

T. C.
UNIVERSITY OF GAZIANTEP
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING PROGRAM

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE ROLES OF LANGUAGE
ANXIETY AND READING ANXIETY IN IRAQI EFL READING
CLASSES

Master's of Arts Thesis

MIDHAT SARBAZ

Gaziantep
March, 2018

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Supervisor: Assist. Prof.Dr. FADIME YALÇIN ARSLAN

GAZIANTEP
March, 2018

APPROVAL OF THE JURY

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Thesis Date : 02.03.2018

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RESEARCH ETHICS DECLARATION

The information contained here is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, accurate. I have read the University's current research ethics guidelines, and accept responsibility for the conduct of the procedures set out in the attached application in accordance with these guidelines, the University's policy on conflict of interest and any other condition laid down by the Gaziantep University Research Ethics Committee or its Sub-Committees. I have attempted to identify all the risks related to this research that may arise in conducting this research, and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants.

I have declared any affiliation or financial interest in this research or its outcomes or any other circumstances which might present a perceived, potential or actual conflict of interest, in accordance with Gaziantep University policy on Conflicts of Interest.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my beloved parents and my lovely wife, all of whom helped me a lot during the course of this study.



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In the name of Allah, most Gracious, most merciful; praise be to Him for giving me the health and ability to complete this work.

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ÖZET

DİL VE OKUMA KAYGISININ, İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRENEN IRAKLI ÖĞRENCİLERİN OKUMA DERSLERİNDEKİ ROLÜ

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Mart 2018, 65 sayfa

Bu çalışma, Irak, Erbil'deki Salahaddin Üniversitesi İngilizce Anabilim Dalında öğrenim görmekte olan 90 İngiliz dili öğrencisiyle gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışma, öğrencilerin dil kaygısı ile okuma kaygısı arasındaki ilişkinin yanı sıra bu iki kavramın her iki cinsiyet üzerindeki etkilerini de incelemiştir. Aynı zamanda çalışmada, dil kaygısı ve okuma kaygısı ile okuduğunu anlama arasındaki ilişkiler de incelenmiştir. Bu amaçlar doğrultusunda çalışmanın veri toplama araçları şunlardır: Horwitz (1986) tarafından geliştirilen *Yabancı Dil Kaygı Ölçeği*, Saito (1999) tarafından geliştirilen *Yabancı Dil Okuma Kaygısı Ölçeği* ve bir *Okuduğunu Anlama Performans Testi* Elde edilen verilerin analizinde Pearson Momentl Korelasyonu, T-test ve tek yönlü ANOVA'dan faydalanılmıştır.

Katılımcıların *Yabancı Dil Kaygı Ölçeği* ve *Yabancı Dil Okuma Kaygısı Ölçeği* anketlerine verdikleri cevaplarla yapılan analiz sonuçlarına göre, dil kaygısı ile okuma kaygısı arasında pozitif bir ilişki vardır ($r(88) = .65, p \leq 01, n = 90$). Cinsiyet değişkeni açısından bakıldığında ise kadın katılımcılar, daha yüksek dil kaygısı seviyelerine sahiptir (sırasıyla, $M=2.86; SD=.46$ ve $M=2.86; SD=.45$), fakat her iki grubun okuma kaygısı puanları arasında istatistiksel yönden anlamlı herhangi bir farklılık tespit edilmemiştir. Son olarak, okuduğunu anlama değişkeni ile hem dil kaygısı hem de okuma kaygısı arasında istatistiksel yönden anlamlı farklılıklar görülmemiştir. Dil kaygısı puanları yüksek olan öğrenciler, *Okuduğunu Anlama Performans Testi* de daha düşük puan alırken, dil kaygısı puanı daha düşük olanlar, performans testinden daha fazla puan almışlardır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dil kaygısı, okuma kaygısı, Iraklı İngiliz Dili Eğitimi öğrencileri

ABSTRACT

An Investigation into the Roles of Language Anxiety and Reading Anxiety in Iraqi EFL Reading Classes

Midhat, Sarbaz

MA Thesis, Department of English Language Teaching

Supervisor: Assist. Dr. Fadime YALÇIN ARSLAN

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This study was conducted among 90 EFL learners in the English Department at Salahaddin University in Erbil, Iraq. It examines the relationship between learners' language anxiety and reading anxiety as well as the impact of gender on both of these constructs. It also investigated the relationship between language anxiety and reading comprehension as well as reading anxiety and reading comprehension separately. To achieve these aims, three data collection instruments were employed: a Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale designed by Horwitz (1986), a Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale designed by Saito (1999), and a Reading Comprehension Performance Test. For data analysis, a Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, t-Test, and one-way ANOVA were utilized.

The results of participants' Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale and Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale indicate a positive relationship between language anxiety and reading anxiety ($r(88) = .652, p \leq .01, n = 90$). In terms of gender, females and males exhibited same levels of language anxiety ($M=2.86; SD=.46$ and $M=2.86; SD=.45$, respectively), yet no significant difference was found to exist between the reading anxiety of the two groups. Finally, no statistically significant difference was determined to exist between reading comprehension and either language anxiety or reading anxiety. Students with higher levels of language anxiety scored lower on the Reading Comprehension Performance Test, while those with lower levels of language anxiety scored higher.

Keywords: Language Anxiety, Reading Anxiety, Iraqi EFL Learners.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAH	: Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis
CLI	: Cross-Linguistic Influence
CPH	: Critical Period Hypothesis
FLCAS	: Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale
FLRAS	: Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale
FLRP	: Foreign Language Reading Performance
IAM	: Interactive Acculturation Model
MLAT	: Modern Language Aptitude Test
PLAB	: Pimsleur Language Aptitude Battery
RCPT	: Reading Comprehension Performance Test
TAS	: Test Anxiety Scale

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Presentation

This chapter includes background information for the study. After identifying the purpose and central problem of this study, the research questions as well as the significance of this study are addressed. Finally, the potential limitations of this study are discussed. Attached to these items is a list of definitions upon which several terms in this study are based.

1.2 Background of the Study

Acquiring English as a foreign language (EFL) has always proven a difficult task for non-native speakers, as their limited exposure to the language occurs only in EFL classrooms. Similarly, their instructors—especially those who are non-native speakers themselves—often have trouble in addressing the concerns of their students. A common issue faced by EFL students is the lack of motivation for learning English in the first place (Chen & Chang, 2004).

Moreover, during the late twentieth century, numerous studies of learning anxiety were conducted in the field of education (Saito, Garza & Horwitz, 1999; Bailey, 1983; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Abu-Rabia & Argaman, 2002; Sellers, 2000). These studies investigated language anxiety and reading anxiety (Wu, 2011). Some researchers (Bailey, 1983; Horwitz, 1986) noted that high-anxiety learners suffer from weaker language skills than do low-anxiety learners (Horwitz, 1986). Moreover, it was found that positive feedback reduces language anxiety (Bailey, 1983). Other studies found that anxious students experience more problems in expressing themselves in the classroom than do students with lower anxiety levels (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Rabia & Argaman, 2002; Sellars, 2000). In terms of

gender, it has been proven that males experience higher anxiety levels than do females in EFL classes (Na, 2007).

Concerning reading anxiety more specifically, several researchers have proffered answers to the question of why students experience such anxiety in classroom settings (Saito, Garza & Horwitz, 1999). Some scholars have even offered methods of reducing reading anxiety in reading classrooms (Price, 1991; Williams & Andrade, 2008; Waxler, 2010). Other studies of RA have shown that students with lower RA levels perform better than those with higher levels (Horwitz, 1986 : Zuhana, 2007).

The above case is particularly true in foreign language learning contexts, as one scholar observed (Zhao, 2009). Zhao's study, which involved Chinese students in U.S. universities, found that students' levels of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) were similar to their levels of Foreign Language Reading Anxiety (FLRA). Moreover, it was determined that FLRA is affected more by course level than by gender. On the other hand, FLRA was found to negatively correlate with Foreign Language Reading Performance (FLRP) among Elementary I- and Intermediate I-level students but not among Elementary II-level students. Moreover, another scholar discovered a negative correlation to exist between reading strategies and reading anxiety (Lien, 2011). Learners with high anxiety levels were found to use basic mechanism tools such as translation to understand texts, while learners with low anxiety levels tend to use general reading strategies such as guessing (Lien, 2011).

Regarding language anxiety, some studies have investigated its relationship with either one or all of the four language skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking)(Cheng,1999 ;Pappamihiel, 2002). For example, Cheng (1999) investigated the relationship between writing and language anxiety as well as their correlation with speaking among 433 university-level Taiwanese students in an English department. His findings indicated that language anxiety and speaking achievement share a positive correlation. Another study that of Pappamihiel (2002), examined language anxiety among 178 Mexican high-school students attending school in the U.S. The findings indicated that language anxiety levels correlated with specific factors such as the number of years they had been studying in the U.S., gender, and the four language skills.

Concerning the relationship between learning anxiety (both language anxiety and reading anxiety) and text anxiety among EFL learners, Tsai and Li (2012) observed that English proficiency is negatively correlated with both. Moreover, Loghmani and Ghonsooly (2012) observed a positive correlation between RA and test anxiety

As demonstrated by a range of verities of studies discussed above, there have been numerous investigations of learning anxiety in an EFL context. However, most researchers have focused on speaking, listening and writing (Cheng, 1999; Chen & Chang, 2004 and Wu, 2011), while few (Horwitz, 1986; Lien, 2011 and Zuhana, 2007) have examined the impact of learning anxiety on the development of reading skills. Thus, the present study addresses this gap by investigating reading anxiety in an Iraqi EFL context.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Foreign language learners generally experience two kinds of anxiety: language anxiety and reading anxiety. According to Young (1991), “language anxiety is associated specifically with foreign language learning contexts and is comprised of three elements: communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation”(Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope,1986, p.125). Learners who have communication apprehension are usually shy when they are connecting with others, and they face difficulty in speaking as well as listening due to the fear of negative evaluation (Wu, 2011).

The second type of anxiety is reading anxiety. Reading in any language is claimed to be a cognitively demanding process that includes the coordination of attention, memory, perception and comprehension processes at least at minimum levels (Sellers, 2000). Thus, when foreign language learning contexts are considered, it is observed that students experience additional challenges related to cultural background, motivation and language ability (Howitz ,1999). On the other hand, many EFL educators have observed that reading is the least anxiety-provoking part of their curriculum (Sellers, 2000). Other studies of skills-specific anxieties have revealed that reading anxiety is present among EFL students and negatively affects their cognitive abilities (Saito, Garza & Horwitz, 1999).

In general, learning style, teaching style, syllabus design and student background affect the learning processes of EFL students. While anxiety is observed in numerous subjects at the university level, it occurs most frequently in EFL classrooms. This study concerns students who are in their first year of university study in an English department. They all are enrolled in EFL reading classes. When these learners entered the university, they might have lacked appropriate strategies for managing their learning anxiety in a variety of subjects. It is observed that most students in Iraq begin to exhibit learning anxiety during their fifth year of primary school. If they are unable to decrease this anxiety, it may even persist throughout their last year of university study. Reading anxiety, in particular, often begins during these students’ high

school study in language courses, and they do not learn effective strategies for decreasing this anxiety prior to their English language study at the university level. As we mentioned, students in EFL class face two kinds of anxiety (language anxiety and reading anxiety).

1.4 Purpose of the Study

This study investigates language anxiety and reading anxiety among Iraqi EFL learners enrolled in reading classes within the English Department of Salahaddin University. Though studies related to language anxiety and reading anxiety have been conducted internationally, similar studies are relatively lacking in an Iraqi university context. Thus, this study examines the following relationships in Iraqi EFL reading classes: the relationship between language anxiety and reading anxiety, the impact of gender on language anxiety and reading anxiety, and the relationship between reading comprehension and language anxiety as well as reading anxiety.

