TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF GRADED READERS IN MOTIVATING EFL STUDENTS ON EXTENSIVE READING

Adam Haroon Abdullah Mohammed and Aadel Yousuf Khanday

Language instructor, Najran University

ABSTRACT: *The purpose of this research was to explore the overall perceptions of EFL teachers at the PYP towards the use of graded readers in motivating Saudi EFL learners to go extensive reading. This area as the researcher thinks has not been given due investigation therefore, The literature reveals that literary texts including songs, poetry, short stories and plays could positively impact learners knowledge of English. However, this paper attempted to highlight using graded readers that are judiciously chosen and within learners experience in motivating them to read extensively or intensively. A total of twenty six male and female teachers at the PYP Najran University, Saudi Arabia participated in the study. They were given the chosen copies of graded readers to examine and form ideas about them. Also these teachers were strongly encouraged to do online reading to acquaint themselves with such readers.Data were collected by means of questionnaire to give answer to the two major questions: to what extent could SRs or GRs (the ones familiar to learners) motivate learners to go extensive reading? And are the teachers at PYP aware of GRs?The findings from the study showed that even the few who were not familiar with graded readers have become proponents of the approach once they had seen and read the copies. They also expressed a fondness for graded readers as source of motivation for young adults because of the simplified language and appealing themes that characterize such reading materials, hence the participants expressed willingness to urge upon their students to continue reading them. Teachers also recognized the linguistic benefits of extensive reading including vocabulary expansion, positive reading attitude, and a sense of accomplishment from reading extensively. The paper will also argue that many of the claims and criticisms raised against using literature are not supported by empirical research. I will assert, therefore, that grader readers within students experience are indispensable in our teaching scenario.*

KEYWORDS: teachers' perception, graded readers, EFL, students, extensive reading

INTRODUCTION

The study aims to reveal the perceptions of Preparatory Year English teachers at Najran University about the importance of using Graded Readers or Simplified Readers (SRs) in motivating students to read extensively outside classroom. The area examined is motivation, which is a challenge worth tackling in EFL context nowadays. Simplified Readers (SRs) or Graded Readers (GRs) play a vital role in language teaching and should have a proper place in language learning strategies, curricula, and textbooks. To prove this statement, the researcher investigates teachers' attitude towards SRs that within the students' experience and level. Literary texts in English Language classrooms at the tertiary level in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, has not been given sufficient academic reflection and research. The starting point for choosing the topic of this study was the time when the researcher came across graded readers as teaching materials. Since then, the researcher found them of great interest personally as well as professionally. The core of this study is to prove that GRs should be a supplementary

material in enhancing language learning .The role of literature in the EFL classroom has been reassessed and many researchers view literary texts as providing rich linguistic input, effective stimuli for students to express themselves in other languages, and a potential source of learners motivation. Literary texts provide lots of aesthetic, intellectual and emotional pleasure by a creative and emotive use of language, for its capacity in providing pleasure and enjoyment. The researcher is investigating simplified readers mainly the ones learners might have experienced by either reading them in their own language, or watching them as movies, animation or in any other form.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review is a description of relevant literature that relates to our study. It helps us to narrow down the focus of our research area to specific topics and enables us to decide on the direction of our research. Mackey and Gass (2005) states that most reasoned research questions come from a reading of literature and understanding the history of current issues. Ali Shehadeh (2015) relevant literature review helps you in identifying and choosing or deciding on the most appropriate way to the design of your study including the selection of target population, method of data collection procedure and treatment, and analysis of data. Hence, a short review of the related literature is given below by the researchers of the current study.Thornberry (2005) in his research "Beyond Sentence" showed that reading extensively in a foreign language can result in
• Faster, more fluent reading
• Greater vocabulary acquisition and familiarity (also called 'automaticity')
• A better understanding of how the language works and is used
• Better writing skills
• Improved confidence and motivation, greater independent learning
• A more positive attitude to the foreign language in general

Maley (2005) research findings support the use of GRs, as it benefits the development of speaking, listening, and writing language skills (as well as involuntary vocabulary acquisition. As practiced in a wide range of studies, the belief underlying extensive reading is that participants should learn to read by reading Krashen, (2004): reading more makes reading better, faster and with fuller understanding.p37Nuttall (1982): 168).Also they argued, literature can increase the students' "motivation to interact with a text and thus, ultimately increase their reading proficiency" (1982:531). DiYanni (1998) recommended that with the teaching of stories, students can be motivated not only to learn English, but also to appreciate the deeper dimension and exquisiteness of the language. A low proficiency learner would begin reading books at the lower level of the scheme, and when reading at that level was comfortable, would move on to books at the next level. Good graded reading schemes need to take participants close to un-simplified text at the highest levels of the schemes (Nation and Wang, 1999).

However, there are some researchers like Dera (2012), Huq (2012)   Mckay (1982), Shang (2006), Carter & Long (1991) Robson (1989) who have posited the possible potholes literature might cause in language classes. The issues they raised include: literature in the light of Islam, syntax, cultural barriers, phonetics and phonology, lexis, semantics, literary concepts and notions, selection of materials, literature and academic English, yet they unanimously approve the indispensable role that literature can play in English language acquisition and proficiency.

In general, literary works are viewed as "carrying an undesirable freight of cultural connotations." The study refutes all those assumptions giving the following justifications: First, their claims are based on certain aspects of literature and not the area the researcher is investigating i.e. simplified readers mainly the ones learners might have experienced either by reading them in their own language, or by watching them as movies, animation or in any other form. In addition, if judiciously chosen, simplified and not the masterpieces, which native English speakers read for enjoyment, simplified readers, can give a wide spectrum of linguistic knowledge. Also, in the era of cyber technology, culture has no longer become exclusive to a certain region, people around the globe eat the same food, and wear the same fashion, watch the same movies and tell the same jokes either. M.K. Gandhi was quoted as saying "No culture can live if it attempts to be exclusive." Moreover, novels and stories address nearly the same social or political issues that human beings experience around the globe like love, hatred, death, adventures, and it is the kind of mental process that makes one a lifelong reader, therefore no room for cultural threads or barriers. Simplified reader is a reader friendly book, which is designed to eliminate all forms of difficulty and complexity. Moreover, simplified readers are accompanied by CDs nowadays. Simplified readers should be incorporated in EFL classrooms and students should be encouraged to read them for pleasure a process that will definitely result in language exposure and language input and hence language acquisition.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher will use quantitative method to prove the hypothesis in this study. Giving the account of a survey carried out to gather information about the usability and usefulness of graded readers as source of ER (input) in engaging adults to read outside classrooms. Data will be collected by means of a closed-ended questionnaire for teachers.

