

## **Exploring English-speaking fluency among Iraqi EFL students at the Colleges of Basic Education in different contexts**

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**Date of research submission :18/6/2026**

**Date of publication acceptance : 19/7/2026**

**Date of publication :29/8/2026**



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### **Abstract**

This study aims to assess the level of English-speaking fluency among Iraqi EFL students at the Colleges of Basic Education and it is an attempt to investigate the statistical difference between students' fluency performance in monologic and dialogic tasks. The instrument include a test of oral fluency of two main tasks (monologic and dialogic) and a related analytical rubrics to score the participants' responses. A sample of (310) male and female EFL students from third year Basic Education college ( 155 from University of Almustansiriyah /College of Basic Education and 155 from University of Diyala /College of Basic Education) has been selected randomly. The results show that the Iraqi EFL students' speaking fluency performance is distributed across four fluency levels: excellent, good, fair, and poor. (40%) of students are within the fair fluency level. ( 30%) of the students are

classified as good speakers, while only 10% demonstrated excellent fluency and 20% were categorized as poor speakers. Iraqi EFL students demonstrated significantly higher fluency levels in dialogic tasks than in monologic ones, in the total fluency performance and across the three fluency dimensions: speed, breakdown, and repair.

**Keywords:** English-speaking fluency - Iraqi EFL students - Colleges of Basic Education

استكشاف الطلاقة الشفوية باللغة الإنجليزية لدى طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية  
(EFL) بكليات التربية الأساسية العراقية في سياقات مختلفة

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تاريخ استلام البحث : 2026/6/18

تاريخ قبول النشر : 2026/7/19 - تاريخ النشر 2026/8/29



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### الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تقويم مستوى الطلاقة الشفوية باللغة الإنجليزية لدى طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL) في كليات التربية الأساسية العراقية، كما تسعى إلى الكشف عن الفروق الإحصائية بين أداء الطلبة في مهام التحدث الأحادي (Monologic) ومهام التحدث الحواري (Dialogic). اشتملت أداة الدراسة على اختبار للطلاقة الشفوية يتكون من مهمتين رئيسيتين (أحادية وحوارية)، بالإضافة إلى قائمة تقدير تحليلية لتقييم استجابات المشاركين. وقد اختيرت عينة عشوائية مكونة من (310) طالباً وطالبة من طلبة المرحلة الثالثة في كليات التربية الأساسية، بواقع (155) طالباً من كلية التربية الأساسية في الجامعة المستنصرية و(155) طالباً من كلية التربية الأساسية في جامعة ديالى. و أظهرت النتائج أن أداء الطلبة العراقيين في الطلاقة الشفوية توزع على أربعة مستويات هي: ممتاز، جيد، مقبول، وضعيف؛ حيث وقع (40%) من الطلبة ضمن مستوى الطلاقة المقبول، و(30%) ضمن المستوى الجيد، بينما

أظهر (10٪) فقط مستوى ممتازاً من الطلاقة، وصُنِّفَ (20٪) ضمن المستوى الضعيف. كما بينت النتائج أن الطلبة العراقيين حققوا مستويات أعلى بصورة دالة إحصائية في مهام التحدث الحوارية مقارنة بمهام التحدث الأحادي، سواء في الأداء الكلي للطلاقة أو في أبعادها الثلاثة: السرعة، والتوقفات (الانقطاع)، والإصلاح. **الكلمات المفتاحية:** الطلاقة الشفوية باللغة الإنجليزية، طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في العراق، كليات التربية الأساسية.

## 1. The problem and its Significance

Fluency is a key component of speaking abilities which enables learners to express smoothly and confidently. It reflects the speaker's ability to produce speech with appropriate speed, rhythm, and continuity, speaker's ability to speak without hesitation or unnecessary breakdowns in communication. Brown (2010) asserts that for many language learners, being fluent is a primary goal. Indicators of fluency include speaking at a reasonably speed with limited pauses to express their message. Therefore, developing speaking fluency should be a primary objective for language learners across proficiency levels. Goh and Burns (2012) argue that this aim should be applied to both beginning and advanced learners across the whole learning process. Language fluency is characterized by the presence of features that give speech a natural and normal quality.

Consequently, varied research in Iraqi EFL context, highlight the need to explore the factors that effect on oral fluency and the need to develop EFL speaking fluency through various instructional methods and strategies (Almadhady and Muhsen, 2022; Al-Khazaali, 2022; Al-Obeidi & Alahmed, 2022; Hasan & Alavinia, 2025), they also concluded that EFL speaking fluency remains insufficient among university students, highlighting the need to replace the traditional instructional methods with more innovative approaches.

