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The Relationship between Iranian EFL Learners' Performance on Different types of Reading Comprehension Items and their Anxiety Level

Fatemeh Eghrarian[1], Iraj Noroozi[2]

[1]English Teacher, Islamic Azad University,Roudehen Branch, Iran
[2]University Instructor, Islamic Azad University,Roudehen Branch, Iran

Email: **ghermez.sib2016@gmail.com**

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A B S T R A C T

The present study was an attempt to investigate the relationship between Iranian EFL learners' performance on different types of reading comprehension items and their anxiety level. In order to achieve the purpose, 150 EFL learners were selected and they took preliminary English test (PET) and 91 intermediate-level students were non-randomly assigned on the basis of availability sampling procedure and their anxieties. Through using the quantitative method of research in the form of administering the PET, reading tests and test anxiety questionnaire, the relationship between Iranian EFL learners' performance on different types of reading comprehension items and their anxiety level was investigated. At last, raw data was collected and analyzed by the use of Pearson's correlation coefficient. Obtained results of this study indicated there was significant meaningful relationship between EFL learners' performance on true/false reading comprehension items and their anxiety level. In other words, there was a significant negative relationship between EFL learners' performance on true/false reading comprehension items and their anxiety level.

Introduction

Reading ability is often all that is needed by learners of English, but it is a common problem that most high school students fail to read adequately in the foreign language and they are not able to answer different types of questions. Very commonly, high school students' reading comprehension seems at lower level and students read with less understanding than their teachers might expect them to have. Teachers, students themselves and parents tell that high school students' reading compression difficulty is a considerable problem. Unfortunately, foreign language learning does appear to involve relatively high levels of anxiety. For example, Campbell and Ortiz (1991) estimated that more than one-half of university students studying foreign language, regardless of the language major, have high levels of language anxiety. In fact, more recent research has established that foreign language learning is related to a high level of anxiety in comparison with other university courses (Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999a).

Therefore, foreign language anxiety is one of the most important predictors of foreign language achievement (Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, & Daley, 1999). It can be defined as "the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts, including speaking, listening, reading and writing" (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994, p. 284). The arousal of foreign language anxiety (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994) diverts into thoughts of failure, self-deprecation, avoidance, and the cognitive resources needed to optimize intake, processing or production in the foreign language (cf. MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991a).

In other words, the self-conscious learner's mind is so busy being worried that it cannot spare the processing power required to take in or produce the foreign language. More recently, Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, and Daley (2000) described foreign language anxiety as "a form of situation-specific anxiety" (p. 88).Although much research has been done on foreign language anxiety, its complex and multidimensional nature (Young, 1991) could explain why this field still remains underdeveloped (Aida, 1994). Such research is vital because we need to understand why a language learner feels anxious in order to control such anxiety and alleviate its effects (Horwitz, 1996; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991a & 1991b; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2000; Scovel, 1991). Philipps (1991) warns that language anxiety in the classroom causes negative

affective reactions and can induce negative attitudes and discourage students from continuing their language study. Teachers need to be aware that language anxiety plays a role in overall strategy use and the use of certain types of strategies in the language classroom (MacIntyre & Noels, 1996).

Research on foreign language anxiety will thus have important implications for the teaching as well as the learning of foreign languages. Thus, in the recent L2 teaching context, one of the greatest challenges for ESL/EFL teachers is to provide students with a learner-centered, low-anxiety, and comfortable classroom environment. In an attempt to fill part of the existing gap, this study aims at investigating the meaningful relationship between EFL learners' performance on different types of reading comprehension items and their anxiety level.

Literature Review

Reading Anxiety in Second or Foreign Language

When L2 readers read second language texts, they are trying to decode unfamiliar scripts, writing system, and cultural materials. If encountering difficulty in processing them, they may get frustrated with reading, and

experience anxiety. The anxiety aroused during the process of reading L2 texts is known as reading anxiety (Saito et al., 1999). To explore this construct, Saito et al., (1999) used the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), measuring language anxiety related to various aspects of foreign language learning, and Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS), eliciting reading anxiety, to examine native English speakers of 192 French, 114 Japanese, and 77 Russian learners. They found that reading anxiety was related to, but distinct from, language anxiety. In addition, regarding reading anxiety, Japanese learners were the most anxious, followed by French and Russian learners. The learners finding it difficult to read in their target language had higher reading anxiety than those who felt reading as medium difficult, followed by those who perceived it as easy. These results suggest the differentiation of reading anxiety and language anxiety, and indicate that learners' reading anxiety differs from the specific target language and depends on how they perceive the difficulty of the target language. These findings in turn confirm the existence and uniqueness of this construct.

