reading fluency skills before and after conducting the program. The data, which was collected from the pre-and post-test in which the data was illustrated in grades reported in excel sheets (See Appendix E).

The second phase was the collection of the qualitative data including documents' analysis. First, the collection of documents took place during the conduct of the program, in which the participants' reading fluency skills progress was measured, documented into a form of grades using checklists. Additionally, the evaluation of the participants' progress was collected on 3 occasions; every two weeks. Finally, the grades were illustrated in an excel sheet prepared for analysis (See Appendix F).

3.6 Data Analysis

Due to the nature of the data collection in this study, data analysis was done through two successive phases. The first phase was the pre-and post-test analysis; the quantification of the data was based on grading the parts of the test including the rate of fluency section (word read & WCPM) and the accuracy section. It is a simple and very brief procedure that uses texts to determine the words account that students can

read in the correct way during one minute. To get a words-correct-per-minute (WCPM) score, students are assessed individually as they read aloud for one minute. To compute the WCPM score, the researcher subtracts the total number of mistakes from the whole number of words read in one minute. Finally, the final grades of the participants for pre-and post-test were entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), where a Paired sample t-test was carried out to show whether there is a significant variance or not between pre and post-test after implementing the guided reading program.

The second phase was the qualitative analysis including the documents of the development evaluation conducted by the researcher and the rater researcher. The evaluation of the reading fluency development was measured by using a checklist. Every two weeks the researcher assessed participants individually to read aloud so that she can count the correct words read by the student per minute. To quantify the document, descriptive analysis was extracted by identifying the mean scores and comparing them from one evaluation to the other, which demonstrates the process of monitoring the progress of the participants. Then the results were illustrated in bar graphs using Excel sheets.

3.7 Validity

As a result of the use of both quantitative and qualitative research tools to collect and analyze the data, different types of validity were established in this study. First was ensuring the construct validity for both the quantitative and qualitative instruments. Since the pre-and post-test as a quantitative instrument was adapted from one of the standardized tests, provided by the school, the construct validity of

the pre-and post-test was unquestioningly guaranteed. Gay, Mills and Airasian (2011) defined construct validity as "the degree to which a test measures the intended construct" (p. 163). The intended constructs in this study were reading fluency skills. Therefore, Gay, Mills and Airasian (2011) recommended that construct validity could be established by collecting evidence to prove this kind of validity, which is called by Popham (2014) the "construct-related evidence of validity" (p. 114). To establish construct validity in the pre-and post-test, the researcher used a program which is defined by Popham (2014) as the various ways the students respond to the evaluation instrument after receiving a program. In this study, the researcher used a designed program, in which the participants' scores in the post-test were higher than their scores in the pre-test after implementing the program for six weeks, two classes every week. This showed the different responses that participants had to the post-test after implementing the program. Hence, one part of the construct-related-evidence of validity was established.

In terms of the document analysis as a qualitative instrument, the use of construct-related-evidence validity has appeared in the way through tracking the participants' performances. While the students were practicing reading the researcher assessed their reading fluency skills through using a checklist every two weeks during the implementation of the program. The intervention here is the types of reading strategies and the materials employed. The results disclosed in this study demonstrate that the third evaluation showed a higher score compared to the first one. Thus, construct validity was successfully attained.

The other type of validity is the content validity for both quantitative and qualitative instruments. The content validity for the pre-and post-test and the adopted

program and the checklist evaluation were tested by exposing them to a panel of experts who checked and evaluated them in terms of content and language. According to Young, So, and Ockey (2013), the composition of the panel should include experts from various stakeholder groups. Moreover, Gay, Mills and Airasian (2011) emphasize that the content of the test must measure the purpose for which it was designed. Accordingly, the pre- and post-tests, the evaluation checklist, and the designed program were presented to a panel composed of two faculty members from the College of Education in the UAEU, as well as three expert EFL teachers in order to check the degree of relevance between the content of the pre- and post-test and the content of the program. The comments and the feedback gained from the panel were modified by the researcher to enhance the structure and the content of the pre- and post-test and the designed program.

3.8 Reliability

To establish the reliability in this study, the researcher checked the internal consistency reliability which is defined by Popham (2014) as "the extent to which items in the assessment instrument are functioning in a consistent fashion" (p. 82). Based on the nature of the instruments (pre-and post-tests, and evaluation checklist) the participants were required to read correctly at a specific time. Cronbach's coefficient alpha was employed due to its appropriateness as the most common internal consistency approach (Miller, Linn & Gronlund, 2013). Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient ratio is between 0 and 1. The nearer Cronbach's alpha coefficient is to 1.0 proves the larger the internal consistency of the items (Gliem & Gliem, 2003). In this study, SPSS was used to extract the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the pre-and post-tests items and the evaluation checklist items. The

results of Cronbach's alpha coefficient are exposed in Table (2). The internal reliability for both the pre-and post-tests as well as for the document was high; this indicated that the values were satisfactory as the Cronbach's alpha was closer to 1.0.