Moreover, deep analysis on the EFL students' oral fluency components is needed to better understand the interaction between speech rate, pausing behavior, and linguistic accuracy in their oral production. Adding to Sultana and Usha (2026) that recommend

analyzing EFL students' oral productive behaviors in both dialogic and monologic discourse, there is also a need to analyze students' oral production in both monologic and dialogic discourse in order to capture variation in fluency, interactional competence, and discourse organization across different communicative settings, as the shift from monologic to dialogic pedagogy has become an important theme in applied linguistics and language education (Lyle, 2008). Al-Adeimi and O'Connor, (2021) suggest that dialogic classroom talk can strengthen oral communicative competence and create more productive opportunities.

In light of the previous limitations and gaps in the Iraqi EFL teaching context, the present study seeks to investigate the spoken fluency of EFL majors at the college of Basic Education through a systematic and descriptive approach

### **1.1 Aims of the Study**

This study aims to:

1. Assess the level of English-speaking fluency among Iraqi EFL students at the Colleges of Basic Education.
2. Exploring the statistical difference between students' monologic and dialogic fluency performance.
3. Exploring the statistical difference in the students' speaking fluency based on gender difference (male-female)

#### **1.1. Questions of the Study**

- Q1. What is the level of English-speaking fluency among Iraqi EFL students at the Colleges of Basic Education?
- Q2. What is the statistical difference between the students' fluency performance in monologic and dialogic tasks?
- Q3. What is the statistical difference in the students' speaking fluency based on gender difference (male-female)?

#### **1.2. Limitations of the study**

The current study is limited to assess the oral speaking fluency of (310) Iraqi EFL third year Basic Education college students, during the academic year (2025-2026), in Universities of Almustansiriyah and Diyala.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

### **2.1. Speaking in Second/Foreign Language Contexts**

A review of previous studies define speaking into two dominant perspectives: the bottom-up and top-down approaches. Bygate (1987) states a bottom-up view, which concentrates on motor-perceptive skills. according to this view, speaking is defined as the physical act of producing auditory signals to elicit verbal responses from a listener. Speaking is viewed as the process of systematically combining sounds based on specific rules of a language to form meaningful utterances (Cornbleet & Carter, 2001). However, this approach overlooks the essential interactive and communicative nature of speaking, restricting it to the correct formation of sounds and words. In light of this view, Dorgham (2011) asserted that speaking is related to oral products in speech. He divided speaking into different units: fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, and intonation.

Alternatively, Bygate (1998, 23) advocates adopting a definition of speaking based on interactional skills which involve making decisions about communication. This is considered a top- down view of speaking. Adopting this view, Ur (2000, 10) states that “speaking is a skill used by someone in daily life communication, whether at school or outside. The skill is required by much repetition; it is primarily considered a neuromuscular and not an intellectual process. It consists of competence in sending and receiving messages”.

Furthermore, Florez (1999, 2) considered speaking as “an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving, and processing information.” Speaking is an act of making vocal sounds. It is a means to converse, or express one's thoughts and feelings in spoken language. To speak often implies conveying information. It may be from an informal remark to a scholarly presentation to a formal address. Brown (2010) adds more explanation mentioning that speaking is an interacting process that contains certain skills such as giving oral presentations, making suggestions, making requests, and giving

advice that enhances the oral fluency of prospective teachers of English by using at least five kinds of intelligence. Mora (2010) indicates that speaking is a process that focuses on building and sharing meaning by using verbal and non-verbal symbols.

Based on the previous definitions, speaking skill is the ability to communicate effectively and fluently in a spoken language. These skills encompass various aspects of oral communication, including pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, intonation, fluency, and coherence. possessing speaking skills enables individuals to express their thoughts, ideas, opinions, and emotions clearly and appropriately in different social and professional contexts.

## **2.2. Spoken Fluency in Language Learning**

### **2.2.1. Nature of Fluency**

Oral fluency as a construct can be seen from several perspectives and viewpoints. Koponen & Riggienback (2000) identified four primary conceptualizations of oral fluency in the context of foreign language development. The first perspective views oral fluency as a speech smoothness, which is dependent on the temporal, phonetic, and acoustical features of the speech. The second conceptualizes fluency as proficiency, or as a component of it. This represents a broader, more comprehensive view where smoothness is considered only one part of overall fluency. The third viewpoint defines fluency as the automaticity of underlying psychological processes. The fourth and final perspective defines fluency as being in opposition to accuracy. This last view highlights the distinction between accuracy-focused activities, where learners concentrate on the language itself, and fluency-focused activities, where the primary goal is communication.

