

The Influence of Audiobooks on the Development of English as a Foreign Language Learners' Reading Fluency in Jordan

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Abstract—This study aimed to discover how audiobooks affected the development of the English reading fluency of Seventh grade EFL students at Jordan University School. A quasi-experimental strategy using a two-group pretest-posttest design achieves the study's goals. Over a month, thirty students experienced the opportunity to learn through audiobooks (Experimental group), while another group received traditional instruction (Control group). Two measurements were carried out for the experimental and control groups before and after various treatments. The researchers developed a similar reading assessment test to evaluate the students' reading fluency. In addition, they utilized an observation card that included multiple criteria to assess the accuracy and automaticity of students' reading abilities. The prosody was measured using Rasinski's Multidimensional Fluency Scale. The effect of the audiobook approach on the three reading fluency levels (accuracy, automaticity, and prosody) was investigated using a one-way multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA). The study revealed the positive impact of audiobooks on improving reading fluency. The study suggested that educators should enhance their understanding of incorporating audiobooks in classroom and non-classroom settings.

Index Terms—audiobooks, accuracy, automaticity, fluency, prosody

I. INTRODUCTION

Reading is essential because it provides a strong foundation for learning a language. Reading is one of the four crucial skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) of language acquisition in a foreign language learning setting and is necessary for academic objectives. As per Kostewicz and Kibina, stated in Wolf (2018), reading refers to an individual's capacity to visually perceive written content, engage in the most accurate interpretation, and understand its significance. Multiple studies have demonstrated that successful reading skills require quick reading, precise word identification, and fluency (Taguchi et al., 2004). Nevertheless, non-native learners have encountered numerous challenges in comprehending written content, leading to insufficient reading abilities and a negative disposition toward reading (O'Day, 2002).

In the past, educators had the belief that children would achieve success in reading written texts if they could acquire the skill of precisely decoding words. While precise interpretation is crucial for fluency, it does not encompass the entire matter. Readers must decode the words precisely and do so rapidly or unconsciously. Furthermore, reading fluency includes decoding written content with precision and interpreting it with expressive proficiency, leading to the highest level of comprehension. Proficient readers rely on fluency skills to enhance their reading comprehension, making it essential (Rasinski, 2004).

According to Van Zon (2002), students can develop reading fluency by utilizing role models, engaging in frequent oral reading, and being given more time for silent reading. In EFL classes, educators should employ contemporary methodologies to instruct reading fluency, specifically emphasizing precision, automaticity, and prosody. Additionally, they should allocate additional time for silent reading to improve intonation.

Modeled reading is essential for improving reading fluency as it demonstrates to students the correct way to read the content aloud precisely. It is crucial to select this model carefully since any inaccuracies in its presentation could mislead the trainees. Van Zon (2002) recommended that educators engage in regular oral reading sessions with students, using materials such as chapter books, picture books, newspapers, poetry choices, and newspapers. Providing the necessary support outside regular class hours could challenge educators, making acquiring independent L2 reading skills somewhat challenging.

Similarly, Tusmagambet (2020) proposes that modeled reading is a potentially practical approach for supporting

independent second language (L2) reading, and this method will be used in the current research subject. Modeled reading, primarily through audiobooks, is a widely used approach to offer students aural input as a substitute for reading aloud. These books enable students to engage in extracurricular reading and gain supplementary auditory input. They provide tangible assistance for reading aloud and comprehensive reading with audio aids. Studies indicate that audiobooks can enhance reading fluency in English language lessons, especially for second language (L2) readers, offering fascinating possibilities (Padberg, 2020).

In recent times, advancements in technology and artificial intelligence have significantly impacted the field of education, resulting in the integration of audiobooks as a highly beneficial resource for language acquisition. These audiobooks facilitate the acquisition of new vocabulary and enhance comprehension of words for learners. Studies have demonstrated that exposure to proficient language speakers improves pronunciation and memory (Koskinen et al., 2000). Audiobooks are regarded as a highly effective method of reading for individuals acquiring a new language, making them a superb selection for those who can grasp a new language. The primary focus of the current study is reading fluency, which is crucial for a compelling reading encounter. To clarify, the present research illuminates the three elements of reading fluency: accuracy, automaticity, and prosody through utilizing audiobooks as a framework for enhancing proficiency in oral reading.