Statement of the Problem
Despite the consensus reached by the scholars and researchers that literature is catalyst in motivating English language learners, simplified readers (graded readers) as a branch of literature have not been incorporated in EFL classes and courses due to claims of linguistic, social, or belief potholes. That indirectly demotivate learners to read extensively, hence, their English abilities are getting unduly poorer. The researcher is contented that simplified readers are reader friendly texts that provide extensive reading (input) which is necessary for language acquisition and proficiency. Students will be motivated to go for SRs if teachers make them aware of the importance of reading copies and the authorities provide GRs that are familiar to students and at their level. Familiar means, the ones they have read in their native language or watched them as animation or movies. The researcher proposes to examine the usefulness and usability of simplified readers in EFL by conducting questionnaires to investigate teachers' perception about ways Graded Readers can motivate their Students.

Significance of the study
There are limited numbers of studies on graded readers as branch of literature in motivating students to read extensively in KSA of Saudi Arabia. None of these studies, however, involve integrating graded readers particularly the ones within the experience of students, to enhance extensive reading. Thus, there is a need to determine the impact of extensive reading program using graded readers on students' level at preparatory Year University of Najran. The study of simplified readers (SR) or graded readers (GR) is innovative because it brings important facts

and strategies to English language teaching and learning. So on the bases of its findings, graded readers could be a part and a parcel of any English course or program. It is believed this study will make a significant and substantial contribution to the practitioners, teachers, course-designers and other stakeholders in the field of education.

The Objectives of this Research

As mentioned above, the practical part of this thesis deals with the issue of using graded readers in motivating students to read extensively outside classroom.. The aim of this study is:

1. To investigate teachers' perception about graded reader in motivating students to read extensively.
2. To figure out teachers' awareness of the term GRs.

Questions of the Research

The objective of this research is to answer the following question:

To what extent could SRs or GRs (the ones familiar to learners) motivate learners to go extensive reading?

Are the teachers at PYP aware of GRs?

Research Hypothesis:

This study hypothesis that when teachers show positive attitude towards GRs, students will get motivated to read extensively outside classroom, hence their instrumental motivation will be achieved.
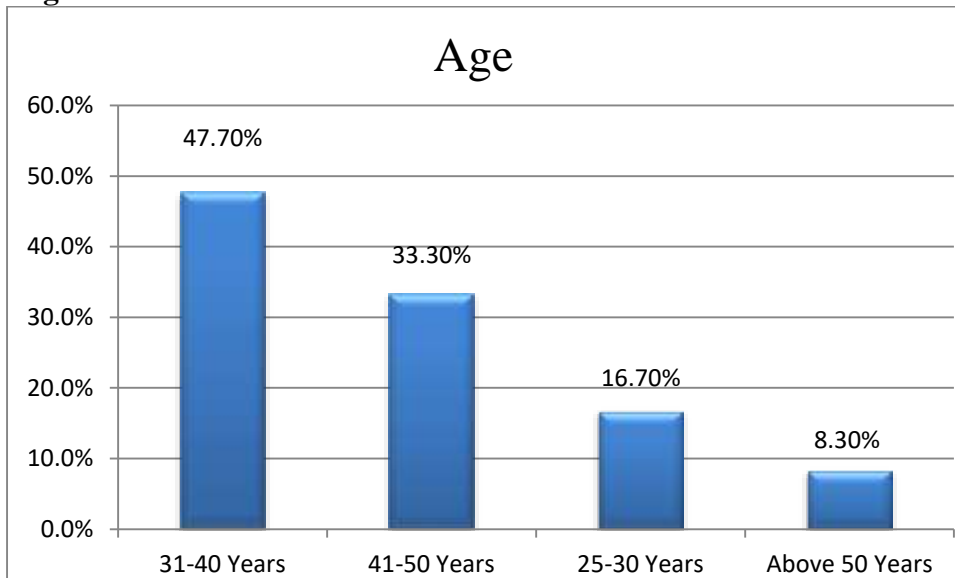
Participants

This research has been conducted during the academic year 2018-2019. The population of the study is male and female teachers at the Preparatory Year, Najran University, Saudi Arabia. Twenty six male and female teachers responded to the questionnaire sent to their emails.

**Data Analysis:** Figure 1
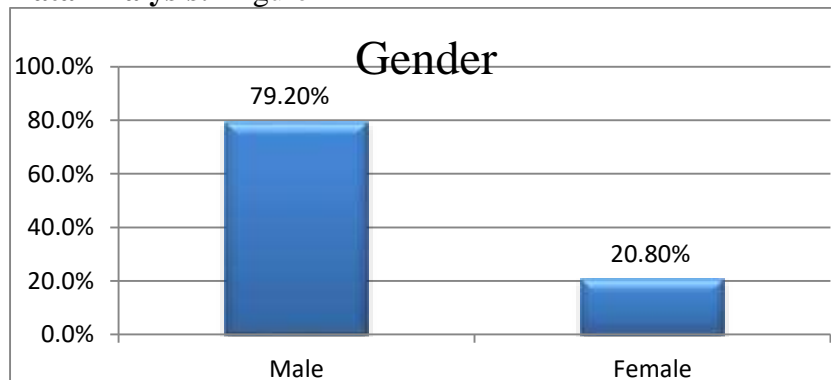
From the above bar chart, we can observe that 79.20% of the participants were male and 20.80% were female. It shows that the percentage of male participants is higher than female participants. It also depicts that less female students have participated in the study.

Figure 2

The above graph shows the participants' age 16.70% of them are in the age group of 25-30 and 47.70% are in the age group of 31-40 years and 33.30% of the participants are in the age group of 41-50 years. 8.30% of the participants are in the age of above 50 years Therefore, it is clear that most of the participants participated in the study are in the age group of 31-40 years.

Figure 3
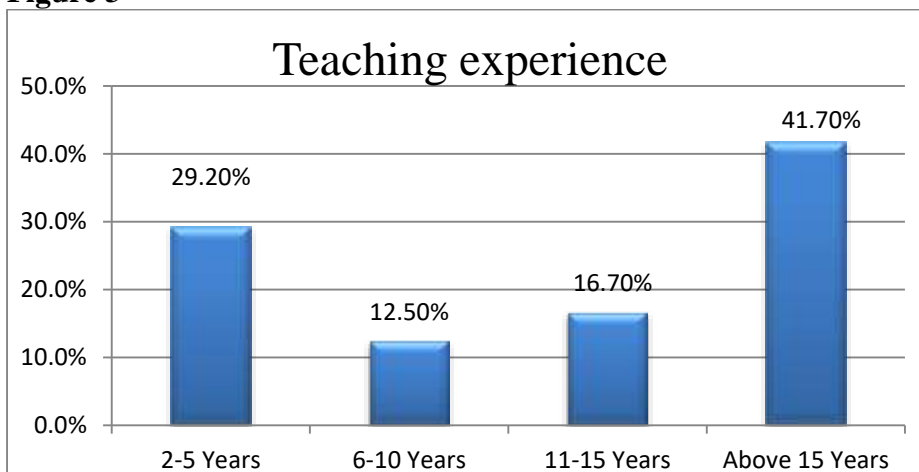
The above graph shows that 41.70% of the participants having teaching experience more than 15 years, 29.20% are them having 2-5 years while as 12.50% of the participants having 6-10 years of teaching experience, and 16.70% of them having 11-15 years of teaching experience. Therefore, it clearly showed that most of participants having more than 15 years of teaching experience.