1.5 Research Questions

The following research questions are addressed in this study:

- 1- Does a statistically significant relationship exist between Language Anxiety and Reading anxiety?
- 2- Does a statistically significant difference exist between the Language Anxiety and Reading Anxiety scores of males and females?
- 3- Does a statistically significant relationship exist between reading comprehension and Language Anxiety?
- 4- Does a statistically significant relationship exist between reading comprehension and Reading Anxiety?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study might provide insight for Iraqi EFL instructors regarding the skills about which their students are anxious during the language learning process. Moreover, the results of this study might enable these teachers to improve their reading courses and, hence, students' reading skills in English. In addition to assisting educators, this study might also assist students by aiding them in understanding and managing their learning anxieties in their English reading courses. On the other hand, teachers can help students by

giving them techniques to reduce their reading anxiety and language anxiety like pass-option, group activity and wait time. When teachers try to reduce students reading anxiety then there language anxiety will be reduced too.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The first limitation of the present study is related to the sample, which included only first-year students enrolled in reading courses within the English Department of Salahaddin University. Moreover, students were attending a state university, so the results are not generalizable for private learning institutions. Aside from these factors, the number of participants itself was limited; thus, to achieve better results, a larger number of participants is needed. The second limitation is that the present study dealt only with reading rather than the other three language skills. A third limitation is that the pre-tests (midterm) and post-tests (final) administered to students were not official tests. Finally, the close-ended nature of the questionnaires in this study might be considered a limitation. A questionnaire that allows students to describe in their own words their attitudes towards anxiety would be useful, as such a qualitative method might evoke a greater variety of responses than would a closed questionnaire.

1.8 Assumptions of the study

The participants of the study are assumed to have understood the instructions of the questionnaires (FLCAS and FLRAS) and reading exam (RCPT). They are also assumed to have honestly answered without any pressure from the researcher, answering according to their understanding of the subject and withdrawing at any time. The participants are also assumed as having similar educational backgrounds in English. The FLCAS is assumed to have been sufficient for measuring foreign language anxiety among EFL learners, while the FLRAS is assumed to have been sufficient for measuring reading anxiety. Finally, the RCPT is assumed to have been sufficient for determining the reading comprehension levels of learners.

1.9 Definitions

Anxiety: According to Hilgard and Atkinson (1971), “anxiety is a psychological construct, commonly described by psychologists as a state of apprehension, a vague fear that is only indirectly associated with an object” (p.18).

Language Anxiety: Horwitz (1986) defines foreign language anxiety as “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (p.128).

Gardner and MacIntyre (1993), “Language anxiety is defined as both the fear or apprehension occurring when a learner is expected to perform in a foreign language and the worry or negative emotional reaction when during the foreign language learning process, itself” (p.3).

Language anxiety is considered by most academics and psychologists “as a negative psychological aspect in the language learning process. It impacts the short-term memory of students, which is necessary for enabling them to retain new information including vocabulary long enough to utilize it in communication” (Arnold & Brown, 1999, p.8).

Reading Anxiety: Horwitz (1986) viewed reading anxiety as a mediating variable that exists at some point between the decoding of a text and textual meaning.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Presentation

This chapter examines theories concerning reading anxiety in foreign language learning. It also presents information regarding language anxiety and reading anxiety, followed by information regarding factors that affect reading performance and anxiety in a foreign language.

2.2 Factors Affecting Foreign Language Learners

According to Brown (2004), three major factors affect foreign language learners: linguistic, individual, and sociocultural factors. Linguistic factors involve the contrastive analysis hypothesis, cross-linguistic influence, and language learners, while individual factors include age, motivation, intelligence, aptitude, attitude, characteristics of learners, learning styles, learning strategies and personality. Finally, sociocultural factors relate to culture, acculturation, intercultural competence, English as a Lingua Franca, and World Englishes.

2.2.1 Linguistic Factors

A leading topic of research within applied linguistics during the mid-twentieth century was the contrast between two languages (Brown, 2000). During the late 1950s to early 1970s, a method known as the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) was popularized in second language acquisition studies. CAH refers to the systematic comparison and contrast of two languages in terms of their structures. Lado (1957), a leading proponent of CAH, explained that if certain elements of a second language differ greatly from those of the native language, then learners likely will experience difficulty in language acquisition. On the other hand, if elements of a second language are similar to those of the native language, then

learners will more easily acquire the second language. It has been noted that two distinct versions of CAH exist, namely a strong and a weak version (Wardhaugh, 1970). According to Gass and Selinker (2001), the strong version of CAH maintains that “one could make predictions about learning and, hence, about the success of language teaching materials based on a comparison between two languages.” On the other hand, the weak version of CAH involves error-making and subsequent identification of similarities and differences between an L1 and L2 by learners. In this version, learners engage with their teachers to gain knowledge of both the L1 and the L2 while also understanding the source of their language errors (Wardhaugh, 1970). This weak version of CAH is also referred to as Cross-Linguistic Influence (CLI) and is used primarily to investigate the influence of the L1 on the L2. It concerns the interaction among all existing linguistic systems and does not regard the L1 as the sole potential source of learning another language.

During the late 1960s, an additional linguistic focus within second language learning concerned learners themselves. This period marked a special interest in language learners as independent systems (Corder, 1967), and the term “inter-language” was utilized to imply a transitional state between the L1 and the L2. Later, in the early 1980s, a more comprehensive analysis of language learners known as “performance analysis” was proposed (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982). Corder (1967) defined performance analysis as “the systematic investigation of learners’ errors and comparison of learner production data in the L2” (p. 38).

More recently, Jabeen, Kazemian and Mustafi (2015) have emphasized the negative factors affecting language learners, the most significant of which is error-making. Rather than viewing errors as disadvantages impeding successful L2 performance, error-making in recent years has been studied as a vital component of language-learning, as errors assist learners and educators alike in better comprehending the second language itself, its use, and its acquisition.

2.2.2 Sociocultural Factors

2.2.2.1 Cultural Factors

Regarding cultural factors influencing language learners, Brown (2000) has claimed that second language learning is a lengthy and nuanced endeavor. He has described this process in the following manner:

Your whole person is affected as you struggle to reach beyond the confines of your first language and into a new language, a new culture, a new way of thinking, feeling, and acting. Total commitment, a total involvement, total physical, intellectual and emotional responses are necessary to successfully send and receive messages in a second language (p. 7).

Some research has suggested that in situations in which learners perceive their own cultures as inferior to that of the L2, these learners are less successful in acquiring the L2 in a time-efficient manner (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). In this case, the incorporation of authentic materials, classroom interactions with native speakers, and other related methods have been proven beneficial to acclimating learners to the target language culture. Additional research has also indicated that interactions with speakers of the target language as well as target language culture can greatly reduce anxiety among learners (Na, 2007). On the other hand, in environments which lack sufficient opportunities for learners to engage with individuals of the target language culture, students tend to experience heightened levels of language anxiety (Na, 2007).

In addition to the above-mentioned situation, teachers themselves may also influence the performance of L2 learners in terms of intercultural mediation. Byram and Risager (1999) have asserted that teachers act as mediators between cultures, which involves the responsibility of helping learners to understand other people and their cultures. Part of this responsibility regards the language of instruction adopted by teachers. Studies (Oxford, 2005) have proven that when educators utilize either partly or entirely the target language themselves during instruction, their students perform more successfully than those of educators who instruct solely in students' native language. For example, Oxford (2005) investigated two students enrolled in foreign language courses, Russian and Spanish, whose instructors utilized English as the primary means of instruction. In both cases, students experienced difficulty in acquiring the L2 due to various factors including lack of both confidence and motivation regarding using the language in communication as well as lack of motivation regarding the target language culture.

A related factor affecting learner performance in L2 acquisition is a lack of knowledge regarding the target language culture. Genc and Bada (2005) conducted a study among ELT students at Çukurova University in Turkey. Their results indicated that a cultural competence class had significantly improved students' language skills, increased their

awareness regarding the target language culture, and changed their attitudes toward the target language culture. Dai (2011) similarly investigated cultural-based language instruction among EFL students in China. The results indicated that educator competence in the target language culture and transference of this knowledge to learners was useful in enhancing language acquisition among learners.

2.2.2.2 Acculturation

Shumann (1986) defined acculturation as an “exchange of cultural features when two or more different cultures come into contact. This may alter change a culture but the cultures still remain distinct from each other” (p. 380). He also claimed that acculturation, or the integration of the L2 learner into the target language culture, is not a direct cause of successful L2 acquisition but does, indeed, promote it. He explains the following:

Acculturation as a remote cause brings the learner into contact with target language speakers and verbal interaction with those speakers as a proximate cause brings about the negotiation of appropriate input which then operates as the immediate cause of language acquisition (p. 385).

Schuman’s acculturation model contains seven social variables and four affective variables. The sociocultural variables include social dominance, assimilation preservation and adaptation, enclosure, cohesiveness and size, congruence, attitude, and intended length of residence. The four affective variables are language shock, culture shock, ego permeability, and motivation.

Concerning acculturation research, it has been observed that generally researchers focus on immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers as learners, all of whom are assumed to be permanently settled in their new homeland but whose circumstances may differ significantly. Furthermore, it has been observed that acculturation may occur for both individual and groups (Spiro, 1955). Moreover, the processes of acculturation at the individual level are affected by the group level. Other researchers (Barry, 2001) have cited different components of the acculturation process and developed a scale for measuring acculturation among both individuals and groups. For example, Barry (2001) has developed a twenty-nine-item scale for measuring acculturation among East Asian immigrants. Defining assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization as aspects of

acculturation, the scale has been proven as a useful tool among researchers for investigating the acculturation of a particular group of individuals.

A similar scale used for examining acculturation at an individual rather than group level is the Interactive Acculturation Model (IAM) developed by Bourhis, Moïse, Perreault, and Senéca (1997). This scale examines the relationship between the host culture and the immigrant's acculturation strategies. The IAM includes three components: immigrants' acculturation strategies, the host culture's attitude toward the immigrants, and the results of interactions created by the immigrant's acculturation strategies and the host country's attitudes.

2.2.2.3 Intercultural Competence

Intercultural competence may be defined as “the ability of a person to behave adequately in a flexible manner when confronted with actions, attitudes and expectations of representatives of foreign cultures” (Meyer, 1991, p. 138). This definition expands upon the notion of communicative competence. As stated by Byram (1997) the success of interaction implies not only an effective interchange of information, as was the goal of communicative language teaching, but also the “the ability to de-centre and take up the other's perspective on their own culture, anticipating and where possible, resolving dysfunctions in communication and behavior” (p. 42). Kramsch and McConnell-Ginet (1992) further claim that the primary focus of teaching within an intercultural approach is on the target culture, but it also includes comparisons between learners' native culture and the target language culture, thereby fostering the development of reflective attitudes among learners regarding their own culture.

Intercultural competence has also been viewed as comprising various types of competences, according to Byram (1997). One competence concerns knowledge about the foreign society and social processes, about self and other, and about social interactions. The other dimension of intercultural competence regards attitudes and refers to aspects such as openness, flexibility, empathy, awareness of others, and the ability to relativize one's perspective and overcome dysfunctions and resistances.

Bennett has described the process of intercultural competence more specifically as it relates to learners. He has defined intercultural competence as “the ability to relate effectively and appropriately in a variety of cultural contexts” (Bennett, Bennett & Allen, 1999, p. 21). Bennett's stance toward intercultural competence is both intra- and inter-personal and

addresses the needs of novice language learners. He proposes that in order to achieve intercultural competence, learners and educators must surpass their own ethnocentrism and adopt an ethno relativism. Similar to Barry's conception, Bennet's definition relies upon the assumption that intercultural competence de-centres the native culture and enables the development of an open-mindedness and self-awareness among learners regarding their culture.