A. Problem Statement

Reading fluency is a typical problem while teaching foreign languages. It discourages oral reading exercises in the classroom and results in anxious and frustrated students needing expressive interpretation skills to improve their reading ability quickly and smoothly. Reading at a slow pace without displaying any emotion or variation might result in misunderstandings and inaccurate interpretations, which can hurt overall learning. A significant number of students need help with reading with efficiency and fluency. Audiobooks can enhance precision, automaticity, and prosody in comprehending material. This underscores the crucial role of educators in this domain.

B. Study Question

Based on the research problem, the main question is: Are there any statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the mean score of seventh-grade Jordanian EFL students on the reading fluency post-test in terms of automaticity, accuracy, and prosody that attributed to the teaching method (audiobooks vs. traditional instruction)?

C. Study Purpose

This study aims to investigate statistically significant variations in the average scores of seventh-grade Jordanian students studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL) on the reading fluency. The research examines the elements of automaticity, accuracy, and prosody and investigates how they relate to various teaching approaches, such as audiobooks and traditional instruction. By employing a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$, this study aims to gain insights into the relative effectiveness of different teaching methods. The findings will have valuable implications for improving reading fluency among Jordan's English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students.

D. Study Significance

The importance of this study is in its capacity to function as a helpful asset for educators of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The insights on improving reading fluency can assist teachers in building more practical and pragmatic instructional practices. Moreover, the results could significantly impact the choices made by curriculum designers and policymakers, supporting the integration of audiobooks into EFL programs to enhance learning outcomes. This study, a component of the larger area of educational research, not only fills a gap in the literature but also adds to the current conversation, opening new directions for investigation and providing motivation for scholars who wish to further the study of language teaching.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This study investigates the impact of audiobooks on enhancing reading fluency among English as Foreign Language (EFL) readers, with a specific emphasis on accuracy, automaticity, and prosody. This part of the current study provides a concise overview of the existing knowledge about the development of reading fluency and its practical definition. Subsequently, a comprehensive overview of the literature pertains to the utilization of audiobooks in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) reading.

A. Theoretical Framework

(a). Reading Fluency

Considerable research has emphasized the crucial significance of reading fluency in connecting the disparity between word identification and thorough reading. Skilled readers, as stressed by Rasinski (2004), Therrien (2004), and Therrien and Kubina (2006), prioritize understanding the overall meaning of the text over deciphering individual words. According to Rasinski (2004), reading fluency refers to the capacity of readers to accurately read literature at a suitable speed while also adding meaningful language and expression. Proficiency in word decoding accuracy, automatic word recognition,

and the application of acceptable prosody in oral expression are three essential components that contribute to complete reading.

According to Grabe (2010), reading fluency involves the harmonious integration of understanding, comprehension, speed, correctness, and appropriateness. Pikulski and Chard (2005) explain that reading fluency refers to a reader's proficiency in quickly, effectively, and correctly identifying words in a text and inferring their meanings.

The correlation between comprehension skills and fluency is contingent upon theoretical viewpoints. Hoffman and Isaacs (1991) propose that the development of comprehension skills comes before the development of fluency, but Stayter and Allington (1991) contend that fluency promotes better understanding. Rasinski (2006) highlights the need to identify key attributes of non-fluent readers, including reading with frequent errors, focusing on individual words, and disregarding punctuation. It is crucial to prioritize resolving these problems to develop sufficient reading comprehension skills.

Griffith and Rasinski (2004) propose promoting fluency in education by emphasizing activities such as reading genuine texts, listening to oral readings by teachers, parents, and peers, and interacting with authentic resources. The proposal suggests that educators might enhance students' reading fluency by engaging in strategic conversations and performances of known texts. Although fluency is not the only determining factor, it is nevertheless an essential element for successful learning. Griffith and Rasinski (2004) have pointed out that the focus on word decoding can hinder comprehension and make the learning process more complex.

(b). Reading Accuracy

Educators have long utilized informal reading inventory (IRIS) as a vital tool for evaluating reading proficiency, with a particular focus on reading accuracy (Johnson et al., 1987; Pikulski's, 1990). The level of accuracy in reading is determined by the ratio of correctly read words, as stated by Fuchs and Deno (1982). Spooner et al. (2004) asserted that accurate word recognition is necessary for adequate text comprehension. Precise word recognition is crucial for achieving reading fluency, as students' understanding would be negatively impacted by any errors made during reading. Similarly, Oakhill and Cain (2012) highlight the need for students to evaluate their reading and listening abilities to enhance precision and recognize their mistakes. EFL learners should prioritize the precision of the language structure and strive to achieve proficiency in its usage.