Research on Reading Anxiety and L2 Reading

Hsu (2004) explored reading anxiety and reading comprehension of 125 junior military college EFL students and found that anxious

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students tended to recall less content of the text than less anxious students. Similarly, Sellers (2000) also investigated the possible relationship of language anxiety to reading comprehension with 89 Spanish as aforeign language university students. The results revealed that reading anxiety was related to, but distinguished from, language anxiety. The students with high reading anxiety and language anxiety could recall less content of the article. In conclusion, previous studies on anxiety and L2 learning center on the discussion of (1) the relationship between language anxiety and language-skill-specific (i.e., speaking, listening, writing, and reading) anxiety, and (2) their roles in L2 learning. They suggest that listening, reading and writing anxiety, is related to, but can be distinguished from, language anxiety. Most of them find that there is a negative relationship between language anxiety and L2 performance. Also, language-skill-specific anxiety and performance are negatively correlated, meaning that students with higher listening, speaking, writing, and reading anxiety tend to have lower listening, speaking, writing, and reading performance respectively(Geregly, 2007 cited in Khoii and Shamsi, 2010).

Though most studies conclude that students with higher language anxiety are apt to have lower performance in L2 learning, they seldom revolve around the discussion of language anxiety and L2 reading. There are also few studies examining reading anxiety and L2 reading. Moreover, studies show conflicting results regarding how language anxiety varies with learners' gender and the length of language learning. Little research explores whether the two variables relate to reading anxiety.

Anxiety and L2 Reading

To date, only a few studies have addressed affect and L2 reading. Franson (1984) found that ... "type of motivation for reading a particular text is an important factor influencing the choice of approach to learning, and thus also determining likely levels of outcome". He concluded that students naturally perform better on reading comprehension when there is no expectation of a factual knowledge test. Steffensen, Goatz, and Cheng (1999) included affect as a key variable in a study about readers' nonverbal responses. In three different experiments conducted with students in China, the researchers explored the imagery and emotional responses that readers experienced while reading a text in L1 and L2.

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Readers completed rating scales for imagery and emotional response ratings as well as free reports. Overall, findings revealed that affect and imagery are present during the reading process and that the "nonverbal representational system is a fundamental component of both L1 and L2 reading". With participants from introductory courses of French, Russian and Japanese, Saito, Horwitz and Garza (1999) found that foreign language reading anxiety does exist, and that it is distinct from general foreign language anxiety concerning oral performance.

More specifically, they found that levels of reading anxiety vary by target language and seem to be related to writing systems. In their study, learners of Japanese were most anxious, followed by French and then Russian. They attributed the difference between the results of French and Russian to the fact that Russian symbols are phonetically dependable and French is not. Moreover, they reported that student course grades decreased alongside levels of reading anxiety as well as with general foreign language anxiety (Al-Nujaidi, 2003; Brantmeier, 2000; Lee, 2007; Wu, 2005).

The higher the self-reported level of foreign language reading anxiety, the lower the course grade, and vice versa. The authors discuss the level of instruction as a variable to be examined in future inquiries of this type. Additionally, as Saito, Horwitz and Garza state, "… the anxiety might appear at some point after the reading was actually accomplished or when the student encounters the teacher's or other students' interpretations of the text". With participants from a third semester course and an intermediate level conversation course in university level Spanish, Sellars (2000) also found that reading anxiety is a distinct variable in foreign language learning. Furthermore, students with higher levels of overall foreign language learning anxiety reported higher levels of reading anxiety. In a close look at anxiety ratings, findings showed that more students indicated feeling "somewhat" anxious about L2 reading than any other rating. Sellars asked students to read a magazine article and found a negative relationship between reading anxiety and L2 reading comprehension.

