

The Relationship between EFL Learners' Reading Anxiety and Their Reading Strategy Preference

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between foreign language reading anxiety and the students' reading strategies preference. Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale adopted from Saito, Garza & Horwitz (1999) and the Survey of Reading Strategies adopted from Mokhtari & Sheory (2002) were used to collect data from 204 participants in the English Language Center at Taibah University in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah. The study found that the participants had a low level of reading anxiety. Moreover, they often used all the strategies with preference to PSRS over the GRS and SRS. Furthermore, the relationship between reading anxiety and SRS was negative whereas between reading anxiety and PSRS was positive. Finally, there was no statistical significance relationship between reading anxiety and GRS.

Chapter One

1. Introduction

Learning foreign languages (FL) has become an essential part of many countries' educational system around the world due to the need for political, commercial, educational and medical communication. Many different languages are spoken all over the world but English is one of the most common. In Saudi Arabia, for instance, English language is the only foreign language that is officially considered to be taught in schools.

In spite of the variety of methods people used to communicate recently, the written words still play a crucial role in conveying messages and for entertainment. Normal children in literate communities are expected to learn how to read by the age of five or six, some even earlier (Brown, 2010). In today's world, being literate is one of the most crucial factors to attain success in life. Being able to read properly is a necessity for learners' career opportunity development as well as academic success (Rajab, Zakaria, Abdul Rahman, Hosni & Hassani, 2012). For example, learners who are unable to master good reading proficiency in school may suffer challenges in their social interactions and academic life.

Negative emotion such as fear, anxiety, and anger might hinder the learner's progression. Many educators consider foreign language anxiety as the most common negative feeling and provided intervention especially inside the classroom (Saito; Garza; & Horwitz, 1999). In most previous studies in foreign language anxiety, researchers concentrated more on oral performance (Joo & Damron, 2015) while learners, in fact, need to read more than to speak in their academic study. Moreover, achieving reading proficiency is a prerequisite to learn how to write. Without the learners' capability of reading, it is difficult to write a meaningful message. According to Saito, Horwitz, and Garza (1999), unlike speaking, reading would have less effect on foreign language learners' (FLL's) performance since it can be practiced silently. Furthermore, it can be privately performed with unlimited opportunities for revision and reconsideration.

The researcher, as an EFL teacher, has noticed that reading unfamiliar or foreign written texts causes anxiety to a significant number of Saudi EFL students inside classrooms, while others use a variety of strategies to comprehend the written text. Both strategies use, and language anxiety are playing an eminent role in the FL learning process and interact with different aspects during the learning process (Aida, 1994). When a tough language task is introduced to learners, the related language students experience and the strategy they use might vary and be correlated (Nakatani, 2010).

Reading strategies in its simplest form, are procedural steps that learners use cognitively to help them to store new information and recall them when needed (Anderson, 1991). They are techniques that learners utilize to improve comprehension and overcome any obstacles they may encounter while reading passages in a foreign language (Lee, 2012). Munsakorn (2012) stated that as a result of not utilizing the proper reading strategy during reading practice, EFL learners sometimes have difficulties in comprehending foreign texts.

Metacognitive strategies are a high-level skill of utilizing the perceptions of cognitive processes as well as involving monitoring on the learning task, reflect the learning process, planning for learning, and evaluating to what extent student has learned (Chamot & Kupper, 1989). Metacognitive reading strategies are the means that learners use to help comprehend the written texts. In other words, it is a cognitive process that happens during the reading of ambiguous or unfamiliar written texts to help the student understand the written words.

In recent years, many researchers have acknowledged the significance of reading strategies and metacognitive reading strategies due to several reasons. One of these reasons is that metacognitive strategies create reflective thinking and help students to be independent and capable of dealing with problems they may encounter (Tobias et al., 1999). Another reason is that implementing metacognitive knowledge into teaching practices will create independent students who can learn on their own and evaluate their performance (Mahdi, 2015). The final reason is that integrating reading strategies into EFL instruction will stimulate and accelerate the reading process (Bećirović, Brdarević-Čeljo & Sinanović, 2017).

Although there is a reasonable number of studies that dealt with the correlation between reading strategies use and reading anxiety, there are few studies in Arab world, especially in Saudi Arabia. For that reason, this study was conducted to examine the correlation between reading anxiety and the strategies learners prefer to use during the reading process and whether these strategies help learners to cope with anxiety or not.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The researcher is a teacher with seven years' experience in teaching EFL in more than three Saudi's secondary schools and dealing with more than 700 students. Based on prior background discussed the researcher has noticed that some learners are struggling when they have chosen to read aloud an academic written text. The hesitation and frustration is noticeable but some of them, through repetition of the task, showed some progress while others are still behind. Similarly, Alsaleh (2018) claimed that during her experience as an assistant teacher at Almajmaah University, she has noticed that EFL Saudi students experience reading anxiety when asked either to read and answer questions or to read aloud. This problem is more common among freshwomen. Various studies have admitted that anxiety is one of the major factors that might hinder the FL reading process (Saito, Garza & Horwitz, 1999). Learners will reduce their curiosity as a result of being anxious which will minimize their cognitive abilities (Naghadeh et al., 2014). When learners experience anxiety from learning English, they will be demotivated to learn it (Santoso, Sutarsyah & Sudirman, 2013). According to Alrabai (2016), anxiety is one of the factors that have led to poor achievement in English in Saudi Arabia. Even though learners in Saudi Arabia study English for nine years before university, majority of them graduate with poor understanding of the language (Alhawsawi, 2013; Al-Johani, 2009). It has been proven that a lack of English achievement might be compensated if the student learns how to implement reading strategies and being more aware of them (Carrel, Pharis & Liberto, 1989). As a response to this issue, the present study will be conducted to investigate the relationship between strategies that students utilize to help comprehend foreign texts and reading anxiety.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the present study is to measure the correlation between EFL reading anxiety and reading strategies preferred by students in the preparatory year at Taibah University.