On the other hand, researchers (Neuliep,2006; Wiseman,2001) have also defined intercultural competence as it relates to external interactions rather than solely learner and educator perceptions. For example, Neuliep (2006) has regarded intercultural competence as consisting of four dimensions: knowledge (how much one knows about the culture of others), affective (one's motivation to interact with others from different cultures), psychomotor (the actual enactment of the knowledge and affective components), and context (situational features in which intercultural communication takes place). Wiseman (2001) has similarly suggested that intercultural communication competence is comprised of the knowledge, skills, and motivation required to interact effectively and appropriately with individuals from different cultures.

2.2.2.4 English as a Lingua Franca and World Englishes

Firth (1996) defined English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) as "a contact language between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common culture, and for whom English is the chosen language of communication" (p. 240). External factors which deem English as a lingua franca relate to geography politics, economics, media, diplomacy, and globalization, while internal factors include its structure and lexicon. Baker (2009) examined the relationship between the L2 and its culture among English language users in a Thai university. The results of his study revealed that learners were motivated to learn English for the purposes of negotiation, mediation, and creative expression rather than as a means of acquiring knowledge about the L2 culture. That is, their purpose for acquiring English related more to communication rather than acculturation.

Other studies of ELF have concerned learners enrolled in student exchange programs such as Erasmus (European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students). Kalocsai (2009) examined how 70 Erasmus students studying in Hungary and the Czech Republic and whose only common language was English became socially integrated into their new communities of practice. The results of Kalocsai's study revealed that in these

ELF communities, exchange students developed various shared ways of speaking. In other words, they realized that they did not need to adjust their language on the basis of some external norm, but instead they invented new forms, borrowed from other languages, and/or maintained their own accents to effectively negotiate meaning and to establish interpersonal relationships.

Related to the above situation, World Englishes (WE) denote the localized varieties of English spoken in different parts of the world and are utilized in three distinct ways. Kachru's model (1985) describes this distinction in terms of inner, outer and expanding circles. Inner circle countries utilize English as the predominant mother tongue, e.g. the UK and New Zealand, while outer circle countries utilize English as an official language or a language of education, government, and law-making, e.g. South Africa and India. On the other hand, expanding circle countries utilize English as a lingua franca, e.g. Slovenia and China.

2.2.3 Individual Factors

2.2.3.1 Age

Another factor affecting L2 acquisition is learner age (Lindsay & Knight, 2006) Differences in age groups affect language learning competences; for example, teenagers are often more successful than adults in acquiring an L2. According to Harmer (2001), adult language learners possess the following distinctions: they can engage with abstract thought, have experience in what they learn, and have expectations about learning processes. A distinction in terms of age may also be observed among immigrant families, whose children are more apt to develop native-like fluency than are parents.

Similarly regarding age, Lenneberg (1967) claimed that there is a certain period of language learning which is more conducive to language learning. His "Critical Period Hypothesis" (CPH) asserts that "animals, including humans, are genetically programmed to acquire certain kinds of knowledge and skill at specific times in life" (p.22). This period begins at two years of age and lasts until puberty. Following puberty, language ability decreases because the brain's ability to utilize the language skills necessary for successful learning declines. Lenneberg (1967) also compared the pronunciation of individuals who had begun learning language before and after puberty. He found that those who had begun learning a language after puberty were not able to develop a native-like accent, while children

and teenagers who had begun their L2 learning prior to puberty were able to speak with little or no accent. Fatman (1975) and Williams (1979) both supported Lenneberg's theory. Fatman (1975) investigated the relationship between age and L2 productive ability, while Williams (1979) examined speaking in L2 learning. Both concluded that younger students were more likely to adopt native-like pronunciation while older ones were likely to speak with a foreign accent.

2.2.3.2 Motivation

There are two main kinds of motivation in EFL learning: extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic motivation refers to learners' tendency to engage in activities in order to obtain a known, external reward, whether physical (such as money) or psychological (such as praise) (Brown, 2007). Students who are continuously encouraged by their teachers or parents usually perform more successfully than those who are not. That is, students from families who place little importance on language learning are likely to progress less quickly (Macaro, 2010). Another source of extrinsic motivation is fear of punishment or negative feedback. For example, students may attempt to obtain a higher grade on a reading task in order not to fail an exam for fear of negative consequences (Covington & Muller, 2001). Extrinsic motivation may benefit learners by encouraging them to participate and become more motivated in acquiring new language skills.

On the other hand, intrinsic motivation "comes from a self-propelled desire to excel at the top of the list of success acquisition of any set of skills, (Brown, 2003, p.270). Dornyei and Csizer (1998), who examined intrinsic motivation among EFL learners, found that different techniques such as developing a relationship with learners, building learner self-confidence, personalizing the learning process, and increasing learners' goal orientation had all increased learner motivation. Intrinsic motivation involves both learners' communicative needs and attitudes toward the L2 culture (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). It may be integrative, e.g. if the L2 learner wants to integrate into the L2 culture, or instrumental, e.g. if the L2 learner wishes to achieve certain goals using the L2 (Brown, 2000).

Finally, it has been observed that intrinsically motivated students willingly engage in activities for the sake of skills improvement and/or knowledge enhancement. It may be caused by students' interest in mastering a topic rather than in learning the subject to obtain high grades. Intrinsically motivated students may also believe that possessing language competence will assist them in achieving their personal goals as well as a sense of autonomy.

2.2.3.3 Aptitude, Attitude, and Intelligence

Carroll (1991) defined aptitude as the “ability to learn quickly” (p.80). Various tests may be utilized to measure aptitude in L2 learning. The most frequently utilized tests according to Lightbown and Spada (2013) are the Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT) and the Pimsleur Language Aptitude Battery (PLAB). Both are based on the view that aptitude is comprised of different types of ability: (1) the ability to identify and memorize new sounds; (2) the ability to understand the function of particular words in sentences; (3) the ability to deduce grammatical rules from language samples; and (4) the ability to memorize new words.

Harley and Hart (1997) conducted an empirical study involving two groups of eleventh-grade students enrolled in a French immersion program. The first group had begun an early immersion program in the first grade, and the second had joined a late immersion program as adolescents in the seventh grade. Both groups were administered the same tests. Findings regarding the first group demonstrated a significant correlation between memory-oriented aptitude scores and general achievement scores. Regarding the second group, analytical language analysis was the only predictor of L2 proficiency scores. Some tests of L2 proficiency were not significantly related to any of the aptitude measure employed.

In another study, Kiss and Nikolov (2005) administered an aptitude test to young learners, namely 419 sixth graders studying in 26 groups in 10 different primary schools in Hungary. His study focused on the relationship between learners’ aptitude scores and performances on a proficiency measure, motivation, age and grades in English. After data were collected regarding English proficiency tests, the aptitude test, and learners’ motivation, a strong relationship was found to exist between participants’ scores on the aptitude test and those on the English proficiency tests.

Concerning attitude among learners, McGroarty (1996) asserted that it relates to a learner’s values and personal beliefs and that it “promotes or discourages the choices made in all realms of activity whether academic or informal. Several researchers (Candlin and Mercer, 2001; Peacock, 1998) have studied L2 learner attitudes. For example, Candlin and Mercer (2001) observed that the attitude of language learners toward target language activities, speakers, and learning situations all play a role in determining L2 success or failure. Similarly, Peacock (1998) observed that the attitude of students may be detrimental to language learning. Comparing 64 percent of learners with 7 percent of teachers, his study

determined that L2 acquisition meant understanding L2 grammar within a variety of learning activities implemented by educators in order to enhance their students' motivation and practice.

In a study examining the attitudes of senior high school learners toward English at a private school in Tokyo, Matsuda (2000) administered a questionnaire containing 44 Likert-scale items to identify general attitudes toward English. Then, a small group of the students were selected for in-depth interviews. Additionally, Matsuda conducted classroom observation for 36 hours and interviewed four teachers to investigate their possible influence on the attitudes of students. Matsuda found that the participants exhibited positive attitudes toward English, especially American English, while they displayed negative attitudes toward the Japanese variety of English. In other words, the attitudes of these students toward English were inner-circle bound. Even though they perceived English as an international language, since it was being used internationally, they did not share the view that English belonged to the international community.

In a similar study among 190 adult Brazilian learners of English, Friedrich (2000) found that participants recognized the status of English as an international language and expressed a desire to be included in global society, in which English serves as the main communication tool. However, they recognized only two varieties of English, American and British English. In other words, the participants were not aware of the existence of other varieties of English. As Friedrich (2000) concluded in her article, in order to understand the use of English in the expanding circle and, indeed, all over the world, researchers need to examine learners' and users' attitudes toward the language (p. 222).

Finally, intelligence as a factor of L2 learning has been defined in various ways. Ellis (2008) has defined it as "the general set of cognitive abilities involved in performing a wide range of learning tasks" (p. 649). On the other hand, Brown (2000) has asserted that intelligence refers to performance on certain kinds of tests which usually measure linguistic or logical-mathematical abilities. He determined that success in life and in education both are correlated with high intelligence ability. He further identified a successful L2 learner as one who could remember everything he/she had been taught. Stenberg (1985) proposed three types of intelligence (compatible ability, experimental ability and contextual ability), and Gardner (1993) proposed a view of natural human talent known as the "Multiple Intelligences Model." These forms of intelligence include linguistic, logical-mathematical, bodily-

kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal and natural forms. Goleman (1996) recognized emotion as an additional form of intelligence as manifested in core emotions such as anger, fear, enjoyment, love, disgust, and shame. The above researchers are the most prominent examples of studies examining intelligence and L2 learning.

2.2.3.4 Learning styles

Learning styles refer to a group of a common ways of learning. Learning styles theory is based on the understanding that differences between individuals' processing capabilities lead to significantly different learning requirements (Anderman, 2009). Each learner may exhibit an array of learning styles and techniques according to preference. No style is more conducive to success than another. As various learning styles may be present in one classroom, it is critical for educators to recognize the individual learning styles of students in order to utilize a variety of pedagogical techniques that address all types of learners.

Learning styles have been described as mediating between emotion and cognition, creating what is known as cognitive styles. The terms learning style and cognitive style often are used interchangeably, but sometimes they have different definitions. Allport (1937) described a cognitive style as individual mode of problem solving, thinking, perceiving and remembering, while a learning style concerns the application of cognitive styles in a learning situation.

Finally, learning styles have been described as being multidimensional (Kinsella, 1996), and it is comprised of five main elements: environmental (sound, light, temperatures, and design); emotional (motivation, persistence, and responsibility); physical (perception, intake, time, and mobility), sociological (self, partner, team, mentor, varied); and psychological (global/analytical, impulsive/reflective).

2.2.3.5 Learning strategies

Several scholars have offered clarification on the nature of learning strategies. For example, Cohen (1998) specified that language learning strategies are “those processes which are consciously selected by learners and which may result in action taken to enhance the learning or use of a second or foreign language, through the storage, retention, recall, and application of information about that language” (p. 4). In another vein, Oxford (1990) defined learning strategies as specific actions taken by learners to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, and more transferable to new situations. She also distinguished

between direct strategies, which acclimate learners to the language itself, and indirect strategies, which involve the regulation and management of learning. Direct strategies involve memory, cognition, and compensation, whereas indirect strategies involve metacognition, affect, and social knowledge.

