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**TURKISH ELT STUDENTS' READING ANXIETY AND THEIR**

**STRATEGIES USE**

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## ABSTRACT

This study was designed to investigate the foreign language reading anxiety of Turkish ELT students learning English as a foreign language and their reading strategies use. The purposes of this study were to investigate (1) to what extent Turkish ELT students experience foreign language reading anxiety and foreign language classroom anxiety, (2) whether their foreign language reading anxiety differ according to their gender, course level, using English after school, and visiting an English speaking country, (3) whether learners with different reading proficiency levels exhibit significant and meaningful differences in mean anxiety level, and (4) what reading strategies they use.

The participants were 113 Turkish ELT students at Ataturk University of Erzurum. Two instruments were used for quantitative data: an adapted version of the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS), an adapted version of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and a set of interview questions was employed for qualitative data. Students' final scores for reading courses were collected from the reading instructors to determine their proficiency level. Statistical analysis such as ANOVA, T-Test and Pearson Product correlation analysis were employed in this study.

The study detected (1) the level of foreign language reading anxiety was very high and not distinguishable from the level of general foreign language anxiety among ELT students, (2) L2 reading was anxiety-provoking to some students, (3) new words, lacking background information of the text, and open-ended questions were found to be the main sources of foreign language reading anxiety, (4) there was a significant relationship between FLRAS mean and variables such as year in university, visiting a target language country, using English after school, and (5) a significant negative correlation was found between foreign language reading anxiety and foreign language reading performance.

The study suggests that Reading teachers should be aware of the potential causes of reading anxiety and do everything to diminish their anxiety about reading and reading classes. It is also suggested that explicit vocabulary instruction, selecting textbooks suitable for students' proficiency level, their interest, and their vocabulary sizes are crucially important.

## ÖZET

Bu çalışma Eğitim Fakülteleri İngilizce Öğretmenliği bölümünde okuyan öğrencilerin yabancı dilde okuma ile ilgili kaygı düzeylerini ve onların hangi okuma stratejilerini kullandıklarını tespit etmek üzere yapılmıştır. Bu çalışmanın amaçları, 1) İngilizce Öğretmenliği bölümü öğrencilerinin ikinci dilde okumaya karşı ne düzeyde bir kaygıya sahip olduklarını tespit etmek ve bunu konuşma kaygı düzeyiyle karşılaştırmak, 2) okuma kaygı seviyelerinin cinsiyet, buldukları sınıf, ders dışında İngilizce'yi iletişim aracı olarak kullanıp kullanmadıkları ve İngilizce konuşulan bir ülkeyi ziyaret edip etmedikleri gibi faktörlere göre değişiklik gösterip göstermediği, 3) okuma derslerinde farklı başarı düzeyindeki öğrencilerin kaygı düzeylerinde bir farklılık olup olmadığı ve 4) hangi okuma stratejilerini kullandıklarını tespit etmektir.

Bu çalışmaya Erzurum Atatürk Üniversitesi, Kazım Karabekir Eğitim Fakültesi İngilizce Öğretmenliği hazırlık ve birinci sınıfta okuyan 113 öğrenci katılmıştır. Nicel verileri toplamak için Yabancı Dilde Okuma Kaygı Ölçeği ile Yabancı Dil Dersi Kaygı Ölçeği olmak üzere iki adet uyarlanmış ölçek kullanıldı ve nitel verileri toplamak üzere yapılan mülakatta ise 6 adet soru soruldu. Öğrencilerin başarı düzeylerini tespit etmek içinse okuma dersi dönem not ortalamaları kullanılmıştır. İstatistiksel veri sonuçlarını değerlendirmek için ANOVA, T-Test ve Pearson Product ilgisizlik analizleri yapılmıştır.

Çalışma sonucunda, 1) İngilizce Öğretmenliği öğrencilerinin okuma derslerindeki kaygı düzeylerinin birçok ülkedeki yabancı dil öğrencilerinkinden oldukça yüksek bulunmuş olup çok daha yüksek olduğu düşünülen konuşma kaygılarından hiç de düşük olmadığı, 2) ikinci dilde okumanın bazı öğrencilerde kaygıya sebep olduğu, 3) bilinmeyen kelimeler, okunan metindeki konuya vakıf olmama, açık uçlu sözlü ve yazılı sorular kaygıyı, okunan ders kitaplarının zorluğu kaygıyı artıran en önemli etkenler olduğu, 4) öğrencilerin kaygı düzeyinin üniversitedeki buldukları sınıflarıyla, İngilizce konuşulan bir ülkeyi ziyaret etmeyle, ders dışında iletişim aracı olarak İngilizce'yi kullanma gibi değişkenlerle ilişkili olduğu, 5) okuma dersindeki başarı düzeyleriyle okuma kaygıları arasında önemli seviyede negatif ilişki bulunmuştur.

Bu çalışma okuma dersi öğretmenlerinin kaygıya sebep olan muhtemel etkenlerin farkında olmalarını ve öğrencilerin kaygılarını düşürmek için mümkün olan her şeyi

yapmalarını tavsiye etmektedir. Diğer yandan kelime öğretimine ağırlık ve önem verilmesini, ders kitaplarının seçiminde öğrencilerin ilgi ve ihtiyaçlarının göz önünde bulundurularak seviyelerinin tespitinden sonra seçilmesinin önemli olduğunu vurgulamaktadır.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1.0. Introduction

According to the many researchers there are many factors that affect the quality of second language reading (L2) and some of them are text types, both vocabulary and background knowledge, using reading strategies, target language culture and L2 reading anxiety.

One of these important factors is in L2 reading is the reading strategies used by L2 learners. In the past, reading strategies were known as skills. Much reading research has empirically investigated reading strategies actually used by successful and unsuccessful L2 readers. When reading English, ESL learners' proficiency is related to their reading strategies.

Another factor that affects reading comprehension is reading anxiety. Previous research shows that language anxiety is related to learners' beliefs; and, as Horwitz (1988) notes, learners' beliefs are related to the strategies they use. In this sense, language anxiety research should be associated with learners' beliefs or strategy studies. Many researchers (Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989, 1994a) have shown that anxiety often has a negative effect on language learning. Horwitz (1986), for example, found that higher scores on the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) were significantly correlated with lower actual final scores. Much research has been done on the role of anxiety in language learning with native speakers of English learning other languages. However, there has been little research on the effect of anxiety in language learning among English as Foreign Language (EFL) students.

The aim of this thesis was to examine the foreign language reading anxiety among Turkish students attending ELT department of Faculty of Education of Ataturk University in Erzurum, Turkey. In order to provide effective foreign language instruction,

it is necessary for teachers to know individual differences and to understand how those differences influence learners' success and failure in learning the language. Gardner and MacIntyre (1992, 1993) grouped individual difference correlates of second language learning into three categories. The first category is Cognitive Variables, which include intelligence, language aptitude, language learning strategies, previous language training, and experience. The second category, Affective Variables, includes attitudes, motivation, language anxiety, self-confidence about the language, personality, and learning styles. The third category is Miscellaneous Variables, which include factors such as age and sociocultural experiences. Among these variables, this study focused on language anxiety.

On the way to attaining second/foreign language reading proficiency, anxiety is a hindrance in the affective domain. Some psychologists maintain that anxiety affects massively the learning process (Tobias, 1986). It is further believed that anxiety also affects second/foreign language learning (Brown, 1980). According to Krashen (1985), anxiety raises the “affective filter”—“a mental block” that prevents learners from comprehending. When the “affective filter” is lifted, “the acquirer may understand what he hears and reads” (Krashen, 1985, p.3).

Readers were believed to have the advantage of rereading and thinking; as a result, affective factors in second language reading, such as anxiety, were neglected since reading used to be regarded as a receptive skill that happens within a person's brain, and reading did not require the interaction that speaking which is a productive skill did (Bernhardt, 1991). However, reading was an active meaning constructing process from a sociocognitive perspective (Bernhardt, 1991) in that readers played an important role in reading comprehension. Readers interacted with texts, which led to different interpretations of the text based on the readers' background knowledge and language knowledge. First language (L1) literacy, second language (L2) language knowledge (e.g., word recognition skills, grammar knowledge, and discourse structure knowledge) and background knowledge were considered to be the major factors that influence L2 reading performance (Coady, 1979; Grabe, 1991). Bernhardt (2005) found that L1 literacy and L2 language knowledge accounted for about 50% of the variance in reading performance and these two factors were insufficient to explain the variances in reading performance. She pointed out that the role of affect such as anxiety had been neglected from the previous reading models, which might explain some more of the variance in reading performance.

Studies done in different target languages have showed that foreign language reading anxiety does exist among some foreign language learners, and foreign language reading anxiety is related to foreign language reading performance. For instance, Yamashita (2004) found that students' anxiety in reading L2 was higher than that in reading L1. Although FL anxiety is an important element in the overall learning process, particularly in noncognate, non-western languages, such as Arabic (Hussein. 2005, p. 207) similarly, anxiety might also play an important role in the overall reading process in particular. However, the reading anxiety of learners of English as a foreign language has rarely been studied to the best knowledge of the researcher. This study will enrich and expand what we have already known about foreign language reading anxiety.

In an EFL context like Turkey, where the amount of language input through listening is limited in most students' everyday lives, reading is a very important source of input. Therefore, reading is an essential skill that can serve as the basis of the development of the other major skills, listening, speaking, and writing. Therefore, further research into all aspects of reading is important. Since only a limited number of studies have been conducted on the reading anxiety levels of Turkish ELT learners, in this study this topic was selected on which to focus.

### **1.2.0. Characteristics of English Adult Learners**

Previous studies (Broughton et al., 1980; Hilles & Sutton, 2001; Long, 1983; Rymes, 1997) have identified several characteristics of adult learners. First, they have a great deal of life experience and cognitive development in advance; second, they are capable of directing their own learning process; and third, they often are mostly voluntary learners so they tend to have little motivation in classes if they perceive the class is not furthering their own educational purposes and aims.

According to many researchers post-pubertal L2 learners are more successful than younger ones. "The younger the better in the long run" theory turned out to be not the case by countless research investigation. Singleton (2003) implied that "an early start in a second language is neither a strictly necessary nor a universally sufficient condition for the attainment of native-like proficiency" (p.15). He also considered that, under some circumstances, an adult beginner may become a master of his or her target language because the age factor is only one of the determinants of successful language acquisition.

Those learners who start learning a second language also have stronger motivation in L2 learning than children. They tend to have acquired more learning strategies and established better long-term memory codes and ability to recall detail than children have. Munoz (2003) posited that older students perform much better than younger ones on holistic and quantitative measures. On the whole, older students can use a larger number of more cognitively demanding strategies (Victori & Tragant, 2003).

On the other hand, according to Lingren (1995) most adolescents deal with stressful issues while they are young. Among the most common are their relationships with friends, peer pressure, peer acceptance, social anxiety, negative attitudes, and self perception. As teenagers begin their rapid physical, emotional, and social changes, they begin to question adult standards and the need for parental guidance. One possible way to motivate students to learn a second language is by lowering their “affective filter” (Krashen, 1982). If students’ levels of anxiety are lowered, then they will be able to receive the proper input necessary in order to acquire their L2.

### **1.3.0. Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to expand the knowledge of foreign language reading anxiety by examining the foreign language reading anxiety among learners of English. In order to do that following research questions were asked:

- 1- To what extent do Turkish ELT students experience foreign language reading anxiety and is there a significant difference between their foreign language reading anxiety and foreign language classroom anxiety?
- 2- Is Turkish students’ reading anxiety related to background variables such as gender, age, number of years spent learning English, number of hours spent reading English weekly or the reason why they are reading English in their free time after school?
- 3- To what extent do Turkish ELT students with different reading performance levels exhibit significant and meaningful differences in their foreign language reading anxiety levels?
- 4- What reading strategies do Turkish ELT students use to improve the foreign language reading performance?

### **1.3.0. Significance of The study**

This study was designed to expand our knowledge of the influence anxiety has on L2 reading as anxiety plays an important role in foreign language learning. The foreign language reading anxiety rarely been investigated. Revealing the relationship between foreign language reading anxiety and reading performance and also the relation and between different background variables and foreign language reading, this study will contribute to the study of foreign language reading anxiety.

On the other hand, this study would have academic benefits for English teachers of Turkish students. Examining Turkish students' reading anxiety would help them provide with effective learning atmosphere. The students could be informed about using suitable reading strategies and instructional methods could be adopted to reduce or diminish anxiety.

### **1.4.0. Key Terminology**

**Anxiety:** The feeling of tension associated with a sense of threat of danger when the source of the danger is not known (Miller, 2000). Anxiety is defined as a state of uneasiness and apprehension or fear caused by the anticipation of something threatening. Language anxiety has been said by many researchers to influence language learning. A certain amount of anxiety produces positive effects on learners' performance, but too much anxiety may cause a poor performance (Scovel, 1991). Anxiety contributes to the creation of the affective filter, which prevents students from receiving input, and then language acquisition fails to progress (Krashen, 1981).

**Language Anxiety:** According to Krashen (1985), Language Anxiety inhibits the learner's ability to process incoming language and short-circuits the process of acquisition. If anxiety impairs cognitive function, students who are anxious may learn less and also may not be able to demonstrate what they have learned.

**English as a Foreign Language (EFL):** In an English as a foreign Language (EFL) setting where the teacher may have a language other than English in common with learners, special attention needs to be given to provide opportunities for English language

experience (Savignon, 2001). Oxford (2001) also defined a “foreign language” as a language being studied in an environment where it is not the primary vehicle for daily interaction and where input in that language is restricted (p. 359).

***Foreign language anxiety:*** “A distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 128).

***Second Language (L2)*** - Second language is a learned language after the first language. Lenneberg (1967) uses second language to mean a language consciously learned or used by its speaker after puberty.

***State anxiety:*** The apprehension that a person experiences at a particular moment in time as a response to a definite situation (Spielberger, 1983).

***Situational anxiety:*** The specific forms of anxiety that occur consistently over time within a given situation (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991a).

***Trait anxiety:*** An individual’s likelihood of becoming anxious in any situation (Spielberger, 1983). Trait anxiety is the more permanent predisposition to be anxious and it is usually viewed as an aspect of personality.



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1.0. Introduction**

In this chapter, first language reading (L1) and second language reading (L2) that is not similar but related will be reviewed and summarized. First related topics, including definition, importance and purpose of reading, and reading strategies use will be reviewed. In the following section of this chapter, anxiety, foreign language anxiety (FLA), foreign language reading anxiety (FLRA) and its effect to proficiency will be reviewed in details, with the hope that it can help shed some light on L2 reading research and instruction.

#### **2.2.0. Reading**

Reading is a social activity and it contains three components: the social context, the reading purpose and the interaction between the reader and the text. Driven by the social context, the reader has the desire of reading. Then, the reader will choose reading material and reading manner, which is referred to “interaction”. The interaction is both a psychological and social process. On one hand, it is affected by the readers’ linguistic skill, prior knowledge and reading strategy skills. On the other hand, it is also affected directly by the social context, such as the social value of certain type of text. The product of this interaction is comprehension of the text. Starting with the comprehension, the reader will take actions to fulfill the reading task.

Although most theories focus on the psychological aspect of reading, this definition of reading is different from most contemporary definitions. For example, in the

yearbook *Reading in the Elementary School* by National Society for the Study of Education, Gates (1949) described reading as “essentially a thoughtful process”. Goodman (1965, 1973) defined reading as a psycholinguistic process in which the reader actively reconstructed a message encoded graphically by the writer. Clearly, these definitions merely considered the interaction component of reading and neglected the social context and reading purpose components. Thus, it is more appropriate to consider these theories as the definition of the interaction component of reading.

### **2.1.1. The Purpose of Reading**

The reading purpose forms the reading behavior and ultimately affects the reading performance. During reading, readers may search for the needed information directly. For example, when reading the news about a music contest, if the reader just wants to know the result, he will search for the result. If the reader wants to know the performance of the singers, he will certainly search for the comments of the singers’ performance and pay close attention to that information. Sometimes the purpose of reading emerges as the reader reads and can be modified during reading (McKillop, 1952). Mature readers can approach a text with different purposes or perspectives which can override conventions a linguistic community ordinarily uses to structure a text (Pichert & Anderson, 1977).

