Interrelationship among Foreign Language Reading Anxiety, Reading Proficiency and Text Feature Awareness in the University Context

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Abstract

This paper reports the results of a study designed to investigate the interrelationship of Foreign Language Reading Anxiety (FLRA), Reading Proficiency (RP) and Text Feature Awareness (TFA). The aim was to focus on how foreign language reading anxiety and text feature awareness are related and how, in turn, they affect students reading proficiency. That is, it south to determine how these three constructs correlate with each other.

This study surveyed and analyzed 74 students from Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman. The results indicated that there is no significant relationship between RP and RA, positive significant relationship between RP and TFA and negative significant relationship between TFA and RA.

Also results revealed that there is no significant difference between foreign language reading anxiety, reading proficiency and text feature awareness scores of male and female students, as a result; there is no relationship between gender and these three constructs.

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Key terms: Foreign Language Reading Anxiety, Reading Proficiency, Text Feature Awareness

Introduction

While learners may read a text either in public or privacy, for those who are worried about reciting in front of their peers there exists an important psychological phenomenon in this regard. Reading in public is one of the factors creating anxiety in dealing with the foreign language. Furthermore, reading privately in the foreign language for test may even give the learner a new sense of anxiety. Hence, a text with unfamiliar features may enhance anxiety and so affect the process and product of reading significantly. With these assumptions in mind, one can easily feel the strong need for further research in this area.

According to Alderson (2005), the factors affecting reading comprehension can be classified into two general categories:

1. Reader variables (internal to the reader)
2. Text variables (external to the reader)

The first category of variables which include factors such as reader's background knowledge, reader's skills or abilities, degree of anxiety, motivation and/or attitude are internal to readers. The second category of variables which include factors such as text content, text type or genre, text organization, text typographical features, linguistic variables, text length and text readability are internal to texts rather than to readers (Alderson, 2005).

These categories are depicted in the following diagrams. From the various subcategories of the first group, reader's anxiety was selected to be correlated with the second group variables as a whole and then for both to be correlated with language (reading) proficiency.

