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Impact Of Self-Selected Versus Prescribed Level Reading On Arabic Speaking Ell Students: A Mixed Methods Study

Manal M. Assi
Wayne State University,

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IMPACT OF SELF-SELECTED VERSUS PRESCRIBED LEVEL READING ON ARABIC SPEAKING ELL STUDENTS: A MIXED METHODS STUDY

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MANAL M. ASSI

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DEDICATION

This research project is lovingly dedicated to my former ELL students, who have been my constant source of inspiration, and co-workers with whom I have shared many wonderful years of my teaching career.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

As a teacher with over eight years of experience in the same Detroit charter school, I have grown curious about the reading strategies utilized for our student population. The majority of students I have taught were either newcomers or first-generation immigrants from the Middle-East. A large number of these students were identified as LEP (Limited English Proficiency) whose native language was Arabic. In 2010, the school adopted a new reading program called Accelerated Reader. The entire collection of Accelerated Reader was leveled by reading difficulty. The main problem was not that the books were leveled by readability formulas, rather the rigorous rules that restricted students to read books that matched their reading scores. This became a problem for many of my Arabic speaking English language learners, because they were not allowed to read the books they were interested in if these books fell outside of their prescribed readability level.

The impact on students was notable. Some students complained that the library did not have a large enough collection of books to choose from. Other students disputed the accuracy of the assigned book levels. For example, one student was interested in reading the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series, but the librarian would not allow him to check out these books because, according to the reading assessment, they were determined to be above his reading level. This student was very frustrated and contended that he did understand these books because they were supported by visual aids. Another student was fascinated by soccer, and loved to read books about soccer, but was not allowed because these informational texts were determined to be above his reading level. Similarly, another student loved to read picture books such as *Sitti's Secrets* by Naomi Shihab Nye, but was not allowed to because this book was leveled below her reading ability. These experiences led me to question the applicability of the Accelerated Reader program for my ELL Arabic speakers. I also wondered how these same students would be

impacted if they were allowed to read for pleasure. These questions form the core of this research project and will be described in greater detail in the pages that follow.

Background

The terms English as a second language (ESL), limited English proficiency (LEP), and English language learner (ELL) are often used interchangeably to refer to students whose English language has not yet developed to a point where they are able to use academic language. ELLs represent a growing proportion of U.S. students. The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) reported that "some 21 percent of children ages 5-17 (or 10.9 million) spoke a language other than English at home, and 5 percent (or 2.7 million) spoke English with difficulty" (2009, p. 22).

According to the U.S Department of Education (2013), America's 5.4 million LEP students represent the fastest growing student population and are expected to make up one of every four students by 2025. Standardized assessments show that ELLs are falling behind their peers, especially in reading; interventions to improve readings skills are highly needed. The federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 was one of the implemented responses to calls for reform. In order to receive federal funding, states had to develop measurable targets for ELLs. "Tests developed specifically for the purposes of Sections 3121 and 3122 and administered under Section 3221 of NCLB" (Bunch, 2011, p. 327). This meant that ELLs were supposed to show improvement on the English language proficiency assessment for ELLs.

Additionally, the U.S. Department of Education designed a program "in order to improve the education of limited English proficient (LEP) children and youths by helping them learn English and meet challenging state academic content and student academic achievement standards" (2006, para. 1). Even though schools must use methodologies and approaches that are

research-based, LEP students still fall behind their peers (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2013; Nation's Report Card, 2014). Becker and Luthar (2002) argue regardless of the high expenses policy makers spend on programs to help disadvantaged students, those programs failed mostly because they focused on isolated programs to improve academics, while ignoring critical social-emotional components.

Similarly, Cohen (2006) argues regardless of the efforts made by some educators, a few states, and policy makers, the current education system is shifting away from the original purpose of education, thus reformation is crucial. Cohen (2006) points out that too much emphasis is given to linguistic and mathematics skills in preK-12 schools while undermining the importance of social, emotional, and ethical education. In her book, *the Death and Life of the Great American School System*, Diane Ravitch, a research professor of education, stated, "NCLB ignored the importance of knowledge. It promoted a cramped, mechanistic, profoundly anti-intellectual definition of education" (2010, p. 29). Valenzuela (2005) uses Seguin High School, an urban high school in Texas, to demonstrate how the current education system fails to address the needs of minority/immigrant students (in this case Mexicans). Valenzuela's examination shows that schooling practices subtracted resources from students by devaluing their linguistic and cultural heritage, instead of taking advantage of students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Likewise, Gonzales and Shields (2014) shed light on educators and policy makers who fail to meet the needs of students in the Detroit Latino community. The authors make connections from the colonial past to show that current educational policies, such as turnaround policies and standardized assessments, are not the remedy that will cure failing schools in the Detroit area, but rather utilizing the community's resources, such as parents.

Even though there are a large number of scholarly works in the fields of literacy and reading that have addressed ELLs, very few have addressed the literacy of students whose native language is Arabic. This population of students is growing, as shown by a report that was created for the US census listing the most spoken languages at home in the U.S. This report states that Arabic was one of the ten languages most spoken in the U.S. (Shin & Bruno, 2003). Census 2000 data (United States Census Bureau, 2003) counted 1.2 million U.S. residents who reported Arab ancestry, indicating an increase of 40% in the Arabic population since the 1990s. Data from the 2006-2010 ACS five year estimates show that an estimated 1.5 million people with Arab ancestry were living in the U.S (The United States Census Bureau, 2013). As a result of the growth of the targeted population, more research is needed to address the acquisition of English literacy. This is true for school districts whose population is the dominant group. For instance, in Dearborn, MI, "the district's 30 schools have a majority Arabic student population. Sixty percent of the students (11,753) are ELLs; 11,240 (95.6 percent) of them identified their home language as Arabic" (U.S. Department of Education, 2012, para. 4). Likewise, the setting of the study has a 90% Arabic speaking population with 52% identified as ELLs.

Problem Statement

Ivey and Broaddus (2007) discovered "flexibility and variety in the selection of materials would be essential features of instructional programs designed for adolescent second-language literacy acquisition" (p.538). ELLs come with various literacy skills that are highly influenced by their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Some teachers might assume that it is best to assign ELL students books that are at grade level because these students learn best if the input is one step above their current level, as based on Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1985), which proposes that learners develop language proficiency when they comprehend language input that is slightly

more advanced than their current level. Teachers tend to follow the input hypothesis model and assign books that are based on the students' reading proficiency level.

However, when English reading proficiency is the only variable that teachers consider, other variables are being ignored. For example, ELLs are usually literate in another language and come with various literacy skills that are highly influenced by their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. As a result, leveled books versus reading by choice should be investigated because readability levels do not take students' background knowledge in to consideration.

The term "leveled books" refers to books that have been grouped into levels based on the difficulty of text, which is measured by readability formulas. For instance, some formulas that estimate readability consider average number of syllables and average number of words per sentence (Dale & Chall, 1984). Leveled readers are reading texts that have been rated by their difficulty. Teachers use leveled books to guide students through ascending levels of difficulty in the texts they attempt to read on their own. Reading by choice refers to students who have the option of choosing books that are outside their Lexile range.

A readability formula estimates the difficulty of a text. The first readability formula was developed by Lively and Pressey in 1923. A decade later Gray and Leary (1935) identified readability formulas that became well known among educators such as librarians and teachers. Gray and Leary (1935) identified five variables that affects reading difficulty: average sentence length, number of different hard words, number of first-, second-, and third-person pronouns, percentage of different words, and number of prepositional phrases. Other researchers identified two major predictors of textual difficulty: semantic and syntactic. As shown by Dale and Chall's (1948) formula, text difficulty is based on semantic complexity, which means that words are identified as difficult words if they are not on a specified list of useful words. On the other hand,

based on Flesch's (1948) formula, semantic complexity is based on the number of syllables in a word. By the late 20th century, a large number of readability formulas had been identified by experts, including Klare (1984) who identified around 200 readability formulas.

Although readability formulas are now being delivered digitally, they follow the traditional readability formulas which use a combination of syntactic and semantic measures to identify readability levels. However, according to Hiebert (2009), there are major differences; "the use of digital technology meant that the readability of many texts could be established—something that had been tedious and difficult to accomplish with the time-intensive earlier procedures" (p. 6). Because of the great emphasis on standardized assessments, many schools are implementing reading programs based on digital readability formulas in order to prepare their students to meet state and national standards. For instance, the Advantage-TASA Open Standard Readability Formula for Books (ATOS) sells books for an independent reading program in which students select books based on a readability formula. On the contrary, MetaMetrics, the company that owns Lexile Scale, sells its services to publishers of tests and texts. As of 2014, Lexile measures are used at the school level in all 50 states, and 20 states report Lexile measures statewide on their year-end assessments (MetaMetrics, 2014).

The community in which this study took place had also implemented an Accelerated Reading program. According to Renaissance Learning (2013), the Accelerated Reader program was developed by Judi Paul in 1984 and it was first used with her children. By 1986, the Paul's began selling Accelerated Books to schools. The entire collection of Accelerated Reader is leveled by reading difficulty. Developed by Renaissance Learning, "the ATOS Readability Formula determines the reading difficulty of a book by calculating the average sentence length, average word length, word difficulty level, and total number of words in a book or passage"

(Renaissance Learning, 2013, p. 2). The main problem is not that the books are leveled by readability formulas, but rather the rigorous rules that restrict students to read books that match their reading scores. This is a problem for many ESL students, including Arab speaking ESL students, because their reading proficiency varies for each genre or topic, depending on their prior knowledge of the content and the text structure.

On the other hand, some studies found that the background knowledge of text content, especially cultural content, plays an important role in ESL readings (Johnson 1981; 1982; Stevens, 1982). One important thing about the process of comprehension is that "the reader's background also influences the saliency or prominence of ideas in the text. Different backgrounds make different aspects of the same text more or less relevant" (Kucer, 2009, p. 165). ELLs come to school with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Because students' background knowledge highly influences comprehension, it is hard to determine the readability level of books based on a readability formula that is meant for monolingual and monocultures students.

Many scholars in the field of literacy suggest that the narrow application of the Lexile Framework may harm students instead of helping them. Lexile Framework can limit the reader's choices by keeping students in a narrow range of texts (Carter, 2000). Therefore, if students are only allowed to choose books that are based on their reading levels, their ability to read books on various genres and topics will be limited. This information is valuable to all students, especially to ELLs, whose knowledge of genres in English text varies depending on their native literacy experiences. It is also important to point out that ELL students come to American school systems from schools that have different curriculum. As a result, knowledge of certain subjects and concepts differ from students who have been familiar with the American curriculum since their

first year of school. To illustrate, if a student studying world history has a comprehensive knowledge about ancient Egypt, this student can probably read books that are above his or her prescribed reading level. Similarly, if the same student has limited knowledge on the topic of U.S. History, allowing this student to choose books that are at lower level will still help the student learn about this concept.

Indeed, Krashen (2001) pointed out that reading easy books is not a waste of time because it could contain important information for the reader. Furthermore, some students who read easy text tend to enjoy reading. For instance, when seventh grade boys read comic books they found reading to be more pleasurable, as stated in a report by Ujiie and Krashen (1996). Even though comic books are considered to be light reading, students that read such books are exposed to a sophisticated form of reading. Schwarz argues that reading graphic novels is a way to expand and strengthen literacy skills because students that read graphic novels have to pay attention to story elements such as plot, character, and dialogue, as well as interpret visual elements (2010).

Similarly, some students might select books that are considered above their reading level if they are eager to learn or are interested in specific topics. For example, an ELL was able to outperform his reading level because he was interested in reading about his favorite soccer player. Krashen (2001) criticizes the Lexile Framework, which claims to help teachers select the right texts for students. He finds such precision unnecessary, stating that "students' interest and attention will tell teachers when a book is at the right level, and not every book need be precisely at the edge of the students' competence" (p. 1). Consequently, students should be given opportunities to read books at various levels.

Research Objective and Questions

This study will investigate whether Arabic-speaking ELL students should read leveled books according to grade level readability or if they should be allowed to read by choice. Many schools enforce a policy in which students are only allowed to check out books from the school or classroom library that are at the students' grade level. This means that students cannot read books that are below or above their grade level. Many schools in neighboring communities and across the nation follow this policy. Interestingly, Renaissance Learning is a world leader in cloud-based assessment, teaching, and learning solutions in over one-third of U.S. schools and more than sixty countries worldwide (Renaissance Learning, 2014). Whether schools purchase leveled books from Renaissance Learning or other companies, they tend to follow the leveled reading model. As a result, I will investigate the impact of the two reading models. I have two main research questions. The first question asks whether there is an impact on Arabic speaking ELLs if they are allowed to self-select their own books. The second question asks if there is an attitudinal difference toward reading if students are allowed to self-select books.

Significance of the Study

Palmer, El-Ashry, Leclere, and Chang (2007) state that "teachers of Arabic-speaking ELLs need answers as they strive to effectively design and implement instruction for this growing population" (p. 16). This means that teachers need professional development based on research findings and the ability to put findings into practice. Research that addresses ELLs' reading processes, reading attitude, and reading development does exist, however, the results of these studies are often generalized to all ELLs regardless of the context and the native language of the participants. For instance, professional development courses tend to be more general in nature rather than practical, leaving teachers struggling for instructional practices that can be used with a specific group of ELL students. Because of the limited research that addresses ELLs

whose native language is Arabic and who live in United States, more research needs to be conducted to determine specific instructional practices for Arabic-speaking ELLs, especially in reading.

The results of this study benefit all teachers—regular classroom teachers, ELLs, and bilingual teachers of students whose first language is Arabic, and, most importantly, native speakers of Arabic learning English. In addition, the results of this study are very important because of their potential to impact the policies of the many schools whose teachers follow the leveled reading method based on the readability formulas, regardless if the students are ELLs.

Limitations of this study

This study took place in a charter school that serves over 550 middle school and high school students. Even though the number of ELLs whose native language is Arabic was over 50 %, the study was limited by the small number of participants because students in the control group and experimental groups were matched based on several variables, including English language proficiency level and gender, which is further discussed in the methodology section. The reading materials were limited to the Accelerated Reading collection available at this school's library, which may be different than the collection provided at other schools and/or libraries. Additionally, it was not possible to control students' reading materials outside of the school setting or determine the participants' extent of literacy in their native language (Arabic). This was not taken into consideration because students come from countries that speak different dialects of the Arabic language, and the school did not have an assessment tool that accurately assessed their reading level knowledge in their native language. Finally, this study was limited to eighth grade students whose native language was Arabic and who attended a concentrated Arab-American charter school in the Detroit area.

CHAPTER 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE

The study's theoretical framework builds on the socio-constructivist framework (Vygotsky, 1978). At the heart of constructivism is a concern for lived experience, or the world as it is felt and understood by social actors (Schwandt, 1994). My understanding of literacy is informed by the social constructivist perspective. Through this perspective, literacy learning is seen as a dynamic process that involves complex social relationships with members of their particular sociocultural contexts such as family, school, and community. Furthermore, this framework takes into consideration students' native language, culture, and previous experiences.

I will expand Gee's (1999) findings in which minority students tend to fail because of the mismatch between the students' primary discourse of home and the mainstream discourse of the school, including differences in language, literacy skills, and experiences. Because the participants of this study are ELLs whose native language is Arabic, in addition to the culture, the role of home language as outlined by Cummins (1979) will also be acknowledged. The knowledge and skills of students' native language will be transferred to students' second language.

The framework discussed above has enriched this study. From the perspective of social constructivism, one can argue that literacy learning is a social product that gives greater consideration to issues such as cultural background, ethnicity, and primary language. There are many factors that contribute to Arabic ELLs' growth in reading achievement and attitude, including Arabic literacy skills, cultural differences, and previous experiences.

Literacy as a Social Practice

Moll defined literacy as "a particular way of using language for a variety of purposes, as a socio-cultural practice with intellectual significance" (1994, p. 201). According to New London

Group (1996), "literacy pedagogy traditionally meant learning to read and write in standard forms of the national language and was restricted to formalized, monolingual, mono-cultural, and rule governed forms of language" (p.9). However, the field of literacy has expanded and ongoing research has changed the understanding of literacy today. The concept of literacy continues to evolve. Thus, looking at the cognitive and the linguistic dimensions of literacy without paying careful attention to the social dimension would be leaving out parts of what literacy entails.

Traditionally, teaching literacy meant teaching reading and writing. Teachers were responsible for teaching literacy with standard books that taught reading and writing through the standard forms of the national language. These books are used in schools, published by companies to teach the national language: the language of the dominant group. However, literacy today involves more than just reading and writing: the process amplifies and changes both the cognitive and the linguistic functioning of the individual in society. Gee (1990) distinguishes between *discourse* and *Discourse*. By *discourse* (lowercase d), Gee means language in-use. By *Discourse* (uppercase D), Gee refers to the language that is situated within a context of social practice; it is a combination of language and behavior. Throughout this study, when the word *Discourse* is used with an uppercase 'D' and italicized, it refers to Gee's concept. Most minority students do not have the *Discourse* needed to be able to participate in society, and schools fail to provide them with such knowledge. According to Gee (1999), minority and poor children's failure in school "is rooted in our unwillingness or inability to give them the forms of instruction that are theirs by right and that are necessitated by the doors that have and continue to be closed to them" (p. 68). In becoming multi-literate, ELL students must simultaneously become proficient in a second language and develop the cognitive and socio-cultural skills necessary to fully participate in the social, academic, and workforce environments of the 21ˢᵗ century. It is not

an easy process for ELL students to learn both the language and behavior. Gee (1999) stated the following:

> We pretend that it is easy to make up for a lack of these experiences late in the game, although, to use a sports metaphor, no one thinks many of us could make the college basketball team if we have never played basketball before college. (p. 66)

Unfortunately, when ELLs are not being placed in the right system, they will stay behind. Contemporary literacy scholars have argued that literacy is a social practice (e.g. Gee, 1999; Seigel, 2006; Smagorinsky, 2001). Literacy is viewed from a sociocultural perspective, in which the individual's experiences and prior knowledge play a key role in the process of meaning making. For example, Anderson, Reynolds, Schallert, and Goetz (1977) show that people's background knowledge and prior experiences affect interpretation of text, especially when reading ambiguous texts. Even though this study does not necessarily pertain to ELLs, it is a great example that demonstrates how people with different experiences comprehend text based on their prior experiences. In general, the more similarities between the reader's and author's backgrounds, the smoother the construction of meaning. For instance, Carrell's (1987) study reveals when students' background knowledge is similar to text, students comprehend text better.