Finally, Rubin (1987) distinguished between strategies contributing directly to learning and those contributing indirectly to learning. He identified three types of strategies that contribute either directly or indirectly to language learning. These include learning, communication, and social strategies. Stern (1992) also proposed five main language learning strategies: management and planning, cognitive, communicative-experimental, interpersonal, and affective strategies.

2.2.3.6 Personality

The personality of L2 learners is also a factor affecting their success in L2 acquisition. According to Allport (1955), “personality is everything that makes you an individual. It is the integration and interaction of your genetic inheritance, your experience, and your ways of relating the two” (p. 7). Personality has also been described as consisting of a variety of specific traits rather than a uniform characteristic.

In the 1970's, Costa and McCrae of the National Institute of Health and Goldberg of the University of Michigan determined that most personality traits consist of the following five aspects: extroversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness to experience, and neuroticism. Extroverted individuals, who are usually talkative and outgoing, acquire their energy and motivation from social activity, though some may view them as intimidating or attention-seeking. Conscientiousness individuals are efficient, well-organized, dependable, and self-sufficient, preferring to plan their actions and set high goals. On the other hand, less conscientious individuals may view those with this personality trait as stubborn or obsessive. Agreeable individuals are trustworthy, kind, and affectionate toward others, and they often exhibit pro-social behavior such as engage in volunteer activities or helping others. Nevertheless, others may view them as naïve or overly passive. Individuals who are open to experience are known for their broad range of interests and vivid imaginations. They are curious and creative, usually preferring variety to rigid routines. They are also known for their pursuits of self-actualization through intense, euphoric experiences such as meditative retreats or living abroad. Others may view them as unpredictable or unfocused. Finally, neurotic individuals experience high degree of emotional instability. They are more likely to

be reactive and excitable, and they report higher degrees of unpleasant emotions such as anxiety and irritability.

Regarding personality in L2 learning, it has been observed that anxious learners usually make slower progress, particularly in the development of oral skills. They are less likely to take advantage of opportunities to speak or to actively pursue such opportunities. On the other hand, more outgoing students do not worry about the inevitability of making mistakes. They take risks and thus ensure themselves more practice in the L2 (Wu, 2011).

2.3 Theories about L1 and L2 reading

There are three theories which affect reading in L1 and L2 in EFL classes. Which they are: (Linguistic Interdependence Hypothesis, Linguistic Threshold Hypothesis and Alderson's Hypothesis Regarding Linguistic Interdependence).

2.3.1 Linguistic Interdependence Hypothesis (Iceberg Hypothesis)

The linguistic interdependence principle predicted that older learners who are more cognitively developed and proficient in the L1 would acquire cognitively demanding elements of L2 proficiency more rapidly than would younger learners. Recent studies of age differences among learners confirm this prediction (Cummins, 1981). Cummins (1979) proposed that "the development of competence in a second language is partially a function of the type of competence that already developed in the first language at the time when intensive exposure of the second language begins" (p. 3). According to this hypothesis, first language literacy is the premise of second language reading. Moreover, every language contains surface features; however, underlying those surface manifestations of language are proficiencies that are common across languages. This hypothesis also predicts that a child who has mastered the basics of reading and thinking in the L1 will perform well in a second-language environment (e.g., a classroom). Similarly, the Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) model proposed by Cummins (1979) asserts that "in the course of learning one language, a child acquires a set of skills and implicit metalinguistic knowledge that can be drawn upon when working in another language" (p. 851). This indicates that teachers may play a positive role in encouraging learners not to neglect their first language skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening). A diagram that explains Cummins' theory is displayed next page:

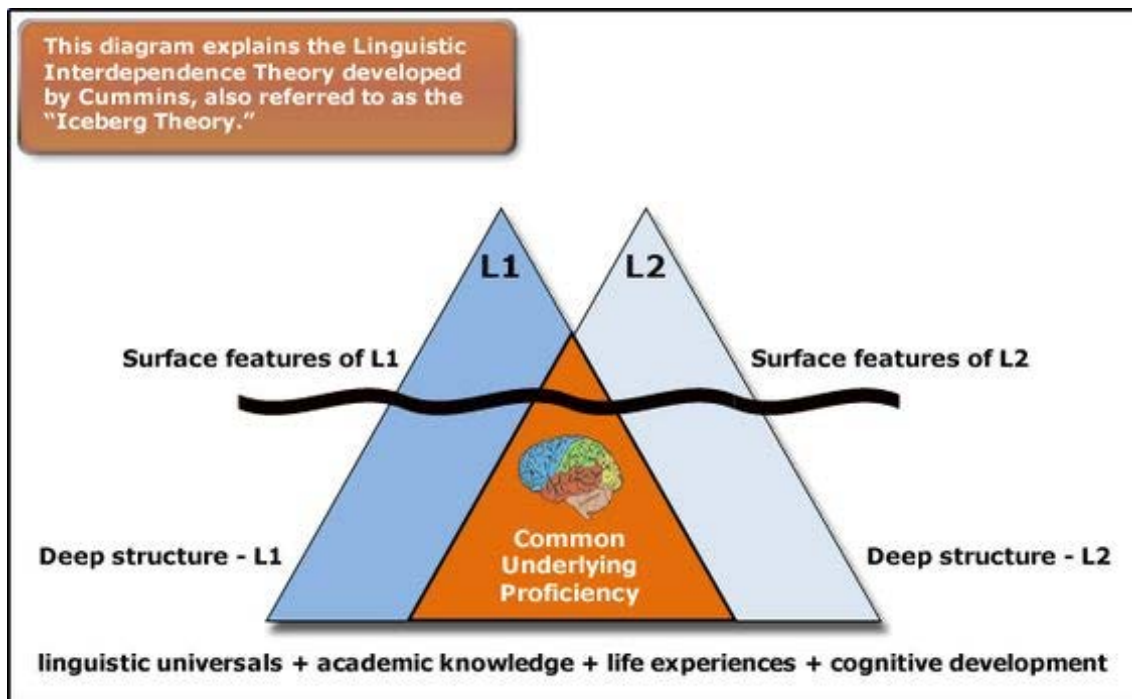


Figure 1. Linguistic Interdependence Theory by Cummins (1979)

The diagram above shows that L1 features such as reading skills are beneficial for L2 learning. Moreover, deep structure information in L1 is beneficial for acquiring an L2, as proven by several scholars such as Cziko (1976), Cummins (1976), Swain (1986), Verhoeven (1991) and Gelderens (2007).

Emphasizing the relationship between L1 ability and L2 acquisition, Cziko (1976) claims that there are similarities between the reading scores of English and French children. In another study by Cummins and Swain (1986), students were divided into two groups: early immersion and immersion programme at grade four. Students who had begun their immersion at grade four achieved the same reading scores of early partial immersion students. Verhoeven (1991) agreed that "literacy skills being developed in one language strongly predict corresponding skills in another language which are acquired later in time" (p.72). Gelderen's (2007) study further supports assertions of a positive correlation between L1 reading performance and L2 reading ability. The results of his study indicate that L1 and L2 reading comprehension already are highly related skills in the early phase of L2 reading comprehension development but that this relationship strengthens with time (p. 11).

2.3.2 Linguistic Threshold Hypothesis (Short-Circuit)

Cummins (1977) studied a sample of 85 bilingual (English-French) sixth-grade students in Canada. Based on each child's home language and language of greatest proficiency, he divided the sample into three groups: participants from exclusively French-speaking households, participants from exclusively English-speaking households, and participants from households in which both English and French were spoken. The results of his study suggested that only the bilingual children who were highly proficient in their second language exhibited the cognitive advantages hypothesised for all bilinguals by Peal and Lambert (1968). Cummins also determined that balanced bilinguals (i.e., bilinguals who had a similar degree of competence in both languages) scored higher than did monolinguals on a measure of verbal divergence. He described these instances of the advantages of bilingualism as "additive," meaning that increased cognitive abilities resulted from the acquisition of a second language in addition to a relatively well-developed first language. Further, Cummins found that those bilinguals who were in the low ranges of second-language proficiency exhibited cognitive disadvantages in comparison with monolingual controls. He described such instances of bilingualism as "subtractive," meaning that decreased cognitive abilities arose from the replacement of elements of the first language by elements of the second language. Based on these results, Cummins proposed a threshold hypothesis, which stated that bilingualism could have positive or negative effects on cognitive ability, depending on one's level of second-language competence. This is therefore a hypothesis of two thresholds: the first threshold, or "criterion of balance," is the level of second-language proficiency individuals must attain to avoid the subtractive, negative cognitive effects of bilingualism; and the second threshold is the level of second-language proficiency individuals must attain to enjoy the additive, positive cognitive effects of bilingualism. Cummins finally proposed the following: "there may be threshold levels of linguistic competence which a bilingual child must attain both in order to avoid cognitive disadvantages and allow the potentially beneficial aspects of bilingualism to influence his or her cognitive and academic functioning" (p.3).

According to the threshold hypothesis, learners should develop (at some point) language proficiency in the L2 before transferring L1 reading skills to reading in the target language (Clarke (1980) and Cummins (1979)). Moreover, the two levels of threshold are higher and lower, as displayed in the next page:

Table 1.

Threshold Level Diagram

Language	Cognitive Effects	Level of Threshold
Balanced in L1 and L2 or higher level in both.	Positive	High Threshold level
Native-like level in either L1 or L2.	Neither positive nor negative	No Threshold level
Semi-lingual or low level in L1 and L2.	Negative	Low Threshold level

The table above indicates that if learners have balanced levels of ability in two languages, then they derive positive cognitive feedback and a higher level of threshold. On the other hand, if they manage only one language as native speakers, then they may derive either positive or negative effects from this language and lack a threshold level. Finally, if learners possess low-level knowledge in both languages, then they derive negative cognitive effects and a low threshold level.

Clarke (1980) refers to Cummins' threshold hypothesis as the Short-Circuit Hypothesis, meaning that proficient L1 readers do not necessarily exhibit proficient second-language reading ability. This indicates that second-language learners need to obtain basic linguistic knowledge in the L1 before they are able to read in the L2. (Carrell, 1991).

2.3.3 Alderson's Hypothesis Regarding Linguistic Interdependence

In 1984, Alderson combined the two hypotheses of Cummins to pose the question, "Is reading in a foreign language a reading problem or language problem?" (p.1). Here, the term "reading problem" refers to a weakness in higher-level mental operations such as analysis, inference, synthesis, prediction, and retrieval of relevant background knowledge. On the other hand, the term "language problem" refers to a weakness in linguistic skills such as phonology, lexis, and syntax. The results of Alderson's study indicate that both language and reading problems cause difficulty in L2 reading. While L2 reading at lower levels of L2 proficiency involves a language problem, L2 reading at higher levels of L2 proficiency concerns a reading problem. Until Alderson's study, no researcher had been able to address the above question directly. The majority of researchers had investigated only three major

variables—the levels of L1 and L2 reading abilities and the level of L2 linguistic proficiency—among the same groups of participants. Thus, Alderson’s study is significant.

2.4 Language Anxiety

The influence of anxiety on the language-learning processes of EFL students is a topic of recent interest among education scholars. According to Hilgard (1991) anxiety “is a psychological construct, commonly described by psychologists as a state of apprehension or a vague fear that is only indirectly associated with an object” (p.18). Anxiety has also been described “as a subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the automatic nervous system” (Spielberger, 1983, p.15). There are three main types of anxiety: trait anxiety, state anxiety and situation-specific anxiety. However, the present study focuses on situation-specific anxiety, which refers to the persistent and multi-faceted nature of some anxieties. According to the situation, the exact form of anxiety may vary. For instance, if a learner is anxious during exams, then he/she is experiencing test anxiety. Similarly, if a learner is anxious when speaking in a second language, he/she is considered as having foreign language speaking anxiety (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991).