From the same narrowest view of oral fluency, Lennon (2000) considers it as “the rapid, smooth, accurate, lucid, and effective translation of thought or communicative intention into language”. Moreover, Rossiter et al. (2010) explains it “as one of the most salient markers of proficiency in a second language. The term “fluency” has a range of meanings, the most common of which is related to high proficiency, that is, an excellent grasp of the

vocabulary and grammar of a language”. De Jong et al. (2015) define oral fluency as a speedy and smooth delivery of speech without filled pauses, repetitions, repairs, hesitations, or reformulations. Handley and Wang (2018, 5) state that “fluency refers to speaking at a good pace without pausing or hesitating.” From a cognitive and psychological Perspective, Ellis (2009, 475) considers fluency as “the capacity to use language in real time, to emphasize meanings, possibly drawing on more lexicalized systems. Brown (2003) states that oral fluency is a productive sub-skill that focuses on content rather than form”. The British Broadcasting Corporation (2003) defines fluency as the ability of the speakers to communicate their ideas fast without unnecessary stopping or too much thinking. Baker and Westrup (2003, 90) showed that “fluency means speaking with ease and without thinking about possible errors.” Furthermore, fluency relates to the learners’ ability to use the language easily and freely to express their thoughts and ideas regardless of the mistakes they make. Students should be encouraged to talk and express themselves as this enforces their self-confidence as well as their self-esteem (Tumova, 2002).

As a multicomponent skill, Richards and Schmidt (2002, 204) stated that fluency is “the features which give a speech the qualities of being natural and normal, including the native-like use of pausing, rhythm, intonation, stress, the rate of speaking, and use of interjections and interruptions”. In the same vein, oral fluency is identified as an important sub-skill of the main skill of speaking. It implies the ease and smoothness with which a foreign language is expressed and produced, characterized by an absence of stops, pauses, hesitations, or the need to reformulate thoughts (Dotan-Eliaz, 2008).

Based on the previous definitions, it could be assumed that oral fluency is a multidimensional construct involving linguistic and communicative dimensions. Different perspectives explaining oral fluency, reveal that fluency does not mean speed or smoothness, but rather, it refers to a complex interaction between accuracy,

automaticity, and communicative use of language. Fluency is characterized by the smooth, rapid, and a maintaining flow of speech, free from unneeded pauses, hesitations, or repairs during communication.

### **2.2.2. Dimensions of Fluency:**

Reviewing previous literature and studies, it is revealed that there are three dimensions of oral fluency which focus on how fast one speaks as well as how smoothly and effortlessly one produces and constructs speech in real communication (Richards & Schmidt, 2002; Elder & Iwashita, 2005; Housen & Kuiken, 2009; Segalowitz, 2010; Devries, 2017).

#### **A. Continuity (Smoothness and Flow of Speech)**

Iwashita and Elder (2005) note that fluency is assessed by counting repetitions, false starts, reformulations, and replacements. Stockdale (2009) assumes that “if a speaker pauses appropriately, talks at a reasonable rate, and forms sentences clearly, they are likely to be perceived as more fluent than a speaker who does not”. Pineda (2017) also said that “ speed and length of speech as well as creating comprehensible and coherent ideas expressed through semantically and grammatically correct sentences as essential components of oral fluency”.

Derwing, et al. (2004) have shown the correlation of oral fluency with speech rate, the correct use of pauses, and filling fillers techniques such as um and uh, as well as mean length of the run. Housen and Kuiken (2009) stated that oral EFL oral fluency development involves dimensions such as breakdown fluency, which is indexed by pausing, and repair fluency, which is indexed by measures such as reformulation, repetition, false starts, and replacements.

#### **B. Rate of speech (speed)**

Devries (2017) includes rate as a major component of fluency, referring to the smooth and rapid production of utterances without hesitations and pauses. Housen and Kuiken (2009) identify speed fluency as a dimension measured by indicators such as syllables per minute.

Saville-Troike (2012) confirms that it is clarified in the production of the “use of automated rule-based systems.” Segalowitz (2010) defines utterance fluency as “the speaker’s ability to speak smoothly and fast”, emphasizing the temporal aspect of oral delivery. Moreover, Gatbonton and Segalowitz (2005) describe oral fluency by automatic, smooth, and rapid language use, while Schmidt (1992) referred to fluency as an automatic procedural skill.

### **C. Effort (Automaticity)**

Devries (2017) identifies automaticity as a core component of fluency, emphasizing effortless and smooth language production. Furthermore, Walpole and McKenna (2017) consider vocabulary, and sentence structure as additional components that support automatic, effortless speech. Segalowitz (2007) adds that access fluidity, or the ability to connect words and expressions to their meanings, forms an important component of oral fluency. In this way, automaticity in target language production is enhanced as learners engage in the repetition of the same tasks. Practice, therefore, appears to be indispensable for achieving fluency in a second language (L2). This assertion is expected to be strongly confirmed if the hypotheses of the current study are supported..

#### **2.2.3. Monologic versus Dialogic Fluency**

Monologic fluency refers to the smoothness, speed, continuity and coherence of speech produced by a single speaker over an extended stretch of talk. Typical measures include speech rate (syllables/words per minute), mean length of runs between pauses, pause frequency and duration, and measures of repair (self-corrections, false starts) (Lennon, 1990). Monologic tasks place demands on the speaker’s ability to plan content and language in advance and to maintain a discourse thread without interlocutor support.