1.4 Research Questions

To achieve the purpose of the study, this study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the reading anxiety levels of the participants?
2. What are the reading strategies the participants prefer to use?
3. What is the nature of the correlation between reading anxiety and the reading strategies preference among Saudi EFL students?

1.5 Research Hypothesis:

Based on the research questions the following hypothesis is formulated:

1. There is a significant positive correlation between reading anxiety and reading strategies Saudi EFL students prefer to use.

1.6 Significance of the Study:

The significance of this study is that it attempts to:

1. Draw the attention of the educators to the importance of using reading strategies.
2. Contribute to the body of knowledge on reading strategies.
3. Address the gap in the literature in Saudi Arabia on using reading strategies and their relation to reading anxiety.

1.8 Definitions of Terms

Reading Anxiety

Anxiety is a “mental and physical state characterized by specific emotional, physical, cognitive and behavioral symptoms.

It is an adaptive reaction which mobilizes the organism and helps it defend, at-tact or avoid an anxiety stimulus” (Zdena, 2016, p.3). In this study, the term of reading anxiety refers to a combination of negative feelings such as tension, frustration, and hesitation that encounter EFL learners when they try to read unfamiliar written texts which lead to blocking their ability to read or might hinder their progression.

Strategies

Strategies are the "specific methods of approaching a problem or task, modes of operation for achieving a particular end, planned designs for controlling and manipulating certain information." (Brown, 2007, p.119).

Reading Strategies

Aarnoutse and Schellings (2003) described reading strategies as “the cognitive activities which readers can undertake before, during and after the reading of a text in order to adequately comprehend the text and prevent, identify or solve any problems which may occur during this process” (p.390).

1.9 Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Reading anxiety

According to Aida (1994), anxiety works as a block for ESL learners to master the target language. She indicated that such of these negative feelings the learners' experience in the learning process would hinder their ability to communicate properly.

One of the things that are said to interfere with the learning of foreign languages is anxiety. Teachers of foreign languages have, for a long time, understood how this type of anxiety affects learning. Foreign language anxiety is not the same as general anxiety. Various researchers have conducted research to differentiate between the two since there is still limited knowledge about the phenomena (Al-Shbou, Ahmad, Nordin & Abdul Rahman, 2013). They claimed that most of the studies which have been conducted have concentrated on speaking skills since it is seen as the most challenging task and the other four skills have largely been ignored. Studies into the other three skills were only started in the last decade.

One essential skill that had been overlooked is reading ability. It has been shown to trigger feelings of anxiety for students learning a foreign language (Brantmeier, 2005; Zaho, 2009; Wu, 2011).

Various scholars have attempted to distinguish the different anxieties associated with foreign languages (Al-Shbou, Ahmad, Nordin & Abdul Rahman, 2013). Saito et al. (1999) were the first researchers who successfully differentiated the reading anxiety from other anxieties. The researchers were able to identify two specific aspects which caused the reading anxiety. The first one was unfamiliar reading scripts, while the other was writing systems. Familiarizing oneself with scripts from a foreign language can greatly help in reducing the anxiety associated with unfamiliar scripts. For instance, Arab-speaking learners experience less reading anxiety when learning English compared to when they have to learn another foreign language such as Chinese, Japanese or Korean (Al-Shbou, Ahmad, Nordin & Abdul Rahman, 2013). The English language uses familiar writing scripts compared to other languages. Learners who try to grasp these other foreign languages apart from English experience difficulties in decoding the scripts which make it difficult to read the languages.

The other factor which has been shown to cause anxiety is an unfamiliar culture (Zaho, 2009). The anxiety which results from unfamiliar culture is different from the one which results from unfamiliar reading scripts. With this type of anxiety, learners can sufficiently decode the words written in a sentence and can therefore, derive the meaning of a sentence. However, the learners may struggle to understand complete sentences due to their insufficient knowledge about specific cultures. It is worth noting that many languages are influenced by specific cultures. Therefore, understanding the culture associated with a certain language can help in decoding the language and making meaning of it. Researchers have come up with ingenious ways of measuring the anxiety associated with reading foreign languages. A Likert scale devised by Saito et al. (1999) is used to measure this anxiety. It consists of 20 items and participants can choose to either “strongly agree” or “strongly disagree” amongst other choices.

The reliability and validity of the scale were tested using two methods during the earlier developmental stages. The two scales were the foreign language classroom anxiety scale (FLCAS) and the foreign language reading anxiety scale (FLRAS). The study conducted by Saito et al. (1999) utilized 383 English university students. Of the 383 students, 192 were French students, 114 were Japanese students while 77 students had enrolled in Russian courses. All the students were in the first year of their studies. The studies proved to be internally reliable as the consistency score was .86 on the Cronbach's alpha. The researchers also used a Person Product-Moment correlation coefficient in a bid to validate the foreign language reading anxiety. After completion of the analysis process, the researchers were able to understand how the two scales were related ($r = .64$, $p = .01$, $n = 383$). The studies revealed that those students who suffered from foreign language anxiety also suffered from foreign language reading anxiety. The researchers came up with a correlation coefficient of .64. which indicated that the two measures shared an estimated 41% of the variance. However, it also indicated that 59% of the variance was still not shared. These statistics helped in validating the studies.