(c). Reading Grammatical Frameworks

Students must thoroughly understand syntax, morphology, word order, and tenses to know how words, phrases, and clauses fit together and work as sentences.

1. Accurate Pronunciation

To prevent misinterpretation, students must acquire proficiency in intonation, rhythmic structures, stress patterns, and phonetics while avoiding the errors of letter reversal, substitution, or omission that can result in mispronunciation.

2. Vocabulary

Students should comprehensively examine terms and definitions, comprehend word usage deeply, and discern the distinctions between different word categories. A robust vocabulary enables students to select and employ suitable terms within their reading context.

3. Automation and Speed

Automaticity in text reading refers to the reader's capacity to decode words precisely without requiring conscious cognitive effort for decoding tasks (Rasinski, 2004). According to the automaticity theory, proficient word decoding occurs when readers transition from deliberate and accurate decoding to automatic decoding (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974; Samuels, 2002; Stanovich, 1991).

The enhancement of reading fluency is primarily dependent on automaticity, which refers to the capacity of proficient readers to read words accurately and efficiently, enabling them to concentrate on comprehension. Students who read slowly encounter difficulties comprehending deeper layers of meaning in texts since their reading process takes longer (Young & Rasinski, 2009).

Proficient reading entails the precise and efficient recognition of words within a written passage, enabling cognitive resources to be allocated toward understanding the content. Students who read slowly need help comprehending complex ideas and often sacrifice their understanding by speeding through the reading to complete it faster (DeVries, 2008).

4. Prosody

Reading fluency involves proper expression and phrasing, with prosody focusing on stress and intonation patterns in language (Dowhower, 1987, 1991). Whalley and Hansen (2006) confirmed that automatic word decoding enhances cognitive capacity, while phonological awareness involves recognizing and working with sound segments in words. Reading fluency involves correct expression, phrasing, and prosody, while automatic word decoding enhances cognitive capacity, and phonological awareness consists of recognizing and working with sound segments in words. Prosodic reading, characterized by appropriate expression and phrasing, is linked to comprehension, as fluent readers incorporate stress, pitch changes, intonation, rate, diction, and pausing. Schreiber (1980, 1987, 1991), the reader attempts to

understand the text through prosody. When a certain amount of automaticity is achieved, expressive reading occurs.

According to Young and Rasinski (2009), Prosody refers to the reader's ability to read text with proper intonation, phrasing, and expression. Kuhn and Stahl (2003) indicated that fluent readers group words into meaningful units for accuracy and smoothness. Prosody includes intonation, pitch shifts, pauses, and stress. As Rasinski (2000) stated, students can better convey text meaning by developing prosody when interpreting passages orally.

(1). *Phrasing*

It is defined as reading smoothly by gathering words into coherent phrases. In other words, while struggling readers read word by word, good readers limit meaning by reading in phrases (Rasinski, 2000).

(2). *Intonation*

The pitch variations during oral reading significantly influence sentence meaning, with readers employing diverse intonation patterns to convey the intended message to the audience (Erekson, 2010).

(3). *Stress*

Stress refers to the intensity with which a syllable or word is spoken. Dowhower (1991) identifies three stress states in a sentence: unstressed, slightly stressed, and strongly stressed, affecting the intensity of a syllable or word.

B. Practical Framework

As Ayunda (2013) stated, audiobooks provide numerous benefits for English learners, including the ability to imitate fluent reading, exposure to various accents, dialects, intonation, patterns, and expressions, enhanced concentration, and enjoyment of reading beyond their level. They also support auditory learners and improve their text comprehension, as Kartal and Simsek (2017) noted. Furthermore, integrating audiobooks in EFL classrooms offers advantages such as native speaker reading, perfect pronunciation, excellent reading substitutes, accessibility, and enjoyment (Vernon, 2015). In addition, Erekson (2010) highlights the benefits of audiobooks in language instruction, including fluency, content prioritization, vocabulary acquisition, and engaging interaction with literature, resulting in a satisfying learning experience.