Dialogic (interactional) fluency emphasizes the co-ordinated, real-time exchange between interlocutors. It is characterized by rapid turn-taking, responsive timing (minimal gaps or overlaps), interactive repair, alignment of lexical choices, and the ability to

negotiate meaning and manage sequencing (Pickering & Garrod, 2004). In dialogic contexts, fluency depends not only on an individual speaker's processing but also on interlocutor behavior, the two speakers co-regulate the conversation (Brennan & Clark, 1996).

Dialogic fluency draws on somewhat different cognitive dynamics. Conversation is inherently interactive: speakers can offload planning demands onto partners (e.g., through questions, clarifications, or co-constructed phrases) and can rely on mutual grounding mechanisms (Pickering & Garrod, 2004). In other words, dialogic contexts distribute cognitive load across participants and across time. Both facilitate spontaneity and create on-the-spot processing pressure. Kormos (2006) emphasizes the role of working memory and on-line processing in both modes, highlighting that the dialogic task requires additional resources for monitoring interlocutor cues and predicting turn ends.

Segalowitz (2010) states that well-practiced language forms are retrieved rapidly with low attention cost, and free cognitive resources for higher-level interactional goals. According to Shumin (2002), mastering grammar and semantics alone is insufficient for learning to speak a foreign language fluently. It is important to take into account some of the major elements affecting students' oral fluency in English speaking performance. Speaking fluently requires more than just honing speaking techniques and tactics; it also takes into account a variety of other elements, such as linguistic, emotive, cognitive, and performance variables (Thituyetanh, 2015).

### **2.3. Previous studies**

Grimshaw, et al. (2016) conducted a study to explore the development of oral fluency in a computer-mediated communication environment that uses this digital game as a pedagogical tool. Twenty high-beginner/low-intermediate English as a Second Language (ESL) learners participated in the study, divided into two groups: an experimental group (n=11), and the control group (n=9). The study followed a mixed methods design

with pre-, post-, and delayed post-tests to measure developments in oral fluency. The results suggest that mobile games such as Space team ESL have the potential to assist in fluency development.

Al-Ghazali and Alrefaee (2019) examined oral fluency within the EFL context by focusing specifically on the phenomenon of silent pauses. Their investigation analyzed three aspects of these pauses: their frequency, placement, and length. The data were collected from 20 level-four students enrolled in the Department of English Language at Taiz University. Participants were recorded while narrating the events of a short silent video immediately after watching it. The data were analyzed quantitatively using the waveform and spectrogram software PRAAT. The findings revealed a distinct overuse of silent pauses by the learners. Based on this, it was highly suggested that pedagogical interventions should draw learners' attention to the notion of pausing.

Al-Khazaali (2022) tried to identify the problems and difficulties facing the Iraqi high school students in developing speaking skills. the study involved six high school participants in Misan, utilizing learner interviews and classroom observations as instruments of collecting data. The results indicated that learners' speaking development is hindered by difficulties that constrain their efforts to cooperate and express themselves in everyday circumstances. Other factors inhibiting oral proficiency include inadequately qualified teachers, institutional procedures, evaluation structures, and insufficient application of audio-visual aids.

Ali and Poulis (2022) aimed to find significant differences in the oral reading fluency levels of first- and second-year Kurdish EFL students, the study depends on a multidimensional fluency scale. Seventy-four Kurdish EFL students participated in the research. The level of students' oral reading fluency was measured based on the four fluency dimensions: Expression and volume, phrasing, smoothness, and pacing. Results revealed that students achieved a low overall ORF level. However, the level of second-year students showed improvement across all dimensions, ordered from most to

least improved as: pacing, smoothness, phrasing, and expression and volume.

Ghafar and Amin (2022) investigated students' speech problems and the relevant reasons. The researchers collected data from 12 second-year students at the National Institute of Technology in Sulaimaniyah city using semi-structured interviews. The results of analysis revealed that difficulties include psychological, social, environmental, interpersonal, and linguistic issues. Reasons were attributed to the instructor and instruction, the core curriculum, misuse of the mother tongue, insufficient education, and the classroom culture. The researchers recommend developing a positive atmosphere, promoting knowledge acquisition, modifying teaching approaches, and revising courses.

### **3. Methodology and results**

The present study follows the descriptive approach, which aims to identify the current state of the studied phenomenon and then describe it accurately.