Reading purposes can be grouped into three; (a) informational reading, (b) perspective reading, and (c) affective reading. Informational reading considers text as a source of information. Therefore the accurate comprehension of the information is crucial (Noda, 2003). “Functional literacy”, which refers to the ability to read common texts such as newspapers and manuals and to use the information gained to secure employment (Resnick & Resnick, 1977), is the capability of informational reading. Perspective reading searches for new viewpoints. Reading articles, film reviews, editorials, biographies, personal and business letters, etc. all can be defined in this type of reading. Readers can engage in perspective reading effectively by knowing the conventional expressions, discourse organization, genre-specific vocabulary, and discourse markers of opinions and viewpoints. These elements can be crucially important prerequisites to successful perspective reading. Affective reading considers the text as a source of affective experiences, and thus the rhetorical power of the text becomes vitally important. Readers pay attention to the rhetorical styles as well as their messages. The purpose of

affective reading resides predominantly within the reader. What individuals gain from affective reading may vary drastically depending on their experiential backgrounds and their state of mind as they encounter the text. Eller (1973) stated that reading comprehension should also deal with the affective aspect, especially when the higher order comprehension skills are employed.

Among the reading purposes, the informational reading has been considered as the standard one. According to Duke (2000) “informational literacy is central to success, and even survival, in advanced schooling, the workplace, and the community. A primary aim of U.S. education is to develop citizens who can read, write, and critique informational discourse, who can locate and communicate the information they seek.” (p. 202).

### **2.2.2. Importance of Reading**

Reading has been examined as a way to acquire second language. According to the input hypothesis (Krashen 1985), human beings acquire language by understanding messages, or by receiving comprehensible input. We acquire language by understanding input that contains structures at our next stage-structures that are a bit beyond our current level of competence with the help of context, which includes extra-linguistic information, our knowledge of the world, and formerly acquired linguistic competence. Wilkins (1972) proposes the manner in which extensive reading may contribute to an L2 learner’s command of the target language. “Through reading the learner is exposed to the lexical items embedded in natural linguistic contexts, and as a result they begin slowly to have the same meaningfulness for him that they have for the native speaker” (p. 132).

Therefore many educators favor a language program which employs extensive reading, encouraging students to read a large amount of longer, understandable materials helping students to get comprehensible input. Also, students normally choose their own materials, with no comprehension test. Such programs involve reading large amounts of understandable material and with little or no follow-up work or testing.

In addition, Elly and Mangubhai (1983) encourage the use of reading in a language program in which students learn English as a foreign or second language. According to them, exposure to the second language is usually not ideal; it is normally planned, restricted, and largely artificial. A way to increase the efficiency of L2 learning

is through the use of an abundance of interesting books in the target language. When children are allowed to read high-interest story books, they engage in an activity which facilitates the acquisition process.

### **2.2.3. L2 Reading versus L1 Reading**

Although L2 reading research is thought of being derived from first language reading research, L2 reading is not similar to L1 reading. In contrary, L2 reading research included significantly more complicated factors than L1 reading (Bernhardt, 2005). Bernhardt (2005) summarized the variables involved in the L2 reading process laid out by the research in the 1970s and 1980s into “the grammatical nature of a language, the orthographic nature of a language, sociocultural reader variables, sociocultural text variables, and additional influences” (p. 135). L2 reading research since the 1990s noticed on the uniqueness of L2 reading. First, the L2 reading process involves both L1 and L2 (Bernhardt, 2003). Second, L2 reading has some unique factors in transferring and interference processes, such as L1 literacy level (Bernhardt, 2000, 2005), L2 knowledge level (Bernhardt, 2000, 2005), knowledge and strategy transferring from L1 reading to L2 reading (Garcia, 1998; Koda, 1996). Third, L2 readers use strategies that are unique to L2 reading context, such as accessing cognates for unknown vocabulary (Bernhardt, 2005; Garcia, 1998, 2000), code mixing, switching and translating (Garcia, 1998).

Bernhardt (1985) asserted that L2 reading is “linguistically, conceptually, culturally, and socially different from the usual audience of literary texts” (p. 23). Later, Bernhardt (2003) also pointed out that the L2 reading process is considerably different from the L1 reading process because of the nature of information stored in memory in terms of visual processing dimension, phonological dimension, syntactic dimension and semantic dimension. L2 readers come to the L2 reading process with representations in memory that possess varying degrees of usefulness and relatedness for cognitive processing.

### **2.2.4. Reading Strategies Use in L1 and L2 Reading**

In order to explore the ways that readers comprehend meaning from written text, it is useful to examine the reading strategies that readers employ. Chamot and O’Malley’s

(1994) work with second language learners strengthens the idea that students who learn to consciously monitor their own learning, and who have studied strategies to use when learning becomes difficult, much better than students who do not have such strategies. The same concept is valid for reading strategies. Reading strategies specify how readers visualize an assignment, how they make sense of what they read, and what they do when they don't understand. Such strategies are used by the reader to enhance reading comprehension, overcome comprehension failure and ultimately diminish anxiety. Therefore, teaching readers how to use strategies should be a prime consideration in the reading classroom to assist students in becoming more effective and efficient readers.

Anderson (1991) examined individual differences in the use of reading strategies reported by 28 Spanish-speaking ESL students in two reading tasks: taking a standardized reading comprehension test and reading academic texts. In order to elicit the reading strategies that the students used in each reading task, think-aloud protocols were used; that is, the students were asked to report the strategies that they were using while reading the passage and answering the comprehension questions. The data were classified and coded into 47 strategies. The results showed that language proficiency level was a better predictor of the standardized test score than any single strategy. However, the level of language proficiency did not contribute to success on the academic reading task. For both reading tasks, the students who reported using more strategies were more likely to achieve a higher reading score. The strategies used in both reading tasks were very similar. Moreover, there was no difference in the kind of reported reading strategies between the high and low scoring students on either task. According to Anderson (1991) strategic reading is not only a matter of knowing what strategy to use, but also the reader must know how to use a strategy successfully and orchestrate its use with other strategies.

Moreover, L2 readers have some strategies with L1 readers in common. Garcia (1998) stated that although bilinguals encountered more unknown vocabulary, they were not different from monolingual readers in the use of prior knowledge, meaning construction, making inference and comprehension monitoring. As a result, scholars in L2 reading research tend to use same kind of category of reading strategies for both L1 and L2 reading. Garcia (2000) and Chamot and O'Malley (1994) identified three types of interrelated strategies to characterize monolingual and bilingual readers: metacognitive reading strategies, cognitive reading strategies, and social and affective strategies. Jimenez et al. (1996) categorized the reading strategies of L1 reading and L2 reading into

another three categories: text-initiated strategies, interactive strategies, and reader-initiated strategies.

On the other hand, L2 readers also demonstrated some differences in strategy use from L1 readers. Researchers consistently found that L1 readers use more bottom-up strategies while L2 readers use more top-down strategies. Cziko (1980) found that less proficient readers primarily employed only bottom-up strategies, while native and advanced L2 readers used both top-down and bottom-up strategies. This trend is more distinct when L2 shares no similarity with L1, as even advanced L2 readers use more bottom-up strategies. By comparing the reading strategies used by native Japanese readers and Japanese L2 advanced level readers, Warnick (1996) reported that L1 readers use every symbol in the text to gather information. Rather, they used the knowledge of sentence and discourse structures to predict many of the discrete words. Garcia et al. (1998) stated that bilingual students focus more attention on unknown vocabulary and use a variety of bottom-up strategies while monolingual students do not use the same kind of strategies as much since they know more vocabulary. In contrast, Japanese advanced level L2 readers used more bottom-up and metacognitive strategies. Researchers like Harada (2003) argue that the employment of top-down strategies by L2 readers can only be realized at a certain level of proficiency.

L2 readers also differ from L1 readers in terms of their use of metacognition strategies. Garcia et al. (1998) reported that bilingual students monitored more of their comprehension. They could identify comprehension obstacles while monolingual students lacked visible monitoring since the texts were fairly easy for these L1 readers to comprehend. Warnick (1996) reported a similar finding that Japanese L2 readers, even at advanced level, used more metacognitive strategies. Bernhardt (1985) reported that L2 readers' reconstructions were impacted by linguistic features and L2 readers used their metacognitive capacities primarily at the lexical level.

L2 readers also use some unique strategies. Researchers argue that there are some bilingual strategies or cross-linguistic strategies uniquely applied by bilingual readers, such as code-mixing, code-switching, translating, and cognate strategies (Garcia, 1998; Jimenez et al, 1995, 1996). Some strategies, such as translating, can enhance bilingual students' comprehension. Garcia (1998) also reported that bilingual readers used different translating processes, such as direct or word-for-word translating, paraphrased translating and summary translating, and paraphrased translating was more effective than direct

translating. The ability to use cognates could be developmental but require explicit instruction (Garcia & Nagy, 1993). Garcia (1998) also reported that cross-linguistic strategies can help bilingual students figure out cognates.

The lack of proficiency in L2 is the main factor causing the differences in the uses of strategies between L1 and L2 readers. Garcia (1998) and Jimenez et al (1995, 1996) reported that both less successful and successful bilingual readers encountered more unknown vocabulary than the successful monolingual readers. The difficulty is bigger for L2 readers when L2 is non-cognate to L1.

### **2.3.0. Foreign Language Anxiety**

Anxiety is a term referring to the subjective feeling of apprehension, inadequacy, nervousness, insecurity and self-doubt that is associated with elevated autonomic nervous system activity that accompanies these feelings (Spielberger, 1976). Anxiety has been grouped in three: state, trait and situational. State anxiety is the apprehension that a person experiences at a particular moment in time as a response to a definite situation. Trait anxiety is defined as an individual's likelihood of becoming anxious in any situation (Spielberger, 1983). Trait anxiety is the more permanent tendency to be anxious and it is usually viewed as an aspect of personality. Situational anxiety is the specific forms of anxiety that occur consistently over time within a given situation (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991a). The situation-specific anxiety consists of the anxiety that is aroused by a specific type of situation or event such as public speaking, examinations or class participation.

### **2.3.1. Types of Anxiety**

Anxiety has several sub-categories in terms of personality and situational distinctions, and many studies have distinguished *trait anxiety* from *state anxiety* (Ando, 1999; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991b). The former refers to a relatively stable emotional state that a person experiences more frequently or more intensely than most people do

and is considered to be a part of individual personality. Young (1994) asserted that trait anxiety is a permanent personality feature, and “refers to a stable propensity to be anxious” (p. 12). It should be noted that the interpretations of trait anxiety would be meaningless without taking into account other anxiety provoking factors. For example, while two people may be assessed as having the same level of trait anxiety, one may be more apprehensive in social situations whereas the other could be more prone to nervousness during tests (Ando, 1999; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991b).

*State anxiety*, on the other hand, takes place at a particular moment as a reaction to a specific situation. According to Young (1994), *state anxiety* refers to an unpleasant emotional condition or temporary state. This anxiety, which fluctuates over time and varies in intensity and duration, is usually assessed under a given situation. Spielberger (1983) found a moderately high correlation ( $r = .60$ ) between trait and state anxieties. However, the assessment of state anxiety can be difficult because it often reflects an emotional reaction to another situation. For example, subjects who are supposed to give a public speech in the near future may be anxious regardless of the current situation.

As mentioned above, both trait and state anxiety assessments have problems in describing anxiety at any given point. *Situation-specific anxiety*, the characteristics of which are directly focused on specific situations, is a refined alternative concept. This anxiety is somewhat similar to state anxiety, in that they both attempt to define anxiety in particular situations separately. Ando (1999) stated that “The situation-specific approach allows for as much narrowing of the subject’s attention, even within a particular situation as the researcher wishes (e.g., during drills, class discussion, pair/group works, etc., within a context of language classrooms)” (p. 8). Therefore, this anxiety can be applied to many areas of research, including SLA, because it has a clear reference to the source a researcher is concerned about. In other words, *foreign language anxiety* is best described as a form of *situation-specific anxiety* (Bailey et al., 1999).

Another way to examine the concept of anxiety is using the concepts of *facilitating* and *debilitating anxiety*. Alpert and Haber (1960) suggest that learning and performance are affected either by facilitating anxiety or debilitating anxiety. Facilitating anxiety is anxiety that motivates and enhances one’s ability to complete a learning task. This is in contrast to debilitating anxiety, which evokes in them an avoidance of the learning activity (Alpert & Haber, 1960; Kleinmann, 1977).



### **2.3.2. Foreign Language Anxiety**

Although anxiety research in communication studies has noticeably focused on general performance anxiety, the focus of research on foreign language anxiety has primarily been on situation-specific anxiety. This specific category of anxiety has interested foreign language researchers as it affects language learning. The situation-specific anxiety has been identified as foreign language or language anxiety, experienced during performing in the target language while key terms and models were often taken from communication studies.

Foreign language anxiety has been considered as different from other types of anxiety and is specific to the foreign language learning situation (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989; 1991a; 1991b). Early studies on foreign language anxiety have pointed out the necessity of having a clear definition of foreign language anxiety. Scovel's (1978) early review on anxiety research revealed the difficulties of defining anxiety and its measurement in empirical research, and concluded that early researchers have suffered from the twin problems of how to define anxiety and of how to consistently apply instruments to measure it. However, about a decade later, Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope (1986) conducted pioneering research about language learning anxiety using a sample of American university students taking various language courses as a degree requirement, and invented the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) which has been widely used.

Horwitz et al. (1986) identified foreign language anxiety as one of performance anxiety within academic and social contexts and drew parallels between it and three other related performance anxiety: communication apprehension, test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation. Horwitz et al. argued that communication apprehension played a large role in foreign language anxiety. People who had trouble speaking in front of groups were likely to experience greater difficulty speaking in a foreign language classroom where they had little control of the communicative situation. Since tests and quizzes in foreign language classes were frequent, test-anxious students in foreign language class experienced more difficulty. Foreign language required continual evaluation by more fluent students or teachers so students in foreign language classroom may be sensitive to the evaluation of their peers. Horwitz et al. explained that although foreign language anxiety was related to these three types of anxiety, it was not the combination of the three. Anxiety came about

when learners had to communicate in their second language that was imperfect and yet to be developed. In this sense, foreign language anxiety was mostly related to the oral aspects of language, listening and speaking.

It can be concluded that several important concepts have emerged. For one thing, foreign language anxiety is distinguishable from other types of anxiety. Second, foreign language anxiety is a situation-specific anxiety. Third, foreign language anxiety comes from negative foreign language learning experience and may have a negative influence on performance.

### **2.3.3. Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety**

Compared to other language skills such as writing and reading (Cheng, Horwitz, & Schallert, 1999), a certain amount of research has supported studies in which speaking has been the most crucial source of anxiety in the foreign language classroom (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Young, 1990; Price, 1991). Foreign language classroom anxiety is believed to be more highly related to speaking than other language skills as Horwitz et al. (1986) announced that “anxiety centers on the two basic task requirements of foreign language learning: listening and speaking”. In addition compared to other language skills such as writing and reading (Cheng, Horwitz, & Schallert, 1999), a certain amount of research has supported studies in which speaking has been the most crucial source of anxiety in the foreign language classroom (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Price, 1991).

Horwitz & Young (1991) posited that “difficulty in speaking in class is probably the most frequently cited concern of the anxious foreign language students seeking help” (p. 29) and that “since speaking in the target language seems to be the most threatening aspect of foreign language learning, the current emphasis on the development of communicative competence poses particularly great difficulties for the anxious student” (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope 1986).

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety is a situation-specific anxiety (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). While test anxiety is a common classroom phenomenon, the anxiety felt by many students in the foreign language classroom extends beyond the test. Language is inherently connected to one’s concept of self, or identity. According to Guiora (1984), it is the “lifeblood of human self-awareness, that is, the carrier of identity”

(p. 10). In the process of learning a new language, individuals usually also have to make changes in ways of thinking about the world and describing their experiences, perhaps challenging the “native language and its psychological correlates” (Guiora, 1984, p. 4).