Research on integrating audiobooks in the EFL classroom has shown various positive impacts on different issues. For instance, Tusmagambet's (2020) study on the impact of audiobooks on ninth-grade English as a foreign language (EFL) student in Kazakhstan found that the experimental group, which used silent reading with audiobooks, read faster and maintained a high level of text comprehension compared to the control group, indicating the positive effects of audiobooks in EFL classrooms.

Koskinen et al. (2000) compared the impact of home rereading with and without an audio model on students' reading motivation, fluency, and comprehension. The study involved 122 students from 16 first-grade classrooms and 16 teachers, with a mix of second language and native English speakers. Results showed that students with an audio model significantly improved reading motivation and comprehension.

A study performed in Japan by Brown et al. (2008) confirmed that reading aloud while listening can help students form "meaningful sense groups" more quickly (Intro, Reading-While-Listening). Thirty-five Japanese English literature students from a medium-sized private university in Kyushu, Japan, were part of his research. According to student feedback, most students (72%) preferred reading and listening together out of the three methods tested in the study (reading, solely listening, or reading and listening together).

Similarly, Mati and Khebbache (2019) investigated if integrating audiobooks affected the reading fluency of 16 second-year English students at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University. Results indicated that the learners' reading fluency fluctuated between excellent and ordinary. After treatment, the experimental group's accuracy, reading speed, prosody, reading comprehension, and word recognition scores were significantly above the pre-test score levels.

According to Chang and Millett (2015), as stated in Isozaki (2018), they examined the impact of audio-assisted reading on reading comprehension and rates. Over 26 weeks, sixty-four year-10 secondary EFL students were treated to either audio-assisted reading or silent reading for 90 minutes weekly. Twenty graded students read in total, ten at level one and ten at level two. Three tests were given to all students: a pre-test, and a post-test with a three-month delay. The study found that listening to audiobooks concurrently with slow readers (averaging 102 words per minute) significantly and sustainably improved the students' autonomous reading speeds to an average of 149 words per minute. Concurrently, reading comprehension also considerably improved in studying high school EFL readers.

In addition, according to Ayunda (2015), who performed an experimental study in which she gave thirteen students guidelines to listen to an audiobook after reading a passage from a book to help them better comprehend the story and the vocabulary used in it, the outcomes revealed that EFL students who were exposed to audiobooks during class reading tasks were more fluent and used a more comprehensive range of vocabulary than students who were not. The more exposure students receive to language use, the more language use comprehension they will have.

In his single case study, Padberg (2020) aimed to examine the development of reading fluency, particularly prosody and phonological awareness, and the joy of reading by supporting the decoding process with audiobooks. The audiobooks enhanced the support for a 13-year-old bilingual student of English and German with dyslexia to develop her reading fluency process. Furthermore, the joy of reading was extended by increasing the student's ability to read more books than

was planned.

Research conducted by Friedland et al. (2017) aimed to evaluate how reading audiobooks while listening to RWL affected reading fluency. To achieve this, 46 third-grade students from Hadassa Primary School in rural Mbale, Uganda, participated in a randomized controlled experiment. The study's findings demonstrated a significant rise in word count per minute over 30 days of consistent practice in the experimental group compared to the control group. Similarly, Pratiwi and Aid (2022) conducted action research to assess audiobooks' influence on reading fluency by evaluating reading performance and perspectives in the pre-and post-cycle of the action research. Thirty students in the engineering program were randomly chosen. The research findings proved that listening to audiobooks benefits students' reading proficiency and positively influences their attitudes toward using audiobooks.

The results of another study, which was performed by Türker (2010) to investigate the extent to which audiobooks assisted university EFL students in understanding particular texts when they were reading, with 82 learners from four elementary and intermediate programs at Anadolu University School of Foreign Language. The results of this study indicated that, in contrast to the control group, which only used printed books, learners in the experimental group, who used audiobooks, accomplished considerably better on reading comprehension tests. In simple terms, research pointed out that audiobooks enhanced university-level EFL students' comprehension of a chosen text.