Figure 4

Courses teachers teach
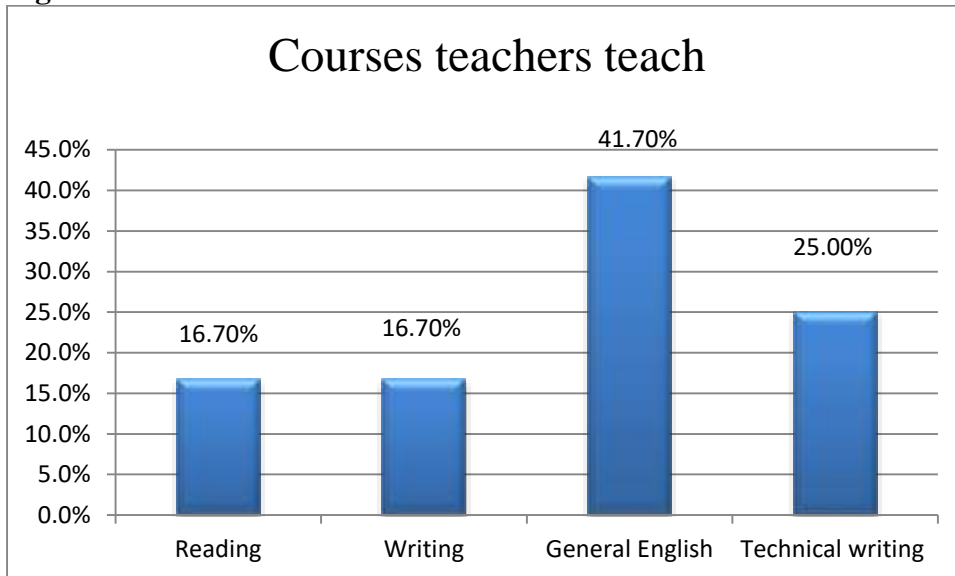
The above item has three options [a. Reading b. writing c. general English e. technical writing] all of these options were selected by the respondents. The data in the graph four reflected that 41.70% of the respondents teach general English, 25% of them teach technical writing, while as 16.70% of them have been teaching Reading and 16.70% of the respondents have been teaching writing. Therefore, it clearly showed that most of the participants have been teaching general English.

Figure 5

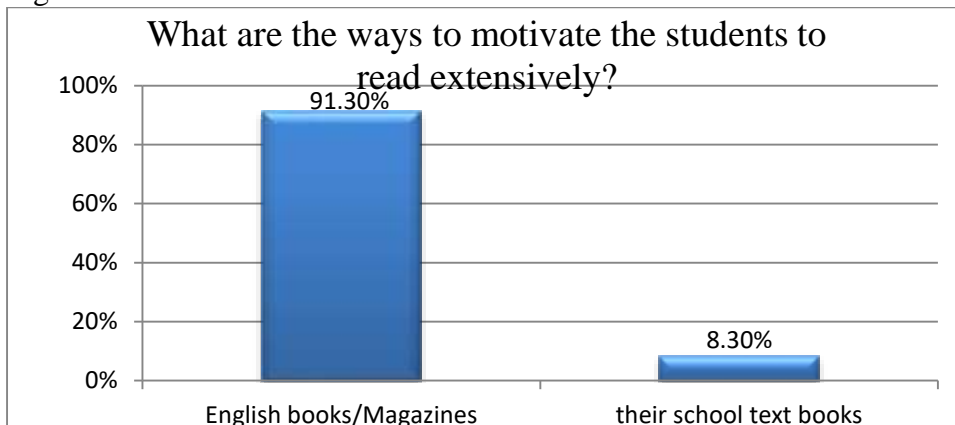Are you familiar with the term (Graded Readers)?
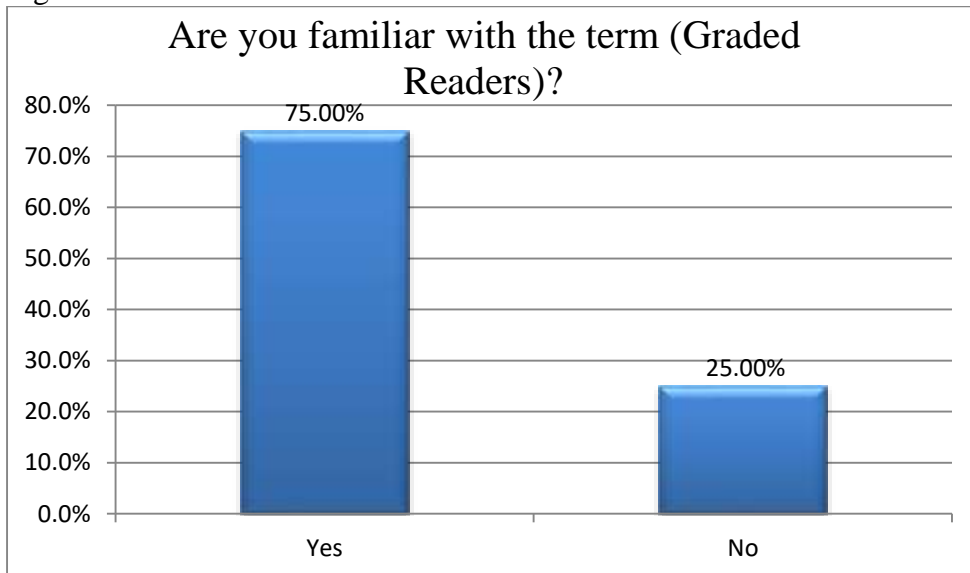
Figure 5

The above item has two options [a. yes b.no] both of these options were selected by the respondents. The data in graph five showed that 75% of the respondents are familiar with graded reading, while as 25% of them responded that they were not responded with graded readers. Therefore, it clearly showed that most of them were familiar with graded reading.