The studies provided enough evidence to help distinguish the fact that foreign language reading anxiety was different from foreign language anxiety. The studies also led the researchers to conclude that foreign language reading anxiety was highly influenced by specific target languages. The levels of anxiety also varied from language to language. The researchers were also able to understand the relationship between specific writing systems and foreign language reading anxiety. The study revealed that those students who had enrolled to learn Japanese as a foreign language suffered the most cases of reading anxiety. They were followed by the ones who had enrolled to learn French as a second language. The ones who had enrolled to learn Russian as a foreign language showed the least cases of reading anxiety among the three.

The research conducted by Saito et al. (1999) was corroborated by other researchers. For instance, Sellers (2000) stated that indeed foreign language reading anxiety varied from case to case. Sellers had conducted her own research where she sought to establish the relationship between language anxiety and reading.

However, unlike Saito et al. (1999) her research focused on the Spanish language. She used the same methods used by other authors. For instance, she applied both the FLCAS and FLRAS in testing the reliability of her research. Her study was limited to 89 English university students. Using the two scales, she discovered a 49% variance that was shared which implied that 51% of the variance had not been distributed between the two scales. The results obtained further indicated that foreign language reading anxiety was indeed different from general foreign language anxiety.

Another researcher, Kuru-Gonen (2009), also sought to find out whether foreign language reading anxiety was different from general foreign language anxiety. Her research also utilized FLCAS and FLRAS in testing the validity of her research. Her study sample, however, consisted of 50-225 first-year students from Turkey who had enrolled in English classes. Unlike the other researchers, she utilized the Pearson Product-Moment correlation coefficient in computing the link between the measures. The researchers found a .45 correlation which implied that a 20% variance was equally distributed between the two measures. It also meant that 80% of the variance had been left unshared.

Wu (2011) sought to investigate the correlation between foreign language anxiety in a general context and foreign language reading anxiety as a specialized skill. The study was descriptive in nature. Even though the two may be related, they differ in a few concepts. The study utilized 91 Taiwanese students drawn from a Taiwanese university. The students were all enrolled in an English class. Wu used FLCAS and FLRAS and also the Pearson Product-Moment correlation coefficient to determine the correlation between the two scales. 54% of the variance was not distributed between the two measures and only 46% was shared. The results obtained further helped to corroborate the research conducted by Saito et al., (1999).

Another study to investigate the existence of reading anxiety was conducted by Bratmeier (2005). It was descriptive in nature and the participants were 92 advanced level students and his findings showed that students at the advanced level of language instruction are almost free of those negative feelings in most cases. However, the results of his study reported that they were less anxious about the reading itself than post-L2 reading tasks. In addition,

when instant communication fear is not a concern, students experience less anxiety about reading. The researcher concluded that students may feel less anxious about reading at an advanced level and that might be due to their exposure to a reading of short vignettes, articles, and magazine.

Reading Strategies

Over the last few years, it has been emphasized that a foreign language learner (FL) can develop his language skills easily through reading (Susser & Robb, 1990). In both, the traditional and contemporary FL teaching, reading forms the center of teaching methodology in a lot of countries for the learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) (Susser & Robb, 1990). Now, the teaching methodology reiterates inculcating reading habits instead of simply teaching texts (Hass & Flower, 1988). Precisely, the reading skills and strategies for comprehending aspects, such as content, textual features, rhetorical elements, and cultural background, are on the focus in teaching procedures (Susser & Robb, 1990).

Based on their usage time, few researchers have categorized the reading strategies into: prior to, amidst or after reading. Another way of categorization is global or local strategies (depending on the emphasized text part) (Young & Oxford, 1997). In addition, there is a difference in cognitive and metacognitive strategies; the reader establishes the text meaning through cognitive strategies. According to Aebersold and Field (1997), during reading, various complex brain processes occur. The first step entails attempting to understand at the sentence level through bottom-up strategies. This involves a word's meaning, grammatical classification, details, etc. The procedure includes a continuous assessment by the reader regarding the fitting in of new information through the application of top-down strategies, e.g. background knowledge and prediction (Barnett, 1988; Carrell, 1989). For instance, through a cognitive strategy, the content can be skimmed to extract the main information but only through a metacognitive strategy, it can be ascertained if the skimming technique was useful.

A lot of research has been conducted on strategy types and impacts on language learning over the past years.

One of these research topics is the reading strategies According to Anderson (1991), the careful and cognitive way of the reader to attain, save and recall new information is referred to as the reading strategies. Therefore, to understand the content, the reader's applied ways are the reading strategies. The survey of reading strategies (SORS), by Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002), has been chosen for this research. The researchers have established three main categories. The first category of the Global Reading Strategies (GLOB) involves intentional approaches of the readers, e.g. pre-checking the flow of the text, to assess their reading. The second category of the Problem-Solving Reading Strategies (PROB) are confined to the problems and are applied when the information cannot be comprehended due to problems like unfamiliar words (hence assuming meaning) and going over the information for better understanding. The Support Reading Strategies (SUP) are the third category that offers voluntary help to the readers with the means of a dictionary, notes and underlining so that they can understand the information better (Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002).