#### **3.1. Population and sample**

The total population for this study consists of undergraduate students, specifically third-year Iraqi EFL students in the Department of English at the Colleges of Basic Education, (University of Almustansiriyah/College of Basic Education and University of Diyala /College of Basic Education), including both male and female students of the academic year 2025-2026. The total number of the students in the research population is (1546), Al-Mustansiriya University includes (232) students who represent ( 15 % of the total population), whereas, University of Diyala includes ( 227 ) students who represent ( 14.7% % of the total population). These statistics are based on the Ministry of Higher Education reports for the year (2026).

The sample was randomly selected from the research population, taking into account that the selected participants represent the population as accurately as possible. The basic research sample consisted of (310) students, including ((155) University of Almustansiriyah/college of basic education) and (155)( University

of Diyala /College of Basic Education). A total number of (141) male students (73 from university of Diyala and (68) from university of Almustansiriyah) and (169) female students participated (82 from university of Diyala and 87 from university of Almustansiriyah) in the study.

### 3.2. Instrument

The researcher developed a speaking fluency test and an analytic rubric for assessing the level of oral fluency among university EFL students. The semi-structured oral interview test was based on specific fluency frameworks (Skehan 2009; Segalowitz, 2010; and Lahmann et al., 2015), and assessed three dimensions of fluency: speed, breakdown, and repair.

The test consist of three main phases: a warm-up phase, a dialogic speaking task, a monologic speaking task, and a closing phase. The warm-up phase aimed to reduce students' anxiety and encourage natural speech production before the assessment tasks began. During this phase, the examiner initiated a short informal conversation with the student. Students were asked simple introductory questions such as: How are you today? Can you tell me a little about yourself? These questions helped establish rapport between the examiner and the participant and allowed students to become comfortable speaking in English before the main assessment tasks. The assessment phase included two main speaking tasks designed to elicit both

- **dialogic fluency** (an oral interview) : it lasts for six minutes for every participant, during which students responded to a series of questions related to familiar topics such as free time and entertainment.

- **monologic fluency**: students were asked to speak about a specific topic for approximately six minutes after being given three minutes of preparation time. Students were instructed to express their ideas freely and organize their thoughts while speaking.

After the assessment tasks were completed, the examiner concluded the interview with a short closing conversation to ensure a comfortable ending for the participant.

Students' performance was scored using a four-level analytic rubric, ranged from (1) poor, (2) fair, (3) good, and (4) excellent. Each fluency dimension was evaluated according to specific performance descriptors. Thus, each speaking task was scored according to the three fluency dimensions. The maximum score of Speed Fluency is (8), The maximum score of breakdown fluency is (12), and the maximum score of repair fluency is (12). Thus the total score of each task is (32). Since the test consisted of two main tasks, the total possible score for the complete speaking assessment was (64) points.

The test is validated and approved by specialists in TEFL. A pilot study on (40) students confirmed the clarity of instructions and tasks, revealing a reliability value of (0.82–0.88), internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.81), and test–retest reliability (0.78–0.81). The speaking test was conducted individually with each participant and consisted of three main stages.

### 3.3. Results and Discussion

**Question One:** " What is the level of English-speaking fluency among Iraqi EFL students at the Colleges of Basic Education." To answer this question frequencies and percentage are calculated. Table (1) shows the statistical results:

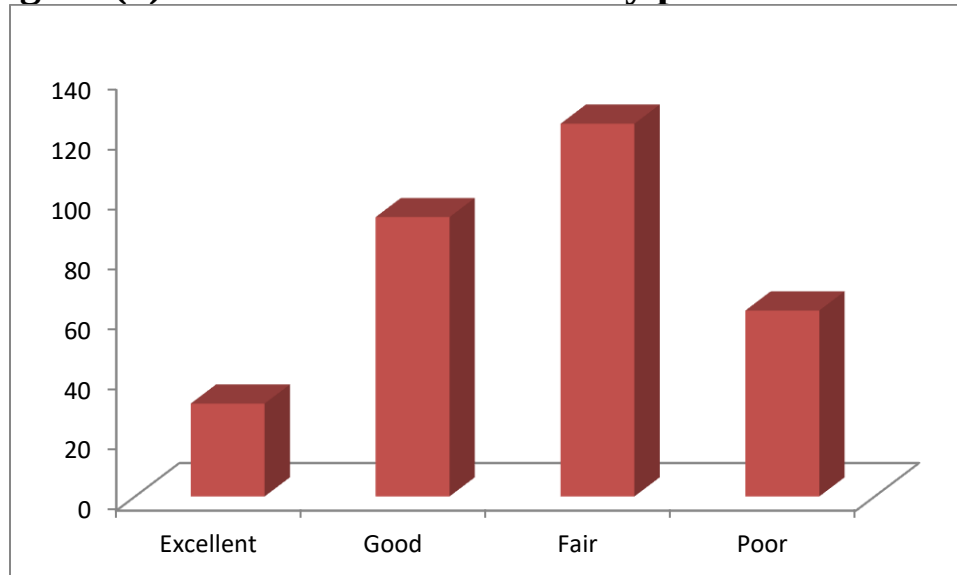
**Table (1)**  
**Statistical descriptive means of speaking fluency test**

| Fluency Level | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------|-----------|------------|
| Excellent     | 31        | 10%        |
| Good          | 93        | 30%        |
| Fair          | 124       | 40%        |
| Poor          | 62        | 20%        |
| Total         | 310       | 100%       |