In fact, language learning is one of the most anxiety-producing undertakings upon which a person can embark. According to Edwin Stengel (1939) it is like the difference between a child being given a flamboyant dress to wear and an adult being given the same dress. The child will see an opportunity to play and have fun and expect others to join her in the game. An adult will likely have a sense of shame and feel uncomfortable in the new clothes, as if she is making a spectacle of herself. Based on Freudian psychology, Stengel believed that in adults the superego is too much on guard to learn a second language easily. “The new language as spoken by them, seems to be the result of a compromise between the demands of reality and their emotional resistance against the new way of expressing themselves” (Stengel, 1939, p. 476) In fact, Schumann (1978) went so far as to propose that the social and psychological distance between the learner and the speakers of the target language partly determine the degree to which the target language is acquired.

Understanding the internal conflict adults face in learning a second language, educators tried measuring language anxiety in the classroom, but did not obtain consistent results. In reviewing the research, Scovel (1978) suggested that the problem was the ways different researchers were operationalizing the construct of anxiety in the language classroom in their studies. As previously discussed, anxiety can be viewed through different perspective: trait vs. state, facilitating vs. debilitating, general vs. specific.

Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) set out to rectify this situation by developing an instrument that could be used to reliably measure anxiety in the *foreign language* classroom. They suggested that because of the mental operations required when speaking a second language, “any performance in the L2 is likely to challenge an individual’s self-concept as a competent communicator and lead to reticence, self-consciousness, fear or even panic” (p. 128). They therefore proposed that foreign language anxiety in the classroom is related to three previously established performance anxieties: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Communication apprehension is “the level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons” (McCroskey, 1977, p. 12).

Test anxiety is fear of formal assessments in the classroom (Mandler & Sarason, 1953). Fear of negative evaluation is defined as “apprehension about others’ evaluations, distress over their negative evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively” (Watson & Friend, 1969, p. 449). It is clear that all three of these constructs could play a part in anxiety in the foreign language classroom, and it was Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope’s (1986) argument that the ways in which these constructs interacted made foreign language classroom anxiety a specific and distinct type of anxiety which, in order to be studied, had to be more consistently measured. After conducting focus groups with language students at the University of Texas at Austin, they developed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) to measure this anxiety “as evidenced by negative performance expectancies and social comparisons, psycho physiological symptoms, and avoidance behaviors” (Horwitz, 1986, p. 559).

Pilot testing showed that the new scale had good internal reliability and test-retest reliability (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986), and supported the validity of the concept that anxiety in the foreign language classroom was distinguishable from other anxieties such as test anxiety alone (Horwitz, 1986). The study supported foreign language classroom 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” (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986, p. 128). Furthermore, in the first administrations of this scale, one-third of the students scored as being highly anxious. Many studies have been conducted using this instrument to examine foreign language anxiety in general as well as anxiety regarding specific foreign language skills (for examples see, Aida (1994), Saito and Samimy (1996). The results have consistently indicated that around a third of foreign language students suffer from high levels of language anxiety in the foreign language classroom. Moreover results have consistently indicated a negative correlation between foreign language anxiety and achievement (Horwitz, 2000).

In language teaching literature, a distinction is generally made between foreign language learning, i.e., learning the language in an environment where it is not spoken by the general populace (Chinese or Arabic in Turkey, for example) and second language learning, which is the case of the language being learned in an environment where it is a primary language (as in English in the United States, or Spanish in Mexico) (Gass &

Selinker, 2008). Specific to English language learning, the field is often discussed in terms of EFL (English as a Foreign Language, i.e., in an environment where English is not the language of the community) and ESL (English as a Second or Subsequent Language, i.e., in an environment where English is widely used and spoken). Although there have been numerous studies conducted to examine foreign language classroom anxiety, there are relatively few that investigate second language classroom anxiety, and even fewer that examine second language anxiety outside of the academic context.

In 1999, Pappamihiel conducted her dissertation study using a modified form of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale which she called the English Language Anxiety Scale (ELAS). Her target population was immigrant Mexican middle school students who were taking both ESL classes and regular academic content classes. She asked her 178 participants to answer the items of the ELAS once within the context of the ESL classes and then again with reference to their mainstream classes. She found that the anxiety experienced by these students could be separated into two distinct domains: performance and achievement. Students were predominantly anxious about their interactions with their teachers and the teachers' assessments of their skills in the ESL classroom, but in the mainstream classrooms their interactions with peers were more likely to produce anxious reactions. Pappamihiel (2001) also found that anxiety was more prevalent in girls than in boys, which she attributed to Mexican cultural norms regarding classroom behavior in general as well as gender appropriate behavior specifically. The anxiety reactions from the girls were particularly attributed to having to interact with Chicanas (Mexican-American girls) in their mainstream classes who would "taunt and tease" them in both English and Spanish (p. 5).

Also in a second language context, Jones (2003) investigated the effects of a treatment for language anxiety among 43 Spanish-speaking adult education ESL students. Her hypothesis was that anxiety management training given in the first language, Spanish, would be more effective than either control groups (who read stories in Spanish, or in English) or anxiety management training provided in English alone. While her study did not show that the treatment had much effect on anxiety, it is an important study in that it is one of the first that deals with adult education learners (not college students) regarding anxiety in the English as a second language context.

Derwing (2004) interviewed a hundred adult ESL students in Canada about their experiences as second language speakers. While this study did not focus specifically on

language anxiety, it found that adult ESL students felt that their pronunciation was the primary cause of communication difficulties with native speakers. Almost all participants (95%) also indicated that the standard goal for pronunciation was to sound like a native speaker, and a third also believed they had been discriminated against because of their pronunciation. Moreover, visible minorities (from the Middle East or Asian-Pacific regions) were more likely to report discrimination than non-visible minorities (mainly immigrants from Europe). Even though the participants expressed the belief that their accent in English did not cause an identity issue for them because their identity was tied to their first language, and not English, they nonetheless indicated having difficulties in expressing themselves as competent communicators and felt that they were at a distinct disadvantage with regard to power relations when interacting with native speakers. Their inability to produce native-like pronunciation threatened their perception of their identity, “how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future” (Norton, 2000, p. 5). Threats to the concept of identity and the ability to manage those threats are at the root of anxiety (Lazarus, 1966, 1991; Lazarus & Averill, 1972).

One other study specifically investigating second language anxiety among adults was conducted by Woodrow. Woodrow (2006) argued that “living in an environment where the target language is also the language of everyday communication may influence anxiety,” explicitly pointing out the perceived difference in the EFL and ESL contexts (p.309). Two hundred seventy-five academic English students planning to enter Australian universities were given an English Language Anxiety Scale (developed by Woodrow). The English Language Anxiety Scale was based on a pilot version tested in 2003. In addition, results from the International English Language Testing Service exam and qualitative interview data were collected and examined. The 12-item Likert scale included questions about speaking anxiety with variations as to the kind of interlocutor (native or non-native speaker as well as status distinctions), the number of interlocutors, and the conversational context (in-class or out-of-class). The results showed that while in-class and out-of-class anxiety were highly correlated ( $r=.58$ ,  $p<.01$ ), there was sufficient lack of correlation to indicate that the context of the language learning (i.e., in class or out of class) should be taken into consideration.

#### **2.3.4. The Effects of Language Anxiety on Final Scores**

Although some research in foreign language education has shown that second language learning is characterized by positive association with anxiety or no relationship with anxiety (Pimsleur, Ludwig, & Andrew, 1962; Backman, 1976), most of the research in the education field has found that (significant) negative correlations exist between anxiety and foreign language learning (Chastain, 1975; Tucker, Hamayan, & Genesee, 1976; Swain & Burnaby, 1976; Gardner, Smythe, Clément, & Glicksman, 1976; Steinberg, 1982; Daly & Stafford, 1984; Young, 1990; Phillips, 1992; Aida, 1994; Saito & Samimy, 1996).

Horwitz (1986) found that higher anxiety scores measured by the FLCAS were associated with lower course grades received by foreign language students at the end of the semester. The more anxious students also expected to receive lower grades.

Aida (1994) and Saito and Samimy (1996) investigated the influence of language anxiety on the acquisition of Japanese, which is generally perceived to be difficult to acquire for English native speakers. Aida, a Japanese educator, was interested in examining how foreign language anxiety would influence the learning of non-Western languages like Japanese. Ninety-six students taking the second-year Japanese course at the University of Texas at Austin participated in her study. They completed an adapted version of the FLCAS, in which the term “foreign language” in the original FLCAS was replaced with the term “Japanese language.” She found that students with a high level of anxiety were more likely to receive lower grades than students with a low level of anxiety. Saito and Samimy also examined the role of foreign language anxiety on language performance by American university students studying Japanese at beginning, intermediate, and advanced instructional levels. Language Class Anxiety was the best predictor of the performance of the intermediate- and advanced-level students in the sense that less anxious students gained higher grades than more anxious students. For the beginning-level students, Year in College was the best predictor in that the students who began studying Japanese in their junior or senior year were predicted to gain higher grades than those who started as soon as they entered college. Thus, foreign language anxiety exerted a negative influence on learners’ grades and became more dominant at higher instructional levels.

### **2.3.5. General Causes of Foreign Language Anxiety**

In order to investigate potential causes of language anxiety, several researchers (Bailey, 1983; Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002; Price, 1991; Spielmann & Radnofsky, 2001) have adopted qualitative research techniques such as interviews and diary studies. Bailey (1983) suggested that researchers could profitably employ a combined approach of quantitative and qualitative methodologies because the two approaches can provide very different types of information. Price (1991) stated that qualitative research “allows the researcher to obtain descriptive information on variables that cannot easily be assessed through empirical research” (p. 102). Spielmann and Radnofsky (2001) argued that “the extreme complexity of the language learning experience cannot be adequately reflected by quantitative research alone” (p. 261).

Bailey (1983) identified a prevalent affective factor, competitiveness, in the diary entries that she kept when she took a required French course for her doctoral work and in the diary entries of ten other adults, eight of whom were language teachers, which were kept in language-learning situations. Some typical manifestations of competitiveness were self-comparisons with classmates and with an idealized self-image, a desire to outperform other students, a concern with tests and grades, and a desire to gain the teacher’s approval. As for the relationship between competitiveness and anxiety, Bailey stated that it is difficult to determine whether competitiveness is a cause or an effect of anxiety, or whether they exist in a cyclic relationship.

On the basis of interviews with highly anxious foreign language students, Price (1991) attempted to identify sources of anxiety in foreign language classes. The aspects of the classes that caused great anxiety were; having to speak the target language in front of others, a concern about poor pronunciation, the frustration of being unable to communicate successfully, and the difficulty of the language classes. The interviews revealed that perfectionism and fear of public speaking were two personality characteristics related to foreign language anxiety.

Gregersen and Horwitz (2002) found a link between language anxiety and perfectionism in their interview study. By examining the reactions of four high-anxious students and four low-anxious students to their videotaped oral performance, they found that the anxious and non-anxious students could be differentiated by their perfectionist tendencies. The researchers reported that, “Specifically, anxious learners reported higher



standards for their English performance, a greater tendency toward procrastination, greater worry over the opinions of others, and a higher level of concern over their errors than the non-anxious learners” (p. 568). They, then, concluded that high-anxious students and perfectionists had many features in common and that perfectionism can be an important source of poor performance in foreign language classes.

From a careful review of the language anxiety literature, Young (1991) presented six potential sources of language anxiety: (1) personal and interpersonal anxieties (e.g., low self-esteem, competitiveness, and communication apprehension); (2) learner beliefs about language learning (e.g., unrealistic performance expectations); (3) instructor beliefs about language teaching (e.g., the instructor’s constant error correction); (4) instructor-learner interactions (e.g., the instructor’s harsh manner of error correction); (5) classroom procedures (e.g., the requirement of oral presentations); and (6) language testing (e.g., unfamiliar testing formats). Young stated that it was important for teachers to recognize signs of anxiety in language learners and offered useful suggestions for creating a low anxiety atmosphere for foreign language learners. Some of those suggestions were that instructors (a) ask students to verbalize their anxieties and discuss them so that they can understand that they are not alone in feeling anxiety, (b) help students dispel their erroneous beliefs about language learning by sometimes holding brief discussions about the process of language learning, and (c) assess their approach to error correction and adopt an attitude that mistakes are part of the language learning process.

Foss and Reitzel (1988) suggested that students’ perceptions of their foreign language and communication abilities play a crucial role in language anxiety. There is sometimes a difference between students’ perceptions of their performances and those of their instructors in the sense that some students will not judge their performance as being satisfactory even though their instructor thinks it good. Students’ self-perceptions should be analyzed and taken into consideration in studying the sources of language anxiety. Quantitative studies by MacIntyre, Noels, and Clement (1997) and Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, and Daley (1999) and Kitano (2001) also revealed a significant influence of self-perception on anxiety.

MacIntyre, Noels, and Clement (1997) managed a study with 37 Anglophone students learning French. They found a negative correlation between language anxiety and both actual and perceived proficiency in French. More interestingly, more anxious students tended to underestimate their ability, while more relaxed students tended to

overestimate their ability.

Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, and Daley (1999) investigated factors that predict foreign language anxiety using a setwise multiple regression analysis with 210 university students enrolled in foreign language courses. They found seven statistically significant predictors: age, academic achievement, prior history of visiting foreign countries, prior high school experience with foreign languages, expected overall average for the current language course, perceived scholastic competence, and perceived self-worth. Three of the seven predictors were self-perception factors, with students' expectation of their overall achievement in foreign language courses functioning as the biggest predictor of foreign language anxiety.

Kitano (2001) examined the relationship between anxiety and self-perceived speaking ability in Japanese with 212 students enrolled in Japanese language courses at two American universities. The study showed that the students who perceived their speaking ability as poorer than that of their peers and native speakers of Japanese had a higher level of anxiety. Male students experienced more anxiety as they perceived their speaking performance to be less competent than their peers and native speakers, whereas female students did not exhibit such a tendency. Thus, the students' self-perceived speaking ability was a source of anxiety in oral performance in a foreign language.

#### **2.4.0. Foreign Language Reading Anxiety**

Foreign language reading anxiety has drawn increased but not extensive researchers' attention. Only a limited number of researchers have investigated the existence and effects of reading anxiety in foreign language learning. Saito, Horwitz, and Garza (1999) first introduced the construct of foreign language reading anxiety. Although reading is likely to be considered less susceptible to anxiety effects than oral performance, they found that reading in a foreign language indeed provoked anxiety. Up to now, researchers have recognized *that foreign language reading anxiety* is distinguishable from general *foreign language anxiety* (Horwitz et al., 1999; Sellers, 2000). That is, *foreign language reading anxiety* is recognized as a specific type of anxiety.

Moreover, researchers have found that there is a negative correlation between *foreign language reading anxiety* and reading quality (Sellers, 2000). The level of

*foreign language reading anxiety* increases as readers perceived a rise in the difficulty level of reading in a target foreign language, and *foreign language reading anxiety* is negatively correlated with language performance (Horwitz et al., 1999).

However, Sparks, Ganschow, and Javorsky (2000) opposed the view that anxiety is the cause of a decrease in foreign language grades and contended that phonological processing skills, especially phonemic awareness, are the best predictors of reading acquisition in both first and second languages. Therefore, Sparks et al. pointed out that Saito et al.'s study did not include language variables, that is, the learners' native language reading skills or foreign language reading skills in their study. Horwitz (2000) responded to this view of the role of language anxiety that Sparks et al. proposed by contending that although researchers investigating language anxiety have never questioned the possibility of native language disabilities causing anxiety, all anxiety reactions cannot be explained solely by native language disabilities. Sparks et al. failed to explain why advanced and successful learners report anxious reactions as well. Horwitz (1996) argued that even many nonnative foreign language teachers experience foreign language anxiety. Horwitz (2000) criticized Sparks et al. and their colleagues for persistently excluding the possibility of other factors besides native language coding disabilities as the causes of individual differences in foreign language learning and concluded that "Language teachers and researchers must be alert to the possibility of language learning disabilities, and it is appropriate for researchers to seek to control for these factors whenever possible, but language learning is a complex interpersonal and social endeavor and to reject the role of affective factors is myopic and ultimately harmful." (p. 258).