According to Erler and Finkbainer (in Cohen & Macaro 2007), reading strategies are intentional attempts at different steps of the comprehension procedure. Researchers have categorized reading strategies in different ways. The two categories, by Block (1986), are general and local reading strategies. The former entails the strategies of checking the mechanism of reading comprehension, which includes background knowledge application, identification of text structure based on key information, etc. The latter, local strategies, are related to linguistic units of reading, which include word level meaning, sentence structure, and textual units.

The reading strategies have also been studied on the dimensions of cognitive and metacognitive strategic processing (Phakiti, 2003a, 2003b). The automatic thinking process of metacognitive strategies and language processing is applied through cognitive strategies. According to Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002), global, problem solving and support reading strategies are the three main categories. The global strategies are properly organized approaches to undergoing the reading process. The next category of problem-solving is focused on repairing and resolve issues of comprehension.

The support strategies are in place to help a reader in better understanding. This research has used the categorization of reading strategies by Mohktari and Sheorey's (2002).

Studies on Reading Anxiety and Reading Strategies

A study was performed by Lu and Liu (2015) in China, the correlation between FL reading anxiety and use of FL reading strategies was explored. It was descriptive in nature and information was gathered from 1702 male and female undergraduate students by using both the Foreign Language Reading Strategy use Scale (FLRSUS) and Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS). According to the findings, most of the students were confident about their English reading skills and had no feeling of anxiety during their reading practices. Simultaneously, many students used various reading strategies during English reading practice. Male students were found to have less satisfaction in their English reading skills, higher reading anxiety, and used fewer strategies, as compared to their female counterparts.

Lien (2011) conducted a study to investigate EFL reading anxiety and its relation to reading strategies in Taiwan. The study was descriptive in nature. one hundred EFL participant volunteered (22 male and 86 female) in the study. The results indicated that there was a negative correlation between reading strategies used by students and their level of anxiety while reading. The conclusion was that male are more anxious than female and the more the students use reading strategies the less of anxiety he/she experience.

In contrary, Sari (2017) conducted a study to examine the correlation between reading anxiety and reading strategies used by students. The study was descriptive in nature and the participants were 103 English major undergraduate students. Two questionnaires were used in that study to collect data. The first one was the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) designed by Saito, Horwitz, and Garza (1999) to measure reading anxiety and the second the Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS) developed by Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) to indicate the reading strategies used by students. In order to analyze data, the researcher used Pearson product moment correlation and regression analysis.

His finding revealed that $r (.022) < r \text{ table } (.207)$ with significant level 0.842 which was higher than 0.05. For that reason, it showed that there was no significant correlation between reading anxiety and reading strategies use.

Reading strategy use has been revealed to be one of the solutions to help in coping with reading anxiety. Hee-Joo (2015) conducted a study to examine reading strategy use based on reading anxiety and English proficiency. The participants were 86 university students that completed two questionnaires concerned with reading anxiety and reading strategies. The researcher collected data and analyzed them quantitatively via SPSS. The results of his study showed that beginners prefer to use Global Reading Strategies (GLOB), while intermediate and advanced learners tend to use Problem Solving Strategies (PROB). His findings declared that there was no remarkable correlation between reading strategies and reading anxiety. Thus, the two groups were different in performing reading tasks. Students with a high level of anxiety tend to use reading materials and textual clues. When they encounter obstacles they attempt to concentrate on their reading. Whereas low anxiety learners prefer to adjust and attempt to concentrate on understanding the text and when they lost their concentration, they reread.

In conclusion, many researchers have proved the correlation between FLA and language strategies and the crucial role that strategies play in the overall mastering of language. However, the studies conducted in the relationship between EFL reading anxiety and reading strategies in Arab world are limited.

Chapter Two

Methodology

2.1 Introduction:

This chapter introduces an overview of the methodology of the study. It illustrates the procedures followed in the study as well as the research design. Furthermore, it describes the population and sample selection, data collection, the instrument used, and data analysis.

2.2 Research Design

In this study, a descriptive research design was used in order to examine the correlation between EFL learners` reading anxiety and their reading strategies preference. According to Singh (2010), a descriptive study is “concerned with conditions or relationship that exist, opinions that are held, processes that are going on, effects that are evident, or trends that are developing” (p.299). This kind of research offers a ‘snapshot’ of thoughts, feelings, or behaviors at a given place and a given time” (Stangor, 2011, p.14).

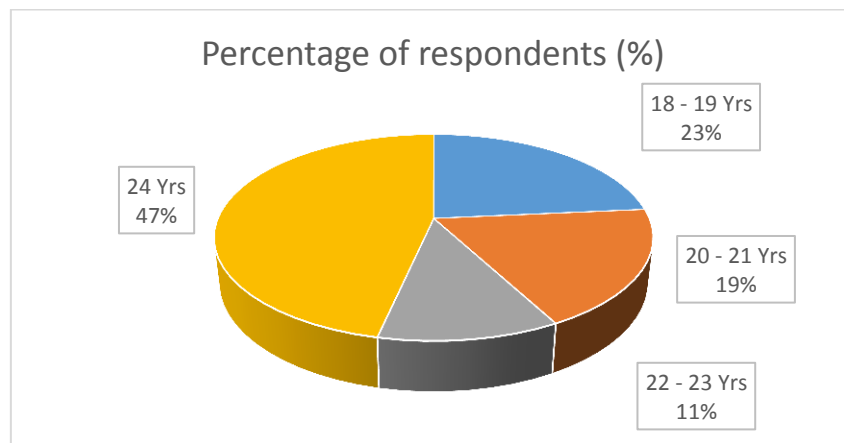
2.3 Population and Sample Selection

This study was implemented to investigate the relationship between reading anxiety and reading strategies EFL students prefer to use during reading practice. The target population consisted of 1425 male EFL students at English language center at Taibah University in Al-Madinah Al-Munawara. The sample was selected purposefully from the science track and they were 200 students who represent (15%) of the population. All participants were asked to fill both questionnaires online.