Table 2: Cronbach's Alpha Reliability

Instrument	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Test Items of pre-test	0.998	2
Test Items of post-test	0.998	2
Document Analysis		
Trial 1	0.997	2
Trail 2	0.998	2
Trail 3	0.998	2

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The ethical consideration in this research is mostly directed at the approval of the school administration to conduct the study after showing the MoE approval (Appendix G). Additionally, the willingness of the participants to take part in this study is an essential part required. The participants and their parents were informed about the purpose and the procedures of the study. Therefore, the parents were asked to sign the informed consent form (See Appendix H) to sustain confidentiality and privacy. Additionally, pseudonyms were used to refer to the participants rather than their real names to ensure further confidentiality. Also, both the parents and participants were informed about the ways the researcher would be using the study's results (Creswell, 2018). Moreover, the participants were informed that they have the

right to withdraw from the study at any time and assured that their participation is completely voluntary. Finally, the confidentiality of the data collected was maintained by ensuring that the data was stored safely and securely and will be destroyed later after the purpose of the study is fulfilled.

3.10 Summary

The study aimed at exploring the role of using guided reading in promoting reading fluency skills for the eighth graders as EFL learners in the UAE context. To achieve this aim, the researcher adopted an explanatory mixed method design in which both quantitative and qualitative tools were used. Twenty-seven eighth-graders students were selected conveniently based on their availability and willingness to participate in this study. Data were collected through two phases. The quantitative phase through conducting the pre-test, then the implementation of the program, and followed by the post-test. The qualitative phase was through using a checklist to conduct three evaluations to monitor and measure the students' performances and development during the implementation of the program.

Chapter 4: Results

4.1 Introduction

This study aimed at exploring the role of a guided reading program in promoting eighth-graders' reading fluency. Particularly, the study featured a guided reading program that focuses on specific reading fluency skills including word read, word corrects per minute (WCPM), and accuracy through using different adopted materials and activities. This chapter reports the major findings of this study. The study employed an explanatory sequential mixed method design in two phases. The first phase was quantitative in which the researcher carried out the pre-test then implemented the guided reading program for six weeks and finally retested the participants by using the post-test. The second phase was qualitative by analyzing documents that represented students' performances during the program. The study attempted to answer the following research questions:

1) Does the use of the guided reading program make a difference in eighth-graders' English reading fluency?

2) How does the use of the guided reading program promote the eighth-graders' reading fluency?

3) How do the qualitative results confirm the quantitative results?

4.2 Results

Q1. Does the use of the guided reading program make a difference in eighth-graders' reading fluency?

To answer this question, a paired sample t-test was carried out to examine whether there is a significant difference between the pre and post-test for 27 eighth

graders. The results shown in Table 3 revealed that there is a significant difference between the pre and post-test in terms of the word read skill in which the post-test scored (M=75; SD=17.4), while the pre-test scored (M=42.19; SD=11.8) at (t= -16.006, df=26, p≤0.05).

Table 3: Results of T-Test Analysis Examining Differences between the Pre and Post-test in terms of Word Read Skill

Category	M	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Word Read Pre-test	42.1852	11.7578			
			-16.006	26	0.0
Word Read Post-test	74.9259	17.4992			

In Table 4, statistics showed that there is a significant difference between the pre (M=23.19; SD=8.46) and post-test (M=59; SD=16.33) in terms of WCPM at (t= -17.342, df=26, p≤0.05).

Table 4: Results of T-Test Analysis Examining Differences between the Pre and Post-test in terms of WCPM

Category	M	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
WCPM Pre-test	23.1852	8.46730			
			-17.342	26	0.0
WCPM Post-test	59.0000	16.3330			

In Table 5, statistics showed that there is a significant difference between the pre (M=54.15; SD=9.68) and post-test (M=78; SD=7.20) in terms of accuracy at (t= -14.569, df=26, p≤0.05).