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┌─────────────────────────┐
│   Factors Affecting      │
│   Reading Comprehension  │
└─────────────────────────┘
         │
    ┌────┴────┐
┌──────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐
│  Text variables  │  │  Reader variables│
│ (external to the │  │ (internal to the │
│     reader)      │  │     reader)      │
└──────────────────┘  └──────────────────┘
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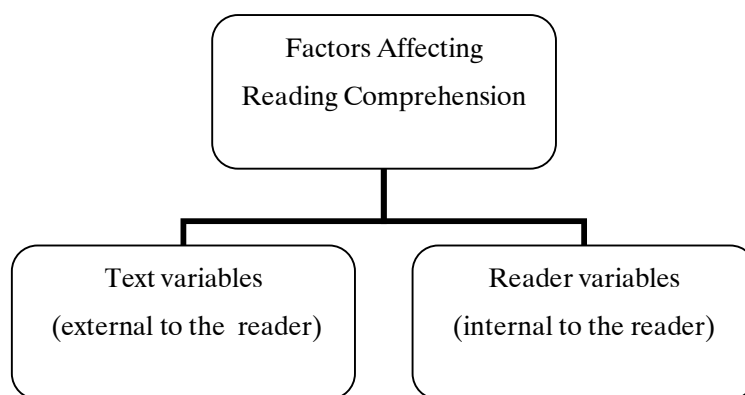
Figure 1. A schematic representation of factors affecting reading comprehension (designed based on Alderson's taxonomy (2005) of factors affecting reading comprehension)
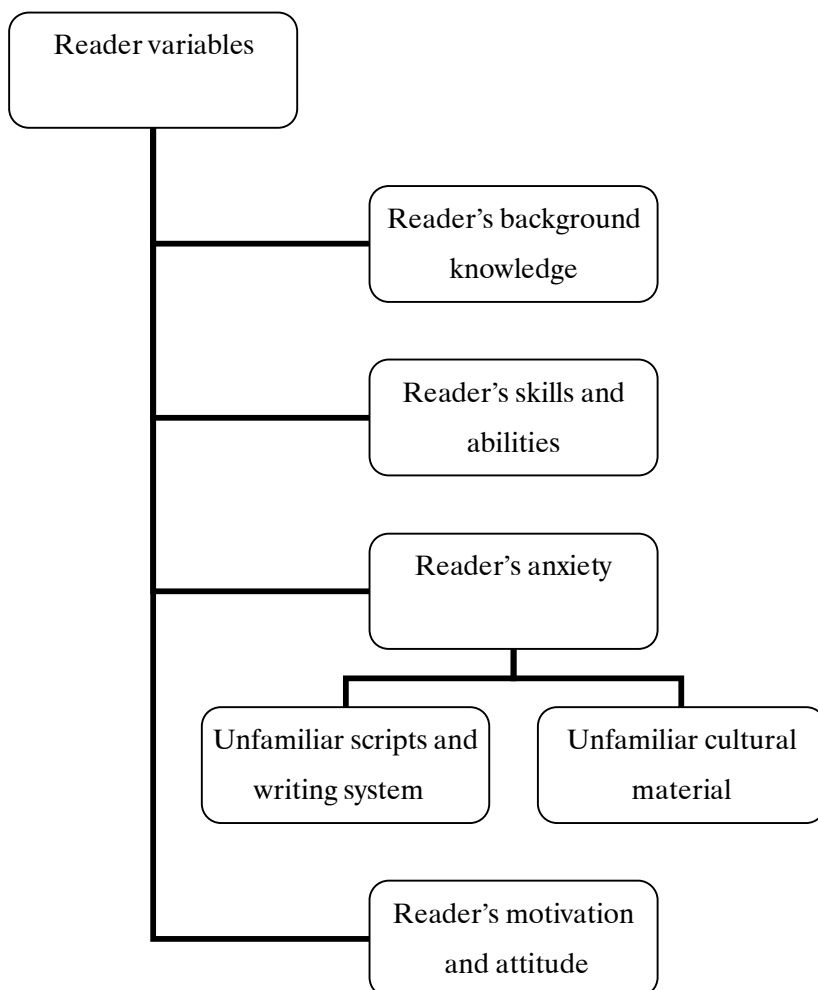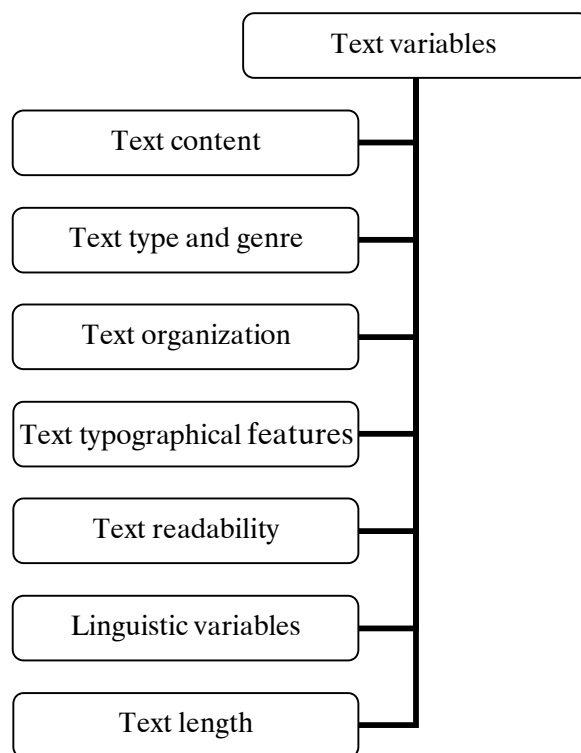
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Figure 2. A schematic representation of factors affecting reading comprehension (designed based on Alderson's taxonomy (2005) of factors affecting reading comprehension and Saito et al., 1999)