Language anxiety is known as *xenoglossophobia*, which is a complex psychological construct requiring investigation from a variety of perspectives and approaches. Language anxiety can occur in two forms: facilitative or debilitating. These normally work side-by-side, serving to motivate and warn the student. According to Horwitz and Young (1991), facilitative anxiety motivates students to resist new learning tasks and causes them to approach these tasks as an emotional challenge (p.22). On the other hand, debilitating anxiety motivates students to flee from new learning tasks and causes them emotionally to adopt avoidance behavior.

Foreign-language anxiety (FLA) is comprised of three main types: communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. Communication apprehension occurs in situations in which students experience authentic communication in the foreign language, usually with each other. Test anxiety, on the other hand, concerns the fear of failing or performing badly on exams. According to Spielberger (1972), there are two major components of test anxiety: worry, which refers to inner thoughts about failure on an exam and emotion, which refers to psychological response to the exam. The final component of FLA is fear of negative evaluation, which occurs most commonly when an instructor

corrects students' errors in a harsh or judgmental manner. It may also occur in any socially evaluative context such as a job interview or public speaking event (Horwitz, 1986). Another cause of FLA may be cultural, as language anxiety changes from culture to culture (Oxford, 2005).

According to Ohata (2005), some learners blame their FLA on a strict and formal academic environment. Thus, EFL teachers should recognize that the classroom environment itself can become anxiety-provoking for students. Moreover, several educators claim that a strict classroom environment may cause anxiety and stress by intimidating students, who are afraid of making mistakes. The participants of Ohata's study declared that if they are able to interact more freely within an informal classroom atmosphere, then they are less likely to experience anxiety. Moreover, they noted that they feel more anxious in classes which depend on traditional learning systems that oblige them to repeat what they hear from audio-lingual teaching machines. On the other hand, these learners commented that they are less anxious in classes that focus on collaborative activities. Giving short talk lectures and presentations is another way that educators can create a low-anxiety environment in their classrooms, according to them (p.148-156).

Other potential causes of FLA are the requirement of oral presentation during classroom activities (Koch & Terrell, 1991; Young, 1991; and Price, 1991) and the inability to remember the details of lectures (Tanveer, 2007).

All-in-all, recognizing the presence and causes of FLA is crucial to enhancing the learning processes of EFL students. As noted by a variety of scholars, FLA is one of the predictors of success in foreign language acquisition (Horwitz, 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989, 1991).

2.5 Studies on Foreign Language Anxiety

Several scholars (Bailey,1983; Horwitz,1986; Young,1991; Pappamihel,2002; Ohata,2005; Na,2007; Steinberg,1986; MacIntyre & Gardner,1994 and Cheng,1999) have examined the causes of FLA. For example, Bailey (1983) discovered that competition might increase anxiety, while positive feedback from a teacher may reduce it. Another discovery made by Bailey was that students who do not participate in collaborative learning and do not complete their assignments experience higher levels of FLA (p.65). In addition to the causes of FLA noted by Bailey, communication apprehension also plays a crucial role. Horwitz (1986) emphasized that anxious EFL learners focus on not making mistakes

in class. Their anxiety also decreases after their first year of study, presumably after they have become accustomed to making mistakes as part of their learning (p.125-132). Young (1991) further identifies the following sources of FLA: personal and interpersonal causes, learner beliefs about language learning, instructor beliefs about language teaching, instructor-learner interactions, classroom procedure and language teaching (p.427-429).

Some scholars have also proven that sociocultural context may affect FLA among EFL learners. For example, Pappamihel (2002) examined FLA among 178 Mexican immigrants attending middle school in the U.S. He found that levels of FLA correlated with specific factors such as years of study in the U.S., gender, and language skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking). On the other hand, his study demonstrated that interaction between students and native speakers of English raised levels of anxiety and that such strategies such as avoidance were used to reduce this anxiety (p.13). In another study among Japanese EFL students in the U.S., Ohata (2005) found that factors such as the inability to express personal beliefs and original ideas in English increased their anxiety when interacting with peers. Alongside sociocultural context, gender has also been proven as a factor of FLA, as proven by Na (2007)'s study which surveyed 115 high-school Chinese students and discovered that males exhibited higher levels of FLA than did females.

In addition to the causes of FLA, its effects on learners have also been the subject of much research. For example, Steinberg (1986) examined the effect of FLA on oral test performance via the oral description of pictures. She compared two anxiety-induced groups and one control group. It was hypothesized that students of the anxiety-induced groups and control group would produce different proportion interpretive content in their descriptions, namely that the anxiety-induced groups would respond less interpretively. The results of Steinberg's study indicate that more anxious students tend to be less subjective and more objective in their oral responses (p.131).

Another effect of FLA on students' ability to express them verbally was proven by MacIntyre and Gardner (1994), whose study involved 97 university-level French learners. The results indicated that students with higher levels of anxiety experienced more difficulty in demonstrating their language proficiency. They also faced additional difficulty when expressing themselves in class. It was also discovered that anxiety and learning achievement are negatively correlated in all three stages of language acquisition, i.e. input, processing and output (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1994; Pappamihel, 2002).

In addition to the effects of FLA on the verbal expressive abilities of students, the

impact of FLA on writing ability has also been researched extensively. One study by Cheng (1999) among 433 university-level EFL students indicated that language anxiety and writing achievement share a negative correlation. Similarly, Rabia and Argaman (2002), who examined the impact of FLA on the writing achievement of 70 high school students, found that students with higher levels of anxiety received lower marks on their exams. In terms of gender, female students displayed higher levels of FLA than did males (p.274-275).

2.6 Reading Anxiety

The source of reading anxiety varies according to the culture and text of the mother tongue. However, according to Saito, Garza and Horwitz (1999), there are some common causes for this type of anxiety: 1. when students do not understand their reading texts, 2. when they understand the words of a text but not the author's message, 3. when they don't remember what they have read, 4. when they deal with unfamiliar writing scripts, 5. when they are not familiar with the reading topic and cultural background, 6. when they do not understand every word they read, 7. when they cannot pronounce what they are reading, and 8. when they do not remember what they have already read (p.201-204).

On the other hand, some scholars have offered suggestions for decreasing reading anxiety. For example, Price (1991) suggested that teachers should not criticize their students' pronunciation errors and should clarify to students that they are free to make mistakes in the class order to improve their speaking skills with each other. Price (1991) also mentioned that group activities reduce anxiety. William and Andrade (2008) have asserted that confidence-building activities help students to display their individual strengths and, thus, decrease reading anxiety. Scholars like Waxler (2010), have proffered that teachers should increase the wait-time for those students who have difficulties in speaking or even give hints for these students. Waxler (2010) further has suggested that students should have a "pass" option so that they may choose not to answer questions to which they do not know the answers.

2.7 Studies on Foreign-Language Reading Anxiety

Extending the findings of studies on reading anxiety more generally, several scholars (Horwitz, 1986; Sellers, 2000; Zuhana, 2007; Zhao, 2008; Lien, 2011; Tsai and Li, 2012; Loghmani & Ghonsooly, 2012; and Wu, 2011) have focused more closely on foreign-

language reading anxiety (FLRA). For example, Horwitz (1986) investigated FLRA among 30 classes of Spanish, Russian and Japanese EFL students. He found that it significantly affected the foreign-language reading performance (FLRP) of these students. Specifically, students who had lower levels of reading anxiety performed better than those who possessed higher levels. Sellers' (2000) study of 89 third-year university students in an intermediate-level Spanish conversation course revealed similar results. Students claimed that they were particularly anxious regarding reading activities in the L2 in comparison with other skills-based activities.

Similarly emphasizing the negative correlation between FLRA and FLRP, researchers such as Zuhana (2007) and Zhao (2008) also extended the sample variety of previous studies. For example, Zuhana's study involved EFL students in local universities in Malaysia. The results indicated that higher levels of reading anxiety corresponded with lower ratings by students regarding their having obtained knowledge of the L2. In his study of Chinese language learners at a public U.S. university, Zhao (2008) found that reading Chinese texts was anxiety provoking to learners of a non-western language. He also found a significant negative correlation to exist between FLRA and foreign language reading performance (FLRP). Recognizing the negative correlation between FLRA and FLRP described above, other scholars have examined more specifically the relationship between FLRA and specific learning techniques utilized by students. For example, Lien (2011) probed the relationship between the FLRA and reading strategies of university EFL students. All participants were administered both an FLRAS and a Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS) after 18 weeks of study. Results demonstrated a negative correlation between FLRA and reading strategies. Students with low levels of FLRA used general reading strategies such as guessing, while high-anxiety students tended to utilize support mechanisms such as translation to help them understand texts. Finally, female EFL learners tended to be slightly more anxious than males in reading classes.

In order to determine the relationship between FLRA, reading proficiency, and test anxiety, Tsai and Li (2012) investigated utilized a test anxiety scale (TAS) among first-year university EFL students. Their study found that English proficiency was negatively correlated with test anxiety and FLRA. Moreover, test anxiety was positively correlated with FLRA, while reading proficiency did not reach a significant level between low-anxiety students and high anxiety students. More specifically, Loghmani and Ghonsooly (2012) examined the relationship between levels of FLRA among 190 EFL students and their levels of cognitive test anxiety. The results found out a positive relationship between FLRA and test anxiety.

Finally, in order to probe the relationship between LA and RA as well as gender, Wu (2011) utilized two forms of measurement (FLCAS and FLRAS) among 91 EFL learners in Taiwanese universities. The results indicated that there was a positive relationship between language anxiety and reading anxiety. In terms of gender, no relationship was determined between males and females and their language anxiety and reading anxiety. RCPT students with higher language anxiety and reading anxiety tended to have lower grades on their RCPT, while students with lower language anxiety and reading anxiety tended to have higher grades.

2.8 Factors Affecting Foreign Language Reading Anxiety

There are many factors that affect FLRA, but the present study is concerned only with the following: worry regarding reading effects and error-making in class, text features, gender, exposure to the target language and course level.

Regarding reading effects and error-making in class, EFL students often feel anxious during and after their reading classes. According to Jalango and Hirsh (2010), when a student is asked to read aloud during class, his/her brain produces immediate worry and anxiety largely because they are asked to read in front of their peers, which causes them to focus more on speaking performance than on reading comprehension. Then, if they are asked to analyze what they have read, they forget most of what they have just read. Sometimes, students worry at the same time they are reading because they are considering what the teacher might ask next. This simultaneously creates reading anxiety in terms of reading comprehension and reading performance.

Similar to the above results of Jalango and Hirsh, Zhao (2009) found out that worry about reading effects is a source of FLRA. On the other hand, the fear of making errors in class also causes students to worry. Students who lack self-confidence are often reluctant to participate, especially in reading class, in order to avoid making errors. Therefore, as anxiety increases, reading performance decreases. This finding is supported by several other studies such as those of MacIntyre (1995), Ohata (2005) and Horwitz (2008).

Pertaining to text features that affect FLRA, such features may induce anxiety in EFL students in two primary circumstances. The first one is if the text represents an unfamiliar culture, as reading tasks are not only a connection between readers and authors but also an interaction between readers and the shared knowledge of the text's culture (Tomasello, 1999). The second circumstance in which text components may induce anxiety in students is if the topic is unfamiliar or difficult to understand. In Zhao's (2008) study, when participants

responded to the FLRAS statement, “I am nervous when I am reading a passage in Chinese when I am not familiar with the topic,” 44% of participants strongly agreed or agreed with the item. This proves that the unfamiliar topic was a source of anxiety.