Berghoff, Borgmann and Parr (2003) define transmediation as "the translation of content from one sign system into another" (p. 354). Through transmediation, an individual makes meaning through symbols and signs. Thus, when ELLs are translating signs into meaning, they become highly dependent on their cultural background and prior knowledge. The semiotic theory explains how ELLs can make meaning through their individual interpretation of signs. To illustrate, a group of ELL students, whose native language is Arabic and who emigrated from the Middle East, were asked to tell something about the main character of a book by viewing a picture of a farmer. The majority of the students stated that the main character was a poor man.

Because students' inferences were based on their prior knowledge and experiences, they believed farming was associated with poverty. While an image of a farmer usually conveys a universal message, such cues implied different messages for this particular group of students because they associated this farmer with farmers that they know back in their native countries. Consequently, students misinterpreted the text and assumed that the farmer was a poor man.

According to Seigel (2006), "Semiotics is an interdisciplinary field of studies that examines how meaning is made through signs of all kinds-pictures, gestures, and music--not just words" (p. 65). For instance, when ELLs are learning about figurative languages they understand the concepts through various modes: writing, music, visuals, or movement. Indeed, it is almost impossible for students to understand the concepts without implementing various modes of representation: onomatopoeia is best taught through sounds, hyperbole is best taught through visuals, personification is best taught through animated pictures or movements, metaphors and similes are best taught through concept maps or visuals. Consequently, literacy entails meaning through various modes of representation such as visual representation.

Throughout the reading process, ESL students interpret graphs, pictures, and symbols. Their interpretation is highly influenced by their cultural background and personal experiences. According to the sociocultural theory, "learning is first social then individual" (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p. 204). Current researchers (e.g. Gee, 1999; Lave &Wenger, 1991; Moll, 1994) from the sociocultural approach build on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1978) and expand to include social identities and situated-social practice. Various researchers who present instructional practices to teach ELLs refer to the sociocultural approach because literacy learning is viewed as a social practice.

According to Lave and Wenger (1991), learning is the process of engaging in a community of practice. Thus, in a community of practice learning is not viewed as a cognitive process, acquisition of new materials, or new vocabulary terms, but as a change in practice through participation—it's change in the *Discourse* and most importantly, as change in identity (p. 37). Through *Discourse,* Gee (1999) means language within a social context. For instance, a person with a teaching certificate does not necessarily mean he or she has the *Discourse* of teaching. *Discourse* is only acquired through social practice, such as being a classroom teacher in a school setting. Consequently, ELLs need access to real situated social activities in order to participate. Only when they have full access—authentic books, artifacts, technology, art, integrated curriculum, mainstream discourse, etc. — are ELLs able to move from legitimate peripheral learners to full members of the community. One example is participating in the Fan-fiction community, a site where people publish their written fiction. There are different sites where fiction fans can publish their work. Black (2005) mentions an important thing about the Fan-fiction community is the feedback that ESL writers receive on the content of their writing and the style—feedback for revision, not editing. ESL writers are able to participate in the Fan-fiction community without the ability to write at the native speakers' level—it's about participation. As ELLs participate in communities, such as reading or writing, they tend to change their identities as well.

According to Kucer (2009), "because the individual belongs to a number of social networks—that is, identities intersect—he or she typically has multiple frameworks for behaving and for constructing and understanding experiences" (p. 219). As a result, ELLs should be given the opportunity to read at the grade level they select because expanding their participation is crucial in becoming full members of the reading community. If the goal for ELLs is to become

lifelong readers with the ability to read various genres and topics, then they should be given the ability to explore the various genres that are available without further restrictions.

Readability Levels and Background Knowledge

Many researchers in the field of second language acquisition have investigated first language interference with the learner's second language (e.g. Alhawary, 2009; Blaxton, 1989; Cowan, 2008; Ellis, 1997; Gass, 2008). Because ELLs are able to transfer native literacy competence from L1 to L2, educators should not assume that learners who do not speak the English language do not have any literacy skills. It is certain that ELLs come with various literacy abilities. Many ESL learners draw on their native language literacy skills. Bilingual readers are able to apply the reading strategies used in their first language to reading in their second language (Fitzgerald, 1995; Jimenez, Garcia, & Pearson, 1995; Kucer, 2009). For instance, bilingual readers are able to form predictions, make inferences, and draw conclusions based on conceptual and linguistic background knowledge.

Reading comprehension and literacy are influenced by the reader's cultural background. Readability formulas do not take students' background knowledge into consideration. "Readability formulas fail to consider whether the author's language patterns are similar or parallel to those of the reader" (Kucer, 2009, p. 123). Traditional readability formulas, such as the Flesch Reading Ease, asses the readability level by the complexity of words (analyzing word syllables), number of words in a sentence, and number of sentences per 100 words (Klare,1974). Goldman and Wiley (2004) suggest that "readability formulas do not correspond well with how easy the text makes it to understand with the concepts and ideas. One reason for this is that making explicit the local relation between ideas sometimes results in longer sentences" (p. 108).

Thus, the fact that a sentence is longer does not necessarily mean it is harder for ELLs who, in large part, rely on context clues to understand the sentence.

Other examples include the Lexile measure, which provides information about either an individual's reading ability or the difficulty of a text. According to *The Lexile Framework for Reading*, "a text receives a Lexile measure by running it through the Lexile analyzer which utilizes a linguistic algorithm that examines the semantic and syntactic features of the text" (2014, p. 2). Kucer (2009) argues "what is ultimately comprehended depends on such factors as the reader's background, purpose, context, and the content of the text" (p. 162). Therefore, the role of background knowledge plays a significant role in the comprehension process. For example, a student who plays soccer and has never been exposed to baseball before is more likely to comprehend a book about soccer, while having difficulty understanding the book about baseball, even though both books are labeled the same readability level.

It is important to remember that the students' knowledge of text type, genre, and text structure play an important role in their reading to each particular text (Peregoy & Boyle, 2012; Kucer, 2009). ELLs who are aware of certain text structures will outperform their peers who are not aware of those text structures. The text structure of compare/contrast, problem/solution, and cause/effect differ from the narrative sequence of a narrative story. "Knowledge of text structure can help readers predict what will come in a text, monitor whether they are getting the information, and help them remember what they have read" (Peregoy & Boyle, 2012, p. 377). Because bilingual students come with different native language reading skills, those differences should be taken into consideration.

People who come from different backgrounds often develop different reading strategies. Parry (1996) suggests that cultural background plays a role in the formation of reading strategies.

However, individual students can always change their reading strategies in the process of L2 learning. Because ELLs come from different cultural backgrounds and their process of second language acquisition varies, reading strategies are shaped by their personal experiences. Hence, the reading process for language learners is a complicated process with various aspects that should be taken into consideration.

Cummins (1979) made a distinction between cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) and basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS). In short, CALP is the language of textbooks—students need to learn the academic language so they can develop the literacy needed to read the school's textbooks. CALP does not only mean academic vocabulary, but also includes other skills, such as the ability to read the structure of textbooks (compare and contrast; cause and effect; problem and solution, etc.). Students need to develop certain skills such as critiquing, comparing, classifying, synthesizing, evaluating, and inferring. For instance, students should be able to understand graphs, charts, and tables. Such skills are difficult to attain in a second language if learners are not yet proficient in their native language. However, students who have developed such skills in their native language can transfer them into their second language literacy. This means that ESL students can read at various difficulty levels (as measured by readability formulas) depending whether or not they're familiar with the text structure.

The background knowledge of text content, especially cultural content, plays an important role in ESL readings (Johnson 1981; 1982; Stevens, 1982). ELLs come to school with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Because students' background knowledge highly influences comprehension, it is hard to determine the readability level of books based on a readability formula that is meant for monolingual and monocultures students. For example, bilingual readers depend on their linguistic knowledge to make sense of new vocabulary words

that are similar in both languages. Nevertheless, vocabulary terms do not always have the same meanings. According to Carrell (1987), even though both content and rhetorical form are factors in ESL reading comprehension, content is generally more important than form (p.476). As a result of the content of the book, the students' readability level can change. For instance, two books that have the same readability level maybe different for ELL students than non-ELL students because background knowledge about the content of the book plays a significant role.

Peregoy and Boyle (2012) state that Readability formulas "will give a grade level for an expository text you are using, but because readability formulas are simply based on sentence and word length, they do not give an accurate measure of your students' abilities to read a specific text" (p. 382). It is important for students to not only have a variety of textbooks, but also be flexible in choosing varying difficulty levels. Krashen (2001) points out that teachers and students are good at choosing the right book to read without following the readability formulas.

The literature review presented above establishes critical points regarding readability formulas and why they are not necessarily the right prescription for ELLs. Thus, this study investigated whether ELLs, whose native language is Arabic at the secondary level, should only read leveled books according to their readability level or whether they should self-select reading materials based on preference.

Effects of Choice

Oldfather and Dahl (1994) defined intrinsic motivation as a "natural inclination of children to explore their environment as curious, social, and self-determining beings" (p. 140). Thus, it could be argued that ELL students should be encouraged to nourish their identity as literate people who read books of their interest, rather than restricting students to follow the leveled book formula.

Guthrie and Davis (2003) argue, based on motivation theories, context influences students' motivation and "there are six characteristics of a classroom environment that foster engagement and aid in the achievement of reading competence: knowledge goals, real-world interactions, an abundance of interesting texts, support for student choice and self-determination, direct strategy instruction, and collaboration support" (p. 71). Supporting students happens when providing them the option to choose their books, not by restricting them to read at a certain grade level. Edmunds and Bauserman (2006) recommends five methods to motivate students' reading in the classroom: "self-selection, attention to characteristics of books, personal interests, access to books, and active involvement of others" (p. 10).

Research shows that growth in reading motivation relates to reading comprehension growth. Guthrie et al. (2007) found that reading motivation predicted reading comprehension growth; so students with high involvement, high efficacy, and high interest had the opportunity to improve their reading comprehensions. However, reading comprehension did not predict motivation growth; students with low involvement, low interest, and low efficacy did not improve their reading comprehension. These findings are critical for ELLs because students that have low comprehension growth are more likely to improve their reading growth if they have literacy opportunities such as engagement and involvement. Restricting students to read from one level will limit their ability to choose from a variety of genres and, at the same time, will not give students opportunities (Gambrell, 1996; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Schraw, Floerday, & Reisetter, 1998).

Choice is widely known as a strategy to motivate students to read. Gambrell (1996) found that over 80% of children involved in a reading motivation study chose books they had self-selected as the books they enjoyed most. Schraw, Flowerday, and Reisetter (1998) found a

relationship between choice and engagement, concluding that the positive relationship between choice and affective factors such as motivation can be empirically supported, and choice has a positive effect on students seeking to control their environment. Worthy, Turner, & Moorman (1998) conducted a survey and the results show that teachers viewed choice of materials during sustained silent reading as a way to improve both reading motivation and achievement. In addition, when students are self-motivated to read about a subject, they will outdo their instructional level of performance because they're reading about ideas that they truly want to learn about (Hunt, 1996/1997). Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) suggest that providing genuine student choices increases students' commitment to reading. Access to books is critical to the amount of reading children do and to their reading achievement (Gambrell & Marinak, 1997). Edmunds and Bauserman (2006) highlight the importance of choice when attempting to positively affect children's reading motivation. Consequently, allowing students to choose their reading materials increases the chances of becoming more engaged in reading. The more students read, the more likely they will improve their reading comprehension.

Arabic-Native Speakers

Cummins (1981) suggests that the knowledge and skills learned in the native language provide the basis for second language learning. Even though the level of interference decreases when the languages are orthographically different, the person's first language interferes with the person's second language (Hamada & Koda, 2008; Yuan & Zhao, 2005). For example, Arabic speakers learning English as a second language tend to misuse the article 'the'.

> According to Diab (1996), In English, abstract words referring to qualities, ideas, and attributes are used without article 'the' to refer to that quality, idea, or attribute which belongs to everybody or everything. In Arabic, however, such abstract words are preceded by a definite article equivalent to 'the' in English. Hence, errors pertaining to the misuse of the article 'the' occur. (p. 74)

ELLs, whose native language is Arabic, tend to misuse the article 'the' as a result of L1 interference with L2. Although it is necessary in Arabic, English use of the article 'the' is not needed in the following examples: *He lives in <u>the</u> China* or <u>*The*</u> *horses are beautiful animals.* Because ELLs depend on their L1, they tend to transfer grammatical rules. In the Arabic language, there is no neutral pronoun 'it'. Everything is referred to as masculine or feminine. For example, *she*, a third person feminine singular pronoun, would be used to refer to nonhuman entities such as the *sun*. Due to language transfer, learners tend to substitute 'it' with pronouns they are familiar with in their native language. Even though it is linguistically acceptable to use a personal pronoun for an animal, it is not acceptable for inanimate nouns.

The case study, *A Case Study of an Arabic-Speaking Child in the U.S.*, suggests that a student's native language plays an important role in second language reading. The findings of this study indicate that the student's limited knowledge of Arabic were confounding his acquisition of English. The results appear to be consistent with Cummins's Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) Theory (as cited in Palmer et al., 2007). For example, ELLs who have good skills in their native language, such as summarizing, predicting, and making inferences, will be able transfer those skills into English. If a student can identify the passages' main idea and supporting details, she is more likely to transfer the same strategies into English. Also, students who understand Arabic grammar rules have a better chance understanding English grammar rules. To illustrate, when learning about subject-verb agreement, students are more likely to understand the lesson if they can differentiate among parts of speech. However, if students are not able to identify the difference between a subject and an adjective, then understanding the lesson in English is much more difficult.

An ethnography that scrutinized the lives of six Yemeni American high school girls shows that Muslim female students had various literacy practices outside of their American high school (Sarroub, 2002). The Yemeni girls were navigating between their school and community's literacy. For example, they attended Arabic schools, read and memorized the Qur'an, listened to Arabic music at weddings and parties, and attended Arabic lectures at the Mosque. This ethnography provides an example of typical Arabic-speaking students who, whether they were native born or immigrants, tend to navigate between English and Arabic literacy. Another ethnographic study examined Sudanese refugee families in Michigan, illustrating how students are exposed to various types of literacy outside of schools "as parents relied upon children to help them with texts, they drew them into authentic literacy practices, exposing the children to multiple texts and real-world purposes for reading and writing" (Perry, 2009, p. 274). Many teachers assume if the parents are not literate in English, their children's literacy skills will be negatively affected. However, in many situations, the children tend to be exposed to various modes of literacy because their parents cannot read or write, and as a result, the children develop their literacy. The school's role is to build upon such skills and give immigrant students more opportunities to learn literacy in a situated context. Both ethnographic studies support the argument that students' exposure to various types of literacy outside of school varies and cannot be measured by a single reading test.

Abu-Rabia and Siegel (2002) investigated bilingual English Arabic children and monolingual English children. "Bilingual English Arabic children who had reading problems in English had higher scores on English pseudo-word reading and spelling tasks than monolinguals" (p. 661). This could be explained as a result of L1 transfer. Mohamed-Sayidina, A. (2010) investigated whether Arab ESL students would transfer features of L1 writing into L2.

Children's writing samples in English showed evidence of semantic and syntactic transfer from L1. The results indicated that there was a significant relationship between L1 organizational pattern of writing and L2 writing. Both studies show that the students' English literacy is influenced by the students' Arabic language. Similarly, Alhawary (2009) found evidence of syntactic and semantic transfer from native language to second language. In this study, English and French speakers were learning Arabic as a second language. The first language of the participants differed somewhat in their subject-verb agreement in relation to Arabic. In English there is no gender inflection, while the French and Arabic languages have gender inflection. Results indicated that the French L1 groups differed significantly from participants whose language was English. Because the English language does not have the gender inflection rule, the results show evidence of syntactic and semantic transfer from L1 to L2.

Hayes-Harb (2006) investigated the reading processes of native Arabic speakers compared to the reading processes of native English speakers and non-Arabic ESL learners. Native Arabic speakers are less aware of vowel letters in English text, which may contribute to native Arabic speakers' ESL reading comprehension difficulties. In English, for example, words with similar consonant structures are often not semantically related such as *pints, point,* and *paint.* Also, changing one vowel in English changes the meaning of the word. For example, when the vowel in *hat* changes, it becomes semantically unrelated words *hot, hit, hate,* or *heat.* Native Arabic speakers tend to apply their Arabic morphological knowledge to predict meaning of unfamiliar words which demonstrates evidence of semantic transfer. Learners may believe words have the same meaning if they have the same consonant letters. Thus, when learners encounter new words, they tend to guess their meaning based on their prior knowledge of words that have a similar consonant letter combination. In my experience, an ESL student I had taught

associated the meaning of 'star' with 'stair' as he was discussing a story that he was reading simply because both words have the same three consonant letters. Another student associated the meaning of 'smell' with 'small'. This is a result of the transferred morphological rules from Arabic—consonants are the same, so the meaning should be related.

In Arabic, short vowels are predictable based on grammatical function. Consonant letters represent lexical information.