Most previous studies provide a framework for using audiobooks in reading instruction. It is still unknown how healthy audiobooks teach reading in EFL classrooms, as most studies have concentrated on university students. Even though previous studies have shown that audiobooks are effective in improving reading comprehension, vocabulary, reading speed, and reading proficiency in a foreign language learning context (Ayunda, 2015; Chang & Millett, 2015; Friedland et al., 2017; Koskinen et al., 2000; Mati & Khebbache, 2019; Pratiwi & Aid, 2022; Türker, 2010; Tusmagambet, 2020), other studies have focused on investigating the effectiveness of audiobooks on students' motivation, feedback, attitude, and enthusiasm toward reading (Brown et al., 2008; Pratiwi & Aid, 2022). One study has investigated the impact of audiobooks on prosody and phonological awareness (Padberg, 2020). There is a need for further studies that compare the effectiveness of audiobooks on school EFL learners of the three components of reading fluency together: accuracy, automaticity, and prosody, not only one separate component.

The literature does not cover the effectiveness of audiobooks for all three components of reading fluency. Many studies, including Mati and Khebbache (2019), fill this gap. The gap is even more pronounced when comparing the current study's 60 participants with the small sample size of participants in Mati's study. Additionally, the methods used to collect the data for this study are what set it apart. In other words, in contrast to the current study, which established an observation card with specific criteria for reading errors based on linguistic literature and calculated the frequencies of each criterion, such as omissions, reversals, substitutions, mispronunciation, and words represented by the examiner after a wait of 2-3 seconds, the previous study collected data in the accuracy factor by calculating errors in reading (word recognition) generally without specific criteria. Furthermore, the study application's duration and the sample types vary entirely.

Furthermore, prior research failed to consider prosody as an indicator of reading comprehension and ignored the importance of prosodic features such as intonation, stress, and phrasing in conveying the meaning of the text. Most earlier research has focused only on measuring comprehension using comprehension questions that usually appear after texts, except in the Padberg 2020 study, which capitalized on the role of prosodic features in conveying the meaning of the text, which is considered more important than reading comprehension questions. The prosodic features are highly valued in the current research and essential to understanding the texts.

The significance of this study appeared from the fact that, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, there hasn't been much research done on the effects of using audiobooks on reading fluency in three domains: accuracy, automaticity, and prosody together, as a primary indication of measuring reading fluency by applying them together. As a result, this study offers some of the first information about whether using audiobooks improves reading components across the board as an indicator of reading fluency.

III. METHOD

A. Study Methodology

This study utilized a quasi-experimental design, explicitly employing a two-group pretest-posttest strategy, to examine the influence of audiobooks on the enhancement of English reading fluency in seventh-grade students studying English as a foreign language (EFL) at Jordan University School. The Experimental group consisted of thirty students exposed to audiobooks, and the Control group, comprising thirty students who received standard education, took part in a one-month intervention. Both groups underwent pretest and posttest evaluations to evaluate their reading fluency.

The researchers developed a standardized reading assessment test to measure reading fluency in both groups. In addition, a comprehensive observation card was employed to evaluate the precision and efficiency of students' reading proficiency. The Rasinski (2004) Multidimensional Fluency Scale was utilized to assess prosody, a crucial aspect of fluency.

Analyzed by one-way multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA), the audiobook approach's impact on the three characteristics of reading fluency—accuracy, automaticity, and prosody—was examined. This statistical study aimed to detect any substantial disparities between the Experimental and Control groups. To sum up, the study's methodology enhances the comprehension of how audiobooks can improve reading fluency and offers significant insights for educators

anticipating the incorporation of audiobooks in language learning settings.

B. Study Population and Sample

The research was carried out at Jordan University School during the first semester of the 2023- 2024 academic year, explicitly emphasizing seventh-grade students learning English as a foreign language. A sample of sixty students was drawn from a population of ninety. The participants were categorized into two distinct groups: a control group, which engaged in reading stories without the assistance of audiobooks, and an experimental group, which utilized audiobooks in combination with printed materials. The participants' ages ranged from 11 to 12 years old.

C. Data Analysis

To assess the extent to which the audiobook method influenced reading fluency, the researchers employed a statistical technique known as one-way multivariate analysis of covariance, abbreviated as MANCOVA. This approach facilitated the examination of three crucial components of reading fluency: accuracy, automaticity, and prosody.

Through the utilization of MANCOVA, the researchers may systematically examine whether any apparent differences or significant impacts result from the utilization of audiobooks. The methodology enabled the researchers to comprehensively investigate the effects of different instructional approaches on various aspects of reading fluency. In short, MANCOVA is a valuable instrument that allows the researchers to assess the impact of the audiobook approach on the students' reading fluency levels (accuracy, automaticity, and prosody).