Figure 6
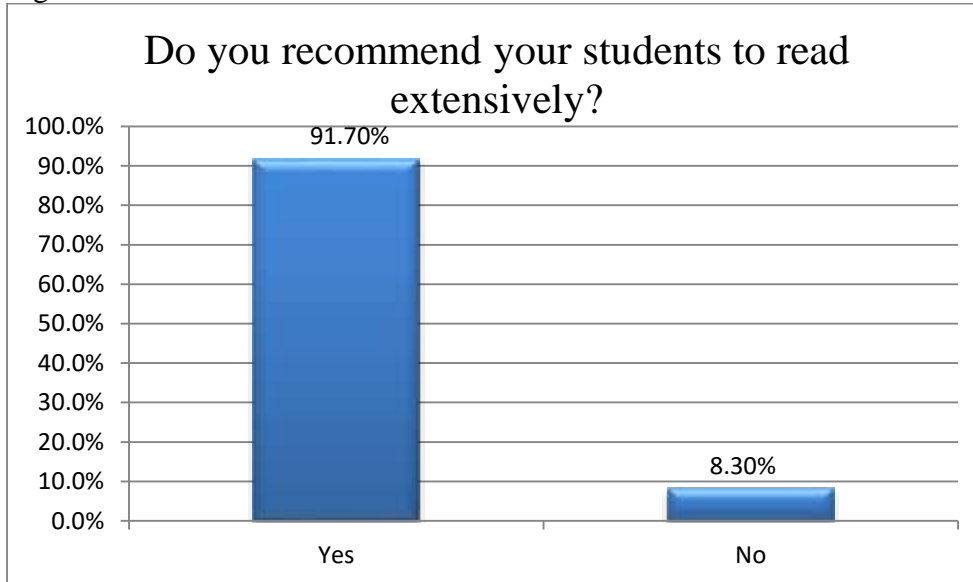
Do you recommend your students to read extensively?

Yes — 91.70%
No — 8.30%

The above item has two options [a. yes b.no] both of these options were selected by the respondents. The data in the graph six showed that 91.70% of the respondents recommend students to read extensively, while as 8.30% of them responded that they don't recommend students to read extensively. Therefore, it clearly showed that most of the teachers recommended students to read extensively.

Figure 7

What are the ways to motivate the students to read extensively?

English books/Magazines — 91.30%
their school text books — 8.30%

The above item has two options [a. English books/magazines b. school text books] both of these options were selected by the respondents. The data in graph seven presented that 91.30% of them responded that the motivated students to read books/magazines extensively while as, 8.3% of them responded that they motivated their students to read their text books extensively. Therefore, it clearly showed that most of the teachers preferred English books and magazines to read extensively.

Figure 8
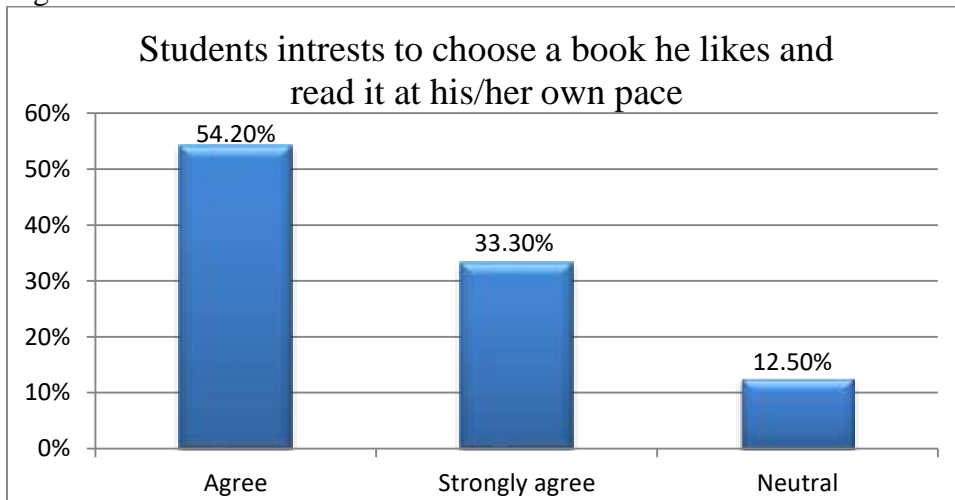
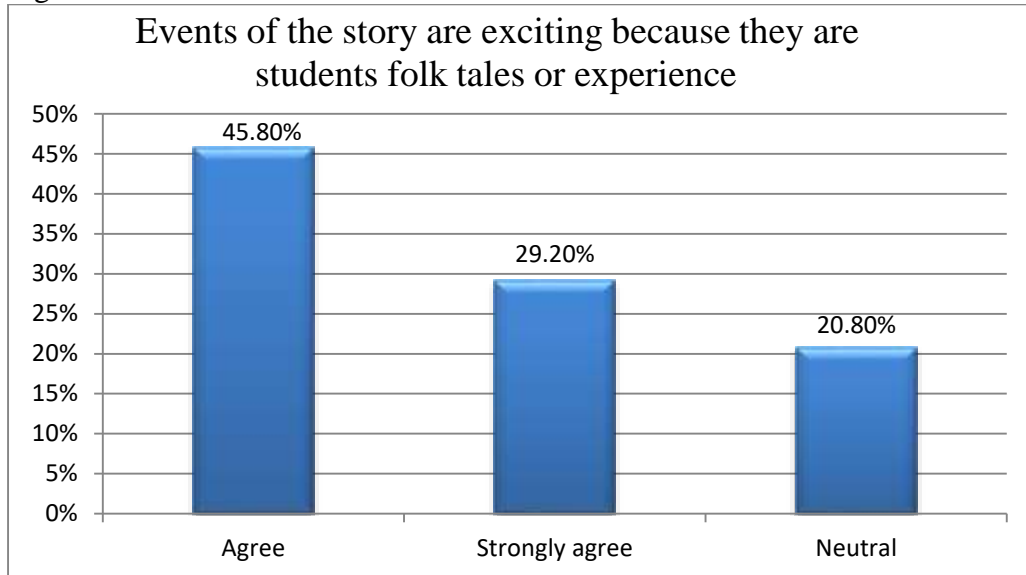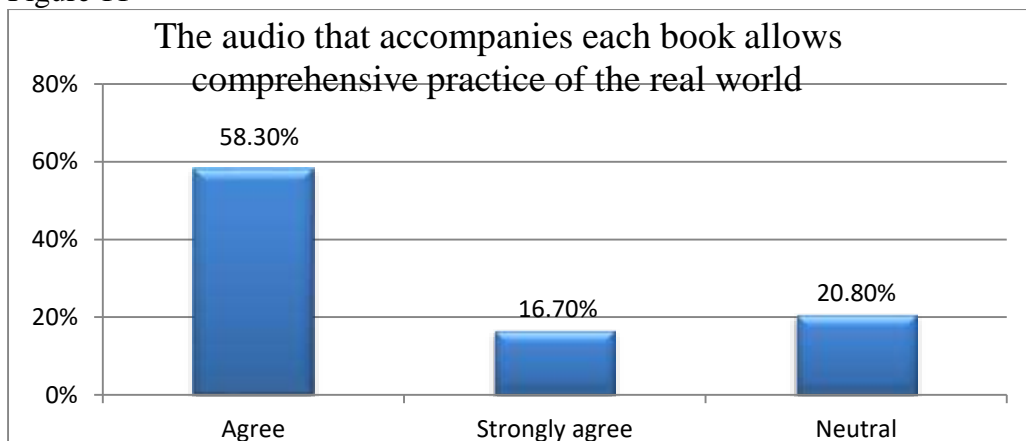**Students intrests to choose a book he likes and read it at his/her own pace**

The above item has five options [a. agree b. strongly agree c. neutral d. disagree e. strongly disagree], only three of these options were selected by the respondents. The data in graph eight showed that 54.20% of the respondents agreed that students should selected choose books on its own and 33.30% of them strongly agreed on it, while as 12.50% of them did not respond. Therefore, it clearly showed that most of the respondents agreed with the above statement.