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                        ┌─────────────────────┐
                        │   Text variables    │
                        └─────────────────────┘
                                    │
        ┌─────────────────────┐     │
        │    Text content     │─────┤
        └─────────────────────┘     │
        ┌─────────────────────┐     │
        │  Text type and genre│─────┤
        └─────────────────────┘     │
        ┌─────────────────────┐     │
        │  Text organization  │─────┤
        └─────────────────────┘     │
   ┌──────────────────────────┐     │
   │Text typographical features│────┤
   └──────────────────────────┘     │
        ┌─────────────────────┐     │
        │  Text readability   │─────┤
        └─────────────────────┘     │
        ┌─────────────────────┐     │
        │ Linguistic variables│─────┤
        └─────────────────────┘     │
        ┌─────────────────────┐     │
        │    Text length      │─────┘
        └─────────────────────┘
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Figure 3. A schematic representation of factors affecting reading comprehension (designed based on Alderson's taxonomy (2005) of factors affecting reading comprehension)

Foreign Language Reading Anxiety

Normally, reading is done privately with the opportunity for consideration and review. It is considered an individual act in that the success of reading does not depend on a dynamic construction of meaning by two or more speakers. In fact, it is maintained that readers first decode the symbols into sounds, associate the sounds with words and then attempt to process the

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meaning of the text. Doing this, there is a chance of becoming anxious when the reader can decipher the words of a foreign language text but not its sense, because of incomplete knowledge of cultural material underlying the text (Saito et al., 1999). Therefore, the following two aspects of FL reading would seem to have great potential for evoking anxiety:

1. Unfamiliar scripts and writing systems
2. Unfamiliar cultural materials

With regard to unfamiliar writing systems, it seems that the less the learner can depend on the reliability of a specific system of sound-symbol correspondence, the more anxiety he would be expected to experience in the process of reading.

Unfamiliar cultural concepts also, would seem to have an important influence on reading process that is less immediate than that of unfamiliar scripts and writing systems. Furthermore, the text itself contains a number of factors that may affect comprehension. These are called text features.

Text Features

As mentioned above, a text contains many different factors. Rationally, the degree to which the learner is aware of or may be sensitive to such factors (Mehrpoor, 2004) is an important variable and is, therefore, taken into consideration here.

According to Alderson (2005), abstract texts will be harder to understand than texts describing real objects, events or activities, and texts on arcane topics are maintained to be harder than familiar ones. So, a text

should be concrete, imaginable and interesting and located in familiar settings on everyday topics to be readable. The quality of information in a text affects understanding and recall, as does the density of propositions.

Text type or genre may also affect reading comprehension. The actual content of the text is not always the main reason of difficulty in understanding, but the way the text is written i.e., its style or the features give rise to a number of classifications of the text type. Expository texts, for example, are believed to be harder to comprehend than narrative texts (Alderson, 2005).

According to Swales (1990), one thing that distinguishes a text type from another is the way the text is organized. Text organization that is, how the paragraphs relate to each other, how the relationships between ideas are signaled or not signaled has been the focus of study for a long time. Two other text variables which might affect the reading comprehension processes are coherence and cohesion.

Difficult vocabulary and unfamiliar topic also reduce comprehension, but texts with difficult vocabulary do not become easier if more familiar topics are used, and vice versa. Vocabulary difficulty, especially the meanings of idiomatic expressions, makes a text hard to read for second language readers (Williams and Dallas, 1984).

Also, different methods of text simplification have been studied for their effects on readers and textual understanding. As a result, many researchers hold that making a text syntactically less complex may have the effect of distorting the message, or increasing difficulty in other text features (Alderson, 2005).

