

The Effect of Anxiety on Reading Comprehension among Distance EFL Learners

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Abstract

This study investigated the correlation between the construct of Foreign Language Reading Anxiety (FLRA) and reading comprehension skill among Iranian distance EFL learners with age and gender serving as moderator variables. The research was carried out with a group of 112 male and female junior and senior students studying English at Mashhad Payame Noor University. A 33-item Likert-style Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale, a 28-item reading comprehension test, and a demographic questionnaire were completed by the participants. The Pearson product moment correlation, t-Test, and one-way ANOVA were used to analyze the data. The results indicated that there was a significant negative relationship between FLRA and reading comprehension; moreover, no such relationship was found between foreign language reading anxiety and age; and finally compared to males, females suffered more from anxiety.

Keywords: Age, Foreign language reading anxiety, Gender, Reading comprehension

1. Introduction and Literature Review

Anxiety is a part of human emotion which includes fear and uncertainty, uneasiness and frustration or tension (Brown, 2000; Sarason, 1988; Scovel, 1978; Spielberger, 1972). Vasa and Pine (2004) believe that the three basic interrelated aspects of anxiety are physiological, behavioral, and cognitive, but it is the cognitive aspect which has received the most attention in recent studies. Anxiety may be either facilitating; in a sense that it affects learning and performance positively or debilitating which hinders learning and performance (Alpert & Haber, 1960). Facilitative anxiety stimulates the student to 'fight' the new learning task (Scovel, 1991), and debilitating anxiety, on the other hand, motivates the student to adopt avoidance behavior (Eysenck, 1979; Scovel, 1991).

Different types of anxiety are associated with different situations. They can be classified as *Trait*, *State* and *Situation Anxiety*. Trait anxiety is viewed as a "relatively stable personality characteristic" (Horwitz, 2001; Spielberger, 1983); whereas "state anxiety is seen as a response to a particular anxiety-provoking stimulus such as an important test" (Horwitz, 2001, p.113), or it is the real experience of anxiety and it can affect emotions, cognition, and behavior (MacIntyre, 1999). Trait anxiety is believed to "impair cognitive functioning to disrupt memory, to lead to avoidance behaviors, and to have several other effects" (Eysenck, 1979; in MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991c, p.87). Situation-specific anxiety is a new construct similar to trait anxiety but it is experienced in a single context or situation (MacIntyre, 1999). According to (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991a) the most suitable measures for foreign language anxiety would be the situation-specific measures.

On the other hand, many foreign language learners experience foreign language (FL) anxiety which is "a situation-specific and unique type of anxiety closely related to the acquisition of a foreign language" (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 125).

Although language anxiety can sometimes work as helpful "energizer" for L2 learning, the harmful effects of anxiety which is considered "debilitating anxiety" (Brown, 1994), cannot be easily ignored in the context of L2 teaching. Evidence of negative relations between anxiety and achievement has been studied in several researches to find the processes which are likely to be involved in such a negative relation (Blankstein, Toner & Flett, 1989; Cassidy & Johnson, 2002; Hembree, 1988; Swain and Burnaby, 1976). Nevertheless, anxiety-provoking

circumstances are part and parcel of teaching and specifically testing. Moreover, each second language learner might potentially suffer from a form of anxiety despite the age, gender, language experience, the form of language learning environment (EFL or ESL), and also pronunciation (Chao, 2003; Ortega, 2005; Pappamihel, 2001; Tsai, 2003).

The prevalence of foreign language learning anxiety inspired Elaine Horwitz (1983 & 1986) to develop the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). This scale has served as the most widely used anxiety measure in foreign language learning researches including but not limited to chronologically-ordered studies by: Aida (1994); Rodriguez (1995); Oh (1996); Truitt (1997); Kuntz (1997); Yan (1998); Onwuegbuzie et al. (1999); Bailey et al. (1999); Spitali (2000); and Coulombe (2000). Horwitz argues that although foreign language anxiety consists of three related anxieties (communication apprehension, test-anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation); it is more than the mere sum of its parts.

Moreover, it has been found that female learners are generically more worried and anxious than male learners in several studies which makes them to underachieve, to fail to consider themselves as capable, or to apply for senior positions, to confine their aspirations and even to be afraid of success (Chang, 1997; Daly, Felson & Trudeau, 1991; Kreiser & Rogharr, 1994; Onwuegbuzie, Bailey & Daley, 1997). These findings are consistent with other studies which discovered that, generally, female learners are more concerned about language complications compared to male ones, and that they tend to be more anxious and worry-oriented than male students (Bernstein, Gierl & Rogers, 1996; Garfinkel & Hoberman, 1989; Padilla, Cervantes, Maldonado & García 1988; Plancherel & Bolognini, 1995).

1.1 Anxieties of Different Language Contexts

Since language anxiety is a situational specific construct, each language context may lead to a specific form of anxiety. Therefore, they can be classified into speaking anxiety, listening anxiety, writing anxiety, and reading anxiety. Nevertheless, the research on language anxiety has mainly studied oral aspects of language anxiety (speaking and listening), and relatively underestimating the other two components of language anxiety (reading and writing).