> The root k-t-b is the root of many words having to do with writing such as kitaab (book), kataba (he wrote), maktab (office), and maktaba (library). Skilled Arabic readers are able to use contextual clues to fill in the missing vowels because short vowels typically represent grammatical information (e.g., part of speech, person, number, case, tense, and voice) that can be inferred from the semantic and syntactic context and would often be redundant if presented in writing. (Hayes-Harb, 2006, p. 322)

As the studies discussed above demonstrate, Arabic ELLs transfer literacy skills, either correctly or incorrectly, to their L2 reading. This important information indicates that Arabic ELL speakers have distinct features that distinguish them from ELL students whose native language is not Arabic, not to say they do not share any features.

Carrell (1987) makes a distinction between "content schemata" and "formal schemata". Content schemata or background knowledge that relates to the content domain of the text; formal schemata are the background knowledge that the reader has about the organizational structure of the text. The participants in Carell's study were divided into two groups: Muslims and Catholic. They had to read two texts: one with Muslim-oriented content and one with Catholic-oriented content. In addition, each text was either presented in a well-organized rhetorical format or an unfamiliar, altered rhetorical format. The results of the study show that both content and formal schemata are important factors in ESL reading comprehension, but content schemata are more important than structure. For example, Muslim students performed better on a Muslim-oriented passages because they were familiar with the content. When both content and form are familiar,

the reading is relatively easy for ESL students; however, when content and form are unfamiliar, the reading is relatively difficult. Again, the result of this study suggests that students comprehend text at various difficulty levels depending on the content and structure of the text.

The literature review demonstrates how choice affects students' reading (Gambrell, 1996; Schraw, Floerday, & Reisetter, 1998; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). It also indicates readability formulas do not provide accurate measures of text difficulty (Goldman &Wiley, 2004; Krashen, 2001; Kucer, 2009; Ujiie & Krashen,1996). Furthermore, the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of Arabic-speaking ELLs play a significant role in L2 learning (Alhawary, 2009; Hayes-Harb, 2006; Mohamed-Sayidina, 2010; Palmer et al. 2007; Carrell, 1987; Perry, 2009; Sarroub, 2002). As a result, this study investigated whether Arabic-speaking students from a small charter high school show growth in their reading comprehension and attitude towards reading if they are allowed to self-select books versus being prescribed readings. The following chapter outlines the research methodology that guided the researcher throughout this study.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

The literature review discussed above shows that ELLs, whose native language is Arabic, are a distinct category from other ELLs for various reasons including, but not limited to, the linguistic and cultural background of the Arabic language. This study will build on these findings by using a mixed-method investigatory model to compare the impact of reading formulas on student literacy scores and attitude towards reading with Arabic-speaking ELLs.

According to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), "what is most fundamental is the research question—research methods should follow research questions in a way that offers the best chance to obtain useful answers" (pp. 17-18). Because this study took place in a school setting with students already in groups, a quasi-experimental, pretest-posttest control and comparison group design was used. A quasi-experimental design is described as follows:

> A quantitative research design whose purpose is to determine cause and effect when there is direct manipulation of conditions. A treatment is used in a quasi-experimental design in order to impact certain variables, without random assignment of subjects to either the treatment or control groups. (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, p. 273)

Using two intact classes, the researcher randomly assigned an experimental group, Group 1, and a control group, Group 2. Students were matched based on the following variables: grade, gender, English proficiency level based on WIDA assessment, and reading achievement level. The experimental group, Group 1, was allowed to self-select books during individual reading time at the library and classroom reading time while the control group, Group 2, continued to follow the school's model in which students were restricted to read books that were at the readability level.

The overall design of the study was a pre-post matched group design, which investigated whether or not there was an increase in reading comprehension and attitude if students were reading leveled books versus reading by choice.

Context and Participants

This research was conducted in a middle/high charter school in the Detroit area. The sample was chosen from this city because, according to the 2000 U.S. Census, it had the largest percentage of Arab-Americans in Michigan. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006), "In purposeful sampling, the researcher selects particular elements from the population that will be representative or informative about the topic of interest" (p. 126). Purposeful sampling was used because this city had the largest population of students learning English whose native language is Arabic. I was able to match participants from this district because the majority of the students spoke Arabic. The school serves a community made up mostly of Middle Eastern families. Many students are either newcomers or first generation emigrants from the Middle-East. The majority of students were from Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen. This was based on the enrollment applications as of fall 2014, which listed the students' place of birth and/or nationalities. Even though Arabic was the official language of the countries from which they emigrated, their linguistic and cultural experiences differed. These diverse experiences provided a rich understanding of the lived reality of ELLs in the sociocultural context of a highly concentrated Arab-American community.

Even though the study took place in eighth grade classes, general information of the entire school is given to provide a clear picture of the context. The school serves over 550 students in grades 6-12, most of them from low socioeconomic families with very limited education. The student to teacher ratio in the school is 22.6:1. The ethnic makeup of the student population in the school district during the 2013-2014 school year was 92% White (from the Middle East), 3% Hispanic, 4% African American, and 1% Other. This information is based on the students' enrollment applications as of fall 2014. Middle school classes were segregated by

gender, which might account for the nearly 2:1 ratio of females to males. High school classes were both gender separate and co-ed. Separate gender classes represent a traditional preference of parents in the Arabic-speaking communities. In general, these families live on government assistance programs according to the school's database, which collected information from lunch forms as of fall 2014. Eighty-nine percent of the students received free lunch and 3% qualified for reduced-price meals. Forty-nine percent of the middle school students and 53% of the high school students were identified and served as ELLs based on the school's spring 2014 WIDA results. The ethnic make-up of staff members, based on the staff demographic information provided by the school's administration, was as follows: Caucasian (White) about 34%, Native Born Arab-Americans 20%, Immigrant Arab-American 35%, and Other 11%.

Prior to the study, permission to collect data was obtained from the school district for the 2015-2016 school year. After receiving permission from the school, a letter was distributed to all ELLs who fell under the criteria: eighth grade students whose native language is Arabic and whose English proficiency level is either Emerging (level 2), Developing (level 3), Expanding (level 4), or Bridging (level 5) (based on English language proficiency assessment that is adopted by the state of Michigan, *World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment—WIDA*). These levels were chosen because students were still in the process of developing English proficiency, yet they could read independently and developed a basic level of English language proficiency. Therefore, students at the Entering (level 1) and Reaching (level 6) levels were excluded. Students at the Entering level are at the lowest level and should be in the process of learning the social language. This group was not a good fit for the study because students were not capable of reading alone. Students at the Reaching level were at the highest level, as measured by this test, which was considered to be equivalent to native born English learners. This group was

eliminated because the study's main focus was ELLs who are still in the process of second language acquisition, rather than in the process of becoming former ELLs.

According to the fall 2015 student count records, the school had 77 students in four eighth grade classes. Two classes are female classes, one class is male, and one class is coed. Forty-two students are females and 35 students are males. Forty-six students are ELLs based on English language learner's assessment, WIDA. There are two teachers that teach language arts. One teacher teaches both of the female classes and the one coed class, while another teacher teaches the male class. Because the participants were supposed to be matched based on gender, selecting participants from the mixed class was not an option; participants were selected from the female classes. Students that met the entrance criteria were ELLs whose English proficiency fell between the Emerging and Bridging levels. One class had four students while the other class had nine students. After following the entrance protocol, six students participated. The control and treatment groups were randomly selected.

According to the school's librarian, Accelerated Reader is the reading program implemented by the school. There are about 5000 Accelerated Reader books at the library. The number of books varies for each genre. For example, there are 427 books in mystery, 234 books in fantasy, 188 books in science fiction, 17 books in romance, 386 books in family life, and 126 books in sports. Also, the number of books varies for each Accelerated Reader grade level. For instance, there are approximately five books in the 0-1st grade, 39 books in 1st-2nd grade, 20 books in 2.1-3rd grade, over 500 books in 3.1-4th grade, over 500 books in 4.1-5th grade, over 500 books in 5.1-6th grade, over 400 books in 6th-7th grade, approximately 250 books in 7.1-8th grade, less than 200 books in 8.1-10th grade, and less than 50 books in 10.1-12th grade.

Ethics and Protection of Participants

Each participant received an informed consent document, as outlined by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Because students were between 13 and 17 years old, a letter was mailed to the parents. The letter included information about the study and was translated by a certified translator into Arabic to make sure all parents and students understood. A parent signature was required in order for their children to participate in the study. After receiving the parents' signatures, students' assent was also obtained.

Data was collected in both paper and electronic formats and were kept in a secured file cabinet or electronic data base only accessible to the researcher. Pseudonyms were utilized for reporting all data throughout the study in order to de-identify students' personal information. After the study, the data were destroyed.

Data Sources

A mixed-method approach, employing quantitative and qualitative techniques, was used to collect and analyze data. Quantitative data collection techniques included a computer-based comprehension test (NWEA-MAP) and the Reader Self-Perception Scale (RSPS). Qualitative data were collected through classroom and library observations and semi-structured student interviews.

The Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) is an assessment tool used by the school to evaluate academic progress in reading and math. According to Northwest Evaluation Association, NWEA is a research-based computerized assessment that provides measurement of students who perform at, above, and below grade level. NWEA's Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) are electronically administered and scored tests designed to measure growth for individual students, classrooms, schools, and districts. The NWEA's MAP achievement tests in mathematics, reading, and language usage are delivered electronically to students. Each test is

"adaptive", which means it immediately responds to student answers and customizes future questions. This method provides an accurate and immediate measure of their achievement (2014).

Semi-structured interviews were also used in this study. According to Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2012), "semi-structured interviews are verbal questionnaires. They consist of a series of questions designed to elicit specific answers from respondents. Often they are used to obtain information that can later be compared and contrasted" (p. 451). The researcher followed a predetermined interview guide, which means that questions were prepared in advance. The order of the questions was predetermined. The researcher was also able to add questions during the interview as necessary. The interview questions are included in Appendix B. The interviews took place before and after the intervention to capture any change in students' attitude toward reading as a result of the intervention.

Field observations were another data source of the study. "Data are recorded as field notes, or observations of what occurs while the researcher is in the field. Field notes are dated and the context is identified" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, p. 349). Field observations provided detailed descriptions and were presented as field notes, actions, events, objects, and settings. The researcher took field notes during classroom and library observations, assumed the role of independent observer, and took notes of direct observation.

The Reader Self-Perception Scale (RSPS) was used in this study and intended to provide an assessment of how children feel about themselves as readers. Thus, this survey was used to check students' attitude towards reading using a 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree). Because it is not usually given by the school, only participants in this study took the survey. The scale consists of 33 items that assess self-perceptions along four dimensions

of self-efficacy: Progress, Observational Comparison, Social Feedback, and Physiological States (Henk & Melnick, 1995, p. 11).

Data Collection: Pre-intervention

Data sources mentioned above were used throughout this study. This section demonstrates how these sources were utilized by providing a detailed description of the data collection method, along with the role of the researcher.

Data collection in this study began with students taking a computer-based comprehension test (NWEA-MAP). This test was chosen because it is designed to measure individual progress. The comprehension test was used to measure students' achievement prior to the intervention. This test was naturally occurring, which means that it was given annually by the school in the fall, winter, and spring. Both control group and treatment group took the test with their teachers, according to the assessment window and as scheduled by the assessment coordinator in the fall (third and fourth weeks of September, 2015). Students took this test in the computer lab. Even though this test usually takes about 60 minutes, students were usually given up to 30 minutes of extra time because this test was not a timed test.

After collecting the NWEA-MAP data, the students completed the Reader Self-Perception Scale (RSPS) survey, developed by Henk and Melnick, (1995). Students completed this one-on-one survey during the language arts class in October, 2015. To ensure that students were working based on their own level, they took the survey in a private area (i.e., resource room, isolated section of library, or assessment room). The researcher explained to students that they were going to complete a questionnaire and they needed to be as honest as possible because their responses were confidential. The response options were discussed to ensure that all children understood the rating scale before taking the survey. The students read each item and circled

their responses. Students were able to raise their hands if they need help reading or translating a word. Each child completed the survey in less than 30 minutes, including procedures.

Semi-structured interviews for both groups took place prior to the treatment in October, 2015. Semi-structured interviews were used because they enabled the researcher to gather 'thick description' (Patton, 2002). The purpose of the interviews was to examine characteristics, patterns, and qualities of the students' motivations for reading, as expressed by the students themselves. In addition, semi-structured interviews also facilitated immediate verbal clarification of what was said by participants (Fontana & Frey, 2005; Patton, 1990). To optimize comparability across interviews, each student was interviewed by the same interviewer (researcher). The 10 to 15minute interviews took place in a private area during the language arts period (i.e., resource room, isolated section of library, or assessment room). The interview questions are presented in Appendix B.

When necessary, interview questions were followed with probes. Each interview started with a few general questions about books they were reading to build rapport. Students were then asked questions based on the interview protocol questions. The researcher collected data using both handwritten notes and an audio recorder. Data were recorded and transcribed immediately after the interview to allow the interviewer to focus on the interview. Patton says that a tape recorder is "indispensable" (1990, p. 348). The researcher also documented any non-verbal cues such as facial expressions.

Data Collection: During the Intervention

During the study, students continued to check out books from the Accelerated Reader selection in the school and classroom libraries. Students visited the library biweekly to check out books and read. Students were provided silent reading time once a week. Students in the control

group continued to select books based on their reading level prescribed by the Lexile measure. Students in the treatment group were allowed to check out books of their choice, regardless of the readability level of the book or the students' reading level. The teacher kept a record of students' reading score to ensure that students in the control group were checking out books based on their readability levels, while the treatment group students were allowed to checkout any books they wished to read. Students read for a period of eight weeks prior to post-assessing them using the same measures.

In addition to interviews, the researcher used observations for a deeper understanding of the situation by providing detailed descriptions of the context in which events occurred, enabling the researcher to realize things that participants themselves were not aware of or not willing to discuss during interviews (Patton, 1990). The presence of an observer most likely did not introduce a distortion of the natural scene because students at the site of this study were accustomed to seeing people observe the classroom on a daily basis, such as the school's academic coordinator, student coordinator, school principal, and district mentors. The district mentors observed teachers and classrooms in various classes, including language arts. Because students were accustomed to seeing different observers, it is likely that the presence of a researcher did not affect their behavior.

Classroom and library observations took place using field notes, where the researcher assumed the role of independent observer. Classroom and library observations took place during the last week of October, 2015 and ended during the first week of January, 2016, after the completion of the following pre-assessments: NWEA-MAP, RSPS, interviews, and at the beginning of the intervention. Each classroom observation took place during the reading day in which students read their AR books during Language Arts class, held once a week for a period of

fifteen to thirty minutes. Students were observed bi-weekly for 30 minutes at the library. Library observations started during the second week of November, 2015. During these observations, the researcher used an observation checklist and jotted down notes that served as a memory aid when full field notes were written (Lofland & Lofland, 1984). Each page of the field notes included: (1) date, (2) time, (3) setting, (4) checklist of what was observed, and (5) comments. The researcher typed field notes within 24 hours of the observations which ended the first week of January, after the completion of the intervention. Observations for each class included seven sessions, each lasting approximately 15 to 30 minutes.

Data Collection: Post Intervention

After completing the intervention, the researcher collected data from post-assessments. Students took the same computer-based comprehension test (NWEA's MAP) as scheduled by the school's assessment coordinator, which took place during the second and third weeks of January, 2016, as stated in the school's assessment calendar. Similar to pre-assessment, students took their test with the rest of their classmates in the computer lab for approximately 60 minutes. Because this test was not timed, students took their time as necessary.

Students took the Reader Self-Perception Scale (Henk & Melnick, 1995) in January, 2016. Henk and Melnick's validated survey has become a useful and recognized instrument in the areas of reading. Post-survey procedures followed those of pre-intervention: students completed the survey one-on-one during language arts class; students completed the survey at their own pace in a private area; students had the survey directions read aloud and explained to them; students were able to seek help with reading or translation when needed.

The semi-structured interviews for both groups took place after the intervention in January, 2016. The interviewer followed the same protocol of the pre-treatment interview guide.

This means that the interviewer followed the same set of questions and interview procedure of that of the pre-intervention.

Data Analysis

The researcher examined the impact on reading achievement by comparing scores from fall 2015 pretests and winter 2016 posttests of the control and treatment groups. Data analysis started when students completed the post-test during the third week of January, 2016. The scores were generated by the computer as individual student reports. In order to analyze data, a t-test was used to measure the NWEA-MAP computer-based reading comprehension and post tests were given to both groups. The t-test determined any significant changes in students' reading achievement as a result of self-selected reading materials.

When students finished the pre and post surveys, each response was scored according to the data interpretation section in Henk & Melnick (1995, p. 480). After the surveys were scored, the t-test assessed differences in mean scores to determine any significant changes in students' attitude towards reading. The audiotapes and notes from pre and post interviews were transcribed and typed into a Word document after each interview. The researcher used ''analytic induction'' (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 254), an iterative procedure in which the transcripts are inspected, categories are induced, and the transcripts are re-inspected with these categories in mind. Semi-structured interviews explored whether there was a change in reading attitude and reading involvement between pre and post intervention. In order to code students' responses to the interview questions, a priori coding attributes document was developed based on the existing literature as follows: collaboration, reading involvement, self-efficacy in reading, perceived control, and interest (Guthrie et al., 2007). Other codes were generated based on students' responses and categories were revised as needed.

Field notes from classroom and library observations were transcribed into a Word document after each observation. In order to analyze observations, ''analytic induction'' was used (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). First, each transcript was coded. Then, categories were established after completing two classroom observations (about 30 minutes each) and two library (one library period) observations for both the treatment and control groups. At least two observations were needed for each setting before the data was analyzed for categories and relationships amongst the data. This analysis started in November, 2015. As categories were generated from data, they were typed into an Excel document and color coded. Changes in categories were determined as more field notes were discovered. Data analysis of field notes was a continuous process in which categories were induced and transcripts were re-inspected until all categories were finalized.