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Another factor which can contribute to the level of difficulty of a passage is its length. In fact, it is an intuitive belief that the longer a passage, the more difficult it will be. However, this is believed to be dependent on the reader: "For some, longer texts will appear more difficult. For others, shorter texts present more difficulties simply because they do not offer the extended contextual support and repetition which longer texts do" (Duff and Maley, 1991, p.7).

Recent research has shown that perceptual features influence how rapidly readers can recognize print and, thus, process meaning. Researchers remain interested in what features of print, fonts and layout might be important in causing reading ease or difficulty (Alderson, 2005).

In brief, the present study is mainly concerned with awareness of such text features and reading anxiety, although some findings regarding other forms of FL anxiety may, as well, be generalized if significant. In essence, this study deals with certain aspects of reading texts and their possible relationship with the arousal of reading anxiety and reading proficiency in language learners in the university context.

Statement of the Problem

It is somewhat surprising that little firm knowledge is available about the relationship among reading anxiety, reading proficiency and awareness of the text features. What has already been mentioned shows that we are faced with a number of assumptions, claims and hypotheses. However, it seems pointless to attempt to establish a confirming conclusion without conducting

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an empirical investigation. In the light of these theoretical statements, what is at issue is that this area of research merits further examination.

Reading comprehension skill is of great importance for foreign language learners, and Persian learners of English as a foreign language like all other FL readers, encounter many problems while reading an English passage. As mentioned above, the problems could either be internal to the reader or to the text. Yet, for the vast variety of the problems, only a number of them i.e. those resulting from the interrelationship of RA, TFA and RP are dealt with here in this study.

Objectives of the Study

To study the issue of how FL reading anxiety and text feature awareness are related, and in turn, how each might affect students' reading proficiency in English courses, the following research questions were explored:

Research Questions

1. Is there any significance relationship between reading anxiety and reading proficiency of English major university students?
2. Is there any significance relationship between text feature awareness and reading proficiency of English major university students?
3. Is there any significance relationship between reading anxiety and the text feature awareness of English major university students?

4. Is there any significance difference between reading proficiency of male and female respondents?

5. Is there any significance difference between reading anxiety of male and female respondents?

6. Is there any significance difference between awareness of text features of male and female respondents?

Significance of the Study

The results of this study could have implications for teaching, testing and material development. Teachers will be more aware of those aspects of reading comprehension processes which are more important to Persian learners of English as a foreign language. Such being the case, they will focus their attention on the reader and text variables factors while teaching reading comprehension and make their students aware of such features.

It is also hoped that through the findings of this study, teachers pay more attention to the psychological needs of students during the process of language learning and provide appropriate pedagogical and curricular programs to create stress-free learning environment.

Literature Review

Research on Text Feature Awareness

Golkar (1996) conducted a study to investigate the impact of implicit logical connectives on Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension and their

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interaction with proficiency level of the students. 100 students were chosen as participants and they were divided into to two homogeneous groups based on their scores on a TOEFL test: a control group and an experimental group. The control group took a version of a reading test with explicit connectives and the experimental group took another version of the same test containing implicit connectives. The results obtained from the analysis of the data revealed a statistically significant difference between the reading comprehension of the two groups showing that implicit logical connectives lowered the learners' reading comprehension. However, no significant interaction was found between explicit/implicit connectives and participants' level of proficiency. No relation was found between these variables and their sex either.

Zare'in Dolab (1997, cited in Mehrpoor, 2004) investigated how EFL learners comprehend expository texts and to what extent individual differences in language proficiency and content familiarity influence their comprehension. Participants were 192 medical students who read content familiar, semi- familiar and unfamiliar texts, and wrote recall and translation. The recall was unplanned and was written in students' mother tongue immediately after the texts. The finding indicated that certain strategies were short-circuited as a function of the students' language proficiency and content familiarity with the content of the texts.