Age

The respondents were categorized according to age and the distribution is as shown in Figure 1 below. Majority of respondents were 24 years at 47%, followed by 18 – 19 years at 23%, then 20 -21 years at 19% and lastly 22 – 23 years at 11%.

Figure 1: Distribution of Respondent's Age



2.4 Instruments

The researcher adopted two instruments in this study in order to collect data. The first one was the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) developed by Saito et al. (1999) to measure the anxiety level among participants. Reading anxiety was analyzed using 14 items denoted by 'A1' up to 'A14' and 'Anxiety' represented the overall reading anxiety element. This is a five-point rating scale ranging from 5 "Strongly Agree" to 1 "Strongly disagree". The second instrument was The Survey of Reading Strategies Questionnaire (SORS) developed by Mokhtari and Sheory (2002). It is divided into three categories namely, 'Global Reading Strategies' (GRS), 'Support Reading Strategies' (SRS), and 'Problem Solving Reading Strategies' (PSRS).

Global Reading Strategies (GRS) was checked using 10 items denoted by GRS1 up to GRS10 whereas Support Reading Strategies (SRS) and Problem Solving Reading Strategies (PSRS) was tested using 8 items each signified by SRS1 up to SRS8 and PSRS1 up to PSRS 8 respectively. The 26 items are ranging from 1 which means "I never or almost never do this" to 5 which means "I always or almost always do this".

Implementing questionnaires into the data collection process has the benefits of being more accurate, easy to generalize,

and convenience (Marshall& Rossman, 1999). Furthermore, using questionnaires as a mean of collecting data have the privilege of gathering a plethora of data from a large number of participants in an economical way efficiently and in short amount of time (Kratwohl, 1998).

Validity of the Questionnaires.

The validity of both questionnaires has been evaluated by four members of the staff of Curricula and Methods of Teaching English in the Faculty of Education. In light of their recommendations and comments, the researcher adjusted the instruments to their ultimate forms to be distributed to the EFL learners in the Saudi context.

Reliability of the Questionnaires.

The reliability of all items under the four elements that included Anxiety, GRS, SRS, and PSRS was checked by analyzing the Cronbach alpha coefficient using SPSS software on a sample of 15 respondents as shown in Table 1 below. The following section provides the results. The Cronbach alpha coefficient was explained using the following scale. A value greater than or equal to 0.9 was considered 'excellent', greater than or equal to 0.8 was considered 'good', greater than or equal to 0.7 was termed as 'acceptable', greater than or equal to 0.6 was rated as 'questionable', greater than or equal to 0.5 was 'poor', and a value less than 0.5 was considered 'unacceptable'.

Table 1: Number of cases for reliability test

	N	%
Valid	15	100.0
Cases Excluded ^a	0	.0
Total	15	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Anxiety. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the 14 Anxiety items shows 0.868 as shown in Table 2 below indicating the items checked under Anxiety are considered acceptable for estimating Anxiety.

Table 2: Reliability Statistics for Anxiety items

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.868	14

The item to total statistics for the Anxiety items show that deletion of any item would yield similar reliability standing and not increase the reliability of the items as shown in Table 3 below hence all items were used in further analysis of the data.

Table 3: Item to total statistics for Anxiety items

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
A1	35.20	97.886	.646	.855
A2	34.80	90.600	.678	.850
A3	34.93	95.495	.646	.853
A4	34.53	88.838	.748	.845
A5	35.20	90.314	.789	.844
A6	34.73	97.924	.613	.856
A7	34.80	93.457	.726	.849
A8	34.47	93.552	.669	.851
A9	35.47	112.552	-.097	.889
A10	35.53	104.552	.248	.872
A11	35.20	93.029	.637	.853
A12	35.40	103.971	.283	.870
A13	33.93	91.352	.688	.849
A14	35.47	106.410	.135	.879

Global Reading Strategies (GRS). The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the 8 items checked under GRS was found to be 0.745 as shown in Table 4 below. The value indicates the items were an acceptable measure for GRS.

Table 4: Reliability Statistics for GRS items

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.745	10

Similar to the Anxiety items, the GRS items showed that deletion of any item would either reduce or maintain the reliability of the constructs as shown in Table 5 below, hence all items were used in the further analysis.

Table 5: Item to total statistics for GRS items

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
GRS1	27.73	39.638	.554	.703
GRS2	27.33	45.524	.240	.745
GRS3	27.80	44.314	.289	.740
GRS4	28.07	43.638	.343	.733
GRS5	28.27	41.924	.326	.738
GRS6	29.13	41.124	.552	.707
GRS7	28.00	42.429	.419	.723
GRS8	28.40	41.114	.342	.736
GRS9	27.73	38.638	.457	.717
GRS10	27.73	36.781	.567	.696

Support Reading Strategies (SRS). The Cronbach alpha coefficient for SRS was found to be 0.731 as shown in Table 6 below which indicates the items under SRS were acceptable in measuring SRS.