Results of the previous table revealed four distinct level of oral fluency across the dialogic and monologic tasks. In detail, excellent fluent speakers who demonstrated the highest levels of fluency, represent (10%). Good fluent speakers represents (30%).

in this level, the participants showed generally strong but slightly less consistent fluency. they usually produced smooth speech, although there is a notable occasional hesitation. They moderately able to control pauses show acceptable fluency across tasks. represent (40%) of the participants are fair fluent speakers. Their performance reflects a moderate level of fluency. they produce shorter stretches of speech and experienced more frequent pauses during communication. Self-repairs were more noticeable. poor fluent speakers represent (20 %). Their speech was often slow and hesitant, characterized by fragmented utterances and frequent pauses. In addition, they frequently engaged in self-correction and used filled pauses, which further disrupted the flow of their speech.

**Figure (1) distribution of the fluency performance levels**



The results illustrate a clear progression in speaking fluency across the four levels, with higher-performing students producing longer and more continuous speech, while lower-performing students exhibited more pauses, hesitations, and repairs during speaking tasks.

### Discussion

The results of the previous question, provide important insights into the level of the EFL speaking fluency among Iraqi EFL students at the Colleges of Basic Education. These results indicate that most students demonstrate only a moderate level of speaking

fluency, with relatively few learners achieving high fluency performance. The participants are classified as excellent speakers produced longer stretches of speech with fewer pauses and minimal repairs, indicating stronger control over fluency components such as speed, breakdown, and repair. On contrary, fair and poor speakers demonstrate shorter speech runs, more frequent pauses, and increase self-repair behaviors, which are indicators of limited fluency development.

The availability of the fair level may be attributed to the fact that EFL instruction in Iraqi universities adopted traditional style of instruction, it emphasized the accurate grammar proficiency, vocabulary memorization, reading, and written examinations more than communicative competence. Consequently, although those students acquire basic linguistic knowledge, they receive limited opportunities to practice language in real situation and through spoken interaction, which affects the development of automaticity and fluency. Furthermore, the large class sizes and the limited instructional time, as well as the teachers' focus on achieving curriculum objectives often reduce opportunities for extended oral interaction, making it difficult for most learners to attain a high level of speaking fluency.

The previous results are consistent with the previous studies conducted in the Iraqi EFL context. Al-Khazaali (2022) reveals that Iraqi EFL learners encounter various challenges that hinder the development of speaking skills, including institutional constraints, limited instructional resources, and inadequate use of audiovisual materials in language teaching. Such factors can reduce opportunities for meaningful speaking practice and limit students' ability to develop fluency. in the same domain, Ghafar and Amin (2022) assure several psychological, social, and instructional factors contributing to students' speaking difficulties in Iraqi classrooms. Thus factors as, language anxiety, overreliance on the mother tongue, limited communicative practice, and traditional teaching methods that prioritize grammar instruction over communicative competence may hinder the students high

performance of fluency. The results also align with the findings of Ali and Poulis (2022), who examines oral reading fluency among Kurdish EFL university students and report generally low levels of fluency across several dimensions of oral performance. Thus, many EFL learners struggle with pacing, smoothness, and expressive delivery, which are key components of fluent speech production.

**Answering question (2):** “What are the statistical differences between students' monologic and dialogic fluency performance”. To explore the statistical difference between the students' fluency performance in monologic and dialogic tasks, the researcher uses the paired samples t-test which compares the mean performance of the same students across the two speaking fluency tasks involved in the test. Table (2) show the statistical descriptive results and t values.