1.2 Anxiety and L2 Reading

By far, the number of research studies dealing with affect and L2 reading is limited. Reading in a foreign language ends in anxiety and finally poor language achievement "in conjunction of students' levels of reading anxiety and general foreign language anxiety" (Saito, Thomas, & Horwitz, 1998, p. 202).

Saito, Horwitz, and Garza (1999) and Sellers (2000) found that reading anxiety is distinct from foreign language anxiety. Furthermore, Zhang (2000) and Adams (1996) believe that low language proficiency and teacher diversity may cause reading comprehension test anxiety.

2. Statement of the problem and Significance of the study

Except for the study of Hauck (2005), Harris (2003), Hurd (2000 & 2002), Hurd et al. (2001), and White (1995, 1997, 1999), most explorations into language anxiety concentrate on classroom-based learning and there is little that particularly investigates anxiety in the distance learning context. To date, almost no attempt has been made to clarify the relationship between foreign language reading anxiety and reading comprehension, age and gender among distance EFL learners.

This study attempts to answer the following questions:

- Is there a relationship between foreign language reading anxiety and reading comprehension in distance education?
- Is there a relationship between foreign language reading anxiety and gender in distance education?
- Is there a relationship between foreign language reading anxiety and age in distance education?

3. Methodology

In order to estimate the reliability or internal consistency of the questionnaire, the researchers administered the questionnaire to a group of 18 students who were randomly selected from the original population of the EFL learners at Mashhad Payame Noor University (PNU).

By calculating the Cronbach's Alpha for the questionnaire, the FLRAS showed an internal consistency of 0.88 which is usually rated as a reliable index. Moreover, by applying the same formula for all the items when deleted, it became evident that all the items on the scale were considered reliable, except for item number 32 on the list which got the highest degree of reliability equal to 0.90 applying Cronbach's Alpha if the item was deleted.

As a result, this item (number 32) was omitted from the final administration of the scale and the final questionnaire

consisted of 33 Likert-style items. (See Table 1 for the reliability of the items in the FLRAS and see Table 2 for the mean and standard deviation of each item).

3.1 Participants

The whole population of the study consisted of 542 Iranian learners studying English as a foreign language at B.A. level at Mashhad Payame Noor University in the first semester of 2007. These learners were all junior and senior students and comprised of both males and females.

In order to gain an accurate number of subjects to be included in the study through stratified random sampling, the researcher applied "Sample Population formula" for which the mean and standard deviation were not clear then. Accordingly to obtain the mean and standard deviation which were necessary for the "Sample Population formula" on the one hand, and substantiating the reliability of the questionnaire (FLRAS; adapted from FLCAS by Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986) on the other hand, the researchers administered the questionnaire with a group of 18 students in the piloting phase of the study. (See Table 3 for the statistics related to sample population formula).

The final number of participants to be included in the research was 112 students, 71 females and 41 males. They ranged in age from 20 to 40 with the majority being between 20 and 28.

3.2 Materials

For the present study the anxiety questionnaire was modified according to selected items from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). Items from the FLCAS were altered with a focus on L2 reading instead of general language learning and also a few items were added or changed to match the atmosphere and setting in distance education. (See the Appendix for a complete list of questions solicited on the written questionnaire).

3.3 Procedure

The study was carried out in several phases:

- In the first phase a demographic questionnaire was given to all of the 112 students. The questionnaire included questions about participant's age, gender, years of studying English and experience of traveling abroad.
- In the second phase, this group took a psychology test which was called Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale, adapted from FLCAS (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986). The scale consisted of 33 Likert-style questions (after calculating the internal consistency) with points ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.
- Finally, in the last phase of the study, the students were given a reading comprehension test consisting of 28 multiple-choice items based on 3 reading passages. This test was designed to examine the relationship between foreign language reading anxiety and reading comprehension on one hand and this newly-developed construct (FLRA) and age and gender on the other hand. For consistency reasons, all testing was conducted in the same condition and the procedures followed were the same during each administration.

3.4 Analyses

Data analysis for this study was carried out on the assumption that survey instruments were internally consistent and would produce valid data when used with EFL learners studying at Mashhad PNU. The analyses comprised of both descriptive and quantitative statistics.

The descriptive statistics calculated and summarized the frequencies, ranges, means and standard deviations for the FLRAS and Reading Comprehension Test scores besides the Individual Background Information Questionnaire concerning aspects related to age and gender of the participants.

And for quantitative analysis, SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) Version 10.0 was used. The statistical procedures included: Pearson product moment Correlation to examine the degree and the direction of the relationship between the independent variable (Foreign Language Reading Anxiety) and the dependent variable (Reading Comprehension Scores); T-test to compare the means of the males and females concerning Foreign Language Reading Anxiety and also to test the hypothesis concerning the relationship between FLRA and Gender; and finally one-way ANOVA to determine whether significant differences existed among different age groups of the participants.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

As mentioned previously, the participant sample size, based on computing the sampling population formula, was 112 (See Table 4 and Figure 1 for sex information).