Table 5: Results of T-Test Analysis Examining Differences between the Pre and Post-test in terms of Accuracy

Category	M	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Accuracy Pre-test	54.1481	9.67830			
			-14.569	26	0.0
Accuracy Post-test	78.2593	7.20359			

Figure 1 illustrates the noticeable gain happened in the target reading fluency skills. The gain is remarkable more in the WCPM than in other skills (Word Read and Accuracy).
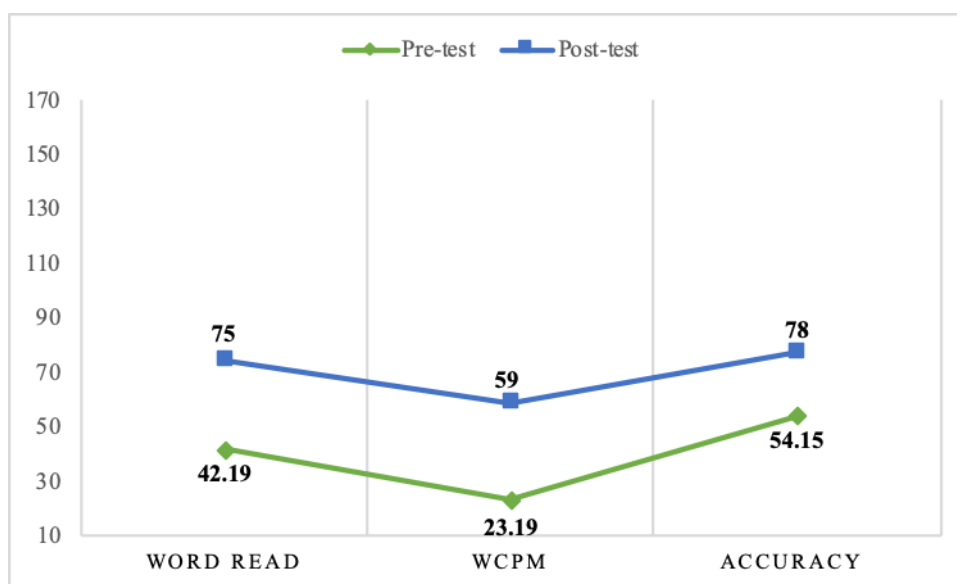
Figure 1: Comparison between Pre and Post-test

Q2. How does the use of the guided reading program promote the eighth-graders' reading fluency?

To answer this question, data extracted from students' performances by using the evaluation checklist for six weeks were quantified to show whether there is a significant difference between each trial biweekly. Tables 6, 7 and Figure 2 indicate that statistically significant difference is found between the three trails in terms of

Word read in which trial one scored (M=40.33, SD=11.48), trail two scored (M=55.48, SD=13.15), and trail three scored (M=73.26, SD=16.67) at (t=-12.308, df=26, p≥0.05) between trial one and two, (t= -16.057, df=26, p≥0.05) between trial one and three, and (t=-12.817, df=26, p≥0.05) between trial two and three. In terms of WCPM statistically significant difference is found between the three trails in which trial one scored (M=19.56, SD=7.74), trail two scored (M=33.41, SD=8.95), and trail three scored (M=51.00, SD=12.55) at (t=-12.320, df=26, p≥0.05) between trial one and two, (t= -18.701, df=26, p≥0.05) between trial one and three, and (t=-14.751, df=26, p≥0.05) between trial two and three. Also, results revealed that a statistically significant difference is shown between the three trials in terms of Accuracy in which trial one scored (M=47.30, SD=9.13), trial two scored (M=60.22, SD=6.72) and trail three scored (M=69.59, SD=5.20) at (t=-7.685, df=26, p≥0.05) between trial one and two, (t= -11.778, df=26, p≥0.05) between trial one and three, and (t=-14.751, df=26, p≥0.05) between trial two and three.

Table 6: Comparing means between the three trials

	Trial	Mean	Std. Deviation
Word Read	Trial 1	40.33	11.48
	Trial 2	55.48	13.15
	Trial 3	73.26	16.67
WCPM	Trial 1	19.56	7.74
	Trial 2	33.41	8.95
	Trial 3	51.00	12.55
Accuracy	Trial 1	47.30	9.13
	Trial 2	60.22	6.72
	Trial 3	69.59	5.20

Table 7: Results of T-Test Analysis Examining Differences between the three trials

Category	Trial	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Word Read	Trial 1 Trial 2	-12.308	26	0.000
	Trial 1 Trial 3	-16.057	26	0.000
	Trial 2 Trial 3	-12.817	26	0.000
WCPM	Trial 1 Trial 2	-12.320	26	0.000
	Trial 1 Trial 3	-18.701	26	0.000
	Trial 2 Trial 3	-14.751	26	0.000
Accuracy	Trial 1 Trial 2	-7.685	26	0.000
	Trial 1 Trial 3	-15.526	26	0.000
	Trial 2 Trial 3	-11.778	26	0.000

Figure 2: Tracking Students' Reading Fluency in Each Trail

Q3. How do the qualitative results confirm the quantitative results?