Figure 9
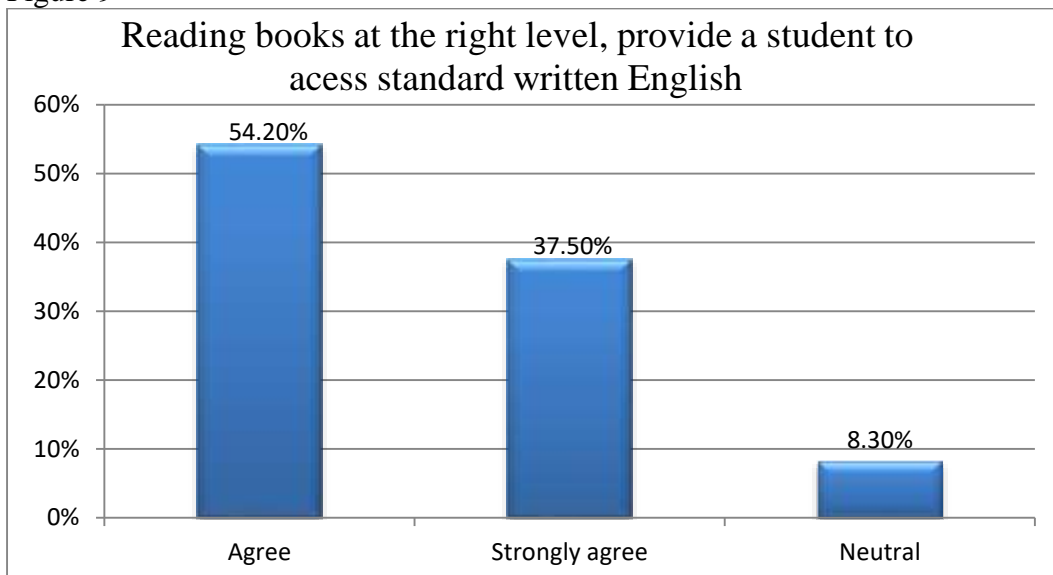
Reading books at the right level, provide a student to acess standard written English
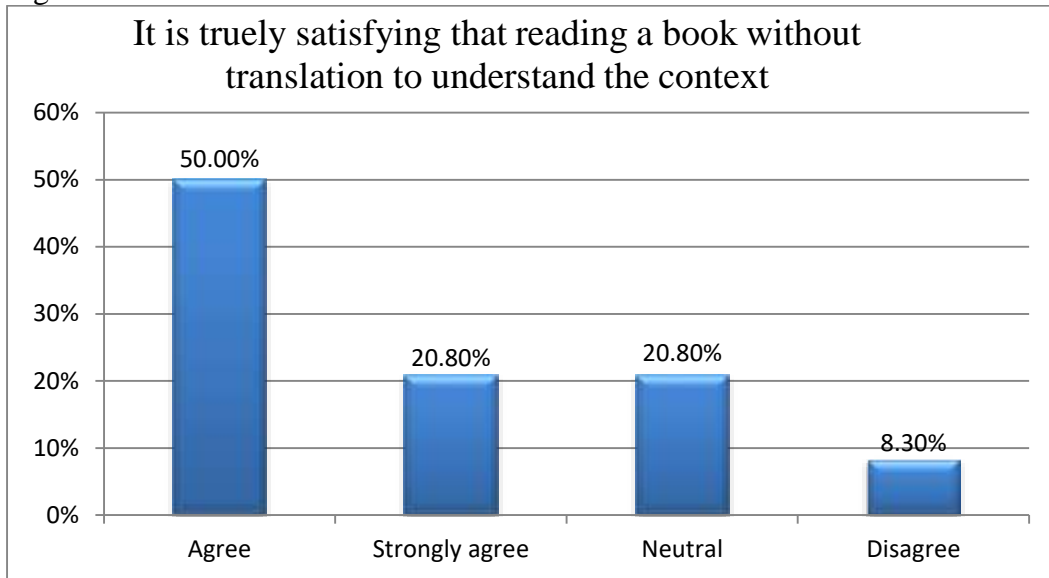
The above item has five options [a. agree b. strongly agree c. neutral d. disagree e. strongly disagree], only three of these options were selected by the respondents. The data in graph eight showed that 54.20% of the respondents agreed that reading books at the right level provide students access to the standard English and 37.50% of them Strongly agreed on the same, while as 8.30% of them did not respond. Therefore, it clearly presented that most of the teachers agreed on the above statement.

Figure 10

The above item has five options [a. agree b. strongly agree c. neutral d. disagree e. strongly disagree], only three of these options were selected by the respondents. The data in graph ten showed that 45.80% of the respondents agreed that story type books are excited for the students and 29.20% of them strongly agreed on the same, while as 20.80% of them did not respond. Therefore, it clearly presented that most of the teachers agreed with the above statement.
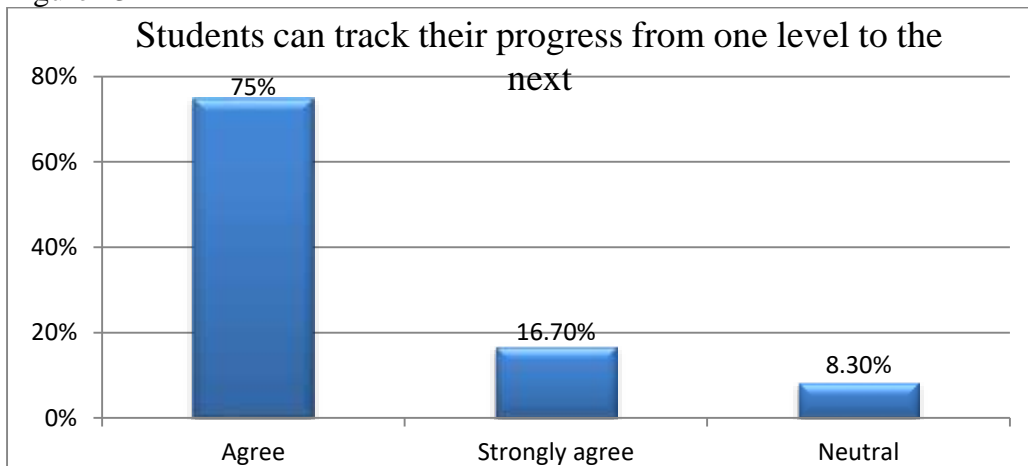
Figure 11