The affective factors including anxiety might explain some variances in second language reading performance as mentioned by Bernhardt (2000, 2003, and 2005). She acknowledged the importance of affective factors in second language reading besides the other two important variables: L1 literacy and second language knowledge such as vocabulary knowledge, syntactic and discourse knowledge. She pointed out that studies conducted among cognate and noncognate languages, among children and adults had shown that L1 literacy accounted for 20% and second language knowledge accounted for 30% in a second language reading performance. Bernhardt (2005) commented that the 50% of the variance accounted for by these two variables was insufficient. She stated that "The role of affect and interest in second language text processing is yet to be

understood.” (p. 137).

According to Brantmeier (2005), “Bernhardt’s model is the first L2 reading model that directly attempts to explain transient variables, such as affect, in the L2 reading process.” (p. 67). Anxiety, as an important affect, might exist in foreign language reading process and have an influence on the foreign language reading process and performance. Indeed, Yamashita (2004) reported that anxiety in reading was higher in L2 than in L1 and self-perception as a reader was more positive in L1 than in L2 among Japanese EFL students enrolled in his extensive English reading course. Therefore, it is worthwhile to explore how prevalent foreign language reading anxiety is among foreign language learners and how foreign language reading anxiety might influence foreign language reading performance.

Word recognition is a very important part in the reading process. It can be imagined that learners will feel immediately anxious when they attempt to attach meaning to the foreign language words written in a very unfamiliar script in a reading passage. Unfamiliar cultural background might not cause immediate anxiety as unfamiliar words do; however, learners might find at some point of reading that they can decipher the words and make meaning out of a sentence but still cannot make sense of the whole reading passage due to their unfamiliarity with the target language culture.

Saito et al. (1999) constructed a Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) to measure students’ foreign language reading anxiety and made it clear that foreign language reading anxiety was related to but distinct from general foreign language anxiety. Three hundred and eighty-three foreign language students enrolled in the first year French, Russian and Japanese participated in the study. Saito et al. concluded that reading was anxiety provoking to some foreign language learners although participants in general reported slightly less reading anxiety than general FL anxiety.

Although most studies (Huang, 2001; Saito et al., 1999; Shi & Liu, 2006; Zhang, 2002) have showed that foreign language reading anxiety exists among foreign language learners, some other studies show that foreign language reading anxiety is not much of a concern to advanced language learners and foreign language reading anxiety level is related to the perceived difficulty level of the reading material and following reading tasks (Brantmeier, 2005). Brantmeier (2005) studied students’ anxiety levels related to reading and reading comprehension tasks among 92 students enrolled in an advanced level Spanish grammar and composition course. In this course, students were required to

read lengthy and authentic literacy works. As a course requirement, students read a short story before class and completed multiple choice questions. During class, students were randomly chosen to read the story aloud or answer comprehension questions orally. Only Spanish was allowed to be used in class. Four assessment tools were used, namely, multiple choice questions, written recall of reading passage, orally answering questions and reading aloud. A ten-item anxiety scale designed drawing from the FLRAS (Satio et al., 1999) and the Reading Anxiety Scale (Young, 1999b) was used to measure students' anxiety about reading and the reading comprehension tasks. Students did not show anxiety about reading in the current course but expressed anxiety about reading in the upcoming literature course. The perceived high difficult level of the literature course might be a cause for the expressed anxiety about reading in the literature course. Brantemier cautioned that his study did not have enough evidence to assert whether anxious feelings with advanced readers affect reading comprehension or not.

According to Abu-Rabia (2004) and Brantmeier, (2005) reading causes less anxiety than other tasks or language skills do among foreign language learners because readers can use reading strategies to overcome difficulties related to comprehension. Brantemier's (2005) results showed that of all language skills, speaking causes the most anxiety, followed by writing, then listening and reading. Abu-Rabia (2004) compared the anxiety related to spelling and reading and found that students had more anxiety about spelling than reading. Abu-Rabia attributed the result to the fact that spelling was a productive skill that required more creativity than reading, and he stated that "The difference between the reading comprehension test and the spelling test are related to the level of difficulty that each test demands. Reading comprehension is an interactive compensatory process where the reader uses comprehension reading strategies, top-down reading, clues in the text, and redundancy of the text and may apply much guess work based on prior knowledge or sentence context. But learners cannot use these strategies in spelling. There, they have to transfer phonological representations from working memory to orthographic units and such a process needs higher cognitive skills beyond the recognition level." (p. 718).

To sum up, foreign language reading anxiety is identified as a unique type of anxiety (Saito et al., 1999; Sellers, 2000). Foreign language reading anxiety is related to but distinct from general foreign language anxiety. Foreign language reading anxiety exists among foreign language learners and the reading anxiety level varies depending on

the target languages (Huang, 2001; Saito et al., 1999; Sellers, 2000; Shi & Liu, 2006; Zhang, 2002). Foreign language reading anxiety seems to be related to the perceived difficult level of reading materials (Brantemeier, 2005).

#### **2.4.1. Comparing L2 Reading Anxiety to L1 Reading Anxiety**

General L2 anxiety has also been shown to be different from L2 reading anxiety. Specifically, whereas general L2 anxiety has been found to be independent of target language, levels of reading anxiety were found to be different according to target language. Sellers (2000) claimed that the Reading Anxiety Scales (RAS) identifies reading anxiety as a distinct variable in L2 learning which correlates positively with the scores on the FLCAS for her subjects. This suggests that learners with higher levels of L2 anxiety also tended to have higher levels of L2 reading anxiety and vice versa. However, in her study, the positive correlation between RAS and FLCAS does not mean that RAS affects FLCAS.

Reading anxiety is correlated with lower reading scores. Saito et al. (1999) reported that students with higher levels of L2 anxiety tended to also have higher levels of L2 reading anxiety and vice versa. In their study, students with higher levels of reading anxiety received significantly lower grades than students with lower anxiety levels. This is also case for general L2 anxiety. Saito et al. (1999), thus, suggested that L2 reading anxiety, like other types of L2 anxiety, has a negative correlation to final grades. Students who perceived reading their target language as relatively difficult had significantly higher levels of reading anxiety than those who perceived it as somewhat difficult, followed by those who perceived reading as relatively easy.

There are several classroom situations where reading anxiety might be present, and effect L2 reading performance. For example, open-ended oral comprehension questions and asking students to read aloud may also cause anxiety. A substantial number of students feel particularly anxious when asked to read aloud.

Several researchers argue that language anxiety takes up processing capacity (e.g., Lee, 1999; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994a, 1994b; Sellers, 2000; Tobias, 1986); for example, Lee (1999) states that “Language anxiety takes up processing capacity, thereby diminishing language learners’ reading performance.” (p. 50). According to Lee (1999), when less processing capacity is available, reading processes will not take place

automatically, and, hence, reading is slowed down. As a result, comprehension suffers.

MacIntyre and Gardner (1994a, 1994b) investigated the effects of anxiety on cognitive processing and found that such effects may be quite far-reaching. For example, highly anxious readers may expend part of their mental energy thinking about things that are completely irrelevant to the reading activity. As a result, the reading process cannot take place automatically or efficiently. In contrast, a less anxious reader does not expend energy on these task-irrelevant thoughts, and therefore, has more mental energy to contribute to the reading process itself (Sellers, 2000).

Tobias (1986) claims that anxiety in general may affect learning in all three stages. At the input stage, anxiety can take away from attending to new information and encoding it. At the processing stage, it can interfere with the organization and assimilation of this new information. Finally, at the output stage, anxiety can interfere with the retrieval and production of previously learned material.

MacIntyre and Gardner (1994b) developed three different language anxiety measures: input anxiety, processing anxiety, and output anxiety. Specifically, the input stage is meant to illustrate the learner's first experiences with a given stimulus at a given time. The processing stage involves the cognitive operations performed on the subject matter: organization, storage, and assimilation of the material. Output involves the production of previously learned material. Their findings showed that anxious students seem to have difficulty holding distinct verbal items in short-term memory. This may explain why anxious students have trouble comprehending long sentences (Horwitz et al., 1986). These students may also recall less information on a reading comprehension test.

MacIntyre and Gardner's (1994b) findings also suggest that, with anxious students, only a small number of verbal statements enter the processing stage. For example, in MacIntyre and Gardner's (1994b) study, the Paragraph Translation test score in the processing stage demonstrated that anxious students were not able to translate a passage as well as their more relaxed counterparts did. In fact, the poetic nature of the passage used in this study required students to guess at the meanings of some terms, and it appears that the more anxious students did not guess as often as the more relaxed ones. This may reflect anxious students' unwillingness to risk an incorrect or incomplete translation; that is, they may avoid responding in order to avoid guessing. The result of this study clearly showed that anxiety affects language learning at each of the three stages, and that the effects appear cumulative. In particular, anxious students tended to

take more time for processing. Therefore, when time was limited, performance was hindered at the output stage. Consequently, anxiety occurring at an earlier stage in the reading process may limit the learner's ability to store relevant information in their memory. Thus, they may recall less information on a reading comprehension test.

An additional aspect of anxiety that has been studied in terms of the reader's "affective state" has to do with the reader's L2 cultural knowledge. In the interactive reading process advocated by Rudell and Speaker (1985), a reader's affective state (including the reader's interests, attitudes, and values that decide goals for the reading of a passage) may be altered by text variables such as content and form. These variables might influence the affective state of the reader. Additionally, in his affective model of reading, Mathewson (1985) argues, that if content is culturally unfamiliar, rather than neutral or familiar, reading materials take longer to read, are more difficult to recall, and the readers' comprehension decreased. He further observes that "Culturally compatible reading materials resulted in greater amounts and accuracy of recall than did culturally incompatible materials" (Mathewson, 1985, p. 851). This observation is supported by a study by Saito et al. (1999), which found that students were nervous when they had to read about cultural topics with which they were unfamiliar. According to the study, students felt that the cultural topics should be explained before being presented in the target language. These results imply that students are less anxious if they have cultural background knowledge about what they are reading.

Concerning comprehension, reading anxiety correlates to the amount of information that readers recall as well as to specific information they recall. Sellers (2000), for example, found that more highly anxious students tended to recall less passage content than did participants who experienced minimal anxiety. Not only did highly anxious learners recall less passage content, they also recalled fewer 'high' pausal units. In her study, a pausal unit is one that has a pause at each end, during normally paced oral reading. High-level units represent central ideas, and contribute significantly to the main idea of the passage. Sellers argues that remembering important information is more demanding and requires more mental capacity, because in the processing of important information, readers must organize, interpret, and interrelate the information.

Anxiety also affects readers' ability to focus on a reading task. Sellers (2000) used an instrument called the Cognitive Interference Questionnaire to assess the number of off-task thoughts of each student while reading. Results from the Cognitive Interference



Questionnaire indicated that highly anxious students tended to experience more off-task, interfering thoughts than their less-anxious counterparts. In other words, highly anxious readers were more distracted by interfering thoughts and were less able to concentrate on the task at hand, which affected their comprehension of the reading passage.

Students' beliefs about reading are also related to reading anxiety. For example, if a student believes that reading is a linear process, he believes that every word has the same importance and feels that he must look up every new word. Approaching a text linearly is not helpful to comprehension, and therefore, his reading is not efficient. This lack of efficiency and comprehension may lead him to be anxious (Lee, 1999). Additionally, in the area of L2 learning, Young (1991) claims that learner beliefs about language learning are one major source of foreign language anxiety. She states that unrealistic beliefs and expectations can lead to frustration and anxiety. Horwitz et al. (1986) mention examples of learners' beliefs concerning the importance of correctness and the unacceptability of guessing, which may also tend to lead to anxiety. Consequently, anxiety affects fluency in terms of speed and particular types of information that readers recall and comprehend.

Text factors may also affect anxiety levels in reading. For example, inappropriate level of text difficulty and unfamiliar topics may increase students' reading anxiety level. Teachers should pay careful attention to the selection of texts, and should choose authentic materials that have an appropriate level of difficulty; if they choose materials that are too difficult, the anxiety level of some students may increase and they may avoid reading. Consideration of the reading passage's level is important, because if the level of the passage is too high for readers, a researcher cannot measure readers' comprehension accurately. In other words, anxiety levels of readers may change according to the level of a reading passage or the topic of a text.

Readers' motivation and purpose also affect anxiety levels in reading. Anxieties about language learning may be related to students' previous language learning experiences, their motivations, and their self-concepts about language learning. Experience in language learning is especially helpful in developing realistic expectations for and approaches to reading in a second language. Therefore, Saito et al. (1999) argue that teachers should pay particular attention to reading strategy instruction with beginners. The knowledge that anxiety and difficulties are possible is often reassuring for many students who feel alone in their reactions.

#### **2.4.2. General Causes of L2 Reading Anxiety**

Besides investigating the causes of foreign language classroom anxiety in general, some scholars also studied the sources of anxiety related to other language skills than speaking (Saito et al., 1999; Vogely, 1998).

Saito et al. (1999) hypothesized two causes of foreign language reading anxiety, unfamiliar scripts and culture. They anticipated that the learners of Japanese would rate the culture-related items and writing symbols related items high. The findings seemed not to support the hypothesis. For the item “I am worried about all the new symbols you have to learn in order to read Japanese/French/Russian,” significantly fewer learners of Japanese (40%) than French (62%) and Russian (86%) agreed or strong agreed. Sixty-eight percent learners of French and 94% learners of Russian agreed or strongly agreed with statement “by the time you get past the funny letters and symbols in French/Russian, it is hard to remember what you are reading about” but only 18% of the learners of Japanese agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Also, only a low percentage of learners of Japanese agreed or strongly agreed with the culture-related items. The learners of Japanese actually perceived less difficulty in the culture and symbols related items than learners of French and Russian did. The researchers suggested that perhaps those students who chose to take Japanese were prepared for the challenges of a highly different culture and writing system and they concluded that the causes of reading anxiety were somewhat perplexing.

More Korean and Japanese students became upset when they met unknown grammar structures. Fifty-seven percent European and American students agreed that they understood each word but still did not quite get what the author said. European and American students had less anxiety in the two cultural-related items than Korean and Japanese students, which conformed to the finding in Saito et al. (1999). Therefore, grammar and culture seem not to be the sources of reading anxiety while worry about the reading effect might be a source of reading anxiety among American students. Zhang (2002) explained that American students were generally confident and carefree, which might be a reason for their not feeling anxious about the unknown cultural elements in a reading passage.

Reading task type is also a source of foreign language reading anxiety

(Brantmeier, 2005; Oh, 1992). As Oh (1992) investigated the effect of reading assessment methods on anxiety level, he found that cloze and think-aloud were more anxiety provoking than comprehension and recall tasks. Oh explained that this might be due to three reasons: students' familiarity with the assessment methods, students' perception of the validity of an assessment method, and the difficult level of a specific text. Cloze and think-aloud might be less familiar to students and thus perceived as more difficult than other reading tasks.

### **2.5.0. Summary**

This chapter was designed to clarify the definition, purpose, and importance of reading, concept of foreign language anxiety and review the effect of foreign language anxiety on foreign language performance. The review shows that foreign language reading anxiety is related to but distinct from foreign language anxiety, and it also shows that previous literature has a heavy focus on speaking while anxiety related to specific language skills has not been thoroughly explored. Finally, to deepen the understanding of foreign language reading anxiety, the sources of both foreign language anxiety and foreign language reading anxiety were explored.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1.0. Introduction**

This chapter includes information about research questions, participants, instruments, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures. This study tried to find answers to the following questions:

- 1- To what extent do Turkish ELT students experience foreign language reading anxiety and, is there a significant difference between their foreign language reading anxiety and foreign language classroom anxiety?
- 2- Is Turkish students' reading anxiety related to background variables such as gender, age, number of years spent learning English, number of hours spent reading English weekly or the reason why they are reading English in their free time after school?
- 3- To what extent do Turkish ELT students with different reading performance levels exhibit significant and meaningful differences in their foreign language reading anxiety levels?
- 4- What reading strategies do Turkish ELT students use to improve the foreign language reading performance?

#### **3.2.0. The Participants**

The participants in the study were 113 preparatory and first year students from English Teaching Department at Faculty of Education of University of Ataturk in Erzurum. The reason why these students were recruited was that they were the only students who were taking reading classes. In preparatory year, students take Reading

courses five hours a week and first year students take Advanced Reading courses three hours a week.