Table 1.

Data Collection and Analysis Summary

Data Sources	Question 1: Is there an attitudinal difference toward reading if students are allowed to self-select books?	Question 2: Is there an impact on Arabic speaking ELLs if they are allowed to self-select their own book?	Time Line
NWEA		Data Collection: Computer-based test. It takes less than 60 minutes to complete. Data Analysis: T-test	Pre-intervention: 3rd-4th week in September, 2015 Post-intervention: 2nd-3rd week of January, 2016

Reader Self Perception Scale (RSPS)	Data Collection: One on one survey; takes less than 30 minutes Data Analysis: T-test		Pre-Intervention: Oct., 2015 Post-Intervention: January, 2016
Classroom and library Observation		Data collection: Field notes Data analysis: Analytic induction of field notes	During Intervention: 4th week of October, 2015- 1st week of January, 2016 for (15-30) min weekly
Semi-structured Interviews		Data collection: Semi-structured student interviews Data analysis: Analytic Induction	Pre-intervention: 2nd-3rd week of Oct, 2015 Post-intervention: January, 2016

Validity and Reliability

In order to reduce the threat to internal validity, differences between the control group and the comparison group were addressed by matching participants. Participants in the control group and treatment group were matched based on reading scores, English language proficiency scores, and gender. To ensure any differences between the two groups were due to treatment, both groups had the same teacher and received the same amount of library time and reading time in the classroom.

According Vellutino and Schatschneider (2003), "external validity is concerned with inferences about the degree to which experimental effects can be generalized across variations in units, treatments, assessment instruments, and setting" (p. 163). External validity is addressed by providing an in-depth description of participants and setting. Various aspects about the participants are described by the researcher such as reading proficiency, English language proficiency, primary language, and socioeconomic status. Thus, results from this study were

generalized based on the context and participants of this study. Instructional strategies may be relevant to Arabic-speaking ELLs who have a similar background to the participants' in this study, as well as live in a similar environment.

Triangulation

Triangulation of data collection and data analysis was used to build credibility. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006), "in this design, both qualitative and quantitative data are collected at about the same time" (p. 28). Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. Data sources included pre and post computer-based comprehension tests (NWEA-MAP), pre and post Reader Self-Perception Scales (RSPS), semi-structured student interviews, and classroom and library observations.

Member-checks and Cross-checking

The presence of multiple realities was assumed and represented by the researcher. This assumption strengthened the validity of the results because the researcher was aware of the possibility of having multiple results. In other words, the researcher attempted to present the data from the view of multiple lenses. Member checks and cross checking also added to the reliability and trustworthiness of the results. Member checks were utilized, allowing the researcher to discuss findings with study participants to verify accuracy after collecting data from the interviews. Cross checking was accomplished through peer debriefing, discussing findings with peer professionals such as another doctoral student, and the researcher's committee members.

The study's results are presented in chapter four, including quantitative and qualitative data findings. The researcher restates the research questions and attempts to answer them based on the study's findings. A discussion about these findings is reserved for chapter five. These

results are interpreted in light of the literature review discussed in chapter two. The remainder of

chapter five discusses the implications of the study's findings for future research.

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

The results of this study are organized around the two research questions: (1) Is there an attitudinal difference toward reading if students are allowed to self-select books? (2) Is there an impact on Arabic speaking ELLs if they are allowed to self-select their own books? The sample included eighth grade ELLs whose native language is Arabic.

Throughout this study Group 1, the experimental group, refers to students given the option to read outside the range of their Lexile level. This is the reading by choice group. Group 2, the control group, is also the prescribed group and refers to students that read books that were within the range of their Lexile level.

Introduction

This study will use a compare and contrast format to evaluate two reading models. As a result, data for both groups, Group 1 and Group 2, will be presented in the same section followed by a narrative analysis and the findings. The two main sections for this chapter include attitudinal and impact data.

The first section, "attitudinal data," uses the Henk and Melnick (1995) survey to measure change in reading attitude. The second section explores "impact on reading" using pre and post NWEA test scores, pre and post interviews with students, and field observations. With that said, data are presented for both groups in the same section and compared through a narrative analysis. Data findings are presented as follows: the first section presents pre-survey results collected in October, 2015 and post results given in January, 2016. Results for the attitudinal scales are then analyzed according to the following: Progress, Observational Comparison, Social Feedback, and Physiological States. In the second section, NWEA results that measure the impact on reading growth are presented using the pre-test given in September, 2015 and post-test given in January,

2016. In the third section, pre and post semi-structured interviews are analyzed. Pre-interviews were completed in October, 2015 and post interviews were completed in January 2016. Based on the interview questions, five components are analyzed: perceived control, collaboration, self-efficacy, involvement, and interest. Finally, observational data collected during the intervention is presented. Field notes were collected between November, 2015 and January, 2016. Observational data cover the following components: perceived control, social interaction, reading involvement, and interest.

Attitudinal Data

Students' attitude towards reading was measured before and after the intervention using a 5-point Likert-type survey (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree), the Reader Self-Perception Scale, which was developed by Henk and Melnick (1995). All six students finished the pre and post surveys in a one-on-one setting, and were provided with assistance interpreting and/or translating the content of the survey when requested. The Reader Self-Perception Scale asses how children feel about themselves as readers in the following five contexts: (1) General Perception, (2) Progress, (3) Observational Comparison, (4) Social Feedback, (5) and Physiological States. Each context was assessed using questions. There was one question to assess the general perception and six to nine questions to assess the rest of the domains (see Appendix A).

Analysis. In order to score the RSPS for each of the four scales, Progress, Observational Comparison, Social Feedback, and Physiological States, the students' completed responses were transferred to a scoring sheet. These responses were transferred using the numerical scoring key (e.g., SA=5; SD=1.). After the responses were recorded, the numbers were added into each column to get a raw score for each scale. Data was analyzed to compare the pre survey and post

surveys for both groups. In order to find results, a change score for each variable was computed, and an independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the difference in change scores between the two groups. See Table 2.

Table 2

Mean Change in Students' Attitude towards Reading

	Group 1		Group 2		T	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p.
Progress	2.33	2.51	4.00	4.35	-.57	.59
Observational	2.66	2.51	5.33	3.78	-1.01	.36
Social	1.66	12.01	9.66	10.78	-3.77	.20
Physiological	1.00	3.60	2.00	4.00	-0.32	.76

*p < 0.05

Findings. In order to test students' reading attitude if they self-select books versus reading at grade level, a two-tailed independent sample t-test was conducted at $α = .05$. Levene's test showed the equality of variance assumption was met, $p > .05$. Results revealed that scores did not differ significantly between the two groups. The results are as follows: Progress, experimental group ($M = 2.33$, $SD = 2.51$), control group ($M = 4$, $SD = 4.35$), $t = -.57$, $p = .59$. Observational Comparison, experimental group ($M=2.66$, $SD=2.51$), control group ($M=5.33$, $SD = 3.78$), $t (4) =-1.01$, $p = 0.36$; Social Feedback, experimental group ($M=1.66$, $SD=12.01$), control group ($M = 9.66$, $SD = 10.78$), $t = - 3.77$, $p = .20$; Physiological States, experimental group ($M = 1.00$, $SD = 3.60$), control group ($M = 2.00$, $SD = 4.00$), $t (4) =-0.32$, $p =.76$.
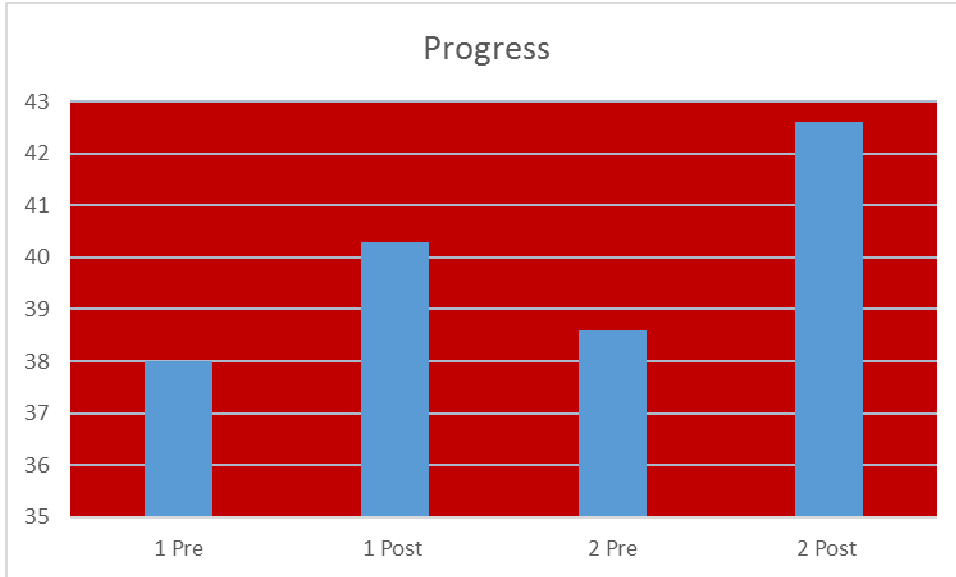
Figure 1. Pre and post means for the construct *Progress* between group 1 (Experimental) and group 2 (Control).
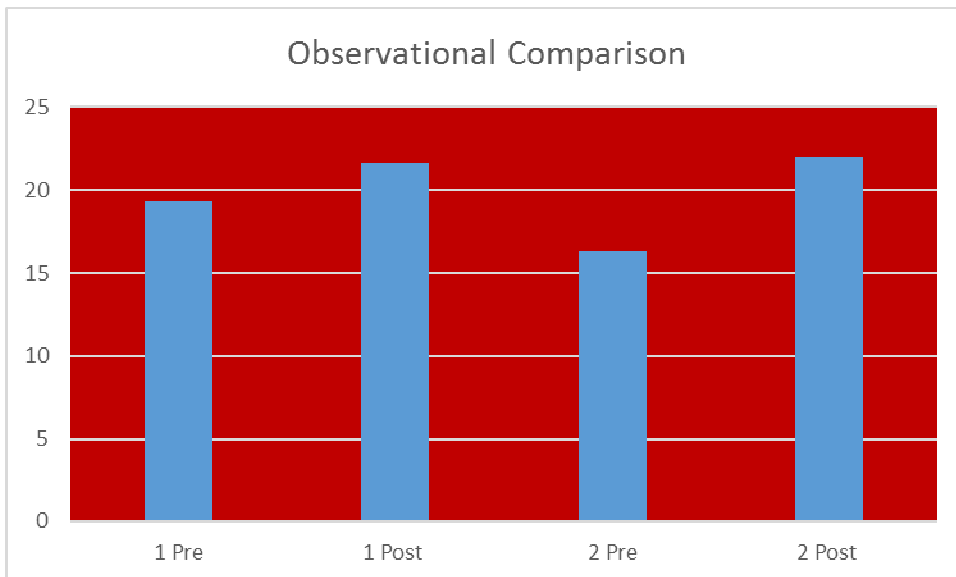
Figure 2. Pre and post means for the construct *Observational Comparison* between group 1 (Experimental) and group 2 (Control).
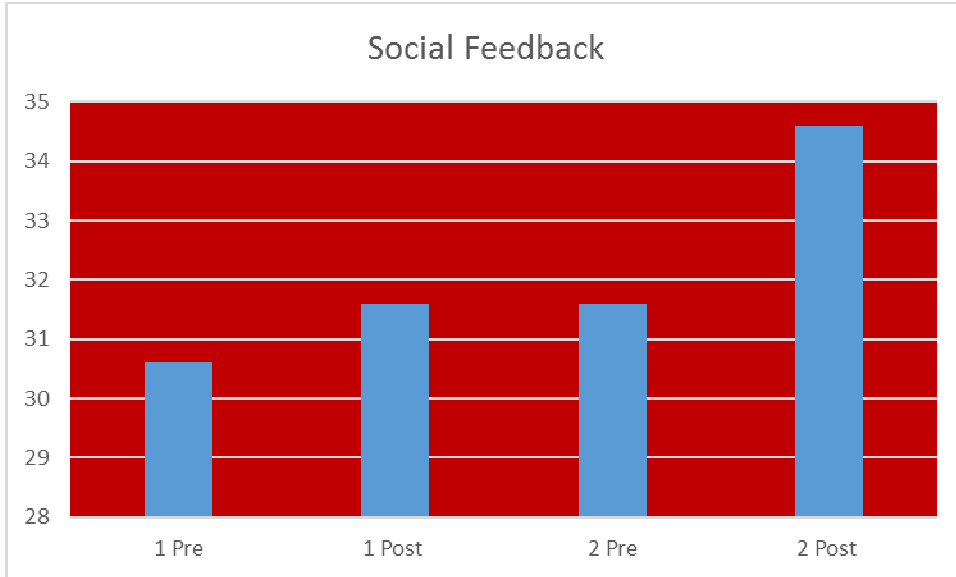
Figure 3. Pre and post means for the construct *Social Feedback* between group 1 (Experimental) and group 2 (Control).
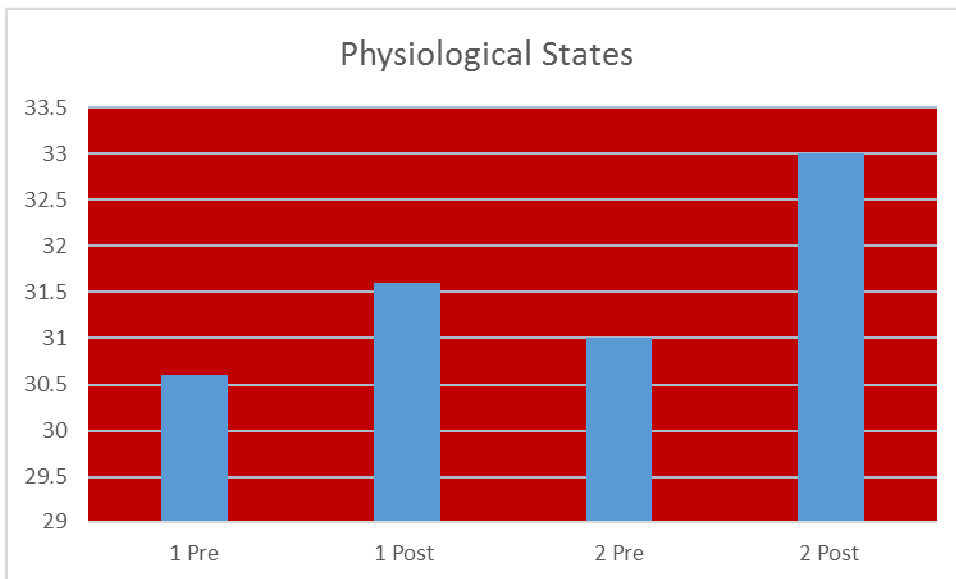
Figure 4. Pre and post means for the construct *Physiological State* between group 1 (Experimental) and group 2 (Control).

Figures 1, 2, 3, and 4 illustrate the four constructs of the Reader Self-Perception Scale

that asses how children feel about themselves as readers: Progress, Observational Comparison,

Social Feedback, and Physiological States. The figures represent pre and post results for Group

1, whose students were limited to books within their Lexile level, and Group 2, whose students

had the option to read books outside the range of their Lexile level. As shown in Figures 1, 2, and 4, students that read within their Lexile range felt better about themselves than students that read outside their prescribed levels. The most change occurred in the construct of Social Feedback, as shown in Figure 3.

Table 3

The Reader Self-Perception Scale Score Interpretation (Henk & Melnick, 1995)

	Progress	Observational Comparison	Social Feedback	Physiological States
Score interpretation				
High	44+	26+	38+	37+
Average	39	21	33	31
Low	34	16	27	25

Table 3 presents normative data. According to Henk and Melnick (1995),

> Any score for a scale that is slightly below, equal to, or slightly greater than the mean indicates that the child's self-perceptions are in the normal range. On the other hand, scores that are a good deal lower than the scale's mean would be a cause for concern. Low range cut-off points for the scales would be: Progress (34), Observational Comparison (16), Social Feedback (27), and Physiological States (25). By the same token, scores that exceed the mean by an amount equal to or greater than the standard deviation would indicate high reader self-perceptions. (p. 474)

Scores are broken down into three categories and interpreted as high, average, and low.

Table 4

Pre and Post Mean Analysis of RSPS

	Progress	Observational	Social	Physiological
Group 1 Pre	38	19.3	30.6	31
Group 1 Post	40.3	21.6	31.6	31.6

Group 2 Pre	38.6	16.3	31.6	31
Group 2 Post	42.6	22	34.6	33

Low	
Average	
High	

Table 4 illustrates how students feel about their own reading abilities. Pre survey data revealed that both groups fell well below average for Progress, Observational Comparison, and Social Feedback, and showed average scores for Physiological States. Post survey data revealed that prescribed readers showed average scores for Progress (M=40.3), Observational Comparison (M=21.6), and Physiological State (M=41.6) scales, but continued to score below average for Social Feedback (M=31.6). On the other hand, the non-prescribed group fell slightly above average for all scales, Progress (M=42.6), Observational Comparison (M=22), Social Feedback (M=34.6), and Physiological Scale (M=33).

Impact on Reading Growth

NWEA Data. In order to measure whether or not there was an impact on students' reading growth among the two groups, a computer-based reading comprehension test was used. The Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) computerized adaptive reading assessment was given twice. This test was given by the school to measure academic progress in reading and provides the RIT score of each student. The classroom teacher used a conversion chart to find the students' Accelerated Reader Level (See Appendix C). The students' Accelerated Reader level could not be converted based on the RIT score because the books and students' scores are measured by two different readability formulas. As a result, the teacher converted their NWEA

RIT score to Lexile level (See Appendix D). At that point, based on the Lexile range, students were able to figure out their prescribed reading levels.