The above item has five options [a. agree b. strongly agree c. neutral d. disagree e. strongly disagree], only three of these options were selected by the respondents. The data in graph eleven showed that 53.30% of the respondents agreed that audio which accompanies each books allows students to comprehend real world and 16.70% of them strongly agreed on the same, while as 20.80% of them did not respond. Therefore, it clearly presented that most of the teachers agreed with the above statement.
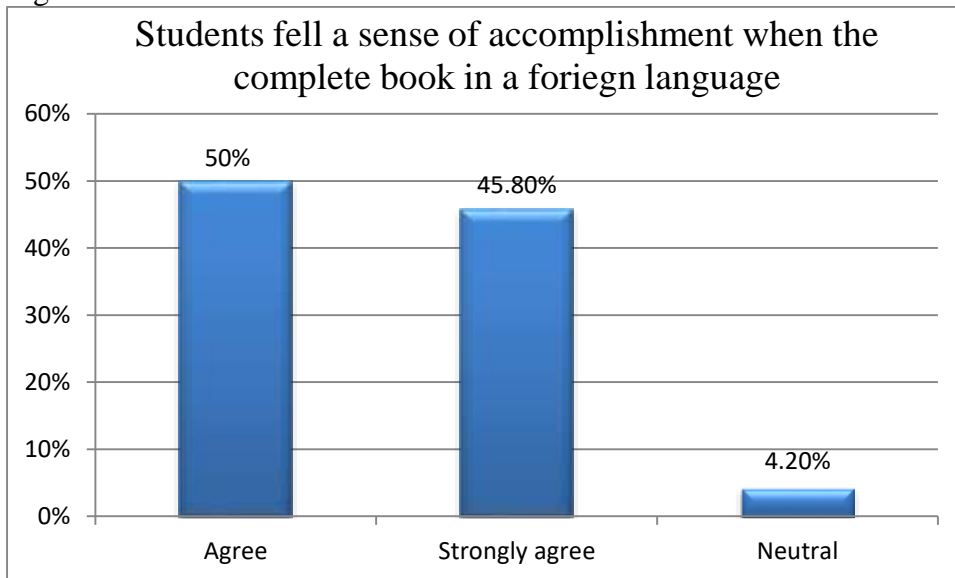
Figure 12

The above item has five options [a. agree b. strongly agree c. neutral d. disagree e. strongly disagree], only three of these options were selected by the respondents. The data in graph twelve showed that 50% of the respondents agreed that it is truly satisfying that reading a book without translation to understand the context and 20.80% of them strongly agreed on the same, while 20.80% did not respond and 8.30% of them disagreed with the above statement.
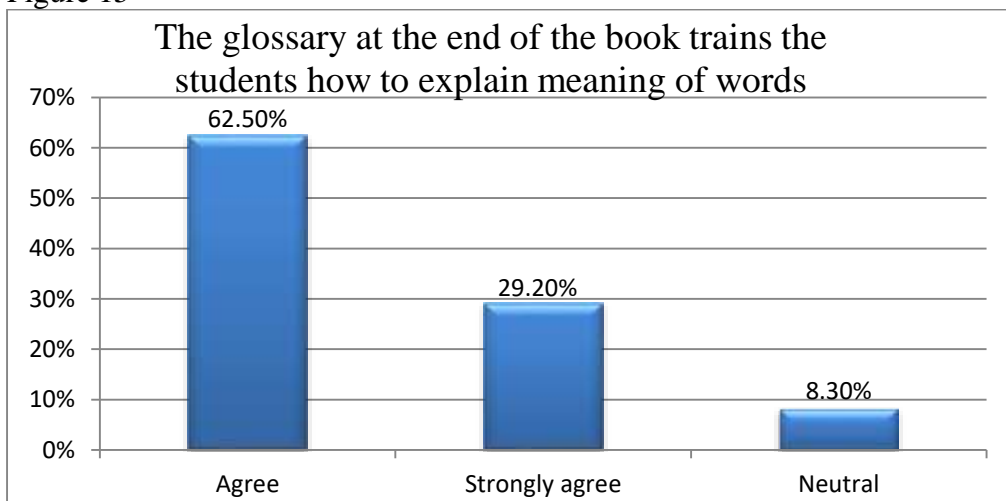
Figure 13

The above item has five options [a. agree b. strongly agree c. neutral d. disagree e. strongly disagree], only three of these options were selected by the respondents. The data in graph thirteen showed that 75% of the responded agreed that students can track their progress from one level to the next and 16.70% of them strongly agreed on the same, while as 8.30% of them did not respond. Therefore, it clearly showed that most of the teachers agreed with the above statement.

Figure 14

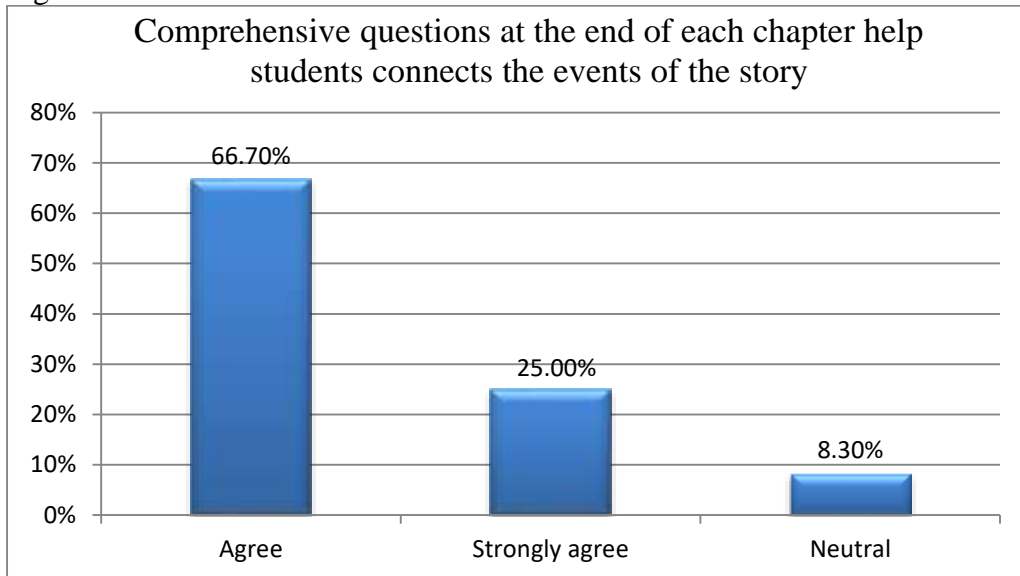**Students fell a sense of accomplishment when the complete book in a foriegn language**

The above item has five options [a. agree b. strongly agree c. neutral d. disagree e. strongly disagree], only three of these options were selected by the respondents. The data in graph fourteen showed that 50% of the respondents agreed student fells a sense of accomplishment when the complete book in a foreign language and 45.80% strongly agreed on the same, while as 4.2% did not respond. Therefore, it clearly showed that most of the teachers agreed with the above statement.