When the researcher administrated the questionnaires for this study in class and asked the students for their cooperation, no one refused to participate in the study. Table 1 shows basic information about the participants including: age, gender, year in faculty, and number of years spent studying English. As shown in Table 1, 80.5% of the participants were female, and 19.5% were male. As to age, they were in the age range between 17 and 24. In addition the majority of participants were between 18 and 21 (80.2%).

Table 1: *Characteristics of the Participants in the study*

Variable	Group	Frequency	Percent
<b>Gender</b>	<b>female</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>80.5</b>
	<b>male</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>19.5</b>
Age	17	4	3.5
	18	26	23
	19	30	26.5
	20	31	27.4
	21	15	13.3
	22	1	0.9
	23	5	4.4
<b>University Class</b>	<b>preparatory</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>46</b>
	<b>first year</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>54</b>
	5-6 yrs	9	7.9
	7-8 yrs	6	5.3
Length of studying Eng.	9-10 yrs	44	38.9
	11+ yrs	54	47.7

When asked about the length of studying English, nine participants (8%) reported that they had studied English as a foreign language for five to six years. Fifty-one subjects (45.1%) reported having learned English for seven to ten years. Fifty-three participants (46.9%) reported they had studied English as a foreign language for twelve years or longer. It can be said that nearly half of the participants had studied English for more than eleven years.

### **3.3.0. Data Collection Procedures**

The data were collected at a public university at the end of December 2009. The researcher went to the classrooms to present in person the pack of the questionnaires and cover letters to the subjects. It took each of the 113 Turkish ELT students approximately twenty minutes to fill out the questionnaires. The instructors of the classes had given permission to collect these data during the students' break time of their preparatory and first year classes. The subjects were very willing to complete the survey, and also they assisted the researcher in distributing and collecting the questionnaires. The background information questionnaire was distributed together with the two instruments. After signing the consent form (see Appendix A), students filled in the two instruments and the background questionnaire. Reading scores after final exams were reported by the instructors at the end of 14-week fall semester in 2009/2010 academic year.

### **3.4.0. Instruments**

Two instruments were used for quantitative data in this study: an adapted version of the FLCAS and an instrument specifically developed to measure anxiety related to FL reading, an adapted version of the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS, Horwitz et al., 1999) (See Appendix B). The FLRAS elicits students' self-reports of anxiety over various aspects of reading, their perceptions of reading difficulties in their target language, and their perceptions of the relative difficulty of reading as compared to the difficulty of other language skills. The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCAS, Horwitz et al., 1986) (see Appendix C) contains 30 items, each of which is answered on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." The FLRAS contains 18 Likert-scale items also scored on a 5-point scale. The theoretical ranges of the FLCAS and FLRAS scales are from 30 to 150 and from 18 to 90, respectively. Students' end-of course scores were obtained at the end of the semester as a global measure of performance (Aida, 1994; Chastain, 1975; Comeau, 1992; Horwitz, 1986; Saito & Samimy, 1996; Samimy & Tabuse, 1992). The data sources are provided in line with the research questions. The first research question asks about the foreign language reading anxiety level among Turkish ELT students. To answer this question, two anxiety scales

were employed.

A background information questionnaire was designed specifically for this study to create a profile of the sample and collect information needed to answer the second research question which aimed to reveal the relationship between foreign language reading anxiety and background variables such as gender, what year they are in university, visiting a target language country, use English after school, number of years spent learning English.

For qualitative data interview questions (see Appendix D) were also designed to find out what caused difficulty for Turkish ELT students in reading English as a foreign language and also the possible sources of foreign language reading anxiety. The interview questions began with general questions for the reading English courses and then moved toward sources of reading anxiety. The interview questions emphasized the following items: place of reading skill among other language skills, importance of reading English, difficulties met in learning English, strategies used in reading English, and strategies used to deal with unfamiliar topics, new words, and grammar in a reading passage.

### **3.5.0. Data Analysis**

The SPSS 11.5 computer software was used to analyze the quantitative data. The research questions were answered through the quantitative analysis of the survey data. Scores from the FLRAS and FLCAS were used to answer the first research question about the foreign language reading anxiety level among Turkish ELT students. Descriptive statistics including mean, standard deviation, maximum, minimum and frequency were used. Data from the FLRAS and students' end-of reading course grades were used to answer the second research question about the relationship between foreign language reading anxiety and foreign language reading performance. Pearson Product-Moment correlation analysis was conducted to obtain the correlation between reading anxiety and reading performance score.

Data from the FLRAS and the background questionnaire were used to answer the second research question about the relation between background variables and foreign language reading anxiety. ANOVA and T-Test were used to detect how different background variables were related to the foreign language reading anxiety level. For instance, the analysis revealed whether or not there was a difference in foreign language

reading anxiety level between female students and male students, preparatory students and first year students at the ELT department.

### **3.6.0. Summary**

Set in the English classes at Ataturk University of Erzurum this study focused on the foreign language reading anxiety level among learners of English and the relation between foreign language reading anxiety and background variables and performance. Participants were 113 students enrolled in ELT department preparatory and first year classes.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESULTS OF THE STUDY**

#### **4.1.0. Introduction**

This chapter presents the results of the study, answering the research questions by analyzing the data obtained from the data collection step. This chapter first explains what statistical procedures were adopted to analyze the data and then presents the answer to each research question based on either the descriptive or inferential statistic results.

#### **4.2.0. Outcomes from Background Questionnaire**

A background questionnaire was used to gain information about the subjects' background and English learning experience in this study. The research participants in this study were 113 Turkish students in preparatory and first year classes of the ELT department during the fall semester of 2009 and 2010. Ninety-one of the participants were female and 22 of them were male. By class, there were 52 preparatory students and from first year there were 61 of them. The age of the subjects ranged from 17 to 24 and most of them (87%) are aged between 18, 19 and 20.

When asked about the length of studying English, nine participants (8%) reported that they had studied English as a foreign language for five to six years. Fifty-one subjects (45.1%) reported having learned English for seven to ten years. Fifty-three participants (46.9%) reported they had studied English as a foreign language for twelve years or longer. It can be said that nearly half of the participants had studied English for more than eleven years.

In addition, subjects were asked about their purposes for reading English. To

determine their purposes, they were asked to choose more than one answer among "course related," "fun," "both course related and fun." Table 2 shows the results.

Table 2: *Statistical results of reading purpose in free time*

	<i>Reading Purpose</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Tukey HSD</i>	<i>course related</i>	49	44
	<i>fun</i>	7	6
	<i>both</i>	57	50

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 16,592.

b The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used.

The above information revealed that 44% of the subjects reported that their purpose was for course related such as examination and assignment, 6% reported for fun, 50% reported for both course related and fun.

#### 4.3.0. Reliability of the Scales

In survey research, the validity and reliability of a questionnaire are very important in that the questionnaires are usually the major data sources. First, the Cronbach's Alpha was calculated on both the instruments, the FLRAS and the FLCAS to test the internal consistency of the two questionnaires. Table 3 gave the Cronbach's Alpha and number of items in each of the instruments.

Table 3: *Cronbach's Alpha of the Two Instruments*

Instruments	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale	0.86	18
Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale	0.94	30

As it can be seen from the table both the FLRAS and the FLCAS had good

internal consistency as was indicated by the Cronbach's Alpha. The FLRAS had a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.86 and the FLCAS had a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.94. According to Dornyei (2003), an instrument with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.8 and above was considered as a very reliable instrument.

#### 4.4.0. Analysis of Research Question One

The first research question was: To what extent Turkish ELT students experience foreign language reading anxiety and is there a significant difference between their foreign language reading anxiety score and foreign language classroom anxiety score? This research question was answered through descriptive statistics such as mean, median, mode, standard deviation, minimum and maximum. Table 4 provides a summary of FLRAS and FLCAS scores of the participants below.

Table 4: *Descriptive Statistics of the FLRAS and FLCAS*

	Number	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
<b>FLRAS</b>	113	2,72	1,28	4,00	2,82	2.77	0,52
<b>FLCAS</b>	113	4,43	1,07	5,50	2,95	2.96	0,76
Valid N (listwise)	113						

The mean score per item in the FLRAS was 2.82 (SD=0.52) and the mean score per item in the FLCAS was 2.95(SD=0.76). Although, on average, participants reported slightly less reading anxiety per item than general FL anxiety, it can be said that students experienced similar level of foreign language reading anxiety and foreign language classroom anxiety as indicated by the small difference mean score per item in the FLRAS and the FLCAS. Because the FLRAS mainly measures students' level of anxiety in reading a foreign language and the FLCAS mainly measures students' level of anxiety in speaking a foreign language, the similar mean score per item in the FLRAS and the FLCAS in this study indicated that reading caused a similar level of anxiety to students as speaking did among students of ELT.

#### **4.4.1. Analysis of responses to FLRAS items**

There are 18 Likert-type items aiming to measure the participants' anxiety level towards reading a foreign language. Table 5 displays the frequency of responses to 18 items in the FLRAS.

Table 5: *Frequencies of Responses in Percent for the FLRAS*

<i>Items</i>		Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I get upset when I am not sure if I understand what I am reading in English.	47.8	39.8	5.3	5.3	1.8
2	When reading English, I do not understand most of the words in the text.	12.1	45.1	15.9	22.1	4.4
3	When I am reading English, I get so confused and I can't remember what I am reading.	4.4	19.5	17.7	41.6	16.8
4	I feel intimidated whenever I see a whole page of English in front of me.	5.3	19.5	17.2	44.2	13.3
5	I am nervous while I am reading a passage in English when I am not familiar with the topic.	9.7	41.6	14.2	24.8	9.7
6	I get upset whenever I encounter unknown grammar when reading English.	18.6	41.6	11.5	22.1	6.2
7	When reading English, I get nervous and confused when I don't understand every word.	38.6	24.8	11.5	18.9	6.2
8	It bothers me to encounter words I can't pronounce while reading English.	26.5	39.8	10.6	16.8	6.2
9	I usually translate word by word when I'm reading English.	40.7	23	14.2	9.7	12.4
10	I don't enjoy reading English.	0.9	1.8	0.9	28.3	68.1
11	I don't feel confident when I am reading in English.	3.5	8.6	8.8	38.1	31
12	Reading English is very difficult.	0.9	9.7	5.3	57.5	26.6
13	The hardest part of learning English is learning to read.	6.2	8.8	11.5	50.4	23
14	I would be happy just to learn to speak English rather than having to learn to read as well.	29.2	27.4	9.7	27.4	6.2
15	I don't mind reading to myself, but I feel very uncomfortable when I have to read English aloud.	14.2	25.7	8.0	35.4	16.8
16	I am not satisfied with the level of reading ability in English that I have achieved so far.	7.1	35.4	15.0	31.0	11.5
17	English and American culture and ideas seem very foreign to me.	6.2	23.9	15.9	42.5	11.5
18	You have to know so much about English and American history and culture in order to read English.	9.7	21.2	15.0	45.1	8.8

Regarding the confidence level, they expressed that they had a lot of confidence in their reading ability. 69.1% of ELT students strongly disagreed or disagreed with statement 11, “I don’t feel confident when I am reading in English,” and only 84.1% of the ELT students strongly disagreed or disagreed with item 12, “Reading is very difficult.” On the other hand, 42.5% of the ELT students strongly disagreed or agreed with item 16, “I am not satisfied with the level of reading ability in English that I have achieved so far.”

Most ELT students expressed concern as to pronunciations while reading. 66.3% of the ELT students strongly agreed or agreed with item 8, “It bothers me to encounter words I can’t pronounce while reading English.”

Most of the participants did not express worry when asked to read aloud. 52.2% of the students strongly agreed or agreed with item 15, “I don’t mind reading to myself, but I feel very uncomfortable when I have to read English aloud.”

As to the perception of difficulty in the target language, only 15% of the ELT students strongly agreed or agreed with item 13 that stated “The hardest part of learning English is learning to read,” and 56.6 % of the students strongly agreed or agreed with item 14 that stated “I would be happy just to learn to speak English rather than having to learn to read as well.” It can be inferred that they thought their reading was better than their speaking.

When asked about their enjoyment in reading English texts, a staggered amount of students reported that they liked reading English and believed that English reading was enjoyable. 96.4% of them strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement 10, “I don’t enjoy reading English.” Despite the fact that students enjoyed reading English, there were still things about reading in English that caused worries and anxiety among students, such as unfamiliar words, unfamiliar topics and general worry about reading.

Regarding word recognition and grammar rules while reading in the target language 63.7% of the students strongly agreed or agreed with item 9, “I usually end up translating word by word when I’m reading English.”, 60.2% of the students strongly agreed or agreed with item 6, “I get upset whenever I encounter unknown grammar when reading English” and 63.4% of the students agreed or disagreed with item that stated “When reading English, I get nervous and confused when I don’t understand every word.”

Unfamiliar topic was one of the sources of reading anxiety. Slightly more than

half of the participants (51.5%) of the students agreed or strongly agreed with item 5 that stated “I am nervous when I am reading a passage in English when I am not familiar with the topic.” Students did not think English and American culture as very foreign to them or did not think that culture played important role in reading English. Nearly 30.1% of the students agreed or strongly agreed with item 17 that stated “English and American culture and ideas seem very foreign to me. 30.5% of the students agreed or strongly agreed with item 20, “You have to know so much about English and American history and culture in order to read English.”

#### 4.4.2. Analysis of Research Question Two

The second research was: Is Turkish students’ reading anxiety related to background variables such as gender, number of years spent learning English, number of hours spent reading English weekly, the reason why they are reading English in their free time after school, visiting the target language country, and use English after school?

To answer the second research question a background questionnaire was used to obtain information about the subjects. The correlation between each background variable and FLRAS scores is reported in Table 6.

Table 6: *Pearson Correlations between Background Variables and Foreign Language Reading Scores*

Background variables	N	r	P
<b>Gender</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>0.178</b>	<b>0.128</b>
Age	113	0.835	0.020
<b>Year in University</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>0.001</b>	<b>0.302*</b>
Number of years spent learning English	113	0.834	0.020
<b>Purpose for reading English in free time</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>0.028</b>	<b>0.250**</b>
Visiting a target language country	113	0.016	0.226**
<b>Use English after school</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>0.031</b>	<b>0.203**</b>

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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

In this study first independent variable *gender* had two levels, female and male. The second independent variable *age* had eight levels, from 17 to 24. The fourth independent variable *Number of years spent learning English* had four levels, e.g., 5-6, 7-

8, 9-10, and 11-12. As it is seen in the table 6, there was no significant relationship between *FLRAS* scores and variables such as *gender*, *age*, and *number of years spent learning English*. It, on the other hand, was discovered that there was significant relationship between *FLRAS* scores and *Use English after school* at the level of 0.031 ( $P<0.05$ ). However, *FLRAS* was found to be strongly related to *Year in university* at the level of 0.001 ( $P<0.01$ ), *Purpose for reading English in free time* at the level of 0.008 ( $P<0.01$ ), and *Visiting a target language country* at the level of 0.006 ( $P<0.01$ ).

*Year in university* had also two levels, e.g., preparatory class and first year class. An independent t-test was run to see if students in *preparatory* and *first year* classes had significant levels of difference in the *FLRAS* scores and a significant statistical difference was found at a high level ( $P<0.01$ ). To compare the *FLRAS* scores and all the seven variables T-Test was run. Table 7 shows the *FLRAS* score for both preparatory and year one students.

Table 7: *T-Test results of FLRAS according to Their Year in University*

Year in University	N	M	Std. Dev.	Df.	t	p
Preparatory	52	2.99	0.49	111	3.33	.001
First Year	61	2.67	0.50			

$p<.01$

As it can be seen from the table 1, those subjects ( $M=2.99$ ) who were in preparatory class tended to have higher *FLRAS* scores than first year students ( $M=2.67$ ).

The fifth variable, *Purpose for reading English in free time*, had three levels and statistical result according participants' purposes to read is given in Table 8.