Students in the experimental group (Group 1) were allowed to read within any Lexile Range, while students in the control group (Group 2) were reading books within their Lexile range. The classroom teacher documented the students' Accelerated Reader level in her conference book. Students in both groups read a variety of books from the Accelerated Reader collection available in the school library and the classroom library. The readability levels of the books ranged from early readers to grade level (Appendix E). Also, students read a variety of genres such as mystery, memoir, and realistic fiction.

Analysis. Students took the NWEA reading assessment at the beginning of the study in September, 2015 and at the end of the study in January, 2016. In order to analyze results, change scores for both groups' NWEA means were computed and an independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the difference between the two groups (Appendix F).

Table 5

Pre and Post T-test Results for NWEA

	Group 1		Group 2		T	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	p.
NWEA Reading Scores	1.66	12.01	9.66	10.78	-0.85	.43

*$p < 0.05$

To test if the results of the reading scores were significantly different, a two-tailed, independent sample t-test was conducted at α =.05. Levene's test showed that the equality of variance assumption was met, *p>*.05. Results revealed that scores did not differ significantly between the students that read by choice (*M*=1.66, *SD*= 12.01) and the students that read based on their reading Lexile level (*M*=9.66, *SD*=10.78), *t (4) = -0.85, p*=.43.
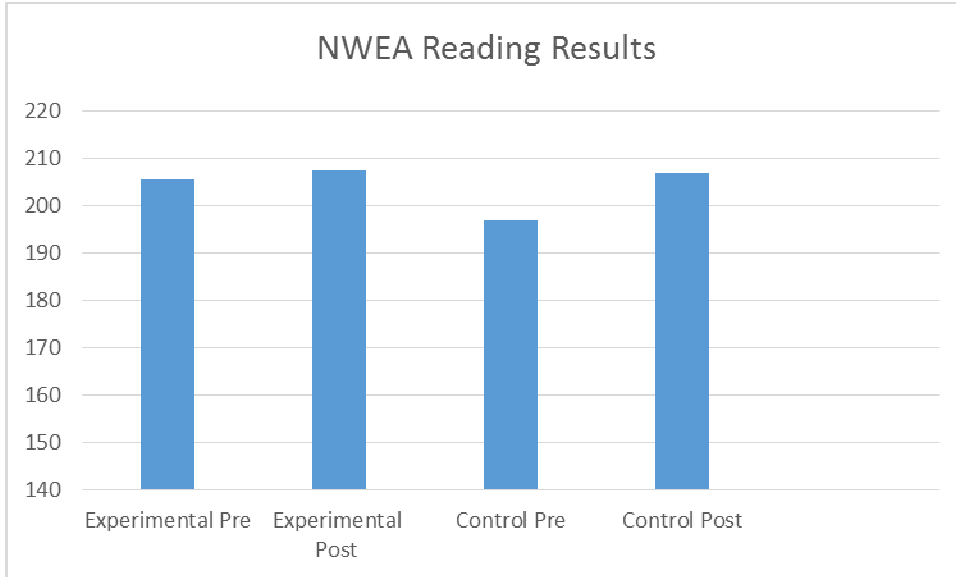
Figure 5. Students pre and post NWEA reading results for the experimental and control groups.

Findings. Figure 5 illustrates the change in mean scores for the NWEA reading assessment between the two groups. The experimental group, Group 1, is the group in which students could choose books outside their Lexile range, while the control group, Group 2, read books within their Lexile range. Even though the change in mean scores between the pre-test and post-test indicated that both groups improved, it appears the control group had greater improvement. Based on Levene's test, the difference was not significant. It is important to discuss the effect of standard deviation on the results. The standard deviation for both groups was high: experimental group (*SD*= 12.01) and control group (*SD*=10.78). A high standard deviation indicates that the data points are spread out over a wider range. Nevertheless, the fact that the students' English proficiency levels ranged from Emerging to Bridging leads one to expect a high standard deviation, in which test scores are spread over a wide range. A student that is still at the Emerging level knows and uses some social English and general academic language with visual support, while a student who is at the Bridging level knows and uses the academic language working with grade level material. Therefore, if there was a wide range

among students' proficiency levels, then a wide range of students' reading scores was expected. It is important to mention that both groups have high standard deviation in pre-test and post-tests, but the fact that the control group (M=9.66) improved more than the experimental group (M=1.66) is an indicator that the students who read within their Lexile range improved more than the other group.

Semi-structured Interview Data

Semi-structured interviews explored reading motivational constructs that were previously researched (Guthrie & Davis, 2003). The interviews were conducted at the beginning of the study in October 2015, and at the end of the study in January 2016. There were a total of 12 interviews conducted during the Language Arts period for approximately 10 to 15 minutes. All interviews were conducted by the researcher in a private area (i.e., resource room, conference office). As stated earlier, the purpose of the interviews was to explore the impact of each reading model on the students and to report any differences between the control group and experimental group by asking questions about the constructs of interest, perceived control, collaboration, self-efficacy, and involvement. The number of questions for each construct varied. Questions 1, 2, and 6 initiated answers about interest; questions 8 and 12 asked about perceived control; questions 13 and 14 asked about collaboration; questions 4, 5, 7, 10, and 11 inquired about self-efficacy; questions 3 and 9 asked about involvement. Questions that generated multiple codes were sometimes used for the same line if the students' thoughts represented more than one construct. The interview questions are presented in Appendix B. In addition to taking notes, the researcher used an audio-recorder during all of the interviews. After each interview, audio-recordings were transcribed. There was an average of three pages for each interview, and an estimated 30 pages of transcription.

Analytic induction was used to analyze students' responses to the interview questions and priori coding was used for each construct. An initial list of attributes was generated before the interviews, based on work by Guthrie & Davis (2003), as well as attributes generated from students' responses. The number of attributes ranged from four to eight for each construct. See Appendix H for a list of attributes.

A quartile system was used to score students' levels on all constructs. A rubric score of 1 was given to students who were determined to be in the bottom 25%; 2 indicated low-middle; 3 indicated high-middle; and 4 indicated the top 25% (Appendix I). This normative approach enabled the researcher to compare any significant differences among the students and observe any significant changes between the experimental group and control group.

Impact on Perceived Control

The construct of perceived control refers to valuing choice related to reading, enjoying pursuing reading independently, and often choosing one's own books to read. Specific attributes and qualities of this construct were initially identified as valuing choice related to reading, pursuing reading independently. During pre and post interviews, students answered two questions that pertained to this construct, followed by probes when needed:

1. Do you like it more when someone else gives you a book or when you pick out a book by yourself?

2. Do you choose the books you read by yourself? If not, who does choose them for you?

Rubric Analysis. To code students' responses, specific attributes of this construct included: (a) preference for personal choice of books, as compared to having books chosen for them by teachers or other adults, about books, (b) expressing preference for choosing their own books (c) expressing preference for selecting books from a series (d) making choices about

books and reading. Students at the lower level of this construct prefer an adult, such as a teacher, to choose books for them rather than choosing on their own book. Students that confirmed both questions, preferring to choose books by themselves, received a 4. Students that said most of the time they choose books by themselves, but sometimes the teacher helps them, received a 3. Students that said both, received a 2, and students that preferred an adult to choose their books received a 1.

In order to validate responses, the researcher referred to the students when in doubt about how to score their responses. For example, at one point the researcher was in doubt whether a student should receive a 3 or 4 and asked the student to score themselves on a scale of 1-4, with 4 being highest. The student stated, "Three". To compare differences between Group 1 and Group 2, pre and post results for this construct were added to an Excel sheet and differences in mean scores were computed.

Findings. Pre and post interview results revealed a very slight change among the prescribed leveled group. During the pre interview, the majority of students expressed that they liked it better when they chose books by themselves. Some students were either indifferent or preferred an adult to choose for them. For instance, one student said, "Sometimes I like it when teachers give me a book because they know what I need." During the post interviews, the majority of students expressed preference to choose books by themselves. Students stated that sometimes they like it when their teacher recommends books. One student stated, "I like to choose books by myself, but sometimes I like it when a teacher gives me a book because I know more about it and would want to read it. One time my teacher gave me a book and she told me about it and I liked it." Results between pre and post interviews did not significantly change.

Looking at the control group's results, pre and post interviews did not show a change. The majority of students preferred to choose books by themselves. One student stated, "I like to pick out a book by myself because I know what I like to read not everyone knows what I like to read." Students expressed that sometimes their teacher helps them choose books. One student expressed, "I like to choose by myself, but sometimes my teacher helps me choose, like if I can't find, she knows what I like, so she chooses." The figure below compares changes in mean scores between the two groups.

Figure 6. Pre and post mean difference between the experimental group and the control group in Perceived Control. Pre 1 refers to the pre interview mean score for the experimental group while post 2 refers to the post interview mean. Pre 2 refers to the pre interview mean for the control group, while post 2 refers to post interview mean.

As the above figure illustrates, the experimental group Pre (M=3) and Post (M=3.3) slightly improved by 0.3 on a scale 1-4. The control group Pre (M=3.0) and Post (M=3.0) did not show any change in mean score. Looking at difference between the two groups, the mean score for experimental group increased slightly from 3.0 to 3.3 on a scale 1-4.

Impact on Collaboration

During pre and post interviews, students answered two questions that pertained to this construct, followed by probes when needed. The questions were as follows:

1. Do you enjoy reading aloud with someone?

2. Do you share information about books that you read?

Based on priori coding and student responses to the interviews, the attributes of collaboration included: (a) sharing or talking about books with friends, teachers or family, (b) reading aloud with someone, (c) expressing enjoyment of reading books recommended by others, and (d) expressing very positive affect about collaborating with others on reading or sharing books with others.

Looking at both groups, students' responses indicated that eighth grade ELLs whose native language is Arabic do not show high positive affect to collaborate with others. Prior to the interview, students in the experimental group were asked if they like to read aloud with someone. One student stated, "If it's in front of my family, yes, but others no." Another student said, "Not that much. I like reading by myself." After the intervention, students did not have high positive affect towards collaborating with others. When asked if they like to read aloud with someone, one student said, "Sometimes, but I do not understand it as much when I read by myself." Another student strongly disagreed, "No! No, not really, sometimes with the teacher." When students were asked if they like to share information about books, they did not have positive affect. One student expressed that she only shares information with the teacher if it's part of an assignment, such as reading conferences. When asked if she likes to share information with her friends, she said, "Not really."

Prior to the intervention, students in the control group were somewhat indifferent towards communicating with others. One student expressed that she only tells her friends about a book if

it's a really interesting book. Another student disliked reading aloud with someone, except her younger sister. After the intervention, when students were asked if they like to read aloud with someone, one student responded, "It depends, usually I don't, not really." Another student replied, "No, but when it is someone younger than me, yeah."

Rubric Analysis. A quartile system was used to score students' level on this on this construct and an analysis was used to determine if there was a significant difference between the two groups before the intervention and after the intervention. Students showing a high positive affect to communicate with others about readings or books received a (4). Students showing moderate affect to communicate with others about readings/books received a (3). Students who were indifferent to communicate with others received a (2), and students who disliked communicating with others received a (1). The majority of students in both groups scored either a (1) or (2). A sum of scores for pre and post interventions were entered in an Excel document, and then a mean difference was computed. The following figure illustrates results.
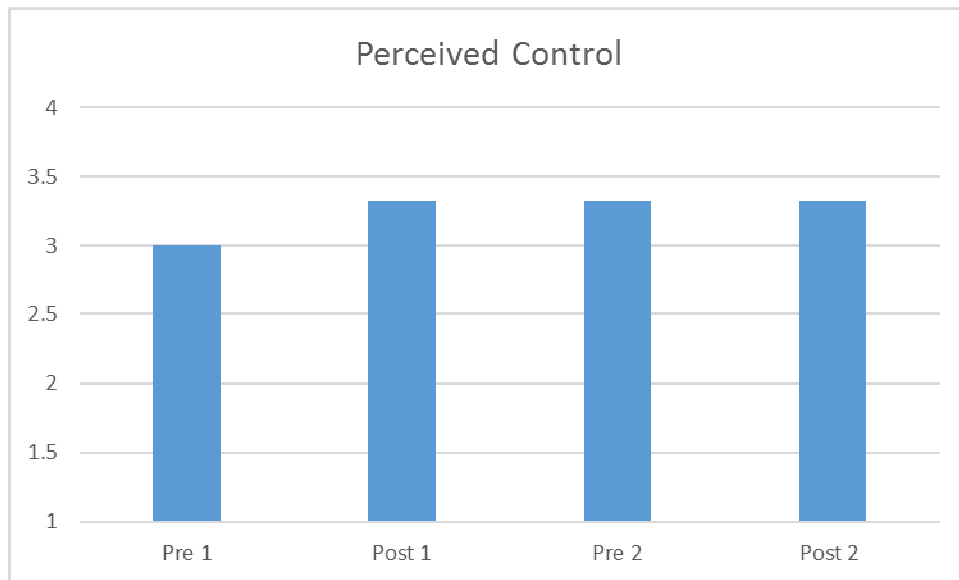

Figure 7. Pre and post mean difference between the experimental group and the control group in Collaboration. Pre 1 refers to the pre interview mean score for the experimental group while post 2 refers to the post interview mean. Pre 2 refers to the pre interview mean for the control group, while post 2 refers to post interview mean.

Findings. As Figure 7 illustrates, students in both groups were slightly below average on the construct of collaboration. Interview responses revealed that eighth grade ELL Arabic-speaking students, whether in the experimental or in the control group, did not show high positive affect towards collaboration and their post test mean scores were below average. Mean difference, Pre (M=2.0), Post (M=1.6) revealed that students in the experimental group decreased by 0.4 on a scale 1-4. Looking at the control group, mean difference, Pre (M=1.6), Post (M=1.6) reveals that there was no change between pre and post interviews.

Impact on Self-efficacy

In order to generate responses about self-efficacy, students answered five questions that pertained to this construct and then these questions were followed by probes. The questions were as follows:

1. Are you good at reading? How do you define a good reader?

2. Do you think of yourself as a reader? Why or why not?

3. Is reading important to you? What makes you think that?

4. What do you do when you encounter hard parts?

5. Do you think your reading has improved?

Based on priori coding and student responses to the interviews, the attributes of self-efficacy included: (a) I think I am a good reader, (b) I can understand what I read, (c) I can read fast and I know what the words mean, (d) I read better than before, I know I am good because my mom or my teacher told me, and (f) I know reading strategies.

Based on students' responses to the pre interview questions, it appeared that both groups showed moderate confidence in reading skills. They generalized efficacy as being "a good reader." When asked if they are good at reading, they answered yes without further elaboration.

When the experimental group students were asked, "Are you good at reading? How do you define a good reader?" One student stated, "Yeah because I used to read low and slow and now I read faster and I pronounce words easier than I used to." Another student stated that she defines a good reader as, "They can read good and they know all the words, fast readers and they understand it all." Another student said, "A good reader I define it as they read every day and they understand what they read." After the intervention, students' defined good readers as, "someone who pronounces the words and they understand them", "know the words and they can read not fast but understand them", and "they understand what they read." Similarly, students in the control group defined a good reader as "someone that knows what they are reading and they know each word when they read it" and "someone who can read fast and understand a lot". Post interview answers included "someone who takes their time in reading and understands the book" and "someone that can pronounce words easily and they understand most of the words that they read". Thus, all students' responses associated good readers with comprehension and vocabulary knowledge; they were aware that good readers not only need to pronounce words, but also need to comprehend the text they are reading.

Rubric Analysis. In order to score students' level of self-efficacy, a rubric using a quartile system was used. Students that showed high confidence in reading skills and the belief in oneself as a good reader were at the highest level, receiving a score of (4). While students that showed moderate confidence in reading skills received a (3), students who were not sure of their reading skills and were unfamiliar with their reading skills received a (2). Finally, students that showed low confidence in reading skills received a (1).
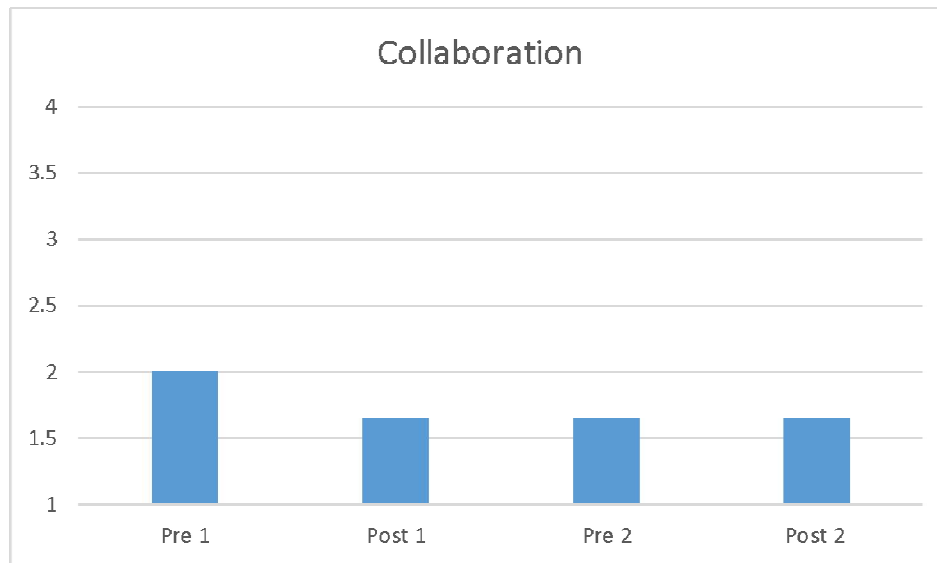
Figure 8. Pre and post mean difference between the experimental group and the control group in the construct Self-Efficacy. Pre 1 refers to the pre interview mean score for the experimental group while post 2 refers to the post interview mean. Pre 2 refers to the pre interview mean for the control group, while post 2 refers to post interview mean.