Table 6: Reliability

Statistics for SRS items

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.731	8

The item to total statistics for SRS items as shown in Table 7 below indicates deletion of any item would not improve the reliability of the constructs to higher reliability standing hence all items were used in further analysis.

Table 7: Item to total statistics for SRS items

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
SRS1	21.73	32.067	.476	.693
SRS2	21.80	29.457	.786	.634
SRS3	20.60	28.971	.619	.659
SRS4	21.47	35.981	.380	.714
SRS5	20.87	36.838	.198	.745
SRS6	21.20	31.457	.455	.698
SRS7	21.13	34.552	.352	.718
SRS8	21.07	35.495	.211	.750

Problem Solving Reading Strategies (PSRS). The reliability of PSRS was found to be 0.653 as shown in Table 8 below indicates the items were not a higher reliable measure for PSRS but acceptable.

Table 8: Reliability Statistics for PSRS items

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.653	8

The item to total statistics for PSRS as shown in Table 9 below shows that deletion of any item would not increase the reliability of the items to a higher reliability status hence all the items were used in further analysis.

Table 9: Item to total statistics for PSRS items

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
PSRS1	26.47	25.695	.104	.675
PSRS2	25.80	21.743	.423	.601
PSRS3	25.73	20.210	.461	.588
PSRS4	26.60	24.543	.142	.675
PSRS5	26.67	21.952	.300	.637
PSRS6	25.67	22.667	.441	.602
PSRS7	25.13	24.981	.248	.644
PSRS8	26.07	18.638	.696	.518

2.6 Data Collection

Data were collected in this study by distributing online questionnaires. The process of gathering data encompasses three steps. The first and the most difficult step was obtaining the official permission to implement the instruments of the study even though the target sample were in the same university. The second one was developing an online version of the questionnaires. The third and the last one was visiting English language center at Taibah University in Al-Madinah Al-Munawara to meet the dean of the center to obtain permission to distribute the questionnaire to the participants. In order to answer both questionnaires, students need to spend approximately ten to fifteen minutes to fully answer the questions. Finally, it took seventeen days to collect data from the electronic questionnaires.

2.7 Data Analysis

The section analyzes 204 responses from the questionnaires distributed to students of English Language Center at Taibah University in Al-Madinah Al-Munawara. Descriptive statistics of the data was first checked. After that, correlation tests were conducted among four main elements, that is, ‘Anxiety’, ‘Global Reading Strategies’ (GRS), ‘Support Reading Strategies’ (SRS), and ‘Problem Solving Reading Strategies’ (PSRS) was undertaken to gauge the relationship among them.

As a five-point rating scale and a measured scale were used, the level of mean scores was divided into five ranges. These levels were used for the purpose of getting a definite interpretation of the means (See Tables 13&14).

Table 10: Interpretation of FLARS Mean Scores

Score mean score	interpretation of the mean score
1.00 – 1.80	Strongly Disagree
1.81 – 2.60	Disagree
2.61 – 3.40	Neutral
3.41 – 4.20	Agree
4.21 – 5.00	Strongly Agree

As presented in table (10) the levels of the mean score were divided into five ranges. These ranges were described as follows:

- ❖ If the mean is within 1.00 – 1.80, the interpretation will be **Strongly Disagree**.
- ❖ If the mean is within 1.81 – 2.60, the interpretation will be **Disagree**.
- ❖ If the mean is within 2.61 – 3.40, the interpretation will be **Neutral**.
- ❖ If the mean is within 3.41 – 4.20, the interpretation will be **Agree**.
- ❖ If the mean is within 4.21 – 5.00, the interpretation will be **Strongly Agree**.

Table 11: Interpretation of SORS Mean Scores

Score mean score	interpretation of the mean score
1.00 – 1.79	Never
1.80 – 2.59	Rarely
2.60 – 3.39	Sometimes
3.40 – 4.19	Often
4.20 – 5.00	Always

As presented in table (11) the levels of the mean score were divided into five ranges. These ranges were described as follows:

- ❖ If the mean is within 1.00 – 1.79, the interpretation will be **Never**.
- ❖ If the mean is within 1.80 – 2.59, the interpretation will be **Rarely**.
- ❖ If the mean is within 2.60 – 3.39, the interpretation will be **Sometimes**.
- ❖ If the mean is within 3.40 – 4.19, the interpretation will be **Often**.
- ❖ If the mean is within 4.20 – 5.00, the interpretation will be **Always**.

Chapter Three

Results & Discussion

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the interpretation of the statistical analysis of the questionnaires, discussion of the results, conclusion, recommendations, and suggestions for further studies.

3.2 Descriptive Statistics

Anxiety

In order to answer the first question `What are the reading anxiety levels of the participants?`, the mean and standard deviation of the 14 items that were checked under Anxiety element as shown in Table 12 below. Item A1 showed a mean of 1.99 implying many of the respondents disagree with becoming upset when they cannot understand what they are reading in English. Item A13 showed a mean of 3.41 expressing that many respondents tended to agree with suffering from culture shock. The mean for the rest of the 12 items tended towards disagreement and thus the majority of respondents disagreed with most of the items checked under Anxiety. The mean for the overall Anxiety element was 2.25 indicating disagreement.