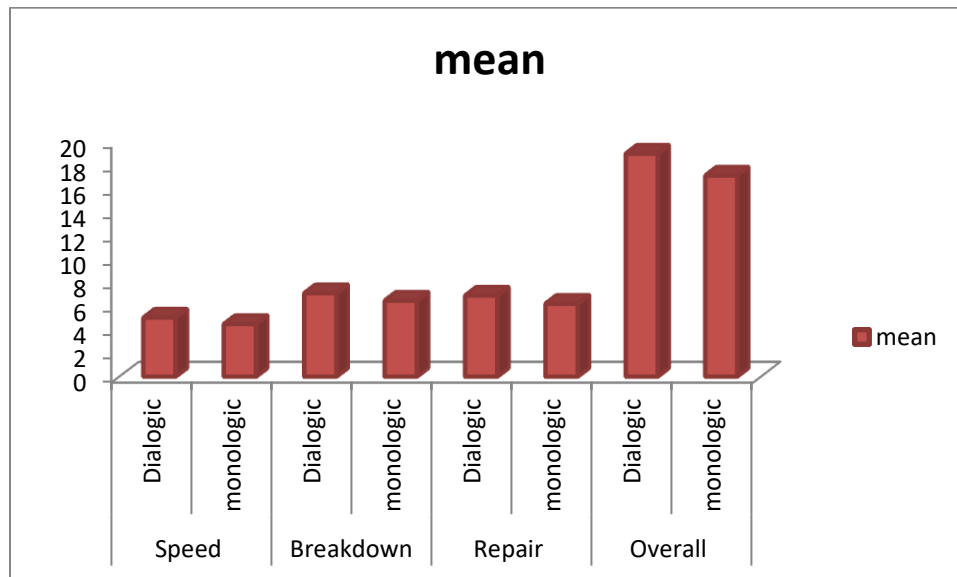
**Table (2)**  
**the statistical descriptive results and t values.**

| Variable  | Task      | M       | Std     | Correlation | Df  | “t”    | Sig  |
|-----------|-----------|---------|---------|-------------|-----|--------|------|
| Speed     | Dialogic  | 5.0065  | 1.50510 | 0.875*      | 309 | 12.759 | 0.01 |
|           | monologic | 4.4613  | 1.49977 |             |     |        |      |
| Breakdown | Dialogic  | 7.0871  | 2.31545 | 0.928 *     |     | 12.974 | 0.01 |
|           | monologic | 6.4516  | 2.17575 |             |     |        |      |
| Repair    | Dialogic  | 6.8806  | 2.28162 | 0.916 *     |     | 13.223 | 0.01 |
|           | monologic | 6.1935  | 2.13492 |             |     |        |      |
| Overall   | Dialogic  | 18.9742 | 5.92723 | 0.962 *     |     | 20.367 | 0.01 |
|           | monologic | 17.1065 | 5.62228 |             |     |        |      |

Results in the previous table, reveal that the participants demonstrate a higher fluency level in the dialogic task compared with the monologic one in the total fluency performance and across the three main skills, as the t- value in the total fluency test is (20.367) and significant at (0.01). In term of, speed the participants speak faster and more smoothly during dialogic

interaction than in monologic speech. With regard to the breakdown dimension, they produce more pauses and interruptions in monologic speech, indicating greater difficulty maintaining continuous speech. In repair fluency, they produce more repair behaviors (repetitions, filled pauses, self-corrections) during monologic tasks. Thus, they demonstrate higher fluency during dialogic interaction, while monologic tasks present greater challenges in maintaining speech continuity and reducing repair behaviors

**Figure (2): Differences of the participants' oral fluency across test tasks**



## Discussion

Based on the previous results, the deep analysis of the participants performance in the dialogic and monologic tasks, reveals a statistical difference of both tasks, in which dialogic speaking task mean scores is higher than monologic task across the three fluency skills, suggesting that interactive speaking contexts facilitate better fluency performance than individual speaking tasks. Thus, when EFL students engage in dialogic communication, they benefit from interactional support such as turn-taking, contextual cues, and feedback from interlocutors, which can reduce cognitive load and help maintain speech flow. In this regard, practicing the monologic task requires them to generate extended independent speech, which

demands greater linguistic organization and speed control. This lower performance in monologic tasks therefore reflects the additional cognitive and linguistic demands associated with sustained speech production. These results could be attributed to Brennan & Clark, 1996; Pickering & Garrod, 2004 who asserts that dialogic task, which allows speakers to share the cognitive load of communication with an interlocutor. According to Levelt, 1989) conversational partners co-construct meaning and support each other during interaction, which facilitates smoother speech production, whereas monologic tasks require speakers to independently plan and maintain extended discourse, which increases cognitive demands .

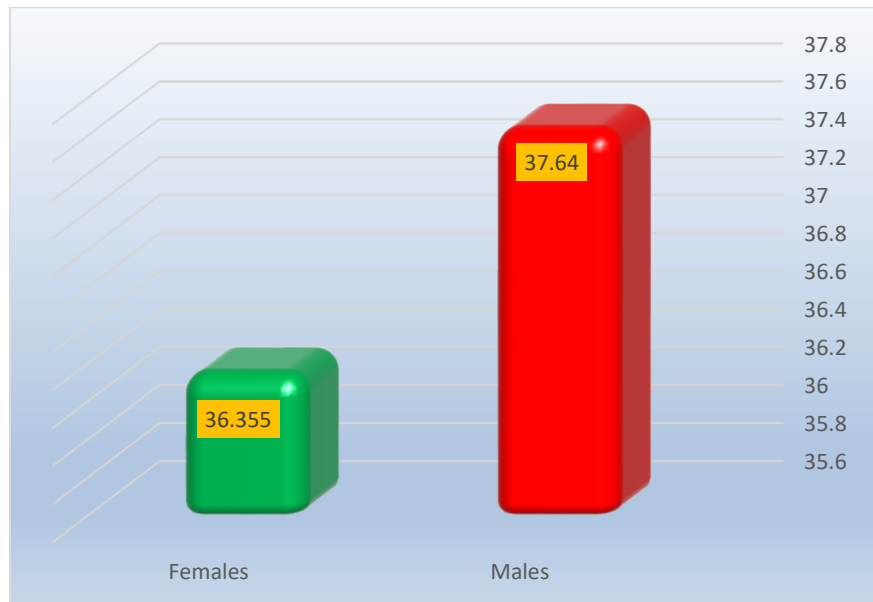
**Answering question (3)"** What is the statistical difference in the students' speaking fluency based on gender difference (male-female)?" To achieve this aim, the researcher used a t-test of independent samples after collecting and inputting the results into the SPSS program. The findings are presented in the following table (3).