Findings. Prior to the intervention, both groups showed moderate confidence in reading skills. After the intervention, both groups increased slightly above the moderate line. The experimental group, Pre (*M*=3.0), Post (*M*=3.6), improved with a mean difference of 0.66 on a scale of 1-4, while the control group, Pre (*M*=3.0), Post (*M*=3.33), improved by 0.33 on a similar scale.

Impact on Involvement

The construct of involvement was described as spending an extended amount of time reading and the experience of being absorbed in reading and/or reading various materials. In order to generate responses about involvement, students answered four questions:

1. How much of your spare time do you spend reading just for fun?

2. What kinds of reading materials have you read this year?

3. Are there other things you like to read besides books?

4. How many books have you read in the last couple of months?

Based on priori coding and answers to the interviews, the attributes of involvement include: (a) I read a lot, (b) I read every day, (c) I read many books, and (d) I read multiple books at the same time. In order to distinguish between involvement and interest, involvement was mainly the students' devotion of time to reading.

Rubric Analysis. As with the other constructs, students reported a wide range of involvement experiences. When students were asked about the amount of time they read just for fun, prior to the intervention, one student answered, "It depends, sometimes I read for 10 or 20 minutes, but not every day." Other students dedicated about an hour every day. Students' responses varied after the intervention as well. Some students did not have a daily reading routine, while others dedicated over an hour. Similarly, students in the control group reported a wide range of involvement experiences. For example, during the pre interview, a student expressed that it depends on the book, "if I am really into the book, I will take a long time reading it, like last time when I was reading a good book, I read for two hours." During the post interview, one student stated that the amount of time depends on the book and her time. Sometimes she reads for two hours and sometimes for less than an hour. If the book is interesting, she continues to read.

In order to score students' level of involvement, a rubric using a quartile system was applied. Rubric scores were divided based on the students' responses. For example, the number of books students read ranged from one to seven. Therefore, students that read only one book were judged to be in the bottom 25% and a rubric score of 1 was given to them. Students who read five to seven books were judged to be in the top 25% and a rubric score of 4 was given to them. A rubric score was given based on two data sources: the number of books and the amount of time they dedicated for reading. The data were not consistent. For instance, one student stated

that she reads for an hour every day, but she only read two books in the last couple months. I looked at other responses and found that this student reads magazines and news. Thus, students that devoted a high amount of time to reading were at the highest level and received a score of (4), students that show moderate devotion of time to reading received a score of (3), students that are consistent in devoting time to reading received a score of (2), and students that devoted no time to reading received a score of (1). To compare differences between the two groups, pre and post interview results for involvement were added to an Excel sheet and differences in mean scores were computed.
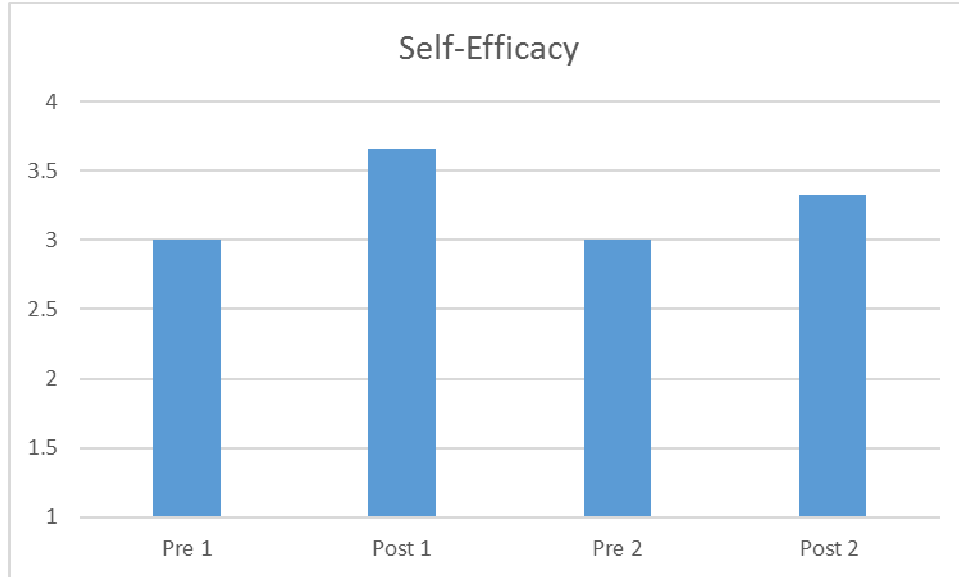

Figure 9. Pre and post mean difference between the experimental group and the control group in the construct of Involvement. Pre 1 refers to the pre interview mean score for the experimental group while post 2 refers to the post interview mean. Pre 2 refers to the pre interview mean for the control group, while post 2 refers to post interview mean.

Findings. Before the intervention, the experimental group results were Pre (M=2.33), while the control group results were (M=3.00). After the intervention, the experimental group results were Post (M=2.66), while control group results were Post (M=3.66). Post results indicate that the experimental group mean difference increased by 0.33 on a scale of 1-4 and the control group's mean difference increased by 0.66 on a scale of 1-4.

Impact on Interest

The construct of interest refers to students' interest in reading, in which they show high positive affect toward text, topics, authors, and series. During pre and post interviews students answered the following questions that pertained to interest:

1. What kinds of books are interesting to you?

2. What genres do you like to read? Why?

3. How much of your spare time do you spend reading just for fun?

4. What kinds of reading materials have you read this year?

5. Are there other things you like to read besides books?

Attributes of interest in reading were generated and included: (a) statements of enjoyment of reading such as I really like this book, author, or genre, (b) I like to read books about…, (c) pursuing a topic or an author through planning, or (d) connecting reading to personal experiences or feelings.

Rubric Analysis. Pre and post results revealed that both groups were attached to one or two genres of books. Nevertheless, they were interested in reading different genres. For instance, students mentioned that their favorite genres included: mystery, thrillers, memoirs, realistic fiction, romance, and fantasy. In addition, students in both groups mentioned their interest in reading nonpoint sources such as online magazines, news, or online writing communities such as Wattpad. In order to find results, students' responses were coded and received a score using a quartile rubric. Students who believed to have high positive affect for reading in general or to a specific book, author, or genre received a score of 4. Students who believed to have moderate affect for reading in general or specific book, author, or genre, received a score of 3. Students

indifferent to reading in general received a score of 2. Students who disliked reading received a score of 1.

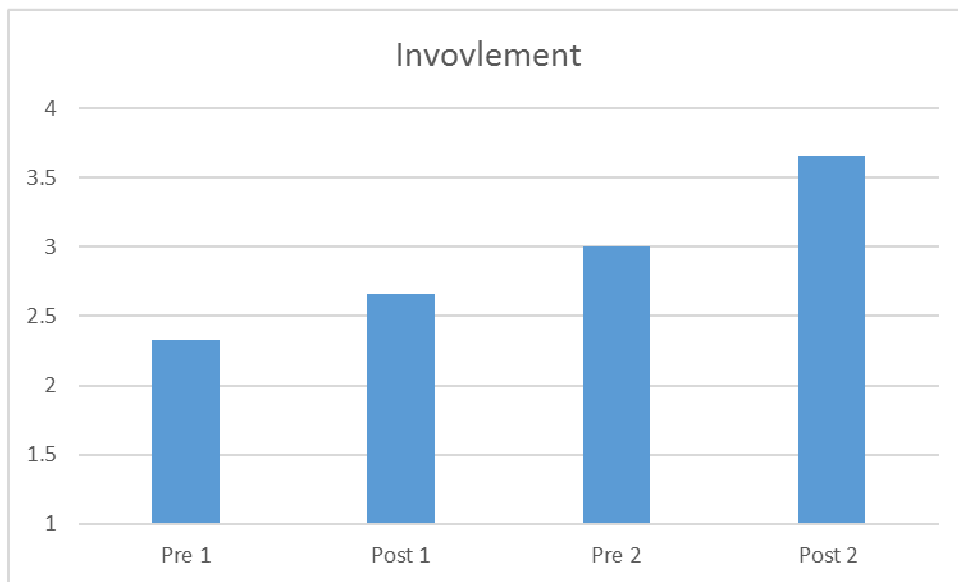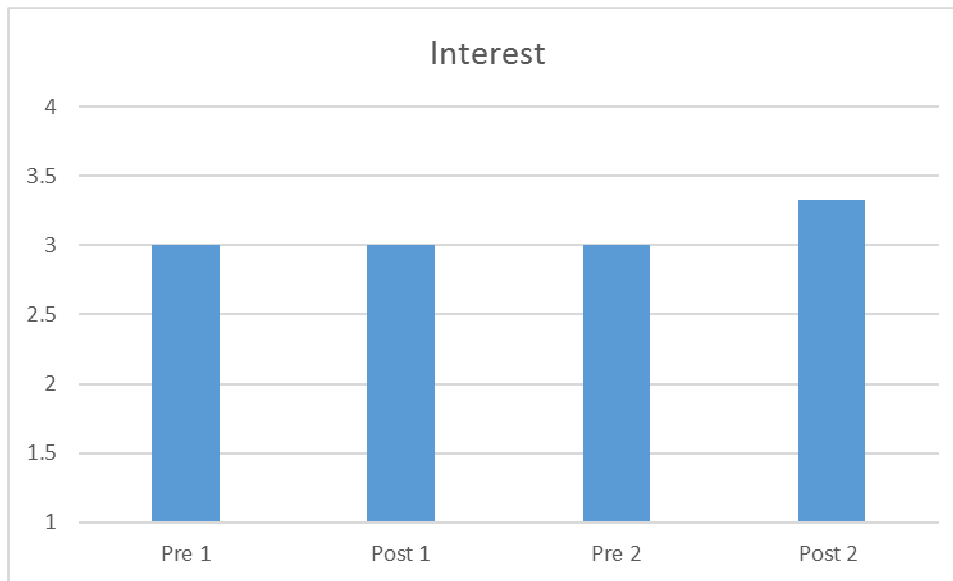**Figure 10**. Pre and post mean difference between the experimental group and the control group in Interest. Pre 1 refers to the pre interview mean score for the experimental group while post 2 refers to the post interview mean. Pre 2 refers to the pre interview mean for the control group, while post 2 refers to post interview mean.

Findings. Results show that before the intervention, the experimental group had a moderate interest level (*M*=3.0). The control group also had a moderate interest level (*M*=3.0). After the intervention, the experimental group continued to be moderate *(M*=3.0), while students' interest level among the control group slightly increased (*M*=3.33). Results indicated that the experimental group had a mean difference of a zero, while the control group showed a slight increase in their interest level with a mean difference of 0.33.

Impact during the Intervention through Observations

During this study, data were collected during classroom reading time and library reading time once a week for a period of 15 to 30 minutes from the end of October until the beginning of January. During reading time, students were expected read their books in the classroom. Students were allowed to check out books from either the library or the classroom. Even though the class

was scheduled to visit the library biweekly to check out books and read, students were allowed to visit the library when they needed to get new books. Students were expected to keep a reading log. The reading log helped students and the teacher monitor the genre and quantity of books read during independent reading time. During this time, students filled in their own logs, indicated the title of the text, the author, the genre, and the pages read. The teacher expected students to read a minimum of 50 pages weekly. The teacher kept track of reading logs and discussed them with students during reading conferences.

During independent reading time, students are expected to spend about 80 to 90% of the time reading and 10 to 20% writing responses. Students were expected to complete written responses or a visual organizer. Samples of written responses included: write a letter to the author or to a character in the story; write a recommendation of the text to other students on a bookmark; draw a different book cover. The following are examples of visual organizers: Character Analysis Map, Character Action Chart, Venn diagram, and Story Sequence Chart.

Reading conferences were one-on-one between the teacher and the student. Students discussed their reading with the teacher. The teacher asked students more in-depth questions about the book and the students' reading process. The following questions are examples of questions the teacher asked and examples of students' responses during a reading conference: (1) Why did you choose this book? (2) What is the book about so far? (3) What's the main character like? (4) What's your favorite part so far? (5) What is the reading level of this book for you? (6) How long do you think it will take you to complete this book?

Observing during reading conferences gave the researcher an opportunity to hear students' responses and collect data from their perspectives. Examples of students' responses were as follows: "I like this book because mystery is my favorite genre", "I think this book is

good for me because I can read all of the words", "The main character is a flat character", "I did not end up finishing that book because I did not like it", and "I just like this book; I don't know why".

   Analysis. During the intervention, data were collected using a priori checklist to document reading behavior (e.g. brings books to class, recognizes favorite authors, recognizes different genres, seems to enjoy reading, starts reading on time, students are engaged, prefers to read, etc.). A student received a tally mark every time the behavior occurred. Additional field notes were added to document behavior that was not in the priori checklist such as the titles of books students were reading, page numbers, quote comments that were made by students, students' selection of books, students' communication with their peers and their teacher about text, etc. After the second observation, the notes were transferred to an Excel document and broken down into categories. When notes were analyzed students received a tally mark for an existing category or adding a new category. As patterns were discovered, color coding emerged. Analysis of coding was a continuous process throughout the study until the final codes were identified towards the end of the study. Four components that have an impact on reading have been distinguished. These components include: (a) social interaction/collaboration, (b) perceived control, (c) involvement, and (d) engagement/interest. A list of attributes for each construct was generated based on a priori list and observations (See Appendix I).

Impact on Perceived Control

   Perceived control was initially referred to as students making choices or decisions about readings. Perceived control over reading is highly investigated and a variety of studies document that perceived control positively impacts reading (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Worthy, Turner, & Moorman, 1998). In the context of this study, perceived control means students are making

choices about the books they are reading rather than letting an adult choose for them. Specific attributes and qualities of this construct include: (a) choosing one's own books, (b) choosing books by favorite authors, (c) choosing to read favorite genres, (d) being able to find preferred books, and (e) knows where to find desired book. Students can seek help from the teacher or a peer to find books, but they are the ones choosing the books. For example, a student who enjoyed reading a memoir asked the teacher if she knew of any other memoirs that she could read. Even though the teacher was listing memoirs, the student was choosing a genre and making a final decision of the book she was reading. In this case the student was seeking help from an adult, but making decisions about readings. As data were analyzed, a tally was used to see if there was a difference over the course of the study among the two groups.

Findings and rationale. Based on observations, the majority of students in the both groups exhibited some of the attributes related to the construct of perceived control.

During observations, it became evident that the majority of students in the experimental group exhibited some of the attributes of this construct. Students wanted to read what they liked the most. When a student forgot her book at home, the teacher asked her to grab a book from the classroom library to read. The student said that she does not want to read from these books. But when the teacher insisted, she grabbed a book and simply flipped through the pages without reading. This example illustrates the construct of perceived control because she did not want to read just any book. For instance, students preferred to choose their own books because they knew what they liked to read. Most students had one or two favorite genres of books. For example, one student read Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight* series: *Twilight*, *New Moon*, and *Eclipse*. Another student enjoyed reading books by John Green and read two of his novels: *An Abundance of Katherines* and *Looking for Alaska*. On the other hand, some group members appreciated their

reading teacher's input and they asked their teacher to recommend books for them. Very few students mentioned that their family members helped them choose their books.

Similarly, students in the control group exhibited some of the attributes related to perceived control. For instance, one student enjoyed reading her first memoir and she was seeking help from the librarian and her teacher because she wanted to read more memoirs. Through the course of the study, she read three memoirs: *The Other Side of the Sky* by Farah Ahmedi; *Tuesdays with Morrie* by Mitch Albom; and *Lock & key* by Richard L. Allen. Another student checked out books from Eleanor Robin's high low series, *Be Fair* and *The Wrong Way,* because they were interesting and easy to read. There were few incidents of family members helping them, besides one student who mentioned that her older sister recommended her book and that's why she was reading it.

Impact on Social Interaction

The second component observed was the construct of social interaction. Research shows that social interaction positively impacts students' reading (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006; Guthrie & Davis, 2003). In the context of this study, social interaction refers to communicating orally or in writing with other individuals such as peers in class about books. Specific attributes and qualities of this construct include: (a) talking about books with peers or an adult, (b) sharing writing about books with others, (c) sharing information about parts of the book, and/or recalling parts of a book, (d) makes connections to real life, and (e) collaborating with others to find books.

Findings and rationale.   During the course of the intervention, the number of incidents in which students were collaborating or interacting socially around readings was very minimal. The majority of students were solitary readers. In general, student to teacher interaction was

more evident than peer to peer interaction. Students mainly interacted with their teacher during reading conference time. The type of interaction was mainly question-answer rather than sharing random information. For instance, the teacher would ask them about their favorite part of the book or to predict what would happen next. Students shared information about their favorite character or part of the book, but mostly at the request of the teacher. It was evident that some students trusted their teacher's recommendation about readings. Students were used to seeking help from their teacher when they needed to find new books that were interesting to them. Thus, bookish discussion amongst peers did not seem to be part of the students' reading experiences. This type of discussion mostly took place between students and the teacher. Examples of peer to peer social interaction include: (a) a student from the control group was discussing whether the character was foil or flat with her classmate while completing an after reading writing activity and (b) a student from the experimental group was in a small group discussing the setting of the book and how it was so interesting. Examples of bookish discussion were minimal because students were taught to read independently. When they read in the library, they sat in groups because the library's furniture allowed them to read in groups. Nevertheless, students continued to be solitary readers, each reading a different book. Based on observations throughout the course of the study, one cannot determine a shift in students' level of interaction.