Table 12: Descriptive Statistics for FLRAS items

Item Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
A1	1.99	.896	204
A2	2.46	1.116	204
A3	2.33	1.053	204
A4	2.47	1.103	204
A5	2.18	1.026	204
A6	2.28	1.039	204
A7	2.28	.995	204
A8	2.59	1.281	204
A9	2.12	.857	204
A10	2.32	1.154	204
A11	2.58	1.203	204
A12	2.48	1.089	204
A13	3.41	1.201	204
A14	2.42	1.203	204
Anxiety	2.25	.979	204

Global Reading Strategies (GRS)

In order to answer the second question `What are the reading strategies the participants prefer to use?`, descriptive statistics were used for the data analysis. These statistics were mean and standard deviation of GRS, SRS and PSRS. The descriptive statistics for the 10 items analyzed under Global Reading Strategies are shown in Table 2 below. Item GRS6 had a mean of 2.75 indicating many respondents sometimes draw tables, figures, and pictures so as to increase their reading understanding. For the rest of the remaining 9 items under GRS, the mean showed a tendency towards sometimes and often. For instance, for the first three items under GRS, that is GRS1, GRS2, and GRS3, the respondents tended to often have a goal when they read English, to think about what they knew in English, and to take an overall view of the text before reading in English in that order. The overall GRS shows that the respondents often use most of the items gauged under GRS.

Table 13: Descriptive Statistics for GRS items

Item Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
GRS1	3.72	1.109	204
GRS2	3.91	1.025	204
GRS3	3.53	1.249	204
GRS4	3.29	1.157	204
GRS5	3.26	1.290	204
GRS6	2.75	1.364	204
GRS7	3.46	1.217	204
GRS8	3.49	1.234	204
GRS9	3.76	1.117	204
GRS10	3.75	1.145	204
GRS	3.65	1.124	204

Support Reading Strategies (SRS)

The SRS was examined using 8 items and the descriptive statistics is shown in Table 14 below.

Table 14: Descriptive Statistics for SRS items

Item Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
SRS1	2.98	1.263	204
SRS2	2.75	1.203	204
SRS3	3.53	1.225	204
SRS4	3.19	1.301	204
SRS5	3.57	1.199	204
SRS6	3.46	1.196	204
SRS7	3.77	1.175	204
SRS8	3.69	1.139	204
SRS	3.44	1.236	204

The means of three items, SRS1, SRS2 and SRS4 showed that students tend sometimes towards using them indicating the respondents take note, read aloud and use reference material less frequent during reading class whilst the rest of the 5 items showed a tendency often towards using them indicating that they were more favorable than SRS1, SRS2, and SRS4. The mean for the overall SRS elements was 3.44 and thus the respondents reflected a tendency often towards using SRS.

Problem Solving Reading Strategies (PSRS)

PSRS was analyzed using 8 items and the descriptive statistics are shown in Table 15 below.

Table 15: Descriptive Statistics for PSRS items

Item Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
PSRS1	3.52	1.071	204
PSRS2	3.85	1.082	204
PSRS3	3.76	1.120	204
PSRS4	3.37	1.235	204
PSRS5	3.26	1.231	204
PSRS6	3.81	1.082	204
PSRS7	3.97	1.087	204
PSRS8	3.80	1.080	204
PSRS	3.88	1.036	204

The mean for all items under PSRS showed that students tend to use them often. However, the means of PSRS4 and PSRS5 indicate that students sometimes pay closer attention to difficult text and stop occasionally to think about what they are reading. In contrast, the means of the rest of the 6 items showed that they are often used by the students. The mean for the overall PSRS elements was 3.88 and thus the respondents reflected a tendency often towards use PSRS.

3.3 Correlation Tests

In order to answer the third question *What is the nature of the correlation between reading anxiety and the reading strategies preference among Saudi EFL students?*, Pearson's correlation test was applied in the study to gauge the strength and direction of the three linear relationships between Anxiety and GRS, Anxiety and SRS, and Anxiety and PSRS. Pearson's correlation coefficient ranges between -1 and +1 where -1 means "a perfect negative linear relationship" and +1 indicates "a perfect positive linear relationship". When the value is at 0.7, it shows a strong relationship, 0.5 indicates moderate and 0.3 indicates a weak relationship.

Pearson's correlation tests. The overall values for Anxiety, GRS, SRS, and PSRS were used in this section to gauge the strength and direction of each of the relationships and Table 24 below provides the results.

Table 24: Correlations between the four main elements

	Anxiety	GRS	SRS	PSRS
Anxiety Pearson Correlation	1	-.014	-.176*	.112
Anxiety Sig. (2-tailed)		.839	.012	.110
Anxiety N	204	204	204	204
GRS Pearson Correlation	-.014	1	.398**	.504**
GRS Sig. (2-tailed)	.839		.000	.000
GRS N	204	204	204	204
SRS Pearson Correlation	-.176*	.398**	1	.361**
SRS Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	.000		.000
SRS N	204	204	204	204
PSRS Pearson Correlation	.112	.504**	.361**	1
PSRS Sig. (2-tailed)	.110	.000	.000	
PSRS N	204	204	204	204

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

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

For Anxiety, 11 items instead of the 14 items were used to compute the overall values and for GRS, SRS, and PSRS, all the items in respective variables were used to compute the overall value.

The correlation between Anxiety and the three reading strategies indicates a weak negative linear relationship between Anxiety and both GRS and SRS whereas between Anxiety and PSRS, a weak positive linear relationship is observed. The relationship between Anxiety and both GRS and PSRS is not significant while that between Anxiety and SRS is significant. The relationship among the three reading strategies GPS, SRS, and PSRS are all significant.