In a complex L2 reading investigation with students of second year university level Spanish, Young (2000) examined several interacting variables including anxiety, comprehension, self-reported comprehension,

text features, and reading ability. With four different non-literary reading passages (magazines, newspapers, etc) she found that the higher the reading anxiety, the lower students rate their level of understanding the L2 texts. She also reported a significant relationship between L2 reading anxiety and L2 reading comprehension with two of the four passages utilized in the study. These findings echo Sellar's (2000) results with third semester participants where reading anxiety affected reading comprehension, and Young explains that linguistically dense texts could produce more reading anxiety than the text length and structure.

Although there are many research articles about the notion of Language Anxiety (LA) and its influence on language learning process, the focus of most of these studies are on oral performance of language learners (Aida, 1994; Horwitz et al., 1986; Koch & Terrell, 1991; Phillips, 1992; Price, 1991; Young, 1991; Daly. 1991). Perhaps this is it because as Horwitz et al., (1986) concluded, "speaking in the target language seems to be the most threatening aspect of foreign language learning" (p. 23).

Jafarigohar (2012) mentioned in his research that reading in a foreign language results in anxiety and insufficient language attainment "in conjunction of students' levels of reading anxiety and general foreign language anxiety" (Saito, Thomas, & Horwitz, 1998, p. 202). Regarding the possible effects of gender in RA level very little research has been conducted so far. However, as Chavez (2001) suggested, trying to find gender-based differences (if there is any) in any context, would be so important since if they really exist they may lead teachers and researchers to search for ways to reduce their effects, and finding ways of letting both genders benefit from the same level of opportunities and achievement. Accordingly, in this investigation it is tried to examine the possible effect of gender on RA levels of Iranian EFL learners.

Several studies (Carreira, 2006; Miyanaga, 2007) have investigated motivation and language anxiety. However, little attention has been paid to the direct relationship between motivation and anxiety. Moreover, there are few studies on foreign language reading anxiety. In addition, there seems to be a paucity of research (specifically in the EFL contexts) on the relationships between reading anxiety, motivation, and the choice of reading strategies. In an attempt to fill part of the

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existing gap, this study aimed at investigating the meaningful relationship between EFL learners' performance on different types of reading comprehension items and their anxiety level.

Research Questions

Q1. Is there any significant meaningful relationship between EFL learners' performance on multiple choice reading comprehension items and their anxiety level?

Q2: Is there any significant meaningful relationship between EFL learners' performance on true/ false reading comprehension items and their anxiety level?

Method

Participants

To fulfill the objectives of this study, 150 female language learners of intermediate level of proficiency, with the age range of 18-25 studying English at Safir and Nabovat language institutes were selected to participate in this research. The participants were aware that they were participating in the current study and they had active roles in the data collection. They were informed that their participation was strict and their confidentiality was protected.

Instruments

Preliminary English Test

A Language Proficiency Test (i.e., PET) including reading skill and it was used to specify the homogeneity of the sample and another PET was used for data analysis in this study.

Test Anxiety Scale

Test Anxiety Scale adapted from Sarason (1980) consisting of 37 items measuring language anxiety related to foreign language learning

Design

This study was carried out through a descriptive design since the researcher did not implement any experiment on the participants. It is a descriptive kind of study which provided descriptions of naturally occurring phenomena connected with language learning with no control over any variables.

However, both quantitative and qualitative research method were employed in this study. A survey questionnaire were administered and used to gather information about EFL learner's reading comprehension ability and EFL learners' anxiety. Then the participants took

part in PET in order to see their performance on different types of reading comprehension items.

Accordingly, in this study performance in different types of reading comprehension items was taken as dependent variable and their level of anxiety was taken as independent variable.