In another study undertaken by Mehrpoor and Riazi (2004), the impact of passage length on reading comprehension was explored. Three reading comprehension passages accompanied by 30 reading comprehension items were reduced to two thirds of their original lengths. This shortened version

of the test along with the original version was randomly administered to 100 male and female Iranian subjects. The subjects were all either advanced English majors or advanced EFL learners (50 Ss each). Although the participants performed marginally better on the shortened version of the test, a two-way analysis of variance (2-way ANOVA) revealed that the length of the test did not have any statistically significant effect on their performance on the two versions of the test. No interaction between the length of the test and the subjects being English majors or EFL learners was found. Further analysis of the data also indicated that even the variable sex did not have any statistically significant impact on the performance of the subjects on the two versions of the test.

Mehrpoor (2004) conducted another study to identify the factors which would affect reading comprehension performance of Iranian EFL learners.

The participants of the study were 131 male and female junior and senior English major university students. Two variables which were chosen were text feature awareness and reading proficiency. The results indicated that the awareness of text features predicts foreign language proficiency but the direction of the relationship is negative though very low.

Reynold and Walker (2004) in their paper described two tests designed to find out whether children would be helped in their reading by the use of word and letter spacing that was looser or tighter than commonly used default values. In each test, 24 six-year old children were asked to read aloud in classroom; the realistic, high quality test material was set using a range of either/or spacing values. The results suggested that children in test groups did not benefit significantly from spacing that was substantially

looser or tighter than our default values, and that they noticed differences in letter spacing more easily than differences in word spacing.

Shahcheraghi (2007) set out a study to serve two purposes relative to the function of cohesive devices in reading comprehension; (1) to investigate the role of cohesive devices in reading comprehension and (2) to determine the relation between language proficiency level and the recognition of these devices in reading comprehension. To investigate the above questions, a two phase experiment was designed. In the first phase, the students were divided into two homogeneous groups one of which was considered the control group and the other one the experimental group. The statistical analysis of subjects' scores in the two groups indicated that the experimental group who got an awareness of cohesive devices did much better than the control group, showing that knowledge of cohesive devices has a positive effect on reading comprehension. In the second phase of the study, the same homogeneity test was administered on another group of students. The bottom 40 of the test scorers were considered as low proficient group and the top 40 percent as the High proficient (advanced) group. After selecting the two groups, the same reading comprehension test was administered on both groups. The results indicated a high degree of correlation between subjects' scores in the test of grammar and their scores in the test of reading comprehension. The findings suggested that a mastery of grammatical structures including cohesive devices can lead to an improvement in reading, and that language proficiency level is in direct relationship to the recognition of these devices in reading comprehension.

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Research on Foreign Language Reading Anxiety

With participants from introductory courses of French, Russian and Japanese et al., (1999) found that levels of reading anxiety vary by target language, and seem to be related to writing systems.

Additionally, as Saito et al. state, "… anxiety might appear at some point after the reading was actually accomplished or when the student encountered the teacher's or other students' interpretations of the text" (p.215).

Sellers (2000) in his study explored the relationship between language anxiety and reading in Spanish. The issues were (1) the effect of language anxiety on reading comprehension and recall of university-level language students and (2) the effect of language anxiety on the reading process itself.

Foreign language reading anxiety scale and foreign language classroom anxiety scale were used as instruments. The results indicated that the more highly anxious students tended to recall less passage content than did those participants who claimed to experience minimal anxiety. Furthermore, students with higher levels of overall foreign language learning anxiety reported higher levels of reading anxiety. In a close look at anxiety ratings, findings showed that more students indicated feeling somewhat anxious about L2 reading than any other rating. Sellers asked students to read a magazine article and found a negative relationship between reading anxiety and L2 reading comprehension.

The research of Matsuda and Gobel (2004) was also concerned with possible relationships between general foreign language classroom anxiety

(FLCA), foreign language reading anxiety (FLRA), gender, extended overseas experience, and classroom performance. Versions of previously published measurement scales (the FLCAS and the FLRAS) were administered to three different groups in nine intact first semester English classes (N=252) at a Japanese university. The results of the analysis suggest that the factor related to self-confidence in speaking English seemed to be significantly affected by overseas experience. Following this, the first-year student subgroup data were analyzed for possible predictors of success in required English classes. It was demonstrated that self-confidence in speaking English, gender and proficiency played an important role in classroom performance of first year students.