3.5 Discussion

The respondents tended to disagree with all the items checked under anxiety which might be due to the development of the instructional practices in the English Language Center. These practices help students to be more confident about their reading performance. In addition, they tended to often use all the three reading strategies but the extent of PSRS was the highest, followed by GRS then lastly SRS. The relation between reading strategies and anxiety has been studied by numerous scholars using different dimensions and the results of these findings have been contradictory. Whereas other scholars claim that there is a significant correlation between anxiety and reading strategies for foreign language students while others finding no relationships.

The findings of this study are consistent with the findings of Pengajaran and Sari (2017) they analyzed the correlation between reading anxiety and reading strategies used by EFL teachers and found no statistical relationship between the two variables. The study found weak relationships between reading anxiety and reading strategies. Not all reading strategies showed a statistical linear relationship, only SRS and PSRS. Anxiety was observed to be negatively related to SRS while positively related to PSRS implying an increase in using SRS reduces the level of anxiety and vice versa. Whereas an increase in the use of PSRS also increases anxiety but the impact of both strategies on anxiety is marginal. Hence the preferred reading strategy, PSRS, marginally increases anxiety and since anxiety has been noted to be one of the major barriers for students learning foreign languages then managing anxiety is a major concern.

Studies have indicated that teachers should concentrate on managing the levels of anxiety and progress to learn English so that students can become self-directed learners (Chuang, 2014). Zhao, Guo, and Dynia (2013) explored the foreign language reading anxiety level for English speaking students learning Chinese as a foreign language and found that anxiety was the main problem facing the learners. In contrary, this study found that Saudi EFL at the English Language Center experience low anxiety and might be due to the frequent exposure to English when using social media applications or play games.

The findings of this study are partly similar to a study by Zheng and Cheng (2018) they analyzed how anxiety influence language performance, the majority of students were found not to feel anxious in other university classroom or testing environs but they showed anxiety during English speaking skills class.

Owens, Stevenson, Hadwin, and Norgate (2012) indicated that anxiety is negatively related to academic performance. Other studies have shown that high anxiety has been linked to low performance and teachers have been advised to reduce the levels of anxiety to improve the performance of students (Santoso & Sudirman, N.d). Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) noted that effective language readers pose specific reading strategies.

The linkage between reading anxiety and reading strategies is complex. Saito, Garza, and Horwitz (2002) analyzed foreign language reading anxiety and found that the student's reading anxiety is heightened by their view of the effort in reading the foreign language and the general anxiety caused by learning a new language. Lim (2007) noted that the Attribution theory shows that students can reduce anxiety by feeling in control of the academic duties. Owen et al. (2012) indicated PSRS, deliberating test processes with students, and coaching study and test-taking skills are techniques that can assist students to feel more in control of the academic duties. Though this study found differing views on PSRS. Magogwe (2013) in his study found that high language reading proficiency is connected to high use of metacognitive strategies. Where students who performed well was mainly attributed to their organization, follow up of their reading targets and going the extra mile of doing more than what was provided in class.

Bektas-Cetinkaya (2011) analyzed foreign language reading anxiety and found that unaccustomed vocabulary or contexts prompt reading anxiety. To be able to effectively control anxiety, teachers and parents need to mentor the students on the skills to make them feel in control so as the students can be able to manage their anxiety levels accordingly (Dobson, 2012). Since reading anxiety exists in mostly foreign language learning, an advanced understanding of language learning anxiety will aid teachers and students to maximize language learning and coaching practices.

3.6 Conclusion

This study aims to investigate the relationship between reading anxiety and reading strategies preference. The participants were 204 EFL students at English Language Center in Taibah University and the study found that the respondents were low anxious and they used all the three reading strategies but preferred PSRS over the GRS and SRS. The relationship between reading anxiety and reading strategies has been explored by numerous scholars. Conflicting results were noted, where some find a relationship and others find no relationship. The study found a weak relationship between anxiety and both SRS and PSRS whereas no statistically important relationship was found between anxiety and GRS. Since the relationship between Anxiety and SRS was negative, the study recommends an increase in SRS as a way to reduce reading anxiety or reduction in PSRS as a way to reduce reading anxiety. Even though some relationship was established between anxiety, SRS, and PSRS, the impact is marginal implying there are other elements that affect reading anxiety more than the reading strategies and these should be explored in order to be able to manage reading anxiety more effectively.

3.7 Recommendations

Various reasons have been identified to influence anxiety such as reading new vocabulary, the view of the effort in reading the foreign language, and the general anxiety caused by learning a new language, among many others. Since these reasons involve both the personal and environmental setting of a student, this study recommends that resolving this dilemma can be managed by integrating the efforts of teachers, parents, and students. The teaching methodology and setting for foreign languages study could be designed such that it does not influence anxiety or work towards reducing any anxiety that may develop during the progress of learning. The parents or guardians could work with their children to ensure the children are able to control their anxiety levels in different situations not only in the classroom by building confidence or making them feeling control.

3.8 Suggestions for Further Studies

To be able to achieve the recommendation, further studies that look at how teachers could reduce the students' anxiety levels could be explored. For instance, studies could focus on how teachers could build student confidence so as to reduce anxiety and make the student feel in control. Other studies could look at how parents or guardians would develop their children to become resistant to any anxiety stimuli.

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