In this question, the researcher tried to demonstrate the consistencies and variations between the quantitative and the qualitative results. The quantitative results showed that there was a noticeable increase in the 27 participants' reading fluency. This was represented in their mean scores in the post-test as compared to the pre-test. To further analyze how this increase has happened, the quantitative results were sequenced with the qualitative results. The consistency and variation between the quantitative and qualitative results are illustrated in Figure 3.

The consistency between the quantitative and the qualitative results existed in the total increase of the mean scores of all the reading fluency skills in the post-test compared with the pre-test mean scores. This consistency was enhanced by the results of the document analysis where it showed statistical evidence of a gradual increase in the mean scores of the three trials compared with each other. This consistency between the quantitative and qualitative showed that the participants achieved higher scores in the post-test and they were developing incrementally throughout implementing the guided reading program.

Having an in-depth look at the detailed increase among the reading fluency skills regarding the post-test and the pre-test. Evidently, clear that the accuracy had the least increase mean score compared with the other skills of the word read and WCPM which approximately had the same average of increase. This consistency was maintained by the qualitative result where the accuracy scored the least mean of increase.

Highlighting the variations that existed between the quantitative and qualitative results. One important discrepancy was found in the qualitative results where the WCPM scored the highest in the increasing average among the other skills of the word read and the accuracy. However, the increase of this skill was not enhanced by the quantitative results where WCPM got almost the same increase average of the word read skill.
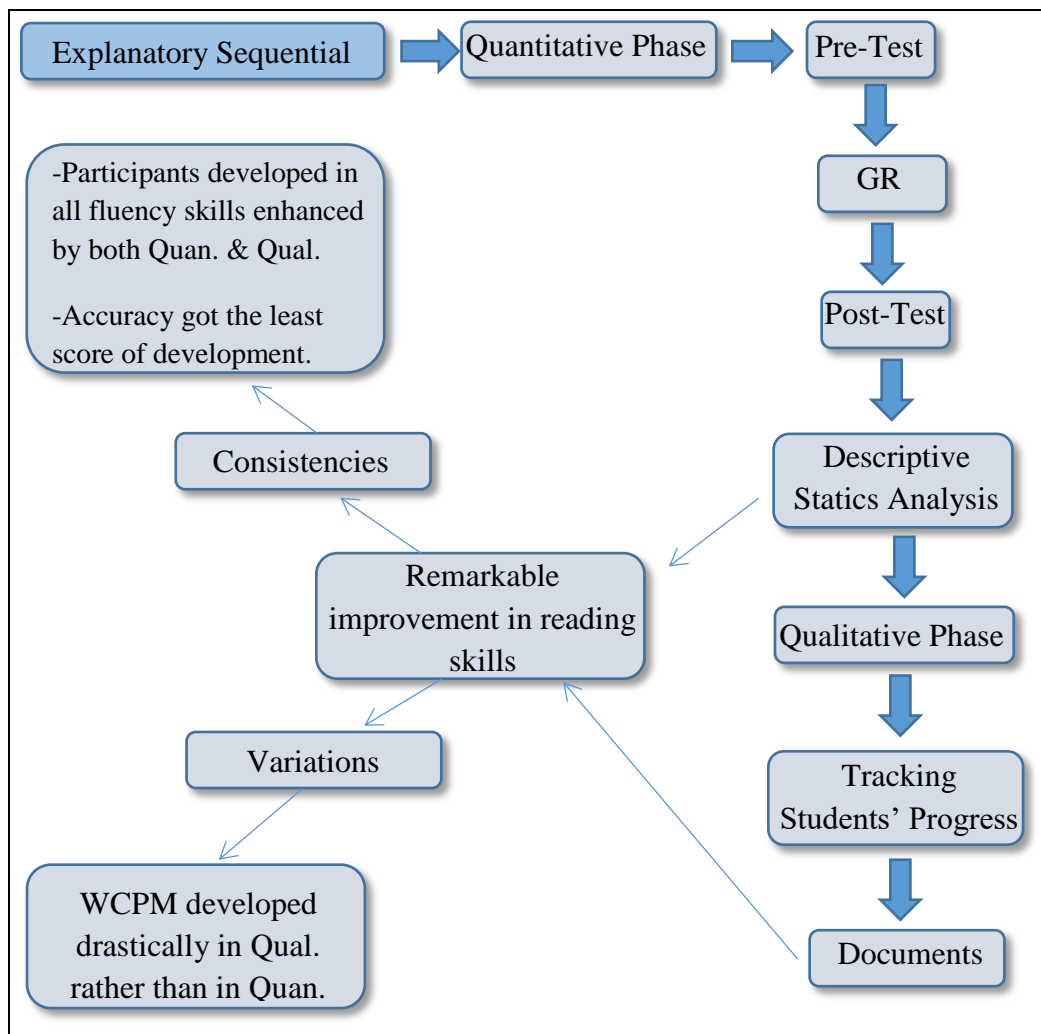
Figure 3: Results Interpretation