Procedure

All the participants (150) were given the PET; in fact this PET only used for homogenization process. After selecting the participants, (60 subjects) the overall procedure of the research were clarified to the subjects participating in this study so that they were aware of the purpose of the study and their roles in the data collection, Then they were given the Test Anxiety Scale adapted from Sarason (1980) consisting of 37 items measuring language anxiety related to foreign language learning but, before starting to answer items, the researcher started with explaining the directions for the filling up of the completion Test Anxiety Scale adapted from Sarason (1980) consisting of 37 items measuring language anxiety related to foreign language learning to the participants and then began distributing the questionnaires.

After that two reading comprehension tests which they just have been included true/ false and multiple choice questions were used in this research for gathering data and investigating the relationship between participants' level of anxiety and their performance on different types of reading comprehension items. They were informed that they could participate voluntarily. Demographic data that includes participants' names, age, and use of languages at home were also collected. After taking PET and Test Anxiety Scale adapted from Sarason (1980) consisting of 37 items measuring language anxiety related to foreign language learning, based on the learners' language proficiency the relationship between their level of anxiety(low/high) and their performance on different types of reading comprehension items (true/false and multiple choice) were measured.

Data Collection

Test Anxiety Scale adapted from Sarason (1980) consisting of 37 items measuring language anxiety related to foreign language learning. Questionnaire was adapted on the surveys; Of course, every item of the questionnaire precisely, separately, and independently measures one component of level of anxiety .In the questionnaire only closed response alternatives were used except

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for the last statement, where the subjects are given an opportunity to make additional comments. This provided us with additional information and also was appreciated by the respondents. The data collection method was self-completed questionnaire and there was a methodological flaw for adopting this method. Since respondents filled out the questionnaire on their own, it was possible for them to give answers that were considered favorable as a means to impress the researcher.

Participants were informed that their participation is strictly voluntary and throughout the data collection procedure, respondents' privacy was protected as their anonymity is assured. First and foremost, respondents are not required to provide sensitive and detailed personal information, like their full name. Instead, respondents only were needed to indicate their sex, their level of education, and year of study. Apart from this, in order to further protect respondents' anonymity and ethicality of the research, they were not required to hand in the questionnaire to the researcher directly but to put the completed questionnaire in a collection box.

Results

Piloting Results

A group of 30 pre-intermediate EFL learners who had the same features to the main population of the study participated in the pilot study. Table 1 summarizes the results of reliability statistics.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics for the Instruments.

Instruments	No. of Items before Piloting	Reliability Method	Reliability Index
Homogeneity PET	50	KR-21	.914
Anxiety Questionnaire	37	Cronbach's Alpha	.855
Reading Comprehension Test	40	KR-21	.895

As it's evident from Table 1, the results indicated that, the reliability index of the Homogeneity PET including 50 items was computed using KR-21 Formula and turned out to be .91. Additionally, Table 1 shows that the

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reliability value for Anxiety Questionnaire comprising 37 items was assessed to be .85 through Cronbach's Alpha. Besides, as it's observable from Table 4.1, the reliability value for Reading Comprehension Test consisting of 40 items (20 Multiple-choice, and 20 true/false) was estimated via KR-21 Formula and turned out to reach .89.

Homogeneity PET Results

The PET comprising 50 items was given to 91 participants to select homogeneous pre-intermediate participants. The descriptive statistics, as set forth in Table 2, reflects that the mean, median and mode of the PET scores were 26.65, 27, and 27 respectively. These central parameters are not very far from each other revealing that the scores are dispersed normally around the mean.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for PET (Scores/50)

N	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Skewness Ratio	Kurtosis Ratio
91	26.65	27.00	27	8.07	.960	-1.374

Based on the results of PET, as appeared in Table 2, from among 91 students, those 62students whose scores were one standard deviation of 8.07 plus and minus the mean of

26.65 (scores between19 – 35) were picked up as homogeneous pre-intermediate participants for the present study. Moreover Table 2 shows that the normality of the scores is proved as the ratios of skewness and kurtosis over their respective standard errors do not exceed the ranges of +/- 1.96.