**Table (3)**  
**Differences between male and female**

| Task   | No. | M       | Std      | Df  | "t"  | Sig   |
|--------|-----|---------|----------|-----|------|-------|
| Male   | 141 | 37.6454 | 10.65032 | 308 | 1.14 | 0.000 |
| female | 169 | 36.3550 | 9.12796  |     |      |       |

From the previous table, it is found that the calculated (t ) value (1.14) is lower than the tabulated value (1.96) at a statistical significance level (0.01) and a degrees of freedom (308), indicating no statistically significant differences in fluency among third-year students in the English language departments at the Colleges of Basic Education of Al-Mustansiriya and Dyjala universities based on gender difference (male-female). The mean score of the female students (36.355) is near the mean score of the male students (37.64).

**Figure (3)**  
**Gender differences of the participants' oral fluency across test tasks**



These results affirmed the achievement of the fourth aim encompassing “Exploring the statistical difference in the students’ speaking fluency based on gender difference (male-female), and indicate that there are no statistically significant differences between male and female students in speaking fluency among third-year students in the English language departments at the Colleges of Basic Education at Universities of Al-Mustansiriya and Diyala.

According to previous studies gender alone is not an influential factor in oral fluency performance (O'Sullivan, 2000; Koosha, et al 2011; Bahri & Deffous, 2024). Wafidin (2022) investigation compared male and female high school students' speaking fluency to determine gender differences. The study concludes that gender does not affect speaking fluency, but does have an impact on it. In contrary Namaziandost et al (2019) reveal that male and female foreign language learners exhibit differing capacity for acquiring distinct linguistic skills. Statistical research revealed that female participants outperformed male participants in fluency, whereas male participants fared better in speaking accuracy. Rather, oral

fluency appears to be influenced by other variables such as language proficiency, classroom environment, speaking anxiety, communicative opportunities, task type, motivation, and willingness to communicate and the influence of gender is marginal in comparison to one's skills and personal abilities (Bahri & Deffous, 2024).

### **3.4.Conclusions**

Based on the findings of the current study, the researcher has drawn the following conclusions:

- 1.The majority of EFL students at college of Basic education demonstrate a moderate level of speaking fluency, as only a small percentage achieve excellent fluency level.
2. Although EFL students in colleges of Basic Education possess a basic ability to communicate in English, their fluency level has not yet reached the expected benchmark of good fluency performance.
- 3.EFL college students perform significantly better in dialogic interactionas learners produce faster speech, fewer pauses, and fewer repair behaviors, than in monologic task
- 4.There are no statistically significant differences between male and female students in speaking fluency among EFL students at Basic of Education. The male's mean score ( $M = 37.64$ ) approximates to female students ( $M = 36.35$ ), the calculated t-value (1.14) not significant at 0.01 value.

### **3.5.Recommendations**

- More opportunities should be incorporated in communicative speaking practice in EFL classroom, particularly that of pair work, group discussions, debates, and role-play tasks that encourage dialogic interaction.
- Training EFL students to focus on developing speech rate, reducing excessive pauses, and improving speech continuity rather than focusing solely on grammatical accuracy.
- Designing structured and gradual speaking tasks ranging from dialogic tasks to more complex monologic tasks to help students develop extended speech production skills.

- Providing a well constructive feedback based on standardized rubrics on fluency, including speech rate, pausing patterns, and repair behaviors.

### **3.6. Suggestions for Further Studies**

Based on the results and conclusions, the researcher suggested the following further studies:

- Exploring the effect of monologic and dialogic tasks on Iraqi English majors' oral fluency performance.
- Using scaffolding strategy to develop Iraqi English majors' oral fluency.
- Exploring teaching practices that enhance Iraqi English majors' oral fluency.
- Investigating the relationship the metacognitive strategies and the development of oral fluency among Iraqi English majors.

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