Chapter 5: Discussion, Recommendations, and Implications

5.1 Introduction

This study is aimed at exploring the role of using the guided reading program in promoting eighth-graders' fluency skills. The study was conducted by using the explanatory mixed-method design in which both quantitative and qualitative results were extracted. The instruments employed in this study were: a pre-and post-test, and documents analysis. This chapter introduces the major discussed findings, the recommendations, and the implications of the study.

5.2 Discussion

Q1. Does the use of the guided reading program affect eighth-graders' reading fluency?

The major finding associated with this question was that an obvious general growth in the participants' fluency skills namely: the WCPM, the word read, and accuracy was perceived. This increase appeared from the results of the post-test as compared to the pre-test results. The mean scores of the fluency skills in the posttest was higher than the mean scores of these skills in the pre-test. This reflects how the use of the guided reading program led to the development of fluency skills for the eighth graders. This result comes in consistence with other findings revealed by Bengtson and Fritchman (2019), Bowling (2011), Cunningham (2018), Chmela and Johnson (2018), Kolness (2018), Reis, McCoach, Little, Muller and Kaniskan (2011) and Ugonnaya (2018) who found that the use of guided reading approach contributes to promoting readers' fluency skills through showing the practical and meaningful relationship between the use of guided reading and the incremental development of

readers' fluency. This result was also informed by Vygotsky who assured that under teacher's guidance or in cooperation with more expert peers build the foundation of student's intellectual and social abilities. In this sense, the difference between the findings of the post-test and the pre-test shows that the eighth graders gain their fluency skills development more actively and punctually when supported by their teacher.

Q2. How does the use of the guided reading program promote the eighth-graders' reading fluency?

The major finding related to this question was that an incremental progress in the eighth graders' performances was observed. This increase was clearly observed during the frequent tracking for their fluency skills conducted by the researcher and the rater researcher three times every two weeks along with the implementation of the guided reading program. The results showed that the program's selection of the texts that were accurately appropriate for the students' level functions effectively in scaffolding the participants' reading fluency skills. Therefore, scaffolding has an important and significant role in teaching students in their ZPD and it is the vital platform on which the guided reading lessons were initially built. With this respect, a considerable alignment goes with Snow, Griffin, and Burns (1998) who indicated that fluency can be improved by practice, with a wide variety of appropriate texts, at the student's reading level. Similarly, Minskoff (2005) specified that students reading a text on their level will help to promote fluency through practicing.

Furthermore, the result of the document analysis was in line with LaBerge and Samuels (1974) model which assumes that there is a strong relationship between attention and fluency in reading. This means when the eighth-grader can quickly shift

his attention between more than one task concurrently such as WCPM, word read and accuracy, the reading will be performed fluently. Simply, the students have developed a kind of automaticity when they became able to perform two tasks simultaneously.

Q3. How do the qualitative results confirm the quantitative results?

An obvious consistency between the quantitative and the qualitative results was perceived in this study. The major consistency was verified in the participants' fluency skills development, which was observed after implementing the guided reading program and it was reflected in the results of the posttest as compared to the pre-test results, which in turn is consistent with the document analysis' results. The data gathered from the document analysis revealed that the eighth graders' performances in the evaluation checklist had increased gradually. These consistent results are supported by Rasinski (2004) and Richards (2000) who suggest that reading fluency has to be performed at an appropriate speed and at an acceptable level of accuracy during the oral production of a written text. Additional support of the document analysis result is given by Cooper et al. (2003) who stated that constant practicing leads to an incremental development in the speed of reading and accurate word recognition which subsequently helps a lot in constructing the text meaning.

Although the general development of the fluency skills, the accuracy skill recorded the least in both the quantitative and qualitative results this was justified by Hudson, Lane, and Pullen (2005) who claimed that acquiring accuracy needs a lot of practice. Therefore, it may take a longer time for the student to get the automatic stage of word recognition.

Despite the consistency between the quantitative and the qualitative results still, a variation between both results was demonstrated in one feature of the study. While there is no significant difference between the reading fluency skills increase in terms of WCPM, word read and the accuracy skills in the quantitative results, the WCPM skill showed higher gradual growth than the word read and the accuracy skills in the document analysis results. This variation could be explained by Rasinski (2004) who revealed that the rate of fluency or the oral production of the written text must be compared with the rate of speaking in a normal communicative situation. This can be reflected in the students' ability to manipulate the speed of reading through the guided practicing of various reading texts. Accordingly, the guided reading program helped the eighth graders to increase the words read correctly per minute through constant practicing.