Table 8: *Descriptive Statistics for Reading Purpose in Free Time*

Reading Purpose		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	<b>Mostly Course related</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>43,4</b>	<b>43,4</b>
	Mostly for fun	7	6,2	49,6
	<b>For both</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>50,4</b>	<b>100,0</b>
	Total	113	100,0	



According to table 8, forty-nine students (43.4%) reported that they had read mostly for exams and done homework in free time, only 7 students (6.2%) reported that their purpose to read was mainly just for fun, and fifty-seven participants (50.4%) reported that their purpose was for both course related and for fun. It can be said that nearly half of the students read when they think they have to. Table 9 compares the FLRAS scores and the fifth variable Reading Purpose in Free Time.

Table 9: ANOVA results of FLRAS according to Reading Purposes in Free Time

Reading Purpose	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df.	F	S
course related	49	2,96	0,50	112	3.68	0.02
fun	7	2,79	0,37			
both	57	2,69	0,53			
Total	113	2,82	0,52			

$P < .05$

These two variables were found to be related at the level of 0.02 ( $P < 0.05$ ). The subjects reporting their purpose for reading in English in free time was *course related* tended to have the highest score ( $M = 2.96$ ). On the other hand, those students reporting their purpose in reading in English was for *both course related and for fun* tended to have the lowest score ( $M = 2.69$ ) among three levels. The mean score for those students whose reading purpose was *for fun* was found to be 2.79. Table 10 explores the relationship between FLRAS scores and the sixth variable *Visiting a Target Language Country*.

Table 10: T-Test results of FLRAS according to Visiting an English Country

Visiting an English Country	N	M	Std. Dev.	Df.	t	p
Yes	7	1.49	0.94	111	-2.43	.016
No	106	2.83	0.50			

$p < .05$

When asked about whether they had visited an English speaking country, those subjects ( $N = 7$ ) who responded that they had visited a target language country tended to

have lower FLRAS scores (M=1.94) than the rest of the subjects (N=106, M=2.83), and The last variable was *Using English after School* and the relationship between FLRAS and *Using English after School* is summarized in table 11 below.

Table 11: *T-Test Results of FLRAS according to Using English after School*

Using English	N	M	Std. Dev.	Df.	t	p
Yes	23	2.61	0.65	111	-2.18	.031
No	90	2.87	0.47			

p<.05

These two variables were also found to be related at the level of 0.031 (P<0.05). Participants (N=23) reporting that they had used English after school to communicate with their friends, teachers, and family members tended to have lower FLRAS scores (M=2.61) than the rest of the students' (N=90) FLRAS scores (M=2.87).

#### 4.4.3. Analysis of Research Question Three

The third research question asked about the degree to which learners with different reading proficiency levels exhibit significant and meaningful differences in their mean anxiety scores. The idea that more proficient students will exhibit a lower anxiety level than less proficient students and that more anxious students will exhibit a lower proficiency level than less anxious students was supported. More proficient students tended to exhibit lower degrees of reading anxiety and more confidence about reading English than less proficient students.

In order to calculate The Pearson Product-Moment correlation between *FLRAS* and *Performance*, the participants' end-of-course scores were collected from the four reading instructors at the end of the fall term in January 2010 and rounded to nearest tens (e.g., 73 is rounded to 70). Before the Pearson Product-Moment correlation was calculated, the distribution of the reading scores was first examined through histograms. It seems that the FLRAS scores were normally distributed. Table 12 displays the statistical results of the reading performance scores.

Table 12: *Descriptive Statistics of final scores of reading courses*

Scores	Frequency	Percent		
Valid 30,00	1	,9	Mean	67,69
40,00	7	6,2	Median	70,00
50,00	7	6,2	Mode	60,00
60,00	32	28,3	Std. Deviation	13,29
70,00	31	27,4	Variance	176,80
80,00	25	22,1	Range	60,00
90,00	10	8,8	Minimum	30,00
Total	113	100,0	Maximum	90,00

As it is seen in the table above, the reading performance scores were normally distributed and had a mean of 67.7 (SD=13.3). The lowest score was 30 and the highest score was 90 out of 100. Nearly 27% of the students had reading scores of 70, in addition 41% of the students had reading scores lower than 70 and 30% of the students had reading performance scores higher than 70. After The Pearson-Moment correlation was calculated foreign language reading anxiety and reading performance were found to be significantly and negatively correlated at the level of 0.001 ( $P < 0.01$ ). (See table 13 below).

Table 13: *Correlation between FLRAS and End-of- Course Scores*

	FLRAS	End of Course Scores
Pearson Correlation	1	-,312(**)
Sig. (2-tailed)	.	,001
N	113	113

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

First, correlation analysis was performed with FLRAS as the independent variable and end-of-course scores of reading courses as the dependant variable to find out if there was a significant relation and if it was a negative or positive one. The results indicated that there were statistically significant differences on the dependent variables. As it is seen in the figure below, participants with higher foreign language reading anxiety received lower foreign language reading performance scores and students with lower language reading anxiety tended to have higher foreign language reading performance scores except for those who got performance scores of 40 (see Table 14).

Table 14: ANOVA Results of FLRAS according to Reading Scores

Scores	N	M	Std. Deviation	Df.	F	S
30,00	1	4,0000	.			
40,00	7	2,9365	,64			
50,00	7	3,0714	,31			
60,00	32	2,9340	,44	112	2.620	.001
70,00	31	2,8262	,43			
80,00	25	2,6244	,51			
90,00	10	2,5611	,77			
Total	113	2,8210	,52			

This finding indicates that, as was the case in previous studies, FL reading anxiety has a negative relationship with student performance as measured by final scores like other types of FL anxiety.

#### 4.4.4. Analysis of Research Question Four

The qualitative data of this research were collected in order to support the quantitative data and to find out if there were some points which cannot be measured by

the questionnaires. The qualitative data, as explained in *Methodology*, were collected through interviews with some volunteers from ELT departments. In these interviews, it was intended to explore the participants' thoughts and feelings related to reading in English in general and reading courses in their departments; importance of reading, difficulty of question types, tackles they face with, what should be done to enhance their reading, above all else what strategies they use in reading English.

The questions and the responses of the participants to them were in Turkish. The findings will be explained below with some necessary extracts from the interviews with the participants. In the presentations of the extracts, pseudonyms will be used for the participants who quoted them.

Twenty students, ten of them from preparatory class and ten of them from first year, were chosen randomly for the interview. The questions asked to interviewees are as follows;

- 1- What language skill do you think is the most important one?
- 2- What do you think of the importance of reading?
- 3- Which of after reading activity questions such as true-false, multiple-choice, open-ended written and open-ended oral questions is the most difficult?
- 4- Which of these difficulties such as unfamiliar and non-interesting topic, unknown words, and grammar structure do you think bothers you most while reading?
- 5- What reading strategies do you use to deal with difficulties during reading?
- 6- What should be done to make your reading classes better?

The interviewees, firstly, were asked to tell how important they found their L2 reading and reading classes, and to put reading into an order among the four basic language skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, in terms of its importance for them. It was also inquired why they thought reading and reading classes were important.

Second question was related to importance of reading and reading class. Subjects, in general, reported that speaking was very important in L2 learning. Eleven of them (55%) reported that speaking skill was the most important one among the four language skills. Six interviewees (30%) reported that reading was the most important one, two of them (10%) reported that listening was the most important one, and one student (5%) out of twenty reported that writing was the most important skill. The respondents gave some reasons for finding reading important in both language learning and other aspects of their

academic life. Some of the reasons they claimed to make reading essential and useful and some statements of the respondents pointing to these reasons are as follows:

- The best way to learn new words in a country where being subjected to L2 is very limited is through reading. Namely, it is very important to see how a new word is used in a sentence and in a context.
- It helps the learners to improve other skills such as speaking and writing mostly.
- It gives an opportunity to the learners to see how grammar rules learned are employed.
- It provides a lot of information ready to use while speaking and writing.

The following extract from the transcription of the responses of an interviewee exemplifies the views of the students supporting these reasons. In this extract, Zeynep from first year says:

*“...Reading brings many benefits in learning English. I believe that whenever we read we encounter a lot of new words. We learn these new words and we build up our vocabulary through reading. By means of reading we can see and how new words are used in the right place and context. Therefore it boosts our speaking and writing ability as we think with words and speak and write with words. Without them, we can neither speak nor write. In addition, it makes it easier for us to consolidate what we have learned in our grammar classes. Therefore, reading plays an important role while learning English...”*

On the other hand, Nurgül from preparatory class agrees with Zeynep and focuses on vocabulary and information reading provides. She states:

*“For me the most important skill is reading as it helps us improve our word bank. If I see a new word to me, either I try to guess its meaning in the context or, I look up a dictionary to find its meaning right away and it is learned. Moreover, it supplies us with ample information. The most important difficulty we face in our speaking and writing classes is unfamiliar topic. So, the more we read the more knowledge we have to use while speaking and writing....”*

- It helps learners broaden their minds and improve themselves.

In the quotation below, Baha and from first year stresses the benefits of reading in especially in cognitive development.

*“Nobody can deny the avails or benefits of reading in English. First, it broadens our horizons by making us familiar with various topics. Second, it helps our conceptual understanding and improves meta-cognitive and cognitive awareness. Through reading, one learns how to concentrate and fathom abstractly, because the information presented is not actually there. So, the reader has to learn what is presented via visualization and imagination that use cognitive abilities....”*

With the third question it was intended to discover the most important difficulty ELT students were facing while reading. Is it related to lacking background information, new words, or grammatical structure? The results are displayed in Table 15 below.

Table 15: *Most important difficulty met during reading*

	Frequency	Percent
Valid <b>grammatical structure</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>
Lack of background information	7	35
<b>new words</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>60</b>
Total	20	100,0

Table 15 indicates that twelve of the interviewees (N=12) reported that they, for the most part, had difficulty with new words, three students (N=7) reported that they had problems with the topics that were not familiar to them. And one of them saw grammatical structure as an important difficulty during reading in foreign language reading. The following statements of the interviewees can be given as examples for their perceptions of new words as the hardest tackle during reading.

**Sevim** from preparatory class: *“...As I meet a lot of unknown words during reading the passage gets boring and boring. Something inside me forces me to stop reading because I need to use a dictionary to find out the meanings of the unknown words and that takes me a lot of time...”* **Merve** from preparatory class: *“...While reading new words to me are the biggest*

*tackle first and foremost. Small number is fine but large number of them makes reading too difficult to cope with. Unfamiliar topics come second. Sometimes I find the meanings of unknown words but still I understand nothing. And, this makes it difficult for me to read...” Kevser from first year: “...The biggest problem I encounter is unknown words. In my belief, vocabulary is the most essential thing in understanding a piece of text ...”*

My fourth question was to find out which one of the four types of questions such as true-false, multiple-choice, open-ended written and open-ended oral questions they find most difficult. Table 16 shows the results below.

Table 16: *Most difficult reading after question type*

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	true-false	0	0
	<b>multiple-choice</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	open-ended written	7	35
	<b>open-ended oral</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>65</b>
	Total	20	100,0

As it is seen in the table above all of interviewees agreed upon the difficulty of open-ended oral and written questions. None of the interviews told that true-false or multiple-choice was the most difficult. Seven of them (35%) told that they found open-ended written questions the most difficult. But the majority (65%) told that they found open-ended oral questions the hardest. For example, Tuba from first year told that she preferred and enjoyed true-false questions but disliked any of open-ended oral and written questions. She expressed her ideas in the following words: “...*Definitely, open ended oral questions are the hardest to answer. I always wish I were not in the class when it is time to answer the open-ended oral questions. I feel stressed out...*”

Some major reasons attributed to difficult nature of open-ended oral and written questions by the students are:

- To answer open-ended oral questions, people need to be fluent speaker in English.



- To answer open-ended questions requires a lot of effort and is mentally a difficult activity.
- To answer open-ended oral questions requires having background information, awareness of cultural differences, good vocabulary, good pronunciation, and grammatical accuracy.

The following statements of the interviewees can be given as examples for their perceptions of open-ended questions as the most difficult due to the reasons listed above.

**Zülal** from first year: *“...The trouble is that most of us usually fail to comprehend every detail because of various factors such as lacking background knowledge, target language culture, grammatical competence, and vocabulary. So, you have to put great effort. ...”* **Ayşegül** from first year: *“...I think I cannot succeed in answering open-ended oral questions because you need to have a lot of qualities. Besides being a fluent speaker, you should have an intelligible accent, you should think clearly and quickly, and you should have a very good grammatical knowledge. While answering open-ended written questions, you have the chance to amend any mistake you have done. But, while speaking, when it is gone, it is gone. You cannot take the wrong sentence back. I do not feel I am competent in answering open-ended oral questions; accordingly, I do not like it...”* **Ceylan** from first year: *“...Open-ended oral questions are the most difficult ones because, when I want to say something, I forget what words to choose. Most of the time, I am speechless. I need to think about what to say for a while before I speak, and that makes me embarrassed and makes me feel anxious...”*

These statements above reflect the reasons why students think open-ended questions are the hardest to answer and provoking anxiety.

Later, the interviewees were asked what reading strategies they were using before, during, or after reading to overcome the difficulties, all of them responded that they had not learned about reading strategies and had not any slightest idea about them. Therefore, the researcher changed the question as *“What do you do to beat the difficulties related to new words, lacking background information of the text, grammatical structure?”* The results are listed below.

- They try to guess what the new words mean within the context for *new words*.

- They ask a friend or a teacher for help if available for *new words* and *grammar structure*.
- They refer to a dictionary or a grammar book for new words and *grammar structure*.
- They search on the internet for *new words* and *background information*.
- They try to read about the same topic in their first language for *lacking background information*.

Here are some examples for the responses of the interviewees about the issue of overcoming the difficulties related to unknown words, grammatical structures and background information of the topics they possibly read about. All the responses are the same more or less.

**Kevser** from first year: “...*For unknown words, I try to guess what they mean, otherwise I look up in dictionaries or ask a friend or a teacher. If I have a problem with the background information, most of the time I use the internet. As to grammatical problem, I think I have nothing to with such a problem ...*” **Meryem** from first year: “...*First of all, I know nothing about reading strategies. But, for unknown words, after trying to have a guess, I refer to a dictionary right away. I seldom have difficulty with grammar...*” **Ayhan** from preparatory class: “...*If the topic is strange to me I try to read a similar text in my own language and it works...*”

The last theme determined according to the data collected through interviews was related to participants’ views about what should be done for students to be more proficient in reading in English. Most of the responses were related to their instructors. The evaluations on the activities and the reading topics were not few as well. These and other most frequent demands of them were as follows.

- Instructors should be encouraging, supporting, and guiding.
- Instructors should praise the students’ performance.
- The instructors should not be strict.
- The students should be given a right to choose text book reading passages.
- The students should be taught the ways to learn new words.
- The passages should be on a great variety of topics.

- The passages should be interesting and relevant.
- The reading passages and text books should be supplied with audio cds.
- The passages should be presented from the easiest to more difficult.
- The text book should not be relied on all the time, but there should be a balance between the course book and interesting stories, classical novels and news articles.
- Individual differences among students should be taken into consideration.
- Instructors should support students with praises.

Below, the extracts which include some of these suggestions at the same time are given. Özlem from first year suggested:

*“...The instructor should be encouraging, supportive, guiding but not strict and scary. They should criticize our performance but not scold us. They should let us know if we are doing any better, making any good progress. We want to know about our progress. That is, we want to know how we are doing...”*

Esma from preparatory class focused on the necessity of different types of activities to learn new words.

*“...As I said earlier, my biggest problem during reading is unknown words. I do not want to use dictionaries on every occasion to find out what they mean. I want to know them by heart... All the new words should be given with their meanings in the text in advance. The instructors should suggest us a way to learn and not to forget them in a short period of time ...”*

In line with the statistical data interviewees thought that even reading in their minds pronunciation was important. In the qualitative data 66.3% of the participants strongly agreed and agreed with the item 8 that read “It bothers me to encounter words I can’t pronounce while reading.” In the interview, Hasan from first year stressed the importance of pronunciation while reading and text books with audio cds.