D. Material and Instruments

To accomplish the objectives of the study, the researchers employed the following instruments:

(a). Audiobooks

The audiobook was presented in a video format, displaying written words on the screen. The audiobook was suitable for the learners' ability in the seventh grade and was obtained from open-source YouTube channels. Additionally, the researchers provided physical copies of the stories for each student, allowing the listeners to read along while listening. The students were assigned two lengthy Arabic literature stories, including "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves." The length of the text was 900 words, while "The Sixth Voyage of Sinbad" consisted of 1300 words. Furthermore, every student is allocated a single minute to check 250 words of the narrative.

(b). Assessment of Reading Fluency

To assess the influence of audiobooks on reading ability, specifically in terms of accuracy, automaticity, and prosody, the researchers developed a fluency test to be administered both before and after reading. The researchers utilized the narratives and thorough guidelines for administering and evaluating the reading fluency assessment.

(c). Observation Card

Assessing students' reading accuracy involved measuring the rate or speed at which they correctly read a certain number of words within a minute, which served as a measure of automaticity. Accuracy was determined by subtracting the total number of errors from the total number of words read in a minute, dividing the result by the total number of words read in a minute, and multiplying it by 100%. Therefore, the components of the observation card were designed to fulfill the study's goals and address the topic of precision. The critical aspects of the division are mispronunciation, substitution, omissions, reversals, and words represented by the person conducting the test after a 2–3-second delay. The exact frequency scale is utilized to measure these dimensions.

(d). Rasinski's Multidimensional Fluency Scale

The Rasinski Multidimensional Fluency Scale (Zutell & Rasinski, 2001) was used to assess the reading prosody of the students and measure their prosodic properties.

E. Procedures

To carry out the research design and achieve the stated objectives, a comprehensive set of procedures was sequentially followed to examine the influence of audiobooks on the improvement of reading fluency in seventh-grade English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students.

1- A comprehensive examination of the relevant literature was performed to build the theoretical framework and investigate empirical research about the topic matter.

2- Choosing the reading test narrative and creating an assessment tool as an observation card to evaluate the precision and efficiency of reading.

3- Utilizing Rasinski's Multidimensional Fluency Scale to evaluate the influence of audiobooks on prosodic characteristics.

4- Assess the reliability and validity of the research instruments' tools.

5- Select participants, get approval from the sample and school administrators, and present clarifications before the beginning of the experiment.

6- Administering a preliminary assessment to both groups before deploying reading techniques. The observation card

evaluates reading fluency, including prosody, accuracy, and reading speed-atomicity (WCPM). The efficacy of audiobooks for assisted reading is assessed by comparing test scores before and after the experiment. Each student in both groups is given one minute to read 250 words of the story the researchers chose. The experimental group used audiobooks, including distinct recordings of two stories: "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves" and "The Sixth Voyage of Sinbad." The audiobooks obtained from open-source YouTube channels exhibit variations compared to the control group. The students in the experimental group participated in silent reading while simultaneously listening to a modeled reading for four weeks. During this period, the main areas of emphasis were accuracy, automaticity, and prosody. Every student took turns reading out loud, and several audiobook readings were intended to improve reading fluency.

7- Assisting students in the experimental group in enhancing their prosody by employing the phrase boundaries technique in audiobooks. The control group adheres to conventional reading techniques, silently reading printed narratives and engaging in self-directed practice.

8 - Analyzing and evaluating research results precisely.

9 - Formulating the discussion and suggestions derived from the research outcomes.

IV. RESULTS

The main question of the study is "Are there any statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the mean score of seventh-grade Jordanian EFL students on the reading fluency post-test in terms of automaticity, accuracy, and prosody that attributed to the teaching method (audiobooks vs. traditional instruction)?" looked into whether there were any statistically significant differences in the average scores of seventh-grade Jordanian English as a foreign language students on a reading fluency post-test that focused on automaticity, accuracy, and prosody concerning the teaching method (audiobooks vs. traditional instruction). Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations for the experimental and control groups across the three reading fluency components.