5.3 Recommendations

This study gives some recommendations for teachers, instruction and curriculum planners, and research as the following:

1. Teachers in the middle school stage should consider the use of GR as a vital element to enhance students' fluency skills.

2. Teachers must be provided with various professional development sessions to expand their knowledge and experiences regarding implementing the GR approach to improve different language skills.

3. Curriculum specialists should include GR materials in the curriculum content to be applied regularly in all schools in the UAE context.

4. The selection of the reading texts in the middle school stage should be relevant to the students' actual lives, to allow them to connect the reading topics with real-life situations.

5. With respect to the MoE expectations of promoting reading fluency as a key learning outcome in the UAE context, stakeholders are recommended to pay serious attention to the ways of implementing the guided reading as an effective method to improving reading fluency skills.

5.4 Implications for Future Research

EFL/ESL researchers and scholars should consider conduct studies similar to the nature of this study, but with a large sampling employed in different schools; public and private in the UAE context within a longitudinal design. Furthermore, researchers can also track the stages of the development of reading fluency skills by using guided reading grade levels. Moreover, teachers' views and experiences regarding using the guided reading approach in promoting reading fluency can be an interesting research topic for future investigation.

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Appendices

Appendix (A): Pre and Post-test

Grade 8

Why Possum's Tail Is Bare

8	Long ago, Possum had a huge, bushy tail.
17	"My tail is the most beautiful in the world!"
21	Possum always told everybody.
29	Rabbit, who had a short tail, hated listening
39	to Possum and decided to play a trick on her.
46	"There is a dance Saturday," Rabbit said.
56	"All the animals will see your tail if you come."
62	"What a great idea!" agreed Possum.
72	"I will send Cricket to help you get ready, so
80	your tail will look its best," Rabbit said.
86	On Saturday, Cricket visited Possum. "Shut
95	your eyes so you will be surprised!" he said.
103	Cricket carefully cut off all the hair on
111	Possum's tail, and then wrapped a cloth around
120	it. Possum raced to the dance and proudly walked
127	to the middle of the dance floor.
135	"See my beautiful tail," Possum sang, as she
143	pulled off the cloth. The animals laughed loudly.
151	Seeing her bare tail, Possum dropped to the
159	ground and pretended to be dead until everybody
169	left. To this day, possums have bare tails and play
174	dead when they are surprised.

Criteria for counting errors						
Mispronouncing	substituting	Omitting	Inserting	Repetition	Self-correction	Total of errors

a. Mispronunciations are words that are misread; dog for dig.

b. Substitutions are real words that are substituted for the stimulus word; e.g., dog for cat, was for were.

c. Omissions are words skipped of not read; if a student skips an entire line, each word is counted as an error.

d. Insertions are words added by the students which are not originally exist.

e. Repeating the word many times.

f. correcting the misread words is also a weakness.

Words read	—	Errors	=	WCPM
WCPM	/	Words read	=	Accuracy %

Appendix (B): Evaluation Checklist

Checklist for evaluating students' progress biweekly

Students' number	Criteria for counting errors						
	Mispronouncing	substituting	Omitting	Inserting	Repeating	Self-correcting	Total of errors

a. Mispronunciations are words that are misread; dog for dig.

b. Substitutions are real words that are substituted for the stimulus word; e.g., dog for cat, was for were.

c. Omissions are words skipped or not read; if a student skips an entire line, each word is counted as an error.

d. Insertions are words added by the students which do not originally exist.

e. Repeating the word many times.

f. correcting the misread words is also a weakness.

Words read	**–**	**Errors**	**=**	**WCPM**
WCPM	**/**	**Words read**	**=**	**Accuracy %**