Regarding gender as a source of FLRA, many researchers such as Abu-Rabia (2004) and Zhao (2013) have indicated that female learners experience higher levels of anxiety than do males. Still, other studies have indicated no relationship to exist between the anxieties of females versus that of males (Aida, 1994; Shi & Liu, 2006). In general, the effects of gender upon FLRA still remain unclear.

Concerning exposure to the target language, which indicates advancement in understanding the culture and customs of the target language (Aida, 1994); it should not be assumed that having previous knowledge about the target language culture alone is sufficient for reducing FLRA.

Finally, regarding course level, scholars such as Saito (1996) have proven a positive correlation between course level and FLRA. This occurs partially because in most schools and universities, students focus on grammar, speaking and listening at early stages in their study. However, in upper level courses, they focus more on reading, which increases their anxiety.

In summary, the above studies have demonstrated that language anxiety and reading anxiety are related but distinct constructs, and the nature of their relationship requires continued investigation, especially in terms of gender. The present study attempts to fill this research gap by examining the roles of language anxiety and reading anxiety in reading-only classes and examining their relationship both reading comprehension and gender among university-level EFL students in Iraq.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Presentation

This chapter is comprised of several sections detailing the methodological framework of this study. The first section explains the research design, the second section presents the demographic information of the participants, the third section discusses the research instruments utilized, and the final section focuses on procedure, including the reliability of the study and pilot study, data collection, and data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

The aims of this study are to examine the relationship between language anxiety and reading anxiety, determine how gender affects language anxiety and reading anxiety as well as reading comprehension, and to investigate the relationship between both types of anxiety and reading comprehension. For this last aim, a Reading Comprehension Performance Test (RCPT) has been utilized.

This research is descriptive in nature. According to Stenhouse (1988), “a descriptive research is an appropriate measure to employ when the researcher is working to enrich the thinking and discourse of educators either by the development of educational theory or by the refinement of prudence through the systematic and reflective documentation of experience” (p. 50). Accordingly, two types of questionnaires (FLCAS and FLRAS) were utilized to obtain information regarding learning anxieties among university-level EFL students in Iraq, and it is hoped that this research might provide insight for educators regarding the questionnaire findings.

A quantitative method has also been employed in this study via the use of two questionnaires (FLCAS and FLRAS) as well as the RCPT. In order to measure the language anxiety of students, an FLCAS has been utilized; likewise, FLRAS was also administered to measure reading anxiety. For the RCPT, students took a midterm and final exam, and the average of both tests were utilized as the RCPT score.

3.3 Research Population and Sampling

Participants included 90 freshman students in an English department, and convenience sampling was used. According to Dornyei (2007), the most common sample type in L2 research is convenience sampling, in which members of the target population are selected for the aims of the study.

After the aims of the present study had been declared to the students, 90 out of 110 students agreed to participate. The other twenty students were regarded as absentees. They all had been taking a reading course involving the same textbook (*Select Readings*) by Bernard and Lee (2004) and teacher, and they all took the RCPT exam at the same time. The participants did not use their native language in class, as each student possessed at least eight years of experience in studying English prior to university.

Participant ages ranged from 17 to 29 years. The number of male participants was 28 (31.1%), while the number of females was 62 (68.9%). Additionally, 2.2% of participants were 17 years of age, 26.7% were 18, 43.3% were 19, 14.4% were 20, 5.6% were 21, 1.1% were 22, 1.1% were 23, 4.4% were 24 and 1.1% were 29.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

Three instruments were made for data collection: an FLCAS for testing foreign-language anxiety, an FLRAS for assessing reading anxiety, and an RCPT to determine the relationship between RCPT and both FLCAS and FLRAS.

3.4.1 Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)

In order to measure students' language anxiety, an FLCAS designed by Horwitz (1986) and consisting of 33 items was utilized. In this questionnaire, the words "foreign language" was replaced by the word "English" according to the specific purpose of this study. The participants were asked to answer each statements on the FLCAS using a five-point scale Likert-type scale consisting of the following: "Strongly Agree" (1), "Agree" (2), "Neither Agree nor Disagree" (3), "Disagree" (4) and "Strongly Disagree" (5). The possible range of the total score of each statement is five and, for all 33 items, 165. The higher score indicates higher-anxiety students. FLCAS was chosen because it determines the varying

levels of anxiety among students. There was no need to translate this questionnaire into the native language because, students were proficient in English and the researcher was present to answer any questions regarding meaning.

The 33 FLCAS items were categorized according to four factors of anxiety: communication anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety and English classroom anxiety. The items were divided according to the table below:

Table 2.

FLCAS based on four factors of anxiety

N.	Factor of Anxiety	Number of the Items
1-	Communication Anxiety	1, 7, 12, 15,20,27,30 & 32.
2-	Fear of Negative Evaluation	6,11,13,18,19,21,24.31 & 33.
3-	Test Anxiety	2, 8, 16, 22 & 25.
4-	English Classroom Anxiety	3,4,5,9,10,14,17,23,26,28 &29.

Note: four factors of anxiety, number of items = 33.

Previous studies have asserted the internal consistency of the FLCAS to be .93(Croanbach's alpha, N= 108) (Horwitz et al, 1986). The present study determined the internal consistency coefficient to be .81(Croanbach's alpha, N=90).

3.4.2 Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS)

Designed by Saito (1999) and consisting of 20 items, the FLRAS is a self-reported measure eliciting students' anxiety about reading difficulties in the L2, relative difficulty in reading as compared to the difficulty of other language skills and students' perception of various aspects of reading. In this questionnaire, the words "Russian, French and Japanese" were replaced by the word "English" for the purposes of this study. Participants were asked to complete each of the FLRAS statements using a five-point scale Likert-type consisting of

the following: “Strongly Agree” (1), “Agree” (2), “Neither Agree nor Disagree” (3), “Disagree” (4) and “Strongly Disagree” (5). The possible range of the total score of each is five and for all 20 items is 100. The higher score indicates higher-anxiety students in reading classes.

The items of the FLRAS were divided into positive and negative opinions, as displayed in the table below.

Table 3.

FLRAS categories

N	Opinion	Items
1-	Positive	9, 12, 13,14,15,16,17,18,19 & 20.
2-	Negative	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,10 &11.

Previous studies such as that of Saito, et. al (1999) have reported the internal consistency of the FLRAS as .86(Croanbach’s alpha, N= 383). The present study determined the internal consistency coefficient to be .80 (Croanbach’s alpha, N=90).

3.4.3 Reading Comprehension Performance Test (RCPT)

For calculating reading comprehension levels, the average of two RCPT is administered as mid-term and final exams were determined. The midterm test was administrated during the eighth week of the semester, while the final test was administrated during the sixteenth week of the semester. For the midterm-test, students were given one hour to answer the questions. For the final test, they were given two hours. For the validity of the test, the department had a Quality Control (QC) Center, which checked and revised the tests for the purposes of validity and reliability. After the exams, if any student was to object to his or her test results, then another teacher would score the paper. The aims of the reading courses in which the participants were enrolled are to expose students to a variety of text types and aid them in being able to utilize reading skills effectively alongside increased

vocabulary use in English. The present study determined the internal consistency coefficient to be .89 ($N = 90$).

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

All data were gathered using FLCAS and FLRAS, and the required permissions were obtained to conduct this study. The researcher promised to keep the students' information confidential and use these data for the current study only. He explained the purpose of this study to the participants and also informed them that their participation would be voluntary. Scales were administered to 90 learners, who were informed about the research and the essential role of their honesty in replying to scale items. The scales were both administered and collected during students' class time.

The first phase of data collection involved completion of the FLCAS and FLRAS during the fourth week of the semester. The reading course teacher was responsible for administering and collecting the questionnaires from all three groups of participants during class time. The second phase of data collection occurred after eight weeks of study, when students completed their RCPT tests. All students who participated in the study completed this exam at the same time and were given the same questions. Moreover, the same teacher graded all three sets of exams. After announcing the results to students, the data were entered into SPSS by the researcher. The third phase of data collection involved completion of the FLCAS and FLRAS for a second time during the twelfth week of study. Again, the results of the scales were entered into SPSS for analysis. Students took their final exam during week 16, after which the researchers determined the average scores of the midterm and final exams to use as RCPT results.

3.6 Data Analysis

The data of this study were obtained via two scales (FLCAS and FLRAS) and an RCPT. For determining the relationship between language anxiety and reading anxiety, a Pearson product-moment correlation was used.

For determining the relationship between gender and language anxiety as well as reading anxiety, two independent-sample *t*-tests were conducted. To determine the

relationship between language anxiety and RCPT as well as reading anxiety and RCPT, a one-way ANOVA was conducted.



CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

4.1 Presentation

This chapter presents the results of the statistical analyses of the data collected via the FLCAS, FLRAS and RCPT. In this part, the research questions of the current study are presented and the answers for these questions are provided based on the collected data.

4.2 Data Analysis

The FLCAS and FLRAS were used to collect data. Then, the average of the mid-term and final RCPT scores was obtained. The first research question aimed to find the relationship between language anxiety and reading anxiety. Thus, a Pearson-product-moment correlation was used. For the second research question concerning gender and language anxiety as well as reading anxiety, two independent-sample *t*-tests were employed. For the third research question, a one-way ANOVA was used to identify the relationship between language anxiety and RCPT. For the last research question, another one-way ANOVA was used to determine the relationship between reading anxiety and RCPT.

4.2.1 Findings of the first research question #1:

Does a statistically significant relationship exist between language anxiety and reading anxiety?

This research question investigated the relationship between language anxiety and reading anxiety. Thus, a Pearson-product moment correlation was utilized, and the results are presented below:

Table 4

The relationship between FLCAS and FLRAS

		FLCAS	FLRAS
FLCAS	Pearson Correlation	1	.65**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.00
	N	90	90
FLRAS	Pearson Correlation	.65**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	
	N	90	90

As seen in Table 4, there was a significant overlap between FLCAS and FLRAS. Additionally, the relationship between FLCAS and FLRAS was found to be a positive one ($r(88) = .65^{**}$, $p < 0.01$, $N = 90$). Since $r = .65$ is close to 1 and has a positive, it can be inferred that reading anxiety increases alongside language anxiety.

4.2.2. Findings of the second research question #2:

Does a statistically significant difference exist between language anxiety and reading anxiety scores in terms of gender?

This research question addresses the impact of gender on language anxiety and reading anxiety. Two independent-sample *t*-tests were conducted. The first one compared language anxiety (FLCAS) scores and genders, while the second one compared reading anxiety (FLRAS) scores and gender. Table 5 below presents descriptive statistics for the relationship between gender and language anxiety.

Table 5.

The t-test for the relationship between language anxiety and genders

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	Sig. 2-tailed	df
FLCAS	Male	28	2.86	.45	.08	-.02	.98	88
	Female	62	2.86	.46	.05	-.02	.98	52.57

Table 5 indicates the mean scores of males and females on the FLCAS. It is clear that the mean of females ($M=2.86$; $SD=.46$) is same of males ($M=2.86$; $SD=.45$). This result indicates that females and males in Iraqi EFL classes in terms of language anxiety are similar with each other.

As seen above, no statistically significant relationship was found to exist between the FLCAS scores of males and females. While the results indicate that mean scores of males and females were close to each other ($t = -.02$) since the *t*-value .We can conclude that males and females did not differ significantly on their FLCAS performance ($p > .05$).

The second part of this research question aims to determine whether a significant difference exist between the reading anxiety scores of males and females. Another independent-samples *t*-test was conducted for this purpose. Table 6 below presents descriptive statistics regarding their relationship:

Table 6.