In his study, Brantmeier (2005) examined the existence of: (1) anxiety about L2 reading as a separate phenomenon from other language skills, (2) anxiety about performance variables involved after L2 reading: oral and written tasks, and (3) a relationship between reading anxiety and reading comprehension. Participants were 92 university students enrolled in an advanced level Spanish grammar and composition course. The results indicated that at the advanced level of language instruction, the learners generally do not feel anxious about reading in a second language. Students reported being most anxious about speaking, then writing, and equally anxious (low) about listening and reading. Finally, the learners were more anxious about post-L2 reading tasks (both oral and written) than the act of reading itself. In addition, they were more anxious about post-oral than post-written tasks. Students feel less anxious about reading when immediate communication apprehension is not a concern. No positive or negative

correlations were found among anxiety factors and both oral and written comprehension tasks.

Barghchi (2006) in his study explored the possible relationship between reading anxiety and reading proficiency, and also between reading anxiety and language learners' use of reading strategies. The foreign language reading anxiety questionnaire was administered to two groups of pre-intermediate and upper-intermediate Iranian learners of English, studying at private language school, in order to discover the correlation between the 2 variables. Also, the think-aloud procedures were employed to examine the possible link between reading anxiety and reading strategy use. The results of the analysis suggest that there is no significant relationship between reading anxiety and ability in reading skill and reading anxiety seems to affect learners' reading style and preference for certain types of strategies.

Methodology

Participants

The sample comprised 74 students enrolled in the course of reading comprehension III. This number of participants represented approximately 95% of fall 2007 semester students enrolled in reading comprehension III at Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman. Of all respondents, 45 were female and 29 male. With respect to the year of the study, all respondents were sophomore. The reason why this type of students were chosen as participants was that they had already taken a number of reading

comprehension courses and had a better understanding of this skill and the factors which might affect their reading comprehension performance.

Instruments

Three different instruments were used in this study. The first was Academic Reading Paper of IELTS (University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate) (UCLES, 2006). The second one was foreign language reading anxiety scale (FLRAS) developed by Saito, *et al*, in 1999 and the third one was text feature awareness questionnaire (TFAQ) developed by Mehrpoor in 2004. FLRAS and TFAQ have been shown to be reliable and valid, through a pilot study, with alpha coefficient of 0.88 and 0.86, respectively.

Data Collection

FLRAS was translated into participants' mother tongue, Persian. This measure was taken in order to eliminate the possible effect of difficulty with reading comprehension on the responses made by subjects, and to make sure that all the subjects in different levels of proficiency would clearly understand every question and give answers that truly indicate their feelings and attitudes. Needless to say that such a measure was not necessary or even desirable in the case of some proficient students, since their language proficiency was observably high enough not to cause any such problem. It should be noted that all experiments were done toward the end of the term, as a mid term exam, when the students had covered a large part of the

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course material and the majority of them were naturally supposed to have reached the standard expected of them in that part of the course.

Academic Reading Paper of IELTS test was administered to the participants of the study. FLRAS was attached to the TFAQ. The subjects were instructed to do the reading test within the time limit and to fill the questionnaires next. The time set for Academic Reading Paper of IELTS was 60 minutes which is the standard amount of time available to IELTS test takers in an authentic test. Also, the administration of two questionnaires took approximately 25 minutes. The participants' score on this test were used as an indicator of their level of reading proficiency.

Data Analysis

After collecting the data, the data matrix was prepared. As a result, the EFL learners reading anxiety and text feature awareness could be measured.