*“...One of our biggest problems is accuracy in pronunciation while reading. Even during reading in my mind, I worry about the pronunciation. I am sure that native speakers would read differently. Every text book should be supplied with a recorded audio cd. It would be fantastic if we could read and listen to original recorded sound by a native speaker...”*

The example for the suggestions related to choosing reading passages are given below by the expressions of another interviewee, Tuba from first year:

*“...Most of the time, I find reading passages very difficult and boring. The instructor chose the text book we have been reading. We could have chosen our text book together with the instructor and could have started with the easier ones. The passages of the book do not get down at our level. On the other hand it would be better if we read stories, news papers along with the passages in the text book...”*

The suggestions above were ordered according to their frequency, from most frequent to least frequent ones, in the interviews. The most frequent ones among these suggestions reflect the views of nearly 55% of the interviewees whereas the least frequent ones are based on the statements of, at least, 30% of them. These findings obtained from the qualitative data with their most notable and noteworthy aspects in terms of the focus of this research will be summarized below.

#### **4.5.0. Summary**

In this chapter, the data obtained from the scales and interviews were analyzed. The results of them were described and, when necessary, correlated to each other. It was investigated whether the qualitative and quantitative data were consistent with each other. In the qualitative data section, it was also tried to determine if there were findings different from those of quantitative data. The qualitative and quantitative data were found to be, to a great extent, consistent with each other.

According to quantitative data, there are some important findings. For one thing, a review of the FLRAS scores and FLCAS scores showed that students experienced a similar level of foreign language reading anxiety ( $M=2.86$ ) and foreign language classroom anxiety ( $M=2.95$ ). Reading English was anxiety-provoking to some students. The major sources of foreign language reading anxiety stemmed from unknown words and unfamiliar topics.

Another thing, an examination of the ANOVA results indicated that there was not a ‘gender’, ‘age’, ‘number of years spent learning English’ effect on the FLRAS score,

but there was a significant ( $P=0.001$ ) ‘year in university’ effect on the FLRAS score with a high effect size. Preparatory class students ( $M=2.99$ ) experienced a significantly higher level of reading anxiety than the First Year students ( $M=2.67$ ). The ‘reading purpose in free time’ effect on the FLRAS score was also significant ( $P=0.008$ ). The ‘visiting a target language country’ effect was significant ( $p = 0.066$ ), too. Those who had visited a target language country ( $M=1.94$ ) tended to have a lower level of reading anxiety than those who had not visited a target language country ( $M=2.83$ ). The ‘use English after school’ effect was at a medium level ( $P=0.03$ ) and those who had used English after school experienced a lower level ( $M=2.61$ ) of reading anxiety than those ( $M= 2.87$ ) who had not used.

Later, the correlation between foreign language reading anxiety and foreign language reading performance revealed a significant negative correlation at a high level ( $P= 0.001$ ) between these two variables. Students with lower foreign language reading anxiety had higher foreign language reading performance.

On the other hand, qualitative data resulted in some major findings. The findings obtained from the interviewees can be summarized in a few sentences. Reading skill and reading classes are regarded as the second important only to speaking skill and speaking classes by the students. The difficulties of reading English and open-ended questions are also recognized. However, this does not imply a natural failure in students’ reading, difficulty of reading has close correlation with unknown words and unfamiliar topics greatly. Another result is that students generally like reading and believe that it has a lot of benefits as it is the only source of comprehensible input.

Respondents proposed several suggestions which they thought could be useful in improving students’ success and lower the reading anxiety in reading courses. However, these suggestions do not mean that the instructors do not follow these strategies in their courses. These are suggestions which the students thought could be valid for all reading classes in general. Their suggestions were basically related to their instructors’ communicative styles (e.g., encouraging, supporting, and guiding) with them; their autonomy to choose reading text books, topics, and reading strategies.

These findings from the analysis of the qualitative data collected through the interviews with some students from both in preparatory and first year students in the ELT

department, to a very great extent, were found to be consistent with the findings from different scales used in quantitative data collection.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

#### **5.1.0. Introduction**

This study investigated the foreign language reading anxiety level among learners of English as a foreign language and also what background variables were related to the foreign language reading anxiety level. In addition, this study examined the relationship between foreign language reading anxiety and foreign language reading performance.

A survey research design was implemented. The participants included 113 English learners enrolled in ELT department of Ataturk University of Erzurum in Turkey. The participants had an age range from 17 to 24. Among the participants, 52 were enrolled in preparatory class and 61 were enrolled in the first year class. Out of 113 participants, 94 participants (80.5%) were female and 22 participants (19.5%) were male.

A questionnaire consisting of a background questionnaire, the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS, Horwitz et al., 1999), Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCAS, Horwitz et al., 1986), and interview questions were administered to the subjects. The data from these questionnaires and the interview were analyzed and reading anxiety score for per item was compared with their FLCAS and FLRAS scores with that of American students studied Spanish, Russian and Japanese in a study by Saito Y., Horwitz, E., Garza T. (1999) and that of learners of Japanese and French in Saito et al. (1999). The major findings and discussion of this study are explicated below.

#### **5.2.0. Foreign Language Reading Anxiety**

Many studies on foreign language anxiety were centered on communicative

aspects of language use, i.e., listening and speaking (e.g., Aida, 1994; Phillips, 1992; Saito & Samimy, 1996) and reading tended to be considered as a skill area least susceptible to anxiety effects. For instance, MacIntyre, Noels, and Clement (1997) argued that “Reading, the most private of the tasks, best allows for repetition and clarification with minimal risk of embarrassment” (p. 279). However, in this study, it was found that reading in English is an anxiety-provoking activity for some Turkish ELT learners. This finding is consistent with the results of previous studies conducted by Saito et al. (1999), Sellers (2000), and Matsuda and Gobel (2001), who identified the existence of reading anxiety with groups of American learners of French, Russian, and Japanese; American learners of Spanish; and Japanese learners of English, respectively.

According to the responses, regarding the confidence level, the results appear that most Turkish ELT students were satisfied with their foreign language proficiency. 69.1% of ELT students strongly disagreed or disagreed with statement 11, “I don’t feel confident when I am reading in English,” and only 84.1% of the ELT students strongly disagreed or disagreed with item 12, “Reading is very difficult.” On the other hand, 42.5% of the ELT students strongly disagreed or agreed with item 16, “I am not satisfied with the level of reading ability in English that I have achieved so far.” A percentage which is that high leads one to believe that most Turkish ELT students possess positive expectations for their English reading proficiency.

Moreover, most Turkish ELT students did not express discomfort with reading aloud in English. In fact, 61% of the students strongly disagreed or disagreed with item 15, “I don’t mind reading to myself, but I feel very uncomfortable when I have to read English aloud.” This possibly because the instructors provide ample opportunities for students to read aloud together as a group, most students might be accustomed to reading aloud in classrooms.

Furthermore, Turkish ELT university students did not perceive reading as being more difficult than other language skills only 15% of the ELT students strongly agreed or agreed with item 13, “The hardest part of learning English is learning to read.” Perhaps, this is due to having practiced reading skill for the most part for average of 10 years. For that reason, they would be more convinced of their reading ability as compared to other language skills such as speaking, listening and writing. In addition, it appears that they had enjoyment in reading English texts. Only 2.7% of the ELT students strongly agreed or agreed with item 12, “I do not enjoy reading English.”



In this study, the FLRAS had 18 items and the total possible score of the FLRAS ranged from 18 to 90 and the ELT student' FLRAS scores for per item ranged from 1.28 to 4.00, with a mean of 2.82 and a standard deviation of 0.52. The FLCAS had 30 items and the total possible score of the FLCAS ranged from 30 to 160. The mean score for per item of the FLCAS was 2.95 (SD = 0.76). The FLCAS measured the general foreign language anxiety with a focus on speaking while the FLRAS measured the foreign language reading anxiety. The similar average per item score of the FLRAS and FLCAS indicated that reading provoked a similar level of anxiety as speaking did among learners of English as compared to Horwitz et al.'s (1999) sample of American foreign language students whose mean score for FLRAS was 52.9 (average score for per item =2.64) and mean score for FLCAS was 95.2 (average score for per item=2.88), thus providing evidence that the ELT subjects studied reported experiencing more foreign language reading anxiety.

In Saito et al. (1999), the average per item score of the FLCAS and the FLRAS for learners of French was 2.95 and 2.66 respectively, for learners of Russian 2.81 and 2.38 respectively, and for learners of Japanese 2.83 and 2.80 respectively. As the FLCAS score indicates the level of speaking anxiety and the FLRAS score indicates the level of reading anxiety, the above-mentioned average per item scores show that reading provoked a lower level of anxiety than speaking did among learners of French and learners of Russian but a similar level of anxiety as speaking did among learners of Japanese. In this sense, the result of this study was consistent with the result of Saito et al. because reading provoked a similar level of anxiety as speaking did among Turkish ELT students.

Potential sources of foreign language anxiety have been investigated by many researchers (e.g., Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002; Kitano, 2001; Spielmann & Radnofsky, 2001). Summarizing the potential sources of anxiety in terms of reading, three broad categories can be found: (1) linguistic sources, (2) affective sources, and (3) task-specific sources. The linguistic sources include various kinds of reading abilities: bottom-up processing abilities, such as pronunciation ability, vocabulary size, grammatical and syntactic knowledge as well as top-down reading processing abilities, such as the capacity to understand the gist of a passage, grasp textual organization, differentiate main ideas from details, and utilize background knowledge. As Sparks et al. (2000) argued, native language ability and foreign language aptitude may be included in this category. Affective sources can be classified into two groups: intrapersonal factors and interpersonal factors. Intrapersonal factors include setting high standards for reading

performance, a high level of concern over making mistakes, which are derived from perfectionist tendencies (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002; Price 1991) and self-perceptions of reading ability (Foss & Reitzel, 1988; Kitano, 2001; MacIntyre et al., 1997; Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999). Interpersonal factors involve self-comparisons with classmates, a desire to outperform other students, a desire to gain the teacher's approval, and a concern with tests and grades, which are typical manifestations of competitiveness (Bailey, 1983). The third category, task-specific sources, includes the difficulty of the reading task, the task type (e.g., translation, taking the gist, faster reading, and extensive reading), time constraints for completing the task, and reading with or without dictionaries.

In this study, on the other hand, when reading English, they expressed feelings of reading anxiety about the *new words, unfamiliar topics, open-ended oral questions* both in qualitative and quantitative data. *Unknown words* seem to be the main source of their anxiety. Their frustration was apparent that the 87.6% of the ELT students strongly agreed or agreed with statement 1, "I get upset when I'm not sure if I understand what I am reading" (87.6%), with item 2, "When reading English, I do not understand most of the words in the text." (57.2%), with item 3, "When I'm reading English, I get so confused I can't remember what I'm reading." (62.2%), with item 7, "While reading English, I get nervous and confused when I do not understand every word." (63.4%), with statement 5, "I am nervous when I am reading a passage in English when I am not familiar with the topic." (51.3%), with statement 6, "I get upset whenever I encounter unknown grammar when reading English" (60.2%). In addition, the findings directly support the data gathered from the interview, 12 out of 20 interviewees (60%) expressed that the most important difficulty they had had was encountering words they did not know. In the interview students reported that they became anxious and frustrated because they could understand the meaning of single words but still could not understand what the author was saying. The reason might be that their word recognition process was not efficient and occupied too much time and processing capacity and thus very limited processing capacity was left for the activation of syntactic knowledge and discourse knowledge, which were also important components of skillful reading (Bernhardt, 1990). Therefore, it seems that *new and unknown words* are main source of anxiety.

*Unfamiliar topic* was another source of reading anxiety. 51.3% of the students agreed or strongly agreed with item 5 that stated "I am nervous when I am reading a passage in English when I am not familiar with the topic." According to the

sociocognitive perspective of L2 reading (Bernhardt, 1991), a text is not only characterized by the linguistic elements but also its content, topic and structure. Therefore, to fully understand a text, students need to understand not only the linguistic elements of the text, but also the topic and the structure. According to Ausubel's (1963) meaningful learning theory, students learn the best when they can relate the new knowledge with the existing knowledge. When the topic of the L2 text was not familiar to students and students cannot relate the topic to their existing knowledge base, it was natural that students might feel anxious.

The after-reading task types might also be another source of foreign language reading anxiety. Different task types have been identified to be associated with different degrees of foreign language anxiety (Brantmeier 2005; MacIntyre and Gardner, 1994a). Most of the after-reading tasks that students are asked to do are multiple choice questions, true/false questions, open-ended oral and written questions. Sometimes students are asked to answer oral questions after reading dialogues and texts in the textbook in class. If students are not sure they understood the reading, they might become anxious fearing that they would give the wrong answer in front of the class and thus incur possible negative evaluation from their peers and teacher. Among the twenty interviewees of this study, seven interviewees (35%) told that they found open-ended written questions the most difficult to answer. And the majority (65%) expressed that they found open-ended oral questions the hardest and did not like at all. This is because they might fear of being embarrassed in front of their teachers and class mates in case they got the questions wrong. Fear of negative evaluation from either peers or teacher had been identified as a possible source of foreign language anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986; Kitano, 2001; Young, 1991).

Furthermore, it may be that the traditional teaching methods in the ELT classrooms do not promote the understanding of English and the ability to use English for reading and learning independently. If students only study for the exams -in this study 43.4% of the participant reported that they had read only when they had exams- , but never do extensive reading, they will end up with no vocabulary; even they will forget about the words they have just encountered in their text book; therefore they will not have a good receptive vocabulary; they will be afraid of making mistakes; they will not be able to work out *grammar structure*, *unfamiliar words*, and *unfamiliar topics*. Eventually they will have a high level of anxiety.

### 5.3.0. Relationship with the Background Variables

The results of this study reveal that four background variables are the significant predictors, which explains the variance in the regression analysis model. The order from the most significant predictor to least significant one is: (1) “Year in university,” (2) “Visiting a target language country,” (3) “Using English after school.” (4) “Purpose for reading English in free time,” The rest of the background variables do not explain variance.

Four conclusions are drawn from the analysis. First, Students in the Preparatory class had a significantly higher level of foreign language reading anxiety ( $M = 2.99$ ) than students in the First year class ( $M=2.67$ ). As course level increased, the foreign language reading anxiety level decreased. This result is in consistent with the result obtained in Hussein (2005), in which he found that learners of Arabic in the third year had a significantly lower level of foreign language anxiety than learners in the first year. On the other hand, this result is in conflict with the results obtained in Brantmerier (2005), in which the learners of Spanish did not express Spanish reading anxiety in a Spanish Grammar and Composition Course but showed anxiety in the upcoming Spanish literature course.

One of the possible reasons why Preparatory class students felt more reading anxiety than the First year class students might be the perceived increased difficult level of the reading passages in textbook. In the background questionnaire, the reading passages in the textbook were rated as more difficult by the Preparatory class students than the first students. Preparatory students rated the level of difficulty of reading passages in the textbook an average of 3.17 with 5 being the most difficult and First year students rated a mean of 2.88. Students could read the comparatively difficult reading passages in the Preparatory class with much effort and therefore the chances for them to experience reading anxiety were high. If difficulty of reading passages increases in the students need more effort in reading and understanding the reading passages and chances for them to experience anxiety in reading are higher.

Second conclusion is that those participants ( $M=1.94$ ) who had visited and stayed for some time experienced lower level of anxiety than those ( $M=2.83$ ) who had never visited and stayed there. This result is in conflict with the result obtained in Caruso

(1996) in which it was found that going to an French speaking country did not have a significant effect on students' foreign language anxiety level. Similarly, third conclusion is that participants (M=2.61) who had kept using English after school tended to have lower FLRAS than those participants (M=2.87) who had not. The target foreign language, English, seemed useful for them. This may provide the evidence that motivation does have an important effect on foreign language reading anxiety.

Fourth, the subjects who responded "for both course related and for fun" is one of their purposes for reading in English tended to have lower FLRAS scores. The subjects reporting their purpose for reading in English in free time was *course related* tended to have the highest score (M=2.96). On the other hand, those students reporting their purpose in reading in English was for *both course related and for fun* tended to have the lowest score (M=2.69) among three levels. The mean score for those students whose reading purpose was *for fun* was found to be 2.79. Those subjects might either regard reading in English was pleasure, or they chose to read in English in their free time besides studying for exams. Anyhow, those subjects selected reading English for a leisure activity experienced less foreign language reading anxiety.

#### **5.4.0. FLRAS and Reading Performance**

The third research question asked about the degree to which learners with different reading proficiency levels exhibit significant and meaningful differences in their mean anxiety scores. The idea that more proficient students will exhibit a lower anxiety level than less proficient students and that more anxious students will exhibit a lower proficiency level than less anxious students was supported.