The t-test for the relationship between reading anxiety and genders

				Std.	Std.	T	Sig. 2-	df
	Gender	N	Mean	Deviation	Error		tailed	
					Mean			
FLRAS	Male	28	2.87	.55	.10	.65	.51	88
	Female	62	2.78	.56	.07	.66	.51	53.39

Based on the table above, it is clear that the means of males were slightly larger than the means of females (M=2.87; SD=.55 and M=2.78; SD=.56, respectively). An independent-samples *t*-test was conducted to determine whether a statistically significant relationship existed between the FLRAS scores of males and females.

As seen in the table 6 above, no significant difference was found to exist between males and females in terms of FLRA. The result of the *t*-test indicates that $t = .65$. As the means of both groups are quite similar (M= 2.87, SD= .55 and M = 2.78, SD=.56, respectively) and ($t(88) = .65, p > .51$), we can conclude that males and females did not differ significantly on their FLRAS.

4.2.3 Findings of the third research question #3:

Does a statistically significant relationship exist between reading comprehension performance and language anxiety?

This research question examines the relationship between reading comprehension performance and language anxiety. A one-way ANOVA test was conducted, and the results are presented in table 7:

Table 7.

The relationship between FLCAS and RCPT

	Sum of		Mean		
	Squares	Df	Square	F	Sig.
Between					
Groups	4.24	28	.15	.64	.89
Within Groups	14.34	61	.23		
Total	18.59	89			

Note\ Ps > .05.

According to the table 7 above, no statistically significant difference was determined to exist between language anxiety and RCPT ($p > .05$). $F(28, 61) = 0.64$, $p = .89$. We can infer that higher anxious students get lower grades and lower anxious students get higher grades in their RCPT. Figure 2 below displays the relationship between the FLCAS and RCPT:

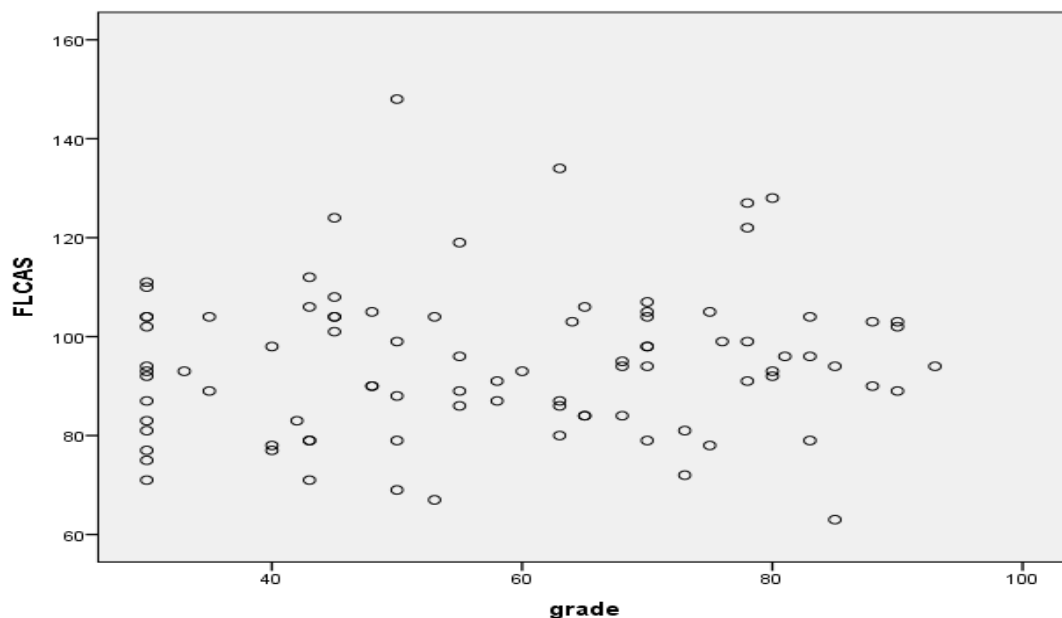


Figure 2. The relationship between students' language anxiety (FLCAS) and reading comprehension performance (RCPT)

As seen in Figure 2, the students were divided into two groups according to their FLCAS median score, which were 94. These results were then transformed into two options: FLCAS > 94 and FLCAS < 94. Next, the RCPT grades were transformed according their median, 56. The resulting options were calculated to be RCPT >56 and RCPT < 56. As mentioned previously, the scores of FLCAS fell between 33 and 165 for all 33 items, and the median score of the FLCAS was 94. FLCAS > 94 indicates higher-anxiety students, while FLCAS < 94 indicates lower anxiety-students. The median of the RCPT was 56. RCPT > 56 indicates higher-grade students, while RCPT <56 indicates lower-grade students. After comparing the medians of the FLCAS and RCPT, it can be concluded that the more anxiety a student experiences, the lower his/her score is, and *vice versa*.

4.2.4 Findings of the fourth research question #4:

Does a statistically significant relationship exist between reading comprehension and reading anxiety?

In order to find out whether there is a relationship between reading comprehension and reading anxiety, a one-way ANOVA test was conducted. The results were shown in table 8.

Table 8.

The relationship between FLRAS and RCPT

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	6.37	28	.22	.64	.89
Within Groups	21.51	61	.35		
Total	27.88	89			

As seen in table 8 above, no statistically significant difference was found to exist between RA and RCPT ($p > .05$, $F(28, 61) = 0.64$, $p = .89$). The results indicates that the more anxious students have lower scores and suggest that the higher FLRAS scores are above 100 and the lower grades fall below 100.

The following figure displays the relationship between the FLRAS and RCPT:

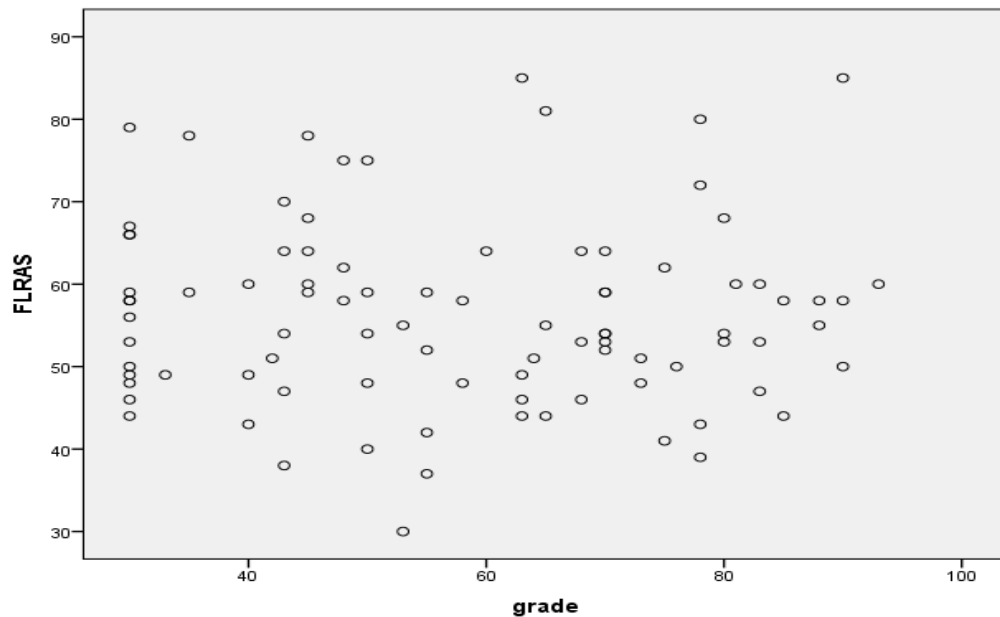


Figure 3. The relationship between reading anxiety (FLRAS) and reading comprehension (RCPT) of students.

As indicated by Figure 3 above, the students were divided into two groups according to their FLRAS median score, which was 55. Two options resulted: $FLRAS > 55$ and $FLRAS < 55$. Next, the RCPT grades were transformed according to their median. As mentioned previously, the scores of FLRAS fell between 20 and 100 for all 20 items of the FLRAS. The median of the FLRAS is 55. $FLRAS > 55$ indicates higher-anxiety students, while $FLRAS < 55$ indicates lower-anxiety students. The results demonstrate that the greater a student's anxiety, the lower the reading score, and *vice versa*.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

5.1 Presentation

This chapter elaborates upon the research questions and compares the results with those of other related studies. Specifically, the relationship between language anxiety and reading anxiety as well as the impact of gender are discussed. The relationship between students' RCPT scores and FLCAS as well as RCPT and FLRAS scores is also examined. Finally, the results of the present study are compared with those of the studies reviewed in the literature section of this paper.

5.2 The Relationship between Language Anxiety and Reading Anxiety

The findings of this study indicate that the relationship between language anxiety and reading anxiety is a positive one, showing that students with higher levels of language anxiety tend to have higher levels of reading anxiety and *vice versa*. This relationship is significant and positive, as demonstrated by Table 2. This result is similar to that of Wu's (2011) study of EFL learners in a Taiwanese university, in which a positive relationship was found to exist between language anxiety and reading anxiety. It is also consistent with the findings of Saito, et al. (1999), whose study of 30 first-semester Spanish, Russian, and Japanese students indicated that reading anxiety changed according to the culture and transcript of the mother tongue. Sellers' (2000) study of 89 third-year university students enrolled in a Spanish course indicated that students became particularly anxious during reading activities in the L2. Similarly, Pappamihel's (2002) study of 178 secondary-level Mexican immigrants studying in the U.S. found that interaction with a native speaker increased anxiety levels and that strategies such as avoidance were used to reduce anxiety.

Although a great amount of research has examined language anxiety, such as studies by Bailey (1983), Horwitz (1986), MacIntyre, and Gardner (1994), the majority of studies concerning language anxiety have yielded the same results because most have dealt with a specific type of learners whose backgrounds in the English language are quite similar.

5.3 The Relationship between the language anxiety and reading anxiety scores of males and females

In order to investigate the relationship between the language anxiety scores of male and female students, an independent samples *t*-test was conducted. The results indicated a statistically significant relationship to have existed between gender and language anxiety. According to the mean scores, female learners and male learners have anxiety like each other in language anxiety classes. This result is similar to that of Williams and Andrade's study (2008) determined that no statistically significant difference existed between males and females in terms of language anxiety. It is contradicts Rabia and Argaman's (2002) study, which found that females students experienced higher anxiety than males. Na's (2007) study found that males were determined to have been more anxious than females. On the other hand, concerning the relationship between gender and reading anxiety, the results of this study indicated that a statistical significant relationship was not found exist between gender and reading anxiety. According to the mean scores, males and females are actually quite similar in terms of anxiety levels, which is why no significant difference was noticed. This result is similar to that of Wu's (2011) study, which did not find any significant relationship to exist between males and females in terms of reading anxiety. Zhao's study (2013) similarly found no difference to exist in terms of reading anxiety. However, Lien (2011) determined that females tended to be slightly more anxious than males in reading courses.

5.4 The Relationship between Reading Comprehension and Language Anxiety

To determine the nature of the relationship between reading comprehension and language anxiety, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. The results indicated no statistically significant difference to exist between language anxiety and RCPT. This result is similar to that of Rabia and Argman's (2002) study in which they determined that students with higher language anxiety scored lower on reading tests. Wu's (2011) and Stienberg's (1991) studies

yielded similar results. On the other hand, this result contradicts that of Horwitz's (1986) study, which determined that anxious students are afraid of making mistakes in foreign language classes. MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) as well as Cheng(1999) indicated that students with higher levels of anxiety experienced more difficulty in language proficiency.