Impact on Involvement

Researchers have investigated involvement in reading and how it impacts students' reading development. Involvement refers to the amount of reading and the depth of experience (Reed & Schallert, 1993). There is a positive correlation between involvement and reading development (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). In the context of this study, involvement refers to the amount of time they have spent reading and their level of engagement in reading. Attributes that

were identified include: (a) students' devotion of time to reading during class, (b) number of readings in their reading log, (c) the level of engagement students identified during reading conferences, (d) getting absorbed in books versus getting distracted by peers, and (e) preferred reading as an activity when given a choice.

Results and Rationale. When reviewing students' reading logs and observing the number of books read by each group, it was evident that students in the control group were more involved than students in the experimental group. A number of members of the experimental group displayed some of the attributes of this construct. For instance, the majority of students brought books to class and were reading during reading time. However, their reading logs revealed the number of readings did not exceed the number required by their teacher. Also, some of the students lacked certain attributes of this construct. For example, when given a choice, some students chose other activities. During silent reading time, some students were often distracted. Some students did not finish the books they had started and began reading other books. Another example took place during reading conferences when the teacher asked the student if she had completed what she was reading the previous week, the student explained she did not like it and returned it to the library. The teacher said, "I thought you switched your book last week." The student replied, "I switched again because I did not like that one either." The reason for the student's lack of involvement in reading could be a result of having difficulty finding an interesting book.

Conversely, students in the control group showed many aspects of this construct most of the time they were observed. The majority of the students brought their reading books to class and were engaged readers most of the time. Reading logs indicated that group members exceeded the amount required by the teacher. Students finished their books in timely matter and

started new ones. For instance, a student stated that she read 150 pages when she was only required to read 50 pages. Another student mentioned that she was reading two books simultaneously. Thus, students in the control group were more involved than students in the experimental group.

Impact on Interest

Students with high interest typically showed high positive affect toward a book, author, or genre. They seemed to enjoy reading and preferred reading as an activity. Specific attributes of this construct included: (a) speaking with enjoyment about books, authors, series, or topics, (b) statements of enjoyment about reading, (c) pursuing a topic, genre, or author, (d) connecting reading to personal experiences or feelings, and (e) selects reading as a choice activity.

Results and Rationale. Based on students' observations, students in the experimental group presented some of the characteristics of this construct. A number of students expressed a high level of interest in an author, series, or genre. For instance, one student articulated her interest in an author during reading conferences, "I like to read books by John Green." The same student preferred to read when given the opportunity to choose between searching the internet for current events or reading. Another student was highly interested in a certain book series and created book covers for them when given a choice in writing options. On the contrary, a student did not demonstrate this construct during reading conferences when the teacher asked if she liked the book, answering, "I think it's a good book." When the teacher asked why, she replied, "I don't know. I think it's a good book." When the teacher asked what kinds of books she enjoys reading, she said, "I like anything that's good." Because she did not have a specific area of interest, she was unable to communicate her high affect towards an author, genre, or topic of interest.

On the other hand, the majority of students in the control group demonstrated most of the attributes related to interest. For example, one student expressed her high interest in a genre, explaining numerous times how much she enjoys reading memoirs. Eventually, she connected reading to personal feelings. She said, "I like reading memoirs because when the story is true, I can feel the characters." This student pursued a genre during library time and sought help from the teacher and the librarian to find a memoir. When asking the librarian about a genre, another student displayed her interest in mystery and thrillers. Lastly, despite having no specific area of interest, another student displayed a high interest in reading when she told her teacher, "I have to read every day because reading calms me down." In conclusion, the level and areas of interest varied among students, regardless of their group. Students with high interest in reading enjoyed reading different types of books. Some students displayed high interest in reading without having a specific area of interest.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter discusses the results of the study presented in chapter four and their implications. The discussion will be organized around the two research questions: (1) Is there an impact on Arabic speaking ELLs if they are allowed to self-select their own books? (2) Is there an attitudinal difference toward reading if students are allowed to self-select books?

Students' Reading Attitude if they Self-select Books versus Prescribed Reading

The Reader Self-Perception Scale was used to assess how children feel about themselves as readers in five contexts: (1) General Perception, (2) Progress, (3) Observational Comparison, (4) Social Feedback, (5) and Physiological States. Results indicated there was no difference in students' attitude toward reading among the students who were limited to read within their Lexile ranges and the students that had the choice to read outside of their levels. All of the students in this study were ELLs and their test scores indicated that their reading levels were below their eighth grade peers. It is important to mention that when students had the option to choose books that were outside their Lexile range, they chose books that were higher than their levels. Results indicated that students who read books above their reading competency did not view themselves as low readers. For example, one eighth grade student was supposed to be reading below the third grade level based on her RIT MAP score, but enjoyed reading books that were two grades above her level. She looked for books that she enjoyed reading, not necessarily books that were easy to comprehend. Students in both groups looked for books within the area of their interest, rather than their Lexile level. Students felt good about reading when they were able to find books that they liked regardless if the book was at the student's prescribed level. Results support Krashen's (2001) argument that students' interest in a book is more important than precision. He finds such precision unnecessary and argues, "Students' interest and attention will

tell teachers when a book is at the right level, and not every book need be precisely at the edge of the students' competence" (para. 4). Students in the control group viewed themselves as average in four contexts: Progress, Observational Comparison, Social Feedback, and Physiological States. On the other hand, students in the experimental group viewed themselves as average in all contexts except Social Feedback, in which students fell below average. Social Feedback involves direct or indirect feedback about reading from teachers, peers, or family members. The fact that students were reading books above their reading competency prevented them from receiving positive feedback.

Arabic-speaking ELLs did not have high self-perception as readers in any of the constructs. This could be because the students' reading levels have always been compared using standardized assessment tools. Teachers view ELL students as low level readers because they are considered below grade level average using standardized assessments. Results could be supported by other findings, including children's self-perceptions as readers, which are significantly related to their reading achievements and to their parents' self-perceptions (Lynch, 2002).

In addition, it is important to mention that schools put great emphasis on standardized assessments. Students that meet the state's expectations are usually recognized, receiving an NWEA award for meeting the goals of eighth grade. ELL students that score well-below the state or national average do not receive recognition from their school despite the fact that some were reading above their prescribed reading levels. Most likely, ELL students were not receiving positive feedback from their teachers, peers, or even parents. Throughout the study, it was clear that teachers were sharing standardized results with parents during parent-teacher conferences. In addition, the school administration were mailing student report results to ensure that parents were

aware of their children's performance in comparison with the state and national average. Using standardized assessments as a single indicator of reading performance could negatively influence parent and school perceptions of student growth and achievement.

Unfortunately teachers are pressured because of the serious consequences that have been applied when students did not perform at the desired levels. Standardized assessments have been problematic because they force teachers to use assessments that may have negative consequences on students and that may hinder their education. Clearly, standardized reading assessments are designed for monolinguals, and thus do not improve ELLs' literacy skills because they do not inform instruction. Instead, formative assessments should be used so teachers can provide instructions in the areas students' need (Peregoy & Boyle, 2012). ELLs teachers need to focus on authentic assessments that capture observational and other kinds of data so that they can more holistically assess each individual and that provide students and their parents with meaningful results, rather than a 'one size fits all assessment'. Teachers, principals, and parents need to collaboratively work together to provide a suitable learning environment that prepares students to succeed, improve their language proficiency skills, and, most importantly, to become active participants in the classroom and the community. For example, providing appropriate reading materials that ELLs are capable of comprehending, having a variety of genres that suits students' interest available, and providing classroom opportunities that increase teacher-student interaction and student-student interaction.

Impact on Reading Growth

Students took the NWEA reading assessment at the beginning and the end of the study. Results indicated that there was no significant difference between the two groups. Even though the sample size was small, results suggest that educators need to be careful when implementing

policies that restrict students to prescribed levels. This does not mean that teachers should completely ignore reading levels and allow students to read anything of interest because ELLs need comprehensible input in order to improve their English proficiency. Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1985) suggests language is acquired by receiving a message that is comprehensible. Thus, one can speculate when students read books they can comprehend, they eventually develop their language.

Qualitative data revealed various tools that can be used to help students find the 'right' book. Throughout this study, reading conferences proved to be a great tool to determine students' interest in reading and whether or not the students were comfortable reading the book. Instead of focusing on the level of the book, the teacher would ask comprehension questions to check for understanding. The teacher can ask students to read a selection to determine if students are frustrated with a book, rather than solely focusing on prescribed levels. Reading logs, as well as conferences with students, can be used as a tool to monitor students' progress instead of exclusively depending on standardized reading assessments to determine reading growth.

Keeping records of what students are reading is extremely valuable in order for teachers to know what students are reading and the area of their interest. Based on this knowledge, teachers can recommend books to students. A short summary of the plot could guide students to know whether or not they might be interested in the book. Many researchers in the field of literacy suggest that one essential factor to help ELL readers is to find books that are interesting and that are not difficult for the child to read (Allington & Cunningham, 2007; Robertson, 2008).

As a result, school policies should re-evaluate policies that restrict students from reading books that are outside their prescribed reading levels. Students need opportunities to take control

of their reading. Our role is to guide them so they can become confident, independent, and motivated readers.

Impact on Interest

Data was collected using semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. Semi-structured interviews showed no significant difference between the two groups. Post interviews showed that students' levels of interest or the areas of their interest were not affected by the book's Lexile levels or the students' readability levels. This data was supported by classroom and library observations. ELL eighth grade students were interested in various genres and types of reading materials. For instance, students who showed high affect towards a specific genre did not change from pre to post interviews. Students who were interested in thrillers, mystery, realistic fiction, memoirs, comics, etc. continued to have the same affect during post interviews. One important factor that was evident during classroom and library observations was the availability of books. The importance of having a book-rich environment was apparent when one student said, "I read all of the good books in this library," implying that there is nothing else that she can read. Thus students should be provided with a variety of books to choose from. Both fiction and nonfiction books with various genres that students can read should be available to students. Throughout the study, students commented on their lack of interest in reading because interesting books are simply not available. Furthermore, the teacher should guide students to explore a variety of books from different genres. For example, when a student stated that she could no longer find a memoir to read, the teacher helped her explore other genres that had similar features such as an autobiography or a diary. The importance of having available books that students are capable of and interested in reading are also supported by numerous literacy researchers (Gambrell,1996; Gambrell & Marinak, 1997; and Robertson, 2008).

Impact on Perceived Control

During pre and post interviews, the majority of students expressed their preference to choose books on their own; classroom and library observations supported the interview data. Edmunds and Bauserman (2006) highlight the importance of choice when attempting to positively affect children's reading motivation. It was evident that students in both groups were seeking topics and/or books of interest. Nevertheless, the majority of students made many comments about the role their teacher played in helping them discover books. Some students thought that their teacher knew more about the area of their interest and preferred it when she recommended a book. Research found that motivating students to read comes from "a teacher who values reading and is enthusiastic about sharing a love of reading" (Gambrell, 1996, p. 20). However, very few students reported that they preferred their parents or peers to choose for them. The fact that students preferred to read books they chose rather than books their friends or family members chose was a strong indicator that students liked to take control of their reading experience. Thus, while reading within the Lexical range could be helpful, being overly prescriptive might prevent students from taking control of their reading experiences. Again, regardless of the model selected, the principle role of the teacher is to provide guidance, with regards to reading options, rather than gatekeeping, by limiting students to their Lexile level.

Impact on Collaboration

Results from interviews and observations showed that students preferred to be solitary readers versus reading with others. When students were asked if they liked to read with someone or by themselves, the majority said that they liked it better when they read on their own. The same was observed during classroom and library reading time. The majority of students were solitary readers. This could be explained because reading time was structured as silent reading

rather than group reading time. There was interaction between the students and their teacher during conference time, but students rarely had the opportunity to discuss books with each other. It would be interesting to see how students would have been impacted if they had the chance to participate in a reading discussion group. Furthermore, students hardly mentioned collaborative reading activities with their parents. Gee (1996) pointed out that minority students tend to fail because there is a mismatch between the students' primary discourse at home and at school. The majority of these parents are either non-fluent or non-English speakers. Thus, the mismatch in literacy between the students and their parents could be a factor that contributed to the students' dislike for collaboration.

The fact that students did not have opportunities to have real book discussions in class with their peers and at home with their parents could be the reason behind their low affect toward collaboration in reading. Peregoy and Boyle (2012) stated, "Some students may not consider group work academically appropriate based on the values and assumptions of their home cultures" (p. 105). One could hypothesize that some parents of Middle-Eastern descent might view learning as the individual's responsibility rather than collaborative work. The role of culture in collaborative learning is an interesting area that should be explored, in this case, the Middle-Eastern culture.

Impact on Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy refers to the way students view themselves as readers. Based on students' responses to the interview questions, students viewed themselves as good readers. Nevertheless, students did not appear to have well-formed understanding of a good reader's abilities such as using reading strategies. Instead, their strategies were more of the ELLs' method. For instance, when students were asked what to do when they encounter hard parts, they all said that they

check out words in a dictionary or ask the teacher. Thus, they used a traditional ELL strategy instead of using context clues to figure out words or use metacognition to assist in comprehension. ELLs need to learn reading strategies that will help them comprehend text. Teachers need to explicitly teach reading strategies. For example, "Students need to use strategies to preview texts, to ask questions, to preview headings and subheadings, and to organize information for memory" (Peregoy & Boyle, 2012, p. 381). Also, some students explained how they think they are good readers because they can read better than before. Thus, their opinion of self-efficacy is based on their progress, rather than on the strategies that they utilize as they read.

Impact on Involvement

Involvement refers to being absorbed in reading and spending an extended amount of time reading. Results showed that the control group was more involved in reading than the experimental group and, at the same time, showed more growth on the NWEA reading assessment. Various researchers in the field support the correlation between reading involvement and reading growth (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). The fact that the control group was more involved than the experimental group could have various explanations. For example, classroom observations showed students who were reading at their level were able to complete the books they had started more often than the students who were reading books that were above their Lexile level. During reading conferences, some students were not able to retell information and answer comprehension questions. They stated that they wanted to switch books because they were too hard for them to read. Students were frustrated when they were not able to comprehend text and decided to stop reading that book. This emphasizes what was mentioned earlier about

guiding students to find suitable books and not merely allowing them to read books of their interest.

Conclusions

The main goal of this study was to determine which reading model will positively impact ELL students and improve their attitude toward reading. The model that was initially used in the school was restricting students to read within their Lexile range. The model that this study was attempting to experiment with allowed students to self-select books that were outside their Lexile range. This study was attempting to investigate the second model because a large number of Arabic speaking ELL students come to school with various cultural backgrounds and literacy skills that make them different from mainstream or other ELL students. Finding the right model to teach this population was critical because the number of ELL students from this population was growing and their achievement gap in reading was increasing.

Pre and post t-test results in this study indicated that there was no significant difference between the two models on students' attitude toward reading nor was there a difference in reading growth. Results from semi-structured pre and post interviews, along with classroom and library observations, showed the need for more research in the field of second language acquisitions among Arabic speaking ELL students. The study's small sample indicated that there was no significance difference between the two models in terms of reading growth and students' attitude toward reading. Rather than restricting students to prescribed leveled readings, teachers can take advantage of the leveled reading collections and guide students to find suitable books that they can enjoy. Thus, depending solely on prescribed levels is not a solution because teachers' judgement and guidance are equally as important in determining appropriate reading materials for ELLs. This study adds to the growing body of research related to literacy strategies,

especially for Arabic-speaking eighth grade ELL students. Finding the right model has significant potential for meeting the literacy needs of a growing Arabic-speaking ELL population. Nevertheless, further research is needed in this area.

Limitations

This study may have been limited by the small number of participants and the gender of the participants. The number of participants was small because students were supposed to be matched based on gender, English proficiency level, and grade level. Also, all participants were supposed to be selected from the same reading class. The second limitation was imposed by the school's gender-separate classes. Therefore, all of the participants were females.

Implications

Findings in this study could assist teachers in addressing the reading skill needs of ELLs whose native language is Arabic; however, it is important to keep in mind that the study's findings are based on a small sample. In order to meet the educational demands, all students must become proficient readers—ELL students are no exception. The Federal Department of Education and the State of Michigan both mandate that all students, including ELLs, improve in the Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs) in reading and math. Thus, finding what ELLs need in order to improve their academic reading needs is very valuable. Quantitative data indicated that there was no significant difference between the two models on students' reading attitude and reading growth. Results indicated that participants in this study, regardless of their group, did not have high self-esteem in reading, and indicated that students need their teachers' assistance so they can have positive self-perceptions. Qualitative results highlight the potential positive impact of each reading model on ELL Arabic-speaking eighth grade female students. As a result, implementing school policies that restrict students to read within their

prescribed Lexile range needs further investigation because results for this school showed no significant difference between the two models. Teachers should benefit from having a leveled reading collection to guide students rather than restrict them. Based on interview results and supported by observations, it was evident that ELL eighth graders whose native language is Arabic disliked collaboration when it comes to reading. These findings call for the need of further research in order to find the cause and potential solutions. Furthermore, interview results indicated that students depend on translation when encountering hard parts rather than having awareness of reading strategies that could aid them in the process of reading or comprehension.

Future Research Directions

Results from this study indicated that there was no difference between the two models and that each model has potential benefits if implemented properly. Results suggest that policies that uses prescribed readings and restrict students from reading outside their readability levels should be reconsidered. A prescribed reading model could be beneficial if it was implemented differently. Thus, further research is needed. Likewise, allowing students to read books of their choice without guidance is not the remedy to cure ELLs' reading skills. As a result, in order to meet the needs of this growing population, additional research is needed using a larger sample to find how teachers can benefit from the leveled reading collections that they have without having to limit students' choice to prescribed levels. Because this study was only conducted on females, discovering how each model impacts males would also be valuable. In addition, it would be interesting to compare the impact of the two reading models on other grade levels, as well as on mainstream students or ELLs whose native language is not Arabic.