Correlation analysis was performed between the participants' mean anxiety score as the independent variable and proficiency level as the dependant variable. The results indicated that there was statistically a negative correlation between the two. More proficient students tended to exhibit lower degrees of reading anxiety and more confidence about reading English than less proficient students. This result seems to be intuitive and logical because, as Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) defined foreign language anxiety as "the apprehension experienced when a situation requires the use of a second language with which the individual is not fully proficient" (p. 5), low proficiency is an original, crucial source of language anxiety. This is supported by MacIntyre and

Gardner's (1989) explanation about the way in which foreign language anxiety develops. They proposed that at the earliest stages of acquisition, language learners will encounter many difficulties and make many mistakes in comprehending and producing the foreign language. This will lead to the experience of state anxiety, provided that they feel some degree of discomfort when making mistakes. After experiencing repeated occurrences of state anxiety, learners may come to associate anxiety with poor performance in the foreign language. In this way, foreign language anxiety, a situation-specific form of anxiety, is constructed. It is natural that the degrees of reading anxiety and lack of confidence displayed by the participants differed due to reading proficiency level.

This result seems to be intuitive and logical because, as Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) defined foreign language anxiety as "the apprehension experienced when a situation requires the use of a second language with which the individual is not fully proficient" (p. 5), low proficiency is an original, crucial source of language anxiety. This is supported by MacIntyre and Gardner's (1989) explanation about the way in which foreign language anxiety develops. They proposed that at the earliest stages of acquisition, language learners will encounter many difficulties and make many mistakes in comprehending and producing the foreign language. This will lead to the experience of state anxiety, provided that they feel some degree of discomfort when making mistakes. After experiencing repeated occurrences of state anxiety, learners may come to associate anxiety with poor performance in the foreign language. In this way, foreign language anxiety, a situation-specific form of anxiety, is constructed. In sum, it is natural that the degrees of reading anxiety and lack of confidence displayed by the participants differed due to reading proficiency level.

This result is also consistent with the previous research which studied the correlation between foreign language anxiety and foreign language performance (e.g., Aida, 1994; Horwitz et al., 1986; Phillips, 1992; Saito & Samimy, 1996). According to Eysenck (1992) humans were limited in their processing capacity in language learning. The reading anxiety that students experienced might occupy their cognitive processing capacity and reduce the attention that they could allocate on the reading task. With less attention on the reading task, the more anxious students might need more time to interpret meanings from words or given the same time the more anxious students might not achieve the same reading effect as the less anxious students. Therefore, the students with higher foreign language reading anxiety might get fewer score in foreign language

reading performances.

#### **5.5.0. Using Reading Strategies**

The primary aim of the quantitative data collection was to discover what the sources of reading anxiety were and what strategies they had used about reading strategies to increase reading comprehension. The results were in consistent with the results of qualitative data. The sources of reading anxiety stem from *lacking background information, perceived difficulty of text books, new words, and open-ended oral and written questions*. These issues were discussed in under the headings of *Foreign Language Reading Anxiety* in this chapter.

In the interview when asked what strategies they had used, none of them could name a strategy and all of the reported that they had never been instructed reading strategies. Later, the researcher of the study changed the question as “What do you do to overcome the difficulties you face while reading English.” The responded that for *new words* they had tried to guess what the meant, ask a friend or a teacher, use dictionary, or search on the internet. For *lacking background information*, they had tried to read about the same topic in their native language. They did not expressed concern about grammatical structure. They told that unfamiliar grammatical structure was a hindrance to reading but this happened to them very seldom. Their main concern was about new words, unfamiliar topics and open-ended oral and written questions. They also told that the main difficulty of open-ended questions was related to their poor vocabulary. In addition, they reported that they forget about words in the text they have just read. Insufficient focus on vocabulary might cause them reading anxiety.

Vocabulary is extremely important for extracting meaning from text. Second language or foreign language learners most commonly claim that vocabulary is one of their main weaknesses and that they need to learn vocabulary so that they can understand the texts they are reading. While comprehension of language structures such as syntax helps learners understand the relationships between sentences and ideas, it does not provide direct access to the meaning of the sentence. Although teachers do spend time teaching vocabulary, time constraints and coverage of large numbers of vocabulary items is often not possible. Typically learners’ receptive vocabulary, that is words they recognize but don’t use, is larger than their productive vocabulary, words they use when

they speak and write. While not every word learners are exposed to needs to become a part of their productive vocabulary, learners do need to expand their vocabulary knowledge base to better understand both academic and literary texts. Although vocabulary teaching is often viewed as being straightforward in that learners simply need sufficient exposure to words, it is a much more complex task than many learners themselves realize. As Nation (1990) points out, learning a word means recognizing form (recognizing the word in print and distinguishing the grammatical forms of the word), position (understanding the grammar patterns and structures in which a word can occur), function (knowing the situations and contexts in which the word would most likely occur), and meaning (knowing the various meanings, nuances and subtleties of a word as well as its synonyms). Teachers are continuously faced with the task of deciding which words students need to know, and the most appropriate, effective, and useful ways of teaching those words to their students.

The teaching of specific learning strategies so that students can effectively learn from context can be of a great help. In essence, researchers emphasize that because of the great variation across learners, the teaching of vocabulary learning strategies is essential. Studies by Ahmed (1989) found that successful learners used more vocabulary learning strategies and more frequently than less successful learners, and Oxford and Crookall (1990) concluded that different vocabulary learning strategies may be appropriate to different students. Other studies have found that direct instruction in a range of strategies including keyword approaches, and metacognitive awareness has led to greater vocabulary acquisition (Altman, 1997; Hulstijn, 1997; Nation, 2001; Oxford & Scarcella, 1994; Parry, 1997). The main position of proponents of this view is that the development of extensive vocabulary knowledge requires some direct instruction and strategy training, as well as extensive reading.

#### **5.6.0. Limitations of the Study**

In interpreting the results, some limitations of the survey study can be mentioned. First, the subjects in this study were from English Teaching Department of Faculty of Education of Ataturk University in Erzurum. The generalization of all ELT students is restricted. Second, since the instruments applied in this study were self-report questionnaires, the validity of the findings depended on the subjects' willingness to



precisely respond to the items of the questionnaires.

Third, it has been guaranteed that the university students achieved a certain English language proficiency level since all subjects in this study passed the University Entrance Exam (OSS) and Foreign Language Exam (YDS) to enter ELT departments. Nevertheless, their English reading abilities may be slightly varied individually.

### **5.7.0. Pedagogical Implications**

The results of this study show that reading in English was anxiety provoking to some Turkish ELT students. Anxiety related to reading and writing as an L2 is not easily detected by instructors while anxiety related to L2 speaking is easily noticed since reading does not require the interaction that speaking does. Therefore, this finding reminded instructors of the existence of reading anxiety. With this awareness, the instructors will be more likely to detect students with high reading anxiety, show a sympathetic attitude towards the problems students are facing and adopt according measures to help students. In a word, instructors should be understanding and sensitive to students' anxiety about foreign language learning in general and foreign language reading in particular.

Sources of foreign language reading anxiety among Turkish ELT students were: unknown words, lacking background information, and open-ended oral and written questions. Not surprisingly, unknown words were identified as the major source of foreign language reading anxiety in this study.

Inefficient word recognition easily frustrates learners in reading, enhances anxiety, and diminishes motivation to read more. According to Koda (1996), word recognition refers to the processes of obtaining both phonological codes (i.e., pronunciation) and lexical meanings appropriate to the context of the text. The participants in the interview reported that the pronunciation of English words makes reading difficult even when reading silently. More anxious learners found dictionary use to be a more effective way to improve reading comprehension than less anxious learners. Therefore, it is vital for reading teachers to develop students' word recognition skills.

The students should be asked to read the texts and to allow them enough time to study on the unfamiliar words and prepare reading after task in advance before they come to reading classes. Dictionary use should be encouraged despite the fact that some

students often do not like using a dictionary and often fail to find meanings most appropriate for the context. This inaccuracy of word-meaning recognition impairs the meaning construction process seriously. In order to determine the appropriate meanings of words, students need to understand the context in which the word is used. Therefore, teachers should provide sufficient time for students to examine the context and identify the most appropriate meanings of words with the aid of a dictionary. Fostering proactive attitudes toward meaning construction of reading texts is of great importance. Explicit vocabulary instruction is necessary in the form of pre-reading tasks using a glossary, and various kinds of vocabulary exercises, such as matching words with their definitions, fill-in-the-blank tasks, and translation activities.

The teaching of specific learning strategies so that students can effectively learn from context can be of a great help. Specific vocabulary instruction strategies might include using the key word method (learning new words by learning a keyword “word clue” for each vocabulary word); associating (making associations to other L1 or L2 words or concepts); incidental learning (learning through reading or listening to others read); repeated exposure (using most frequently used vocabulary across the curriculum); pre-teaching vocabulary; restructuring reading materials; and the context method. In essence, researchers emphasize that because of the great variation across learners, the teaching of vocabulary learning strategies is essential.

Lacking background information of the text was also identified as one of the sources of foreign language reading anxiety. Instructors’ introduction to the topics might activate students’ prior knowledge about the topic and arouse their interest in reading the passage so that students can better process the reading passages based on what he already know about the topic. What the learner had already known had a big influence on what he was going to learn. Shepard (2000) viewed teacher’s close assessment of students’ understanding, feedback from peers and student self-assessment as the central part of the social processes that mediated the construction of knowledge and development of intellectual abilities. Giving students’ chances to ask questions, making comment about the difficult level of the reading passages and asking comprehension questions may provide students chances of evaluating their understanding of the reading passage and decrease the worry of improper understanding of the passage.

Selecting textbooks suitable for students’ proficiency levels, their interests, and their vocabulary sizes is crucially important. If the topic is interesting and related to their

field of study, it will motivate the students to read more. As found in this study texts containing too many unknown words will be demotivating and increase the students' anxiety level.

Another way to reduce students' anxiety is to include an extensive reading component in which students choose reading materials that they are interested in and suitable for their vocabulary size. Providing choices of reading materials and allowing students to read at their own pace can diminish their anxiety and promote autonomous attitudes toward reading.

### **5.8.0. Conclusions**

In conclusion, the development of English reading skill plays a crucial role in university education. In the Turkish context, in which most students encounter limited amounts of English input, reading represents the best opportunity for obtaining input and developing knowledge of English vocabulary, syntax, as well as content knowledge of various reading texts. Moreover, reading is a core skill from which writing, listening, and speaking abilities can develop. The primary purpose of this study was to explore the relationships among Turkish ELT learners' reading anxiety level, general foreign language anxiety, reading proficiency level, and using of reading strategies.

Based on the findings of this study, several conclusions can be made. Turkish ELT students experienced a similar level of foreign language reading anxiety and general foreign language anxiety. The major source of foreign language reading anxiety identified in this study was unknown words. It was found that the Preparatory class students had a higher level of foreign language reading anxiety than the First year students. The negative correlation between foreign language reading anxiety and foreign language reading performance conformed to the findings that such a negative correlation existed between foreign language anxiety and foreign language performance. As to reading strategies, they had not been taught about them at all. The text books they had read was considered to be difficult and above their level.



## APPENDIX A

### SAMPLE OF CONSENT FORM

Dear ELT Students:

I am looking for first year and preparatory students because they are the only ones who take English reading classes in the ELT department. I am conducting a research for my thesis to explore the affective feelings students have towards reading in English.

Your participation will involve filling in two surveys and one background information questionnaire, which will take approximately 20 minutes during a regular class period. Your final exam score will be collected from your instructors at the end of the semester. For those who also agree to participate in the follow up interview, the interview will be conducted in two weeks after the survey data is collected. The interview will be audio taped and will last for about 20 minutes. Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time you can feel free to do so. No personal information will be involved in the study and your confidentiality will be maintained. There is no incentive to participate in this study.

Thank you and I hope you will find this study to be enjoyable.

Sincerely,

Mr. Hayrettin KÖROĞLU

Atatürk Üniversitesi, K.K. Eğitim Fakültesi

İngilizce Öğretmenliği

ERZURUM

## APPENDIX B

### FOREIGN LANGUAGE READING ANXIETY SCALE

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I get upset when I am not sure if I understand what I am reading in English.	⑤	④	③	②	①
2	When reading English, I often understand the words but still can't quite understand what the author is saying.	⑤	④	③	②	①
3	When I am reading English, I get so confused and I can't remember what I am reading.	⑤	④	③	②	①
4	I feel intimidated whenever I see a whole page of English in front of me.	⑤	④	③	②	①
5	I am nervous when I am reading a passage in English when I am not familiar with the topic.	⑤	④	③	②	①
6	I get upset whenever I encounter unknown grammar when reading English.	⑤	④	③	②	①
7	When reading English, I get nervous and confused when I don't understand every word.	⑤	④	③	②	①
8	It bothers me to encounter words I can't pronounce while reading English.	⑤	④	③	②	①
9	I usually translate word by word when I'm reading English.	⑤	④	③	②	①
10	I do not enjoy reading English.	⑤	④	③	②	①
11	I don't feel confident when I am reading in English.	⑤	④	③	②	①
12	Reading English is so difficult.	⑤	④	③	②	①
13	The hardest part of learning English is learning to read.	⑤	④	③	②	①
14	I would be happy just to learn to speak English rather than having to learn to read as well.	⑤	④	③	②	①
15	I don't mind reading to myself, but I feel very uncomfortable when I have to read English aloud	⑤	④	③	②	①
16	I am not satisfied with the level of reading ability in English that I have achieved so far.	⑤	④	③	②	①
17	English culture and ideas seem very foreign to me.	⑤	④	③	②	①
18	You have to know so much about English history and culture in order to read English.	⑤	④	③	②	①

## APPENDIX C

### FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM ANXIETY SCALE

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my English class.	⑤	④	③	②	①
2	I don't worry about making mistakes in English class.	⑤	④	③	②	①
3	I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in English class.	⑤	④	③	②	①
4	It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English class.	⑤	④	③	②	①
5	It would bother me to take more English classes.	⑤	④	③	②	①
6	During English class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.	⑤	④	③	②	①
7	I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am.	⑤	④	③	②	①
8	I am not usually at ease during tests in my English class.	⑤	④	③	②	①
9	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class.	⑤	④	③	②	①
10	I worry about the consequences of failing my English class.	⑤	④	③	②	①
11	I understand why some people get so upset over English class.	⑤	④	③	②	①
12	In English class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.	⑤	④	③	②	①
13	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English class.	⑤	④	③	②	①
14	I would be nervous speaking English with native English speakers.	⑤	④	③	②	①
15	I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	⑤	④	③	②	①
16	Even if I am well prepared for English class, I feel anxious about it.	⑤	④	③	②	①
17	I often feel like not going to English class.	⑤	④	③	②	①
18	I don't feel confident when I speak in English class.	⑤	④	③	②	①
19	I am afraid that my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	⑤	④	③	②	①
20	I can feel my heart beating when I'm going to be called on in English class.	⑤	④	③	②	①
21	The more I study for an English test, the more confused I get.	⑤	④	③	②	①
22	I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.	⑤	④	③	②	①
23	I don't feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students.	⑤	④	③	②	①
24	English class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.	⑤	④	③	②	①
25	I feel more tense and nervous in my English class than in my other classes in Turkish.	⑤	④	③	②	①
26	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English class.	⑤	④	③	②	①
27	When I'm on my way to English class, I don't feel very sure and relaxed.	⑤	④	③	②	①
28	I get nervous when I don't understand every word the English teacher says.	⑤	④	③	②	①
29	I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.	⑤	④	③	②	①
30	I get nervous when the English teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	⑤	④	③	②	①

## **APPENDIX D**

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

- 1- What language skill do you think is the most important one?
- 2- What do you think of the importance of reading?
- 3- Which of after reading activity questions such as true-false, multiple-choice, open-ended written and open-ended oral questions is the most difficult?
- 4- Which of these difficulties such as unfamiliar and non-interesting topic, unknown words, and grammar structure do you think bothers you most while reading?
- 5- What reading strategies do you use to deal with difficulties during reading?
- 6- What should be done to make your reading classes better?



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