Figure 15

The glossary at the end of the book trains the students how to explain meaning of words
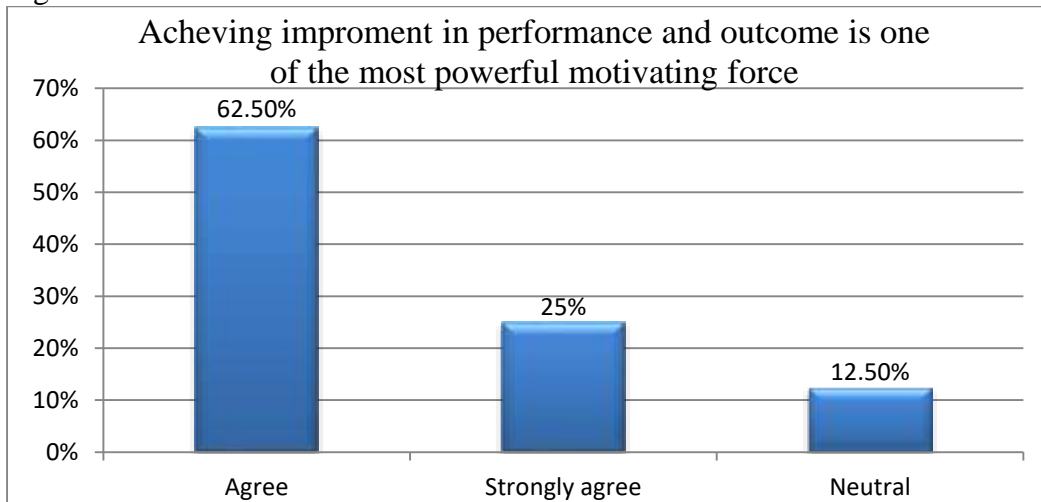
The above item has five options [a. agree b. strongly agree c. neutral d. disagree e. strongly disagree], only three of these options were selected by the respondents. The data in graph fifteen showed that 62.5% of the responded that the glossary at the end of the book trains the students the meaning of words and 29.20% strongly agreed on the same, while as 8.3% did not respond. Therefore, it clearly presented that most of the teachers were agreed with the above statement.
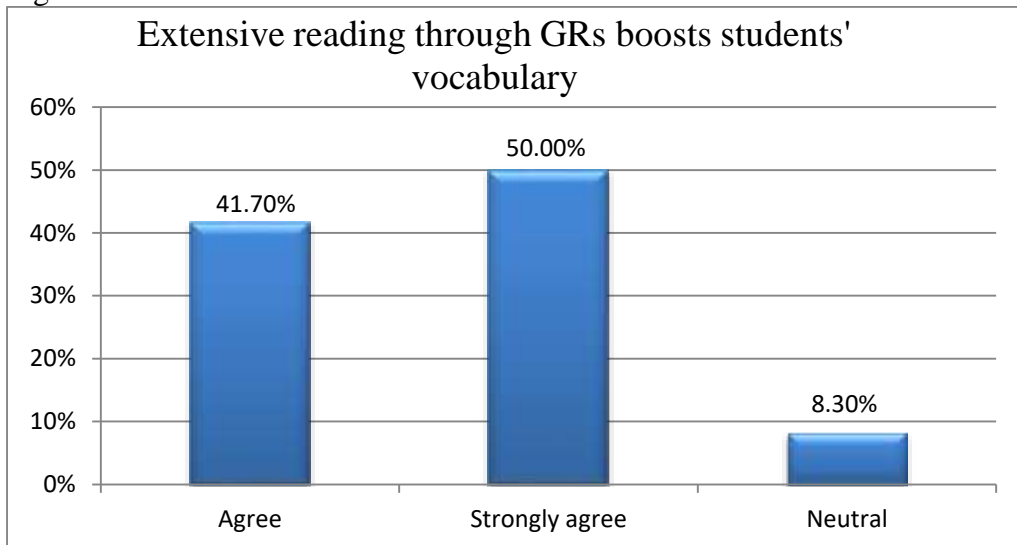
Figure 16

The above item has five options [a. agree b. strongly agree c. neutral d. disagree e. strongly disagree], only three of these options were selected by the respondents. The data in graph sixteen showed that 66.70% of the respondents are agreed that comprehensive questions at the end of the each chapter of book connect the events of the story and 25% of them strongly agreed on the same. Therefore, it clearly presented that most of the teachers are agreed with the above statement.
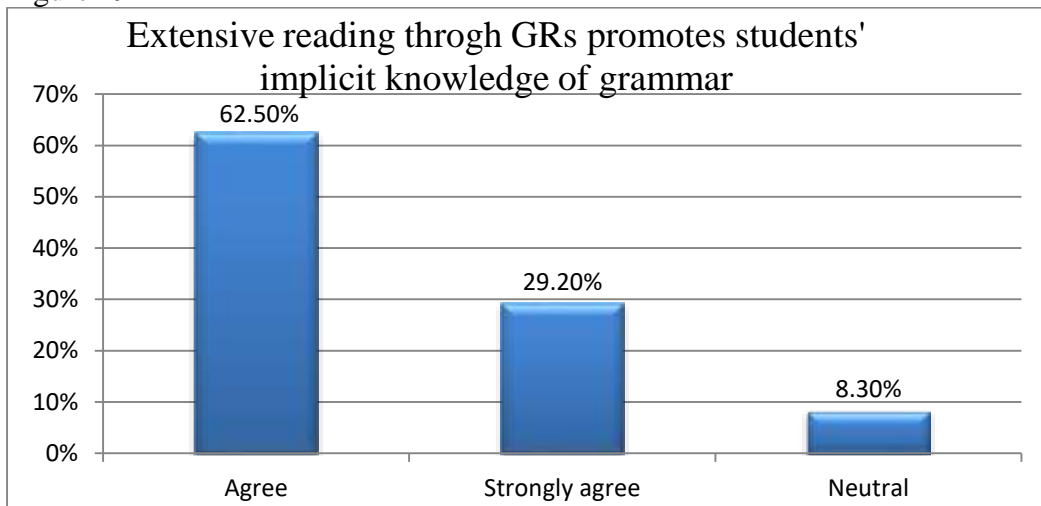
Figure 17

The above item has five options [a. agree b. strongly agree c. neutral d. disagree e. strongly disagree], only three of these options were selected by the respondents. The data in graph seventeen stated that 62.5% of the respondents agreed that when students got improvement in performance and outcome motivates students for reading and 25% of them strongly agreed on the same, while as 12.50% did not respond. Therefore it clearly presented that the most of the teachers agreed with the above statement.