TABLE 1
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF THE PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST PER FLUENCY COMPONENT

Fluency Component	Maximum mark	Group	Pre-test		Post-test	
			Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
Accuracy	100%	Experimental	92.21	2.96	97.50	1.90
		Control	92.50	3.61	94.64	3.09
Automaticity	250	Experimental	82.11	30.90	131.71	49.99
		Control	85.57	30.08	97.96	38.02
Prosody	16	Experimental	6.14	1.46	13.04	1.60
		Control	6.07	1.65	9.68	1.83

Table 1 demonstrates that the experimental group outperforms the control group in all three reading fluency components (accuracy, automaticity, and prosody). To examine the importance of the variations in post-performance between the two groups in the three components of reading fluency, a one-way multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was conducted. This study investigated the impact of instructional methods (Audiobooks vs. conventional instruction) on the three combined components of reading fluency. The study also controlled for pre-test results using Hotelling's Trace test. The findings of Hotelling's Trace test revealed a statistically significant impact of the instructional method on the combined reading fluency components ($F(3, 49) = 36.958$, Hotelling's Trace = 2.263, partial Eta square = 0.694, $p < 0.01$). The partial Eta squared result reveals that the instructional technique can account for 69.4% of the variability in the combined variable.

Furthermore, a subsequent Univariate analysis was performed to investigate the impact of the instructional technique on students' post-performance in the three fluency components while considering pre-test scores. Table 2 below shows the comprehensive findings.

TABLE 2
RESULTS OF FOLLOW-UP ANALYSIS FOR THE EFFECT OF INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGY ON STUDENT'S POST-PERFORMANCE IN READING FLUENCY COMPONENTS

Source	Fluency component	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared (η^2)
Strategy	Accuracy	125.600	1	125.600	44.011	.000	.463
	Automaticity	19722.103	1	19722.103	32.225	.000	.387
	Prosody	151.932	1	151.932	51.175	.000	.501
Error	Accuracy	145.547	51	2.854			
	Automaticity	31212.593	51	612.012			
	Prosody	151.412	51	2.969			
Total	Accuracy	517334.000	56				
	Automaticity	860977.000	56				
	Prosody	7540.000	56				
Corrected Total	Accuracy	469.714	55				
	Automaticity	122445.554	55				
	Prosody	316.857	55				

Table 2 demonstrates that students in the experimental group achieved significantly higher scores than their counterparts in the control group in automaticity ($F(3, 51) = 44.011$, partial Eta square = 0.463, $p < 0.01$), accuracy ($F(3, 51) = 32.225$, partial Eta square = 0.387, $p < 0.01$), and prosody ($F(3, 51) = 51.175$, partial Eta square = 0.501, $p < 0.01$). The partial Eta squared values indicate that the instructional technique accounted for 46.3%, 38.7%, and 50.1% of the variability in the automaticity, accuracy, and prosody components, respectively.

Furthermore, the Adjusted and the Unadjusted Means of the three reading fluency components have been retrieved for both groups. Table 3 presents comprehensive findings for Adjusted and Unadjusted Means for Reading Fluency Components.

TABLE 3
ADJUSTED AND UNADJUSTED MEANS FOR READING FLUENCY COMPONENTS

Reading Sub-skills	Group	Adjusted means		Unadjusted means	
		Mean	S.E.	Mean	Std
Automaticity	Control	97.58	.32	97.50	1.90
	Experimental	94.57	.32	94.64	3.09
Accuracy	Control	133.69	4.69	131.71	49.99
	Experimental	95.99	4.69	97.96	38.02
Prosody	Control	13.01	.33	13.04	1.60
	Experimental	9.70	.33	9.68	1.83

Table 3 demonstrates disparities between the experimental and control groups, even after accounting for variations in pre-test results. As a result, audiobooks improved students' performance after completing the task in the three aspects of fluency: automaticity, accuracy, and prosody.

The presented findings effectively address the research question: "Are there any statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the mean score of seventh-grade Jordanian EFL students on the reading fluency post-test in terms of automaticity, accuracy and prosody that attributed to the teaching method (audiobooks vs. traditional instruction)?"