Addressing Research Question 1

The first research question sought to see if there is a significant relationship between EFL learners' performance on multiple-choice reading comprehension items and their anxiety level. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was conducted to explore the first research question. Before explaining the results of Pearson product-moment correlation, the descriptive statistics for performance on multiple-choice reading comprehension items and their anxiety level were calculated and they are represented in Table 3.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Multiple-choice Scores (out of 20) and Anxiety Score (out of 37)

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Variable	N	Mean	SD	SEM
Performance on Multiple-choice Items	62	12.05	2.479	.315
Anxiety Level	62	15.81	6.833	.868

Variable	Skewness	Std. Error	Skewness Ratio	Kurtosis	Std. Error	Kurtosis Ratio
Performance on Multiple-choice Items	-.057	.304	-.188	-.569	.599	-.950
Anxiety Level	.368	.304	1.210	-.581	.599	-.970

Table 3 above displays the mean and standard deviation for multiple-choice scores ($\bar{x}$ = 12.05, SD = 2.48) and anxiety scores ($\bar{x}$ = 15.81, SD = 6.83). With the intention of performing Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient, three assumptions of interval data, normality and linearity must be met. The first assumption was not violated as the present data were measured on an interval scale. In fact for multiple-choice items, 1 point was assigned to the "Correct" answer and 0 point to "Incorrect" answer, and for the anxiety questionnaire, 1 point was choice "True" and 0 point to "False" choice. The second assumption deals with the normality of the data which was checked via Skewness and Kurtosis; the results of which are set forth in Table 4.

Table 4: Skewness and Kurtosis Test of Normality for Multiple-choice Scores and Anxiety Score.

Table 4 reflects that multiple-choice and anxiety scores have normal distribution as the ratios of skewness and kurtosis over their respective standard errors are not beyond the ranges of +/- 1.96.

The researcher of the present study was justified to apply Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient in order to measure the amount of relationship between the two variables. The outcomes of this analysis are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5: Pearson Correlation for Performance on Multiple-Choice Reading Comprehension Items and Anxiety Level.

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		Anxiety Level
Performance on Multiple-Choice Items	Pearson Correlation	-.379**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002
	N	62

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Pearson correlation, as represented in Table 5 above, detected a significant negative significant relationship (r = -.38, n = 62) between performance on multiple-choice reading comprehension items and their anxiety level, at the significance level of .002< .05, with high levels of performance on multiple-choice reading comprehension items associated with low levels of anxiety. Fundamentally, the correlation coefficient (r = -.38) was larger than the critical values of Pearson correlation (r = .27, n = 62). Consequently, the first null hypothesis of the current that states, "there is no significant meaningful relationship between EFL learners' performance on multiple-choice reading comprehension items and their anxiety level" was rejected and it is claimed that there is a significant negative relationship between EFL learners' performance on multiple-choice reading comprehension items and their anxiety level.

Addressing Research Question 2

The descriptive statistics for performance on true/false reading comprehension items and their anxiety level were computed before presenting the results of Pearson product-moment correlation (Table 6).

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics of True/False Scores (out of 20) and Anxiety Score (out of 37)

Variable	N	Mean	SD	SEM
Performance on True/False Items	62	14.55	2.311	.293
Anxiety Level	62	15.81	6.833	.868

Table 6 above represents the mean and standard deviation for true/false scores ($\bar{x}$ = 14.55, SD = 2.31) and anxiety scores ($\bar{x}$ = 15.81, SD = 6.83). Three assumptions of interval data, normality and linearity must be observed in order to conduct Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. The first assumption was not met as the present data were measured on an interval scale. In fact for true/false items, 1 point was assigned to the "Correct" answer and 0 point to "Incorrect" answer, and for the anxiety questionnaire, 1 point was choice "True" and 0 point to "False" choice. The second assumption concerns with

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the normality of the data which was tested via Skewness and Kurtosis; the results of which are laid out in Table 7.

Table 7: Skewness and Kurtosis Test of Normality for True/False Scores and Anxiety Scores.

Variable	Skewness	Std. Error	Skewness Ratio	Kurtosis	Std. Error	Kurtosis Ratio
Performance on True/false Items	-.307	.304	-1.009	-.421	.599	-.702
Anxiety Level	.368	.304	1.210	-.581	.599	-.970

As evident from Table 7, true/false and anxiety scores enjoy normality assumption since the ratios of skewness and kurtosis over their respective standard errors do not go beyond the ranges of +/- 1.96.