Correlational analysis was used to measure the degree of relationship between TFA and FLRAS and RP, applying simple Pearson product moment correlation. This was to determine the relationship between the three variables irrespective of gender. Furthermore, independent t-test was run to determine the significance of the difference in the performance of males and females. A level of 0.05 was used as a criterion of significance. To analyze the data, the SPSS software was utilized which is common in social sciences.

Gender and the Affective Factors

In order to see whether the variable gender had any impact on the performance of the subjects on the RP, FLRAS and TFAQ independent t-test was used. The results from the analysis are displayed in tables below.

Table 1. Independent t-test to identify the difference between reading proficiency scores of male and female respondents

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig	p
Female	45	25	5.03	1.3	72	.180	NS
Male	29	26.7	5.8				

Table 2. Independent t-test to identify the difference between text feature awareness scores of male and female respondents

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig	p
Female	45	3.8	0.7	0.9	72	.329	NS
Male	29	3.9	0.8				

Table 3. Independent t-test to identify the difference between reading anxiety scores of male and female respondents

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig	p
Female	45	2.8	0.5	0.04	72	.962	NS
Male	29	2.8	0.7				

The analysis of the variance reveals that there is no significant difference between reading proficiency scores of male and female respondents with regard to the affective factors under the study. In other

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words, there is no meaningful difference in the mean scores of both groups of respondents (M=25 for females, M=26.7, for males).

Results

The data of the present study were subjected to a number of statistical analyses including (1) descriptive statistics (2) independent t-test (3) Pearson product moment correlation. The results of these analyses are presented under appropriate headings in the following subsections.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of the participants of the study

Gender

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	45	60.8	60.8	60.8
Male	29	39.2	39.2	100.0
Total	74	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 shows that from among all participants, 45 were female and 29 male. The total number of the participants was 74.

The obtained data were subjected to descriptive statistics utilizing the mean score and standard deviation for reading proficiency, reading anxiety and text feature awareness.

Table 5. Summary of the descriptive statistics of the participants' performance on RP test

Reading Proficiency

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Semi-proficient	56	75.0	78.7
Proficient	18	24.3	100.0
Total	74	100.0	

Table 5 summarizes the descriptive statistics of the participants' performance on reading tests. Based on IELTS categorization students whose scores are 0-11 are non-proficient students those whose scores are 12-29 are semi-proficient and those whose scores are 30-40 are proficient.

As it is shown above, 56 students are semi-proficient, and 18 students are proficient.

To determine the degree of interrelationship of foreign language reading anxiety, reading proficiency and text feature awareness, the Pearson product correlation was utilized. The results are revealed in the following Table.

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Table 6. Pearson Correlation test to identify the relationship between
FLRAS, RP and TFAQ scores of all respondents

Correlations

		Reading Proficiency	Reading Anxiety	Text Feature Awareness Questionnaire
Reading Proficiency	Pearson Correlation	1	-.165	.270*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.159	.019
	N	74	74	74
Reading Anxiety	Pearson Correlation	-.165	1	-.355**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.159	.	.002
	N	74	74	74
Text Feature Awareness	Pearson Correlation	.270*	-.355**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.019	.002	.
	N	74	74	74

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

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

For the relationship between reading proficiency and reading anxiety Table 6 indicate, the correlation coefficient of the paired data is -0.16, and level of significance is 0.159 [r=-0.165, p=0.159]. As can be seen, r-value is negative and it is not significant (*Note: correlation is significant if p<0.05).*

This Table, also, shows the relationship between reading proficiency and text feature awareness. The correlation coefficient of these two sets of data is 0.27 and the p-value is 0.019 [r=0.27, p=0.019]. As it is truly inferred, the r-value is significant and positive (p<0.05).

The relationship between text feature awareness and reading anxiety is demonstrated in the same table. Here, the correlation coefficient of the pair

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data is -0.35 and the level of significance is 0.002 [r= -0.35, p=0.002]. As can be seen, the r-value is a significant negative one (p<0.05). This is reasonable in that the more one is aware of the characteristics of the skill to be developed (in this case the features of the text that should be comprehended), the easier one is likely to handle it.