Figure 18

The above item has five options [a. agree b. strongly agree c. neutral d. disagree e. strongly disagree], only three of these options were selected by the respondents. The data in graph eighteen showed that 41.70% of the respondents agreed that extensive reading through GRs boosts' students' vocabulary and 50% of them strongly agreed on the same, while as 8.3% of the respondents did not respond. Therefore, it clearly stated that all most all the teachers are agreed with above statement.
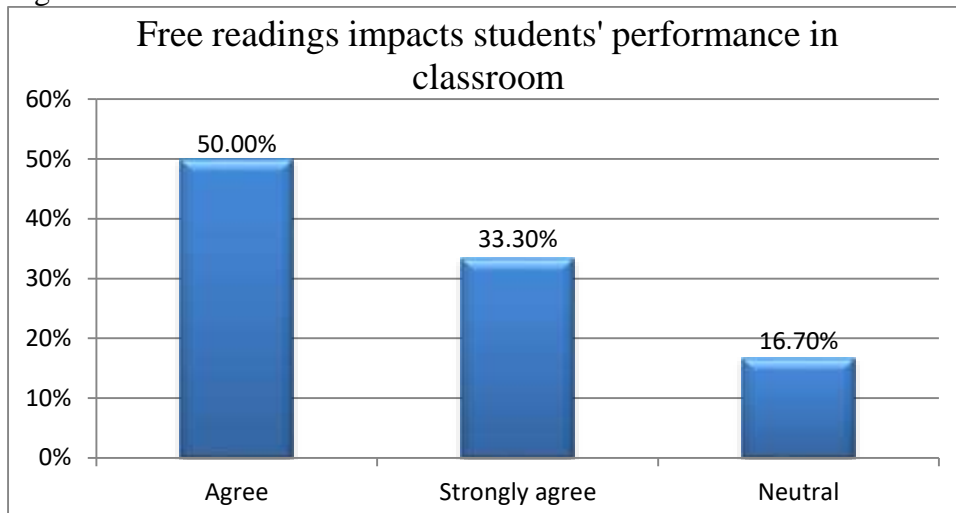
Figure 19

The above item has five options [a. agree b. strongly agree c. neutral d. disagree e. strongly disagree], only three of these options were selected by the respondents. The data in graph sixteen showed that 62.5% of the respondents agreed that extensive reading through GRs promotes students' implicit knowledge of grammar and 29.20% of them strongly agreed on the same, while as 8.3% of them did not respond. Therefore, it clearly showed that most of the teachers agreed with the above statement.

Figure 20

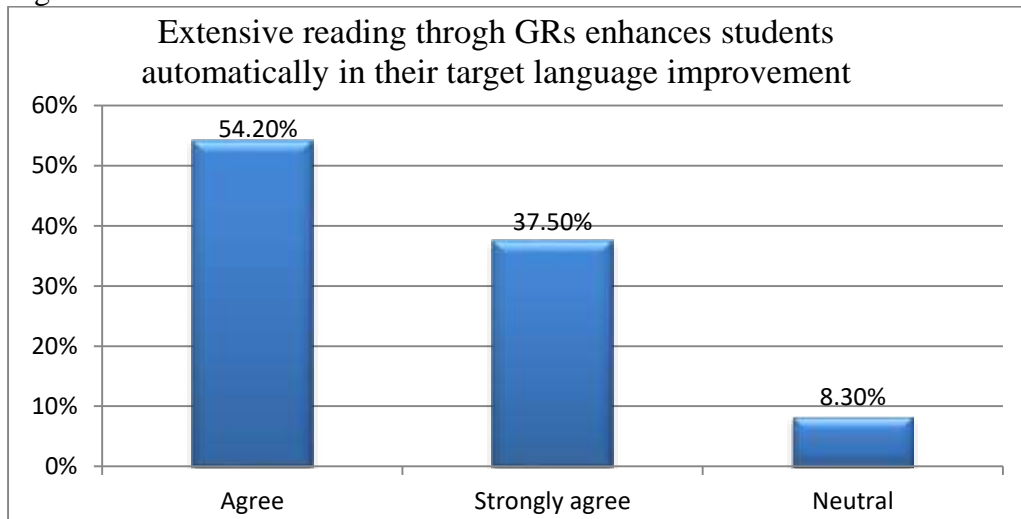Free readings impacts students' performance in classroom

The above item has five options [a. agree b. strongly agree c. neutral d. disagree e. strongly disagree], only three of these options were selected by the respondents. The data in graph sixteen showed that 50% of the respondents agreed that free reading impacts students' performance in classroom and 33.3% of them agreed on the same, while as 16.7% did not respond. Therefore, it clearly showed that most of the teachers are agreed with the above statement.

Figure 21

Extensive reading throgh GRs enhances students automatically in their target language improvement

The above item has five options [a. agree b. strongly agree c. neutral d. disagree e. strongly disagree], only three of these options were selected by the respondents. The data in graph sixteen showed that 54.20% of the respondents agreed that extensive reading through GRs enhances students' performance in their target language and 37.5% of them strongly agreed on the same, while as 8.3% did not respond. Therefore, it clearly stated that most of the teachers are agreed with above statement.

CONCLUSION
The findings of each teacher's response to questionnaire, along with observations, allowed for the need of recommending students to read graded readers. To draw conclusions, graded

readers within students experience i.e. the ones they have read in their native language or watched them as movies could motivate students to read extensively. The findings indicated that majority of teachers are fully aware of the graded readers and they do recommend the educational institutions to furnish libraries with such books. Both male and female teachers across the preparatory year had very similar perceptions of graded readers in motivating students to find reading as fun.

Further study is needed to examine how far graded readers can motivate them to read for fun from students' point of view.

References

Carter, Ronald and Michael McCarthy. (1991). "Discourse and Creativity: Bridging the Gap between Language and Literature", published in Principles and Practices in Applied Linguistics, Guy Cook and Barbara Seidlhofer (Eds.). Oxford University Press, PP. 303-321.

Di Yanni, Robert. (1998). *Literature: Reading Fiction, Poetry, Drama, and the Essa.*

Krashen, S. D. (2002). Second language acquisition and second language learning.New York:

Elliot, R. 1990. "Encouraging reader-response to literature in ESL situations, in ELT Journal, Vol, 44, No. 3, pp. 191-198.

Dr Abdullah al Dera (2011)Dean, College of Arts and Science, Najran University, KSA

Dr Muhammad Emdadul Huq (2011) Professor of English, Najran University, KSA

Mckay, Sandra. Literature in ESL Classroom, published in Literature and Language Teaching, Brumfit, C. J and R A Carter. (Eds).

Scott Thornbury, *Beyond the Sentence*, 2005, Macmillan

Macmillan http://www.macmillaneducation.com/

Cambridge University Press. http://www.cambridge.org/elt/readers

Penguin Readers. http://www.penguinreaders.com

Statement of Originality and Submission Information

Teachers' Perception of Graded Readers in Motivating EFL students on Extensive

We the under signed declare the following matters of submission on the above original paper.

1. We are authors of the above paper.

2. We agree to submit this paper to the journal ISIJ International.

3. We certify that this is original paper and it has not been previously published, is under submission, or currently in press elsewhere.

 4. We accept the Copyright Regulations and the Instructions for Authors prescribed by ISIJ.

5. We agree to pay the page charges, when the above paper is accepted.

Author Name：