Appendix (C): Overview of the PM Series

Overview of the *PM* series

YEAR LEVEL	READING AGE	PM LEVEL	PM LITERACY STAGES	
FOUNDATION ▲		PRE-READING		
	5.0–6.5	1	EMERGENT	
		2		
		3		
		4		
		5		
		6	EARLY	
		7		
		8		
		9		
		10		
		11		
		12		
		13		
		14		
	6.5–7.0	15	DEVELOPING	
		16		
	7.0–7.5	17		
		18		
	7.5–8.0	19	CONSOLIDATING	
		20		
	8.0–8.5	21		
		22		
	8.5–9.0	23		
		24		
	9.0–9.5	25	EXTENDING/ ADVANCED	
	9.5–10.0	26		
	10.0–10.5	27		
	10.5–11.0	28		
	11.0–11.5	29		
YEAR 6 ▼	11.5–12.0	30		
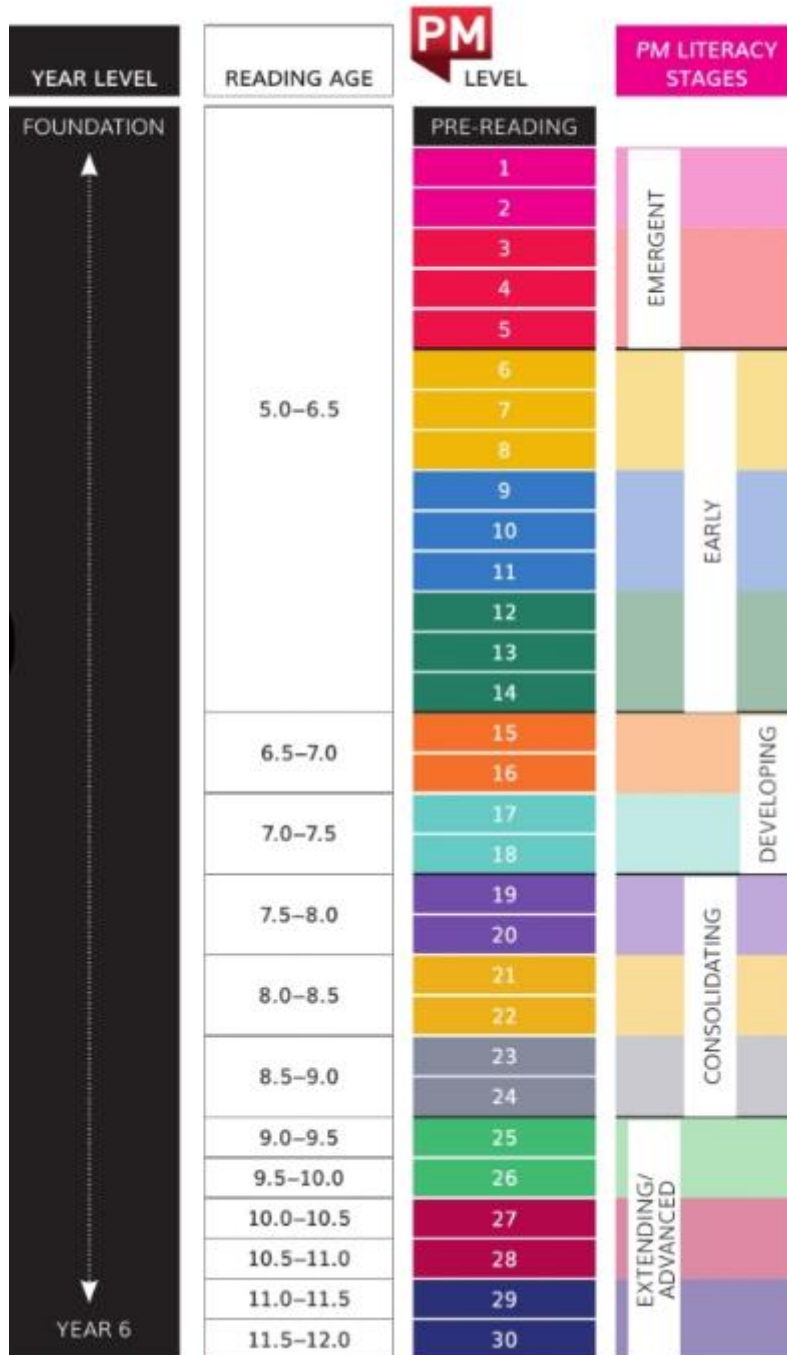
Appendix (D): Final Grades of pre and post tests

name	pre-test					post-test			
	words read	error	WCPM	Accuracy		words read	error	WCPM	Accuracy
1	32	15	17	53.125		50	12	38	76
2	45	26	19	42.22222222		62	20	42	67.74193548
3	47	25	22	46.80851064		68	23	45	66.17647059
4	60	21	39	65		100	2	98	98
5	50	20	30	60		85	16	69	81.17647059
6	30	16	14	46.66666667		52	13	39	75
7	56	20	36	64.28571429		92	15	77	83.69565217
8	54	25	29	53.7037037		101	35	66	65.34653465
9	29	15	14	48.27586207		46	11	35	76.08695652
10	53	22	31	58.49056604		87	18	69	79.31034483
11	34	16	18	52.94117647		73	15	58	79.45205479
12	32	19	13	40.625		81	14	67	82.71604938
13	28	13	15	53.57142857		46	12	34	73.91304348
14	34	17	17	50		79	15	64	81.01265823
15	46	16	30	65.2173913		84	11	73	86.9047619
16	39	23	16	41.02564103		71	21	50	70.42253521
17	29	7	22	75.86206897		54	11	43	79.62962963
18	62	29	33	53.22580645		97	14	83	85.56701031
19	32	21	11	34.375		66	19	47	71.21212121
20	34	18	16	47.05882353		72	18	54	75
21	61	32	29	47.54098361		91	20	71	78.02197802
22	57	22	35	61.40350877		89	15	74	83.14606742
23	45	17	28	62.22222222		58	7	51	87.93103448
24	21	10	11	52.38095238		55	11	44	80
25	48	20	28	58.33333333		96	25	71	73.95833333
26	45	13	32	71.11111111		93	22	71	76.34408602
27	36	15	21	58.33333333		75	15	60	80