Discussion

As the above calculations indicate, no significant correlation exists between scores in IELTS test and FLRAS. In other words, reading anxiety and reading proficiency do not seem to be related in a meaningful way. Certain studies in the past have shown a negative relationship between FL anxiety and general language proficiency. This study attempted to explore the relationship between particular types of FL anxiety that is, reading anxiety and distinct domain of language proficiency that is reading proficiency.

Therefore, the absence of significant correlation between the two variables of this study may not be very surprising. However, it is likely that administrating the FLRAS to a larger population of language learners may produce a different result. Also, because of the possibility of reading in private, the anxious readers could have practiced in private and so made up for their shortcomings in this regard. Furthermore, one may expect the rather proficient readers to be less anxious.

Broadly speaking, the findings of the present study is in direct line with Barghchi (2006) and Brantmeier (2005) which indicated that there was no significant relationship between reading anxiety and ability in reading skill.

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These findings are not in agreement with Sellers (2000) who found a negative relationship between reading anxiety and L2 reading comprehension.

There is a positive significant relationship between RP and TFA scores of all respondents. The higher RP scores are, the higher TFA scores would be and vice versa.

There are few studies conducted on the relationship between reading proficiency and text feature awareness (Golkar, 1996). The study performed by Golkar (1996) revealed no relationship between the two variables, and those conducted by other researchers showed some positive relationship between these two variables. However, the result of the study conducted by Mehrpoor (2004) indicated that the direction of the relationship was negative, though very low.

The total correlation between reading proficiency and reading anxiety was found to be 0.35 irrespective of gender. There is a significant negative relationship between RA and TFA scores of all respondents. The higher RA scores are, the lower TFA scores would be and vice versa.

Although, a number of previous studies (e.g. Kitano, 2001) found a significant relationship between gender and anxiety, the independent t-test in this study reveals that there is no significant difference between reading anxiety scores of male and female respondents. The comparison between the pattern of results in this study and the previous one (Kitano, 2001) is quite interesting. In the previous study, the researchers asserted that anxiety level of male students is higher as they perceived themselves less competent.

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Limitations

Although the findings reported in the present study are theoretically relevant, there exist certain limitations that must be kept in mind with regard to the interpretations.

The participants in the present study were from only one university and a small sample size was available. So, they were not randomly selected.

Furthermore, no data were gathered on motivation, aptitude, previous language learning instruction, and cultural aspects. The present sample comprised two classes, with different instructors, teaching method, and text books. These variations could render the results of the present study less applicable to Persian students as a class.

Also, it was difficult to measure affective variables under most favorable circumstances. General anxiety to performance situation of the subjects was not measured, thus it is possible that some of them may have had anxious personalities.

The results obtained from the instruments employed in this study may be less reliable because of untruthful or careless responses. The respondents' personal interpretations of items could lead in inaccurate responses. These instruments were administered to the students enrolled in reading comprehension III; different results might have been obtained with non-proficient students.

The FLRAS was originally designed in English, in this study the FLRAS was translated into Persian; therefore, although the FLRAS exhibited high internal consistency, the results must be interpreted with caution.

Conclusion

This paper has presented some findings of the relationships between foreign language reading anxiety, reading proficiency and text feature awareness.

These aspects were explored through administrating a reading proficiency test and two questionnaires. With regard to the first research question, that is, whether there is any significant relationship between reading anxiety and reading proficiency of English major university students, the results suggest that there is no significant relationship between RA and RP. In connection to the second research question, namely, whether there is a significant relationship between text feature awareness and reading proficiency of English major university students, a significant positive relationship was found. Also, between text feature awareness and reading anxiety negative relationship was obtained.

Based on the findings of this study, we can maintain that teachers should pay attention to the both sides of reading comprehension namely, readers and text variables and don't limit themselves to just one aspect of reading comprehension.

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