The current researcher was justified to conduct Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient to measure the amount of relationship between the two variables. Table 8 manifests the results of Pearson's product-moment correlation.

Table 8: Pearson Correlation for Performance on True/False Reading Comprehension Items and Anxiety Level

		Anxiety Level
Performance on True/False Items	Pearson Correlation	-.291**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.022
	N	62
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).		

According to the results appeared in Table 8 above, Pearson correlation found a significant negative significant relationship (r = -.29, n = 62) between performance on true/false reading comprehension items and their anxiety level, at the significance level of .02 < .05, with high levels of performance on true/false reading comprehension items correlates with low levels of anxiety. In fact, the correlation coefficient (r = -.29) was greater than the critical values of Pearson correlation (r = .27, n = 62). Subsequently, the researcher rejected the second null hypothesis of the present study that mentions, "There is no significant meaningful relationship between EFL learners' performance on true/false reading comprehension items and their anxiety level".

In other words, it is asserted that there is a significant negative relationship between EFL learners' performance on true/false reading comprehension items and their anxiety level.

Discussion of Findings

The present study rejected the second null hypothesis of the present study that mentions, "There is no significant meaningful relationship between EFL learners' performance on true/false reading comprehension items and their anxiety level". In other words, it is asserted that there is a significant negative relationship between EFL learners' performance on true/false reading comprehension items and their anxiety level.

Chen, L's (2007) findings are partly in line with those of the present study. Chen, L's findings showed that there were no significant differences between low-anxiety readers and high-anxiety readers in choice of the overall reading strategies they used. On the other hand, Chen, L observed that students with higher levels of reading anxiety were less likely to use global reading strategies than supportive reading strategies. The high anxiety readers also used two of the supportive reading strategies more frequently than their low anxiety group classmates did. These findings

are in contrast with the present study's findings indicating that the high anxiety group tended to use global and problem solving strategies more frequently than supportive strategies. The observed discrepancy between the findings of the present study and Chen, L's study might be attributable to the fact that the present study found a positive relationship between reading anxiety and motivation while Chen, L's findings showed that students with a low level of anxiety were more motivated in English reading.

The results of the present study also contradict Miyanaga's (2007) finding that anxious students used global and local strategies less than low anxiety students. Miyanaga reported that students with high level of anxiety tended to use bottom-up strategies, to look up words in the dictionary, and to be in difficulty with grasping the organization and the gist of the text, while the present study indicated that there were no significant differences in the strategy use of learners with different anxiety levels.

The findings of the present study are also in contrast to those of Sellers (1998), who strongly believes that anxiety causes some differences in strategy use. Sellers's findings showed that more anxious students recall less

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passage content than their less anxious classmates. Additionally, her finding showed that more anxious students use more local strategies such as focusing on vocabulary, attention to syntax and translation. On the other hand, less anxious students experience the text more holistically and use strategies like integrating information, rereading and attention to text structure and utilize both local and global strategies equally. Such results are in contrast with the present study.

One of the possible reasons that the results showed no significant difference might be due to small sample size. Another could be the reading passages used in the two reading comprehension tests. The reading passage in each test is extracted from the articles in the textbook. The teacher teaches these articles in the reading courses, so the students might be familiar with the reading passage when taking the test. Also, the students can spend extra time studying these articles before taking the test. Thus, the more anxious students supposed to have lower grades might get good grades after their preparation for the test, and this could explain why the reading comprehension performance of the students in each anxiety level does not differ significantly in the study. To obtain significant results, future research should be conducted on a larger sample. Also,

future research should consider using a reading text that students are not familiar with in order to investigate the actual reading comprehension performance of the students with different levels of anxiety.

Conclusion

The aim of the study was to examine any plausible role of the relationship between their level of anxiety (low/high) and their performance on different types of reading comprehension items (true/false and multiple choice) were measured., the study tried to comprehend if being participants' level of anxiety and their performance on different types of reading comprehension items any significant difference in their performance on these two tests or not.