5.5 The Relationship between Reading Comprehension and Reading Anxiety

To examine the relationship between reading comprehension and reading anxiety, a One-way ANOVA was employed. The results indicated that no statistically significant difference existed between reading anxiety and RCPT. The higher the anxiety level, the lower the score obtained, and *vice versa*. This result is similar to that of Horwitz's (1986) study, which found that students having lower levels of reading anxiety performed better than those having higher levels. Similarly, Zuhana (2007) found that higher levels of reading anxiety corresponded with lower ratings by students who had gained knowledge of an L2. Zhao's (2008) study yielded a negative correlation between FLRA and FLRP, while Ya-Chin Tsai and Yi-Chih Li's (2012) study proved that English proficiency negatively correlated with FLRA and test anxiety. Nevertheless, this finding contradicts that of Brantmemeier's (2005) study, which determined that FLRAS and RCPT did not have any relation.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Presentation

In this chapter, the findings of this study are summarized and subsequently analyzed. Their implications are also considered and, finally, recommendations for further research are presented.

6.2 Summary of the Study

This study was conducted in the Erbil region of northern Iraq at Salahaddin University's English Department in the College of Language. Background information of participants was obtained both to create a profile of the sample and to collect information needed to answer the second research question, which examined the relationship between males and females regarding FLCAS and FLRAS. A mixed quantitative and qualitative approach was employed. FLCAS and FLRAS as well as two reading tests (mid-term and final) were administered. The average of the scores from the two exams was used as RCPT scores to answer the third and fourth research questions. The average of the FLCAS and FLRAS scores was utilized in answering the first research question. Later, SPSS was used to analyze the research questions.

FLCAS and FLRAS were administrated by the researcher during normal class time to ensure a sufficient number of participants and to ensure that students would have enough time for completion. The questionnaires were administered during the fourth and twelfth weeks of the study.

Pearson product-moment correlation was used to determine the relationship between language anxiety and reading anxiety. Independent-samples *t*-tests were also used in order to find the scores of males and females in terms of their language anxiety and reading anxiety. Finally, a one-way ANOVA was used to compare students' RCPT scores with language anxiety and reading anxiety.

6.3 Conclusions of the findings

The findings of the first research question suggest that students with higher levels of language anxiety tend also to have higher levels of reading anxiety. This correlation is positive and significant, which indicates that EFL learners in Iraq have equal anxiety in both language anxiety and reading anxiety. The reason of that finding is that the EFL students in Iraqi universities and particularly in Salahaddin University share similar backgrounds in English language and reading courses.

The findings of the second research question suggest that there is not any significant relationship between males and females in terms of their language anxiety. Level of female's anxiousness was like males, and this is similar to the findings of researchers such as Williams and Andrade's study (2008). This similarity might be due to similar routines of study in universities such as the same textbooks and teachers. The case might be different for large populations. On the other hand, there is not any significant relationship between the males and females in terms of reading anxiety. For reading anxiety, male and female anxiety levels were both quite high and at approximately the same. This result was similar with Wu (2011) which found no relation between males and females in terms of reading anxiety.

The third finding of this study suggests that the language anxiety and RCPT of Iraqi EFL students do not significantly differ. Students of lower language anxiety generally have higher RCPT grades, and students of higher language anxiety tend to have lower RCPT. Learning anxiety is common in the lives of Iraqi students, especially in English language classes. Usually, when students take reading classes in English, their textbooks are easy to understand, which is why lower anxiety levels tend to have higher grades? Because of their anxiety, the students study more diligently. The reverse is also true.

The fourth finding of this study suggests that the reading anxiety and RCPT of Iraqi EFL students do not significantly differ. Students of lower reading anxiety generally have higher RCPT grades, and students of higher reading anxiety tend to have lower RCPT. (Horwitz, 1986; Sellars, 2000; Tsai and Li, 2012; Zhao, 2008 and Zuhana, 2007). This is

because the reading passages on their exams are extracted from their textbooks, from which their teachers instruct them directly. Finally, EFL students in Iraq are already familiar with their textbooks before their courses and, thus, spend additional time studying them. This is why low-anxiety students usually have higher scores in EFL classes in Iraq. However, this situation might change if high-anxiety students alter their routines of study and study more diligently, in which case they might obtain higher results.

The above findings suggest that L2 teachers should cooperate with students to reduce their anxiety levels and increase their RCPT. Moreover, teachers might employ various anxiety-reducing techniques such as group activities, increased wait-times for students who have difficulty in speaking, or an option for students to “pass” when unable to speak. Additionally, teachers should make their students more aware of various reading strategies in order to reduce their reading anxiety.

6.4 Implications of the Study

This study has practical implications for both teachers and students. For example, Iraqi EFL teachers should introduce more reading strategies to their students and incorporate several anxiety-reducing techniques in their classes. They should be careful in how they criticize students' errors in front of peers, encourage independence in the learning process (William & Andrade, 2008), and increase the wait-time for students who have difficulty in speaking while also giving hints or employing a “pass” strategy if students do not know the answers of questions (Waxler, 2010). On the other hand, students should also utilize reading strategies and a variety reading texts as much as possible to reduce their anxiety levels. In general, both teachers and students should enhance their understandings of the impact of FLA on English-language learning.

This study is also relevant for EFL teachers in Iraqi secondary schools in which English reading and grammar classes are combined. Often, these teachers attend more to grammar topics than to reading or vocabulary. The findings of this study afford educators and teachers a rich source of data to understand how anxious students react in an intensive way to improve EFL classes in Iraqi schools. By this study, teachers can create a learner-centered and low anxiety classroom environment. On the other hand, it is recommended that teachers focus on teaching students reading strategies in order to decrease their overall learning anxiety. This might improve students' performance on proficiency tests, for example. Language classes can also be more effective if teachers determine what it is they really want

students to know and do because of their courses and then provide activities designed to develop the performance they desire. Most students who enrolled in the study were very motivated because they realized that the results of the scales might help improve the quality of their instruction and reduce their language anxiety as well as reading anxiety.

A final implication of this study is that appropriate assessment needs to be incorporated into the learning process so that teachers and students can determine whether learning goals are being achieved.

6.5 Recommendations for Further Study

One avenue for further study regards language anxiety and reading anxiety among a large population of students. This is especially important when comparing reading anxiety with RCPT and gender for more accurate RCPT results, students in different stages of study should participate because if all the students have same background, the results are usually known.

A second recommendation is that a wider range of universities participates in the study because teaching styles and textbooks may vary.

A third recommendation is to increase the number of participants and variety of gender representation. Making interview with students who have high anxiety and those has low anxiety, and then to compare the findings between the two groups to see the similarities and differences between them.

A fourth recommendation is that researchers continue to probe the nature, causes, and effects of reading anxiety on the overall language-learning process of EFL students, perhaps the way in which this anxiety also affects the development of other language skills such as writing, speaking, and listening.

Finally, teacher observation is recommended because they are often aware of the weaknesses and strengths of their students in both grammar and reading. In this case, they might be more effective in remedying these weaknesses and capitalizing upon the strengths.

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APPENDICES



Appendix I

The following statements 1 through 33 refer to how you feel about learning a foreign language. For each statement, please indicate whether you (1) strongly Agree, (2) Agree, (3) neither Agree nor Disagree, (4) Disagree and (5) Strongly Disagree. By marking the appropriate number on the line of each statement. Please give your first reaction to each statement and mark an answer for each statement.

Number:

Gender: MALE or FEMALE

Age:

English Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)

N.	Statements	S A	A	N	D	S D
1	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my English Language class.					
2	I don't worry about making mistakes in language class.					
3	It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English.					
4	It would not bother me at all to take more English Language class.					
5	During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.					
6	I keep thinking that the other students are better at language than I am.					
7	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in my English Language class.					
8	I worry about the consequences of failing my English Language class.					
9	I don't understand why people get so upset over English Language Class.					
10	In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.					
11	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English language class.					
12	I would not be nervous speaking in English with native speakers.					
13	I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is saying.					
14	Even if I am well prepared for my English language class, I feel anxious					
15	I feel confident when I speak in my English Language Class.					
16	I am afraid that my English language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I made.					
17	I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for my English language class.					
18	I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.					
19	English Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.					

20	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English language class.					
21	I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in my English language class.					
22	I am usually at ease during tests in my English Language classes.					
23	I often feel like not going to my English language class.					
24	I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on in my English language class.					
25	The more I study for English language test the more confused I get.					
26	I feel more tense and nervous in my English language class than in my other classes.					
27	I feel very self-conscious about speaking the English language in front of other students.					
28	When I am on my way to English language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.					
29	I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak an English language.					
30	I get nervous when I don't understand every word that my English language teacher says.					
31	I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak in my English language class.					
32	I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of The English language.					
33	I get nervous when my English teacher asks questions which I haven't been prepared in advance.					

Abbreviations:

SA: STRONGLY AGREE

A: AGREE

N: NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE

D: DISAGREE

SD: STRONGLY DISAGREE

Appendix II

The following statements 1 through 20 refer to how you feel about reading English language. For each statement, please indicate whether you (1) strongly Agree, (2) Agree, (3) neither Agree nor Disagree, (4) Disagree and (5) Strongly Disagree. By marking the appropriate number on the line of each statement. Please give your first reaction to each statement and mark an answer for each statement.

Number:

Gender: MALE or FEMALE

Age:

Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS).

N.	Statements	S A	A	N	D	S D
1	I get upset when I am not sure whether I understand what I am reading in English.					
2	When reading English I often understand the words but still cannot quite understand what the author is saying.					
3	When I'm reading English, I get so confused I can't remember what I am reading.					
4	I feel intimidated whenever I see a whole page of English in front of me.					
5	I am nervous when I am reading a passage in English When I am not familiar with the topic.					
6	I get upset whenever I encounter unknown grammar when Reading English.					
7	When reading English, I get nervous and confused when I don't understand every word.					
8	It bothers me to encounter words I can't pronounce while Reading English.					
9	I usually end up translating word by word when I am reading English.					
10	By the time I get past the funny letters and symbols in English, it's hard to remember what you're reading about.					
11	I am worried about all the new symbols I have to learn in Order to read in English.					
12	I enjoy reading English.					
13	I feel confident when I am reading in English.					

14	Once I get used to it, reading English is not so difficult.					
15	The hardest part of learning English is learning to read.					
16	I would be happy just to learn to speak English rather than having to learn to read as well.					
17	I don't mind reading to myself, but I feel very uncomfortable when I have to read English.					
18	I am satisfied with the level of reading ability in English that I have achieved so far.					
19	English culture and ideas seem foreign to me.					
20	I have to know so much about English history and culture in order to read English.					

Abbreviations:

SA: STRONGLY AGREE

A: AGREE

N: NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE

D: DISAGREE

SD: STRONGLY DISAGREE

CURRICULUM VITAE

Midhat Sarbaz was born in Erbil in 1987. He is a graduate in Salahadin University – College of Language – English Department in Erbil (2009). He worked as a translator at Zezna Company, Midhat Company and Rec Company. He gets permission a work as legal translator in the Ministry of Justice. Furthermore, he has been working as translator in Ministry of Higher Education/Hawler Medical University since 2009. He speaks English confidently. He can also speak Kurdish and Arabic fluently.

ÖZGEÇMİŞ

Midhat Sarbaz, 1987 yılında Erbil’de doğdu. Erbil’deki Salahadin Üniversitesi- Dil Üniversitesi-İngilizce Anabilim dalından mezun oldu (2009). Zezna, Midhat ve Rec Şirketlerinde çevirmen olarak çalıştı. Adalet Bakanlığında resmi çevirmen olarak çalışma izni vardır. Ayrıca 2009 yılından beri Yüksek Öğrenim Bakanlığı/Hawler Tıp Üniversitesinde çevirmen olarak çalışmaktadır. İyi derecede İngilizce konuşur. Ayrıca, akıcı biçimde Kürtçe ve Arapça konuşabilir.