APPENDIX A

READER SELF-PERCEPTION SCALE

Listed below are statements about reading. Please read each statement carefully. Then circle the letters that show

how much you agree or disagree with the statement. Use the following scale:

SA = Strongly Agree   A = Agree   U = Undecided   D = Disagree   SD = Strongly Disagree

Example: **I think pizza with pepperoni is the best.**   SA   A   U   D   SD

If you are *really positive* that pepperoni is the best, circle SA (Strongly Agree).
If you *think* that it is good but maybe not great, circle A (Agree).
If you *can't decide* whether or not it is best, circle U (Undecided).
If you *think* that pepperoni pizza is not all that good, circle D (Disagree).
If you are *really positive* that pepperoni pizza is not very good, circle SD (Strongly Disagree).

		SA	A	U	D	SD
	1. I think I am a good reader.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[SF]	2. I can tell my teacher likes to listen to me read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[SF]	3. My teacher thinks my reading is fine.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[OC]	4. I read faster than other kids.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PS]	5. I like to read aloud.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[OC]	6. When I read, I can figure out words better than others.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[SF]	7. My classmates like to listen to me read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PS]	8. I feel good inside when I read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[SF]	9. My classmates think I read pretty well.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PR]	10. When I read, I don't have to try as hard as I used to.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[OC]	11. I seem to know more words than others when I read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[SF]	12. People in my family think I am a good reader.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PR]	13. I am getting better at reading.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[OC]	14. I understand what I read as well as other kids do.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PR]	15. When I read, I need less help than I used to.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PS]	16. Reading makes me feel happy inside.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[SF]	17. My teacher thinks I am a good reader.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PR]	18. Reading is easier for me than it used to be.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PR]	19. I read faster than I could before.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[OC]	20. I read better than other kids in my class.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PS]	21. I feel calm when I read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[OC]	22. I read more than other kids.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PR]	23. I understand what I read better than I could before.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PR]	24. I can figure out words better than I could before.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PS]	25. I feel comfortable when I read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PS]	26. I think reading is relaxing.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PR]	27. I read better now than I could before.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PR]	28. When I read, I recognize more words than I used to.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PS]	29. Reading makes me feel good.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[SF]	30. Other kids think I am a good reader.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[SF]	31. People in my family think I read pretty well.	SA	A	U	D	SD
[PS]	32. I enjoy reading.	SA	A	U	D	SD

[SF] 33. People in my family like to listen to me read.   SA   A   U   D   SD

READER SELF-PERCEPTION SCALE (continued)

SCORING SHEET

Student Name _____

Teacher _____

Grade _____ Date _____

Scoring key: 5 = Strongly Agree (SA)
                4 = Agree (A)
                3 = Undecided (U)
                2 = Disagree (D)
                1 = Strongly Disagree (SD)

Scales

General Perception	Progress	Observational Comparison	Social Feedback	Physiological States
1. _____	10. _____	4. _____	2. _____	5. _____
	13. _____	6. _____	3. _____	8. _____
	15. _____	11. _____	7. _____	16. _____
	18. _____	14. _____	9. _____	21. _____
	19. _____	20. _____	12. _____	25. _____
	23. _____	22. _____	17. _____	26. _____
	24. _____		30. _____	29. _____
	27. _____		31. _____	32. _____
	28. _____		33. _____	
Raw Score	_____ of 45	_____ of 30	_____ of 45	_____ of 40

Score interpretation

High	44+	26+	38+	37+
Average	39	21	33	31
Low	34	16	27	25

Source: Bottomley, D.M., Henk, W.A., & Melnick, S.A. (1997/1998). Assessing children's views about themselves as writers using the Writer Self-Perception Scale. *The Reading Teacher*, 51, 286-296.

APPENDIX B

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

1. What kinds of books are interesting to you? What genres do you like to read? Why? (I)
2. How much of your spare time do you spend reading just for fun? (I)
3. What kinds of reading materials have you read this year? (INV)
4. Are you good at reading? How do you define a good reader? (SE)
5. Do you think of yourself as a reader? Why or why not? (SE)
6. Are there other things you like to read besides books? (I)
7. Is reading important to you? What makes you think that? (SE)
8. Do you like it more when someone else gives you a book or when you pick out a book by yourself? (PC)
9. How many books have you read in the last couple of months? Were you good at reading these books? What makes you think that? (INV)
10. What do you do when you encounter hard parts? (SE)
11. Do you think your reading has improved? (SE)
12. Do you choose the books you read by yourself? If not, who does choose them for you? (PC)
13. Do you enjoy reading aloud with someone? (C)
14. Do you share information about books that you read? (C)

APPENDIX C

Lexile* Grade Level Conversion Chart

Lexile Rating	Educational Grade-Level		Lexile Rating	Educational Grade-Level
25	1.1		675	3.9
50	1.1		700	4.1
75	1.2		725	4.3
100	1.2		750	4.5
125	1.3		775	4.7
150	1.3		800	5.0
175	1.4		825	5.2
200	1.5		850	5.5
225	1.6		875	5.8
250	1.6		900	6.0
275	1.7		925	6.4
300	1.8		950	6.7
325	1.9		975	7.0
350	2.0		1000	7.4
375	2.1		1025	7.8
400	2.2		1050	8.2
425	2.3		1075	8.6
450	2.5		1100	9.0
475	2.6		1125	9.5
500	2.7		1150	10.0
525	2.9		1175	10.5
550	3.0		1200	11.0
575	3.2		1225	11.6
600	3.3		1250	12.2
625	3.5		1275	12.8
650	3.7		1300	13.5

This conversion chart is based on educational levels from the published "Lexile Framework" chart. A smoothed curve was fit through the grade-level points indicated here, and regression analysis provided the equations:

$$\text{Lexile} = 500\,\text{Ln(Grade Level)} \quad \text{or, the counterpart} \quad \text{GradeLevel} = e^{0.002(\text{Lexile})}$$

The resulting regression equation was then used to calculate the educational grade-levels in the above table. A separate study of over 700 titles confirmed that their Accelerated Reader© (Advantage Learning's reading management software) reading levels and Lexile ratings are correlated, and that regression analysis on published Accelerated Reader and Lexile reading levels produces a very similar conversion equation.

* "Lexile" and "Lexile Framework" are trademarks of Metametrics, Inc.
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APPENDIX D
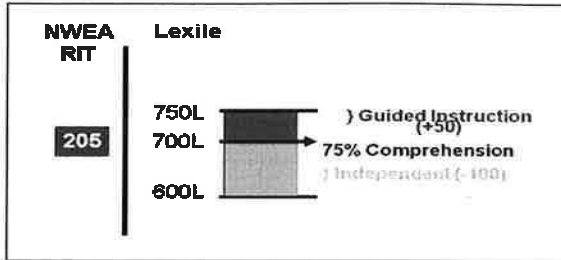
NWEA RIT / Lexile

205

750L) Guided Instruction (+50)
700L → 75% Comprehension
) Independent (-100)
600L

WHAT IS "LEXILE?"

The Lexile Framework for Reading is a scientific approach to reading measurement that matches readers to text. The Lexile Framework measures both reader ability and text difficulty on the same scale, called the Lexile scale. This approach allows educators to manage reading comprehension and encourage reader progress using Lexile measures and a broad range of Lexile products, tools and services.

As the most widely adopted reading measure in use today, Lexiles give educators the confidence to choose materials that will improve student reading skills across the curriculum and at home. Tens of thousands of books and tens of millions of articles have Lexile measures, hundreds of publishers Lexile their materials and all major standardized tests can report student reading scores in Lexiles.

Lexile Codes:

Illustrated Glossary (IG): A text designated as "IG" consists of independent pieces of text such as in the glossary of a book. These independent pieces may be interchanged without affecting the flow of the text. "IG" texts typically contain some or all of the following characteristics:

Non-conforming Text (NC): A text designated as "NC" consists of semantic difficulty (*vocabulary*) and syntactic complexity (*sentence length*) that is inconsistent with the developmental appropriateness of the text. Typically these texts are written at a higher level than would be suggested by the content and the format of the text. Texts designated as "NC" are useful when matching advanced readers with text at an appropriate developmental level.

Beginning Reading (BR): A text designated as "BR" is any text that has a Lexile measure of zero or below. The measure is shown only as "BR" without the zero or negative number appearing.

Non-prose Text (NP): A text designated as "NP" is any book whose content is at least 50 percent nonstandard prose. Some examples are poems, plays, songs, and books with incorrect or no punctuation.

Adult-directed Text (AD): A text designated as "AD" is one designed to be read to or with readers. The following guidelines should be used when examining an "AD" text:

- Text placement
- Sentence length
- Font size and placement
- Basic word usage
- Illustration context
- Book size

Comparison of RIT to Lexile Scales

Note: Comparisons are approximate. Actual score calibrations may vary depending on student performance.

RIT	Lexile	L Range		RIT	Lexile	L Range
150	BR	BR		199	583	483-633
151	BR	BR		200	601	501-651
152	BR	BR		201	619	519-669
153	BR	BR		202	637	537-687
154	BR	BR		203	655	555-705
155	BR	BR		204	673	573-723
156	BR	BR		205	691	591-741
157	BR	BR		206	709	609-759
158	BR	BR		207	727	627-777
159	BR	BR		208	745	645-795
160	BR	BR		209	763	663-813
161	BR	BR		210	781	681-831
162	BR	BR		211	799	699-849
163	BR	BR		212	817	717-867
164	BR	BR		213	835	735-885
165	BR	BR		214	853	753-903
166	BR	BR		215	871	771-921
167	BR	BR		216	889	789-939
168	BR	BR		217	907	807-957
169	BR	BR		218	925	825-975
170	BR	BR		219	943	843-993
171	BR	BR		220	961	861-1011
172	BR	BR		221	979	879-1029
173	115	15-165		222	997	897-1047
174	133	33-183		223	1015	915-1065
175	151	51-201		224	1033	933-1083
176	169	69-219		225	1051	951-1101
177	187	87-237		226	1069	969-1119
178	205	105-255		227	1087	987-1137
179	223	123-273		228	1105	1005-1155
180	241	141-291		229	1123	1023-1173
181	259	159-309		230	1141	1041-1191
182	277	177-327		231	1159	1059-1209
183	295	195-345		232	1177	1077-1227
184	313	213-363		233	1195	1095-1245
185	331	231-381		234	1213	1113-1263
186	349	249-399		235	1231	1121-1281
187	367	267-417		236	1249	1149-1299
188	385	285-435		237	1267	1167-1317
189	403	303-453		238	1285	1185-1335
190	421	321-471		239	1303	1203-1353
191	439	339-489		240	1321	1221-1371
192	457	357-507		241	1339	1239-1389
193	475	375-525		242	1357	1257-1407
194	493	393-543		243	1375	1275-1425
195	511	411-561		244	1393	1293-1443
196	529	429-579		245	1411	1311-1461
197	547	447-597		246	1429	1329-1479
198	565	465-615		247	1447	1347-1497
				248	1465	1365-1515
				249	1483	1383-1533
				250	1501	1401-1551

APPENDIX E

Book Title	Author's Name	Lexile Measure	Grade Level Equivalent
Eclipse	Stephanie Meyer	670 L	4.2
Walk Two Moons	Sharon Creech	770 L	6.6
Charmed	Michelle Krys	770 L	6.6
Sail	James Patterson	890 L	5.6
An Abundance of Katherines	John Green	890 L	5.6
The Maze Runner	James Dashner	770 L	5.3
I'd Tell You I Love You, But Then I'd Have to	Ally Carter	1000 L	7.6
Hoot	Carl Hiaasen	760 L	5.8
Three Times Ready	Sheila Turnage	560 L	3.9
Dangerous Deception	Peg Kehret	800 L	5.1
Lock and Key	Sarah Dessen	840 L	5.5
Wonder	R.J. Palacio	790 L	5.0
The Other Side of the Sky	Farah Ahmedi	850 L	5.6
Be Fair	Eleanor Robins	HL240 L	2.3

APPENDIX F

T-test Results for RSPS

Group Statistics

	group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Progresschange	1.00	3	2.3333	2.51661	1.45297
	2.00	3	4.0000	4.35890	2.51661
Observationalchange	1.00	3	2.6667	2.51661	1.45297
	2.00	3	5.3333	3.78594	2.18581
Socialchange	1.00	3	1.6667	2.88675	1.66667
	2.00	3	9.0000	1.73205	1.00000
Readingchange	1.00	3	1.6667	12.01388	6.93622
	2.00	3	9.6667	10.78579	6.22718
Physiologicalchange	1.00	3	1.0000	3.60555	2.08167
	2.00	3	2.0000	4.00000	2.30940

APPENDIX G

Attributes to Analyze Interview Questions

Collaboration	Involvement	Self-efficacy	Perceived Control	Interest
• sharing or talking about books with friends, teacher or family • reading aloud with someone • Expressing enjoyment of reading books recommended by others. • Expressing enjoyment about • Some students also expressed very positive affect about collaborating with others on reading or sharing books with others.	• I read a lot • I read everyday • I read many books • Reading is part of my daily routine • When I finish a book, I start a new book • I read multiple books at the same time • I am a member of a reading club or a reading learning community	• I think I am a good reader • I can understand what I read • Believe in capacity for reader • I can read fast and know what they mean • I read better than before • I know reading strategies such as… • I read fast and I understand what I read • statements about feedback from parents or teachers about being a good reader	• I like to choose books by myself • I like to select books from a series that I like • select a specific book or books, • Expressing preference for personal choice of books, as compared to having books chosen for them by teachers or other adults, about books.	• Statements of enjoyment of reading such as I really like this book, author, or genre • I like to read books about… • My favorite author is • My favorite genre is • pursuing a topic or an author through planning, • or connecting reading to personal experiences or feelings.

APPENDIX H

Interview Scoring Rubric

	1	2	3	4
Collaboration	Dislikes to communicate with others about readings/books	Indifference to communicate with others about readings/books	Moderate affect to communicate with others about readings/books	High positive affect to communicate with others about readings/books
Involvement	No devotion of time to reading	Indifference to devoting time to reading	Moderate devotion of time to reading	High devotion of time to reading.
Self-efficacy	Shows low confidence in reading skills.	Unaware of their own reading skills. Students do not the level of their reading skills.	Shows moderate confidence in readings skill.	Shows high confidence in reading skills. Belief in oneself as a good reader.
Perceived Control	Dislikes choosing books; prefers someone else to choose their books	Indifference for personal choice	Moderate preference for personal choice of books	High preference for personal choice of books
Interest	Dislike of reading	Indifference to reading in general	Moderate affect for reading in general or specific book, author, genre, or series	High positive affect for reading in general or to specific book, author, or genre.

APPENDIX I

Coding Checklist

Setting for observation in include the classroom during reading time and school library.

Collaboration

_____Talks about books with peers or teacher
_____Shares writing about books with others
_____makes connections to real life
_____Help others find books
_____ Seeks help to find books
_____ Other

Perceived Control
_____Knows where to find books
_____Chooses different types of books
_____ Seeks help to find desirable books
_____selects reading as a choice activity
_____Knows how to select books
_____Chooses books by themselves
_____Recognizes favorite authors/genres
_____Other

Involvement
_____Brings books to class
_____Read multiple books at the same time
_____Starts reading on time
_____Is not easily distracted
_____Finishes books in timely manner
_____Reading exceeds requirements
_____Other
Interest
_____Seems to enjoy reading
_____ selects reading as a choice activity
_____favors books, topics, authors, or genres
_____Statements of enjoyment of reading
_____Pursuing a topic, genre, or author
_____connecting reading to personal experiences or feelings
_____Other

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ABSTRACT

IMPACT OF SELF-SELECTED VERSUS PRESCRIBED LEVEL READING ON ARABIC SPEAKING ELL STUDENTS: A MIXED METHODS STUDY

by

MANAL M. ASSI

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Advisor: Dr. Sandra Gonzales

Major: Curriculum and Instruction; English as a Second Language

Degree: Doctor of Education

This study uses the Accelerated Reader collection to find which reading model, reading within the Lexile range versus having the choice to read outside the Lexile range, will positively impact Arabic speaking eighth grade ELL students and improve their attitude towards reading. The study was conducted in a Title III charter school in the metro-Detroit area. Participants included six female eighth grade students whose native language was Arabic. The mixed-method approach was adapted using qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data included observations and semi-structured interviews; quantitative data included The Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) computerized adaptive reading assessment and the Reader Self-Perception Scale, which was developed by Henk and Melnick (1995). Results indicated that there was no significant difference between the two models on students' attitude towards reading nor was there a significant difference on students' reading growth. As a result, school policies that restrict students to read within their prescribed levels should be reconsidered. Each model could positively impact ELLs if an appropriate reading environment was established.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

Manal's professional experience includes teaching English language learners and mainstream high school students. She has been ESL teacher for eight years at Riverside Academy West, Dearborn, MI, from 2008-Present. In addition to teaching ELLs, she is the school's ESL coordinator, which includes developing ESL curriculum and coordinating ESL assessments. She holds a secondary teaching certificate in English and Bilingual, granted in 2007; Bachelor of Arts in Education with a major in English Education, granted in 2007; Master of Education with a Major in English as a Second Language, granted in 2009; and Education Specialist in Curriculum and Instruction, granted in 2011.

Manal has joined various school committees, such as, Response to Intervention (RTI) committee, School Improvement Plan (SIP) committee, Multicultural Committee. Also, she is a member of the TED-Doctoral Learning Community. In addition, Manal's professional experience includes teaching at the university level, as adjunct faculty instructor for Wayne State University, College of Education, in Detroit, MI, 2013-2015.