V. DISCUSSION

The main aim of this study was to examine the influence of different teaching approaches, specifically audiobooks compared to traditional instruction, on the reading fluency of seventh-grade Jordanian students learning English as a foreign language. The study focused on developing automaticity, accuracy, and prosody in reading. The data collected showed statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) between the experimental and control groups in the reading fluency post-test. This indicates that students in the experimental group performed better than those in the control group in all three reading fluency levels—automaticity, accuracy, and prosody—and the overall reading fluency post-test. This highlights the possible advantages of employing audiobooks for seventh-grade students in Jordan. These findings correlate with prior studies by Chang and Millett (2015), Friedland et al. (2000), Padberg (2020), Mati and Khebbache (2019), Pratiwi and Aid (2022), Tusmagambet (2020), and others, stressing the positive impact of audiobooks on reading fluency. The study demonstrated that audiobooks significantly improve students' reading accuracy, automaticity, and prosody.

An in-depth examination revealed a notable enhancement in the average reading accuracy scores of the experimental group in the post-test (97.5), demonstrating a decrease in errors. The utilization of audiobooks enabled students to independently utilize audiobooks, resulting in improved precision both within and outside of the classroom. In addition, being exposed to language-focused reading through audiobooks allowed for repeated practice in pronunciation and enrichment of vocabulary. This promoted engagement with the text and improved understanding of grammatically correct words. The study's results align with the research conducted by Mati and Khebbache (2019) on fluency abilities, specifically accuracy, automaticity, and prosody. Nevertheless, the present study did not investigate additional reading abilities, such as comprehension and word identification. Pratiwi and Aid's (2022) study also discovered comparable evidence, suggesting that audiobooks positively impact students' reading skills.

Concerning reading automaticity, the experimental group exhibited a significant rise in average scores in the post-test (131.71), indicating enhanced oral reading automaticity and reading speed. The improvement was credited to the use of audiobooks, which increased learners' autonomy and motivation by providing them with examples of reading and boosting their self-confidence. Audiobooks aided students in overcoming hesitancy, omission, and reversal when reading, encouraging them to take risks. The study's results on automaticity were in line with previous investigations conducted by Chang and Millett (2015), Friedland et al. (2017), Mati and Khebbache (2019), and Tusmagambet (2020), suggesting that audiobook interventions had a beneficial impact on reading speed by augmenting the number of accurate words per minute.

The experimental group showed a notable improvement in mean scores in the post-test (13.04), indicating enhanced prosodic elements in their reading. The visual-audio stimulation offered by audiobooks helps comprehend complex texts, boosting phonological abilities. Simultaneously, reading and listening enabled students to self-correct and cultivate their understanding of intonation, stress, phrasing, rhythm, and pauses, thus augmenting their reading ability naturally. The results of prosody were in line with the Padberg 2020 study, suggesting that audiobooks that aid in decoding can enhance reading fluency, specifically in prosody and phonological awareness. The study employed measurement procedures derived from Padberg's research based on Rasinski's Multidimensional Fluency Scale (Zutell & Rasinski, 2001;

Hickey, 1991).

Ultimately, this study provides significant knowledge regarding audiobooks' efficacy in enhancing reading fluency among seventh-grade English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in Jordan. The constant favorable results regarding accuracy, automaticity, and prosody highlight the potential advantages of integrating audiobooks into language learning settings.

VI. CONCLUSION

This experiment primarily aimed to examine the possible advantages of audiobooks in improving the reading fluency of seventh-grade students at Jordan University School. The study utilized a quasi-experimental methodology with a pretest-posttest design. It included two groups of students, with sixty participants, within the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) environment. The results demonstrated a significant achievement in using audiobooks as a successful teaching medium to enhance the three critical aspects of reading fluency-accuracy, automaticity, and prosody.

The results indicate that audiobooks can play a crucial role in instructing reading comprehension abilities to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in Jordan, showcasing beneficial effects on many aspects of reading fluency. This research has important implications for language specialists and educators who teach English as a Foreign Language (EFL). It provides significant insights that may be used to improve curricula, construct programs, and design activities and strategies for organizing reading sessions. Introducing audiobooks into the classroom is seen as a potential approach to enhance students' reading fluency, opening possibilities for additional advancements in language instruction.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are suggested to enhance educational methods and knowledge:

- Conduct additional research to investigate the impact of audiobooks on a wide range of language abilities, including listening, speaking, writing, vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, and grammar.
- Enhance the dissemination of creative teaching materials: Broaden educators' understanding and utilization of innovative teaching resources, promoting their incorporation in conventional and non-traditional educational environments.
- Examine Motivational Influence: Carry out supplementary research to explore audiobooks' impact on students' motivation levels and their attitudes towards reading.

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