Appendix (E): Final Grades in Document Analysis

	Trial one						Trial two						Trial Three			
name	words read	error	WCPM	Accuracy		name	words read	error	WCPM	Accuracy		name	words read	error	WCPM	Accuracy
1	31	16	15	48.3871		1	40	20	20	50		1	55	17	38	69.0909
2	44	28	16	36.36364		2	54	26	28	51.8519		2	62	22	40	64.5161
3	43	28	15	34.88372		3	55	25	30	54.5455		3	69	23	46	66.6667
4	55	25	30	54.54545		4	75	26	49	65.3333		4	98	29	69	70.4082
5	46	25	21	45.65217		5	60	28	32	53.3333		5	83	30	53	63.8554
6	29	18	11	37.93103		6	40	20	20	50		6	53	20	33	62.2642
7	55	24	31	56.36364		7	70	29	41	58.5714		7	90	24	66	73.3333
8	54	23	31	57.40741		8	73	30	43	58.9041		8	99	32	67	67.6768
9	28	17	11	39.28571		9	34	15	19	55.8824		9	45	14	31	68.8889
10	52	25	27	51.92308		10	64	25	39	60.9375		10	85	24	61	71.7647
11	31	16	15	48.3871		11	45	23	22	48.8889		11	70	25	45	64.2857
12	30	19	11	36.66667		12	57	24	33	57.8947		12	79	26	53	67.0886
13	30	13	17	56.66667		13	38	12	26	68.4211		13	45	10	35	77.7778
14	33	17	16	48.48485		14	49	15	34	69.3878		14	77	18	59	76.6234
15	44	19	25	56.81818		15	62	21	41	66.129		15	80	18	62	77.5
16	35	20	15	42.85714		16	58	24	34	58.6207		16	70	22	48	68.5714
17	27	10	17	62.96296		17	37	12	25	67.5676		17	52	15	37	71.1538
18	57	30	27	47.36842		18	69	30	39	56.5217		18	94	34	60	63.8298
19	31	22	9	29.03226		19	52	25	27	51.9231		19	63	27	36	57.1429
20	52	20	32	61.53846		20	63	21	42	66.6667		20	70	19	51	72.8571
21	58	30	28	48.27586		21	78	32	46	58.9744		21	89	30	59	66.2921
22	52	24	28	53.84615		22	67	25	42	62.6866		22	85	25	60	70.5882
23	39	20	19	48.71795		23	45	17	28	62.2222		23	55	16	39	70.9091
24	19	13	6	31.57895		24	31	10	21	67.7419		24	53	17	36	67.9245
25	46	24	22	47.82609		25	59	23	36	61.0169		25	94	25	69	73.4043
26	43	20	23	53.48837		26	65	23	42	64.6154		26	90	22	68	75.5556
27	25	15	10	40		27	58	15	43	74.1379		27	73	17	56	76.7123

Appendix (F): Parents' Consent Form

اولياء الامور الاعزاء,

انا رشا محمد طالبة ماجستير في جامعة الامارات العربية. موضوع دراستي هي "استكشاف تأثير استخدام القراءة الموجهة في تعزيز مهارات القراءة بطلاقة لطلاب الدراسة المتوسطة".

أدعوكم للموافقة لمشاركة اولادكم في هذه الدراسة. علما بان مشاركاتهم تستخدم لأغراض الدراسة فقط. وتكون المشاركة اختياريه وللطالب الحق في الانسحاب في اي وقت. في حال وجود اي استفسار يمكن التواصل مع الباحثة "رشا محمد" على الرقم 0503380521 او الايميل [201670020@uaeu.ac.ae]

اتا ولي الامر --------------------------------- , اوافق على مشاركة ولدي --------------------------
-- في البحث اعلاه

التوقيع --

التاريخ -------------------------------