Administering a series of multiple-choice tests and true/false tests among the learners, the study showed that, since the first and second research null hypotheses were rejected, the researcher can conclude that the major null hypothesis of the study that says, "There is no significant meaningful relationship between EFL learners' performance on multiple choice reading comprehension items and their anxiety level." is rejected and it can be claimed that there is a statistically significant relationship

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between EFL learners' performance on multiple choice reading comprehension items and their anxiety level.

Due to the problems the researchers faced regarding to the availability of the participants, the factors of gender and age were not considered in the research. It is hoped that in the light of this study results, the teachers will pay more attention to learners' anxiety level in the reading comprehension questions. Furthermore, it is hoped that there will be a shift in focus among teachers on teaching reading comprehension questions depending on the anxiety level. Finally, it is hoped that the Iranian teachers will not only concerned about the strategies of reading comprehension questions, but they should deal with learners' anxiety level that impede understanding and affect intelligibility.

Implications of the Study

The main point of this research was reading, therefore; the immediate implication concerns this skill. The importance of reading comprehension that is one of the main aims of foreign language learners has been discussed in previous chapters. According to what was stated, it can be inferred that, in order to deal with such a kind of important skill a great deal

of attention is needed. Since some researchers and methodologists mentioned the benefits of reading comprehension, but with to respect to the obtained findings, the researcher did not come to a certain conclusion to the relationship between Iranian EFL learners' performance on different types of reading comprehension items and their anxiety level.The results could have implications for educators concerned with the validity of tests interpretations, testing researchers, and practitioners, too. Since anxiety level has an effective impact on the participants of reading comprehension, teachers should teach their learners such a fair amount of them that learners can deal with them easily and appropriately. Teachers should be trained to differentiate easily between those types of reading comprehension questions, and so on and they also should be trained to be able to enrich the syllabus regarding cohesion and referent devices in reading comprehension.

The stakeholders should feed the learners' syllabi with vocabulary gradually or systematically. Designers of syllabi should vary between types of reading comprehension questions; that is, they should use texts with a few devices to improve the learners` critical thinking or self-explanation skill, and texts with several cohesive devices to simplify reading comprehension directly.

To begin with, it may hopefully increase students' and teachers' awareness of these reading comprehension questions strategies. In fact, it is hoped that we should raise students' and teachers' awareness of Iranian EFL learners' anxiety level. Therefore, through the incorporation of reading comprehension activities into everyday ELT instruction, students can gain a better comprehending of the expected learning outcomes, find their strengths and weaknesses, and set goals for future improvement. Secondly, by creating a supportive environment in the reading comprehension, the students can have a better understanding of the learning outcomes.

Suggestions for Further Research

The findings of this study suggest many possibilities for further research that illuminated and illustrated how learners' anxiety level affect reading comprehension. The researcher recommends the following:

a) In this study, researcher has seen that an awareness of cohesion may be useful for the teaching of reading and researcher has seen a number of activities that teachers may use to sensitize their students to this phenomenon. More research is needed

for directing the teaching of cohesion into the teaching of reading and writing. In a word, the teaching and practice of cohesion could be taken as a regular part of many teaching programs.

b) The researcher calls for implementing another study with larger numbers of participants including genders, males, and females.

c) The settings, which were chosen for this study, were at Safir English institute. The same procedure could be used in another context, for instance; it can be used at universities or other institutes.

d) Another suggestion is that replication of this study can be done for Iranian EFL learners at various levels of language proficiency. For example; it can be used at upper-intermediate or advanced level.

e) The researcher views that further research is needed with more focus on the role of the students' anxiety level and first language literacy as additional factors related to reading comprehension questions.

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f) Teachers can group students based on anxiety level, give them appropriate authentic tasks in actual classroom activities, and teach learners how to use different strategies to achieve their reading comprehension questions, and thereby to develop their reading comprehension skills, and hopefully their strategies as well.

Limitations

In this research, the researcher may be faced the following limitations

a) It is limited to the reading comprehension and no other skills.

b) The study may culminate in improving some of reading comprehension sub-skills not reading as a whole.

c) As for the subjects, EFL learners were chosen in the Safir, Nabovat square, in Tehran, all the participants are female and their ages between 18 -25.

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