Regarding the age of the participants of the study, they ranged from 20 to 40 which can be categorized on an interval scale of 20 to 24, 25 to 29, 30 to 34 and older than 34 and is reflected on a bar graph. (See Table 5 and Figure 2 for age information).

4.2 FLRAS Scores

The FLRAS was scored by assigning a value of one to five points to the chosen response. Responses indicating low-anxiety received one point, and those indicating high anxiety received five points. So the same procedure was followed for the items such as number 11, 15, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, and 28 which were reverse-coded; consequently, the possible range of scores for the FLRAS is 33 to 165. Scores from the administration of the FLRAS for this study ranged from 42 to 115. The mean score was 79.18 and the standard deviation was 16.98.

As pointed out previously, the FLRAS included 33 items, all of which can fit into different categories representing different dimensions of L2 reading and anxiety: general L2 reading; L2 reading tasks (oral and written) and L2 reading and fear of negative evaluation, then a few items referring to general L2 learning, besides 3 items regarding distance education setting. (Table 6 provides the means and standard deviations for all the questions and Table 7 lists descriptive statistics regarding the frequencies and percentages of students selecting each alternative).

4.3 Research Hypothesis 1

H_{01} : There is no significant relationship (either positive or negative) between foreign language reading anxiety and reading comprehension in distance education ($r=0$, $\alpha<0.05$).

The Pearson's product moment correlation was used to test the hypothesis. Since $r^{obs} < r^{crit}$; $-0.211 < 0.026$, at $\alpha < 0.05$, the Null hypothesis (H_{01} : $r=0$, at $\alpha < 0.05$) is rejected.

Therefore, the results can be said to be significant since there is only a 5% probability that $r_{obs} = -0.211$ occurred by chance alone, or a 95% probability that the observed correlation is due to other than chance factors. (See Table 8 and Figure 3 for the relationship between foreign language reading anxiety and reading comprehension scores).

It should be noted here that each point in the scatter plot represents a student's score. Therefore, the more tightly the points are clustered around the hypothetical straight line, the stronger the relationship between the two variables becomes, and in this study, since the relationship is rather weak, the line is inclined to a small degree.

4.4 Research Hypothesis 2

H_{02} : There is no significant relationship between foreign language reading anxiety and gender in distance education ($r=0$, $\alpha < 0.05$).

By computing T-test for both male and female groups, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis; since the observed t is greater than the critical t ($t_{obs} > t_{crit}$; $2.34 > 1.98$), we conclude that in this study, woman participants were significantly more anxious about reading foreign language than men participants (See Table 9 for the relationship between foreign language reading anxiety and gender).

4.5 Research Hypothesis 3

H_{03} : There is no significant relationship between foreign language reading anxiety and age in distance education ($r=0$, $\alpha < 0.05$).

The result of one-way ANOVA which is displayed in Table 5 shows that there is no significant difference among age groups with regard to foreign language reading anxiety; since F-ratio is smaller than 1 ($F=0.511$, $\alpha < 0.05$); consequently we accept the Null hypothesis and conclude that age doesn't have any significant effect on foreign language anxiety in distance education, and the observed differences were probably due to chance alone. (See Table 10 for relationship between foreign language reading anxiety and age).

5. Conclusion

5.1 Pedagogical Implications

A short review of the literature shows that not only is language anxiety a worldwide problem in language classes and mostly rooted in communication apprehension and test anxiety, but also much attention has been given to the affective state of each learner in ESL/EFL classes.

In order to overcome the negative and debilitating effects of anxiety on all the four skills particularly reading comprehension, it should be of utmost importance and high priority to teachers or instructors to remove any unnecessary anxiety from language learning, and create a stress-free, safe and relaxing atmosphere in the class where students feel secure, interested, joyful and motivated to learn and internalize the learning materials so that they can approach the aims of teaching and learning. Therefore, teachers play a prominent role in alleviating and

controlling anxiety in the classroom. They are likely to facilitate language learning through providing a supportive and friendly environment, applying nonthreatening teaching methods and making use of interesting topics and themes which are relevant to the learner's lives and interests. Similarly, Rogers (1989) believes that "much of what is called learning... involves little feeling of personal meaning, and has insufficient relevance for the whole person, with a resulting lack of interest" (p. 99).

Brown (1994) maintains that instructors need to "establish interpersonal relationships" with their students (p. 201). Teachers should be warm and friendly in their relationships with students. Besides they should value effort, risk-taking and successful communication and also they should take it for granted that errors and mistakes are a natural part of learning. Consequently, in such an atmosphere students seek to have more opportunities to interact positively with each other and act in a cooperative rather than a competitive manner; as a result, they focus on communication rather than being worried and afraid of negative evaluation.

In conclusion, foreign language anxiety should be taken more seriously not only by instructors, but also by students and possibly program developers. This may be achieved through workshops or presentations on foreign language anxiety and exploring different possible ways to alleviate anxiety in the classroom. As Young (1999) believes the only way to train students to become better language learners is accomplished by helping students deal with and overcome their feelings of anxiety.

Moreover, one of the objectives of teacher training programs, or maybe in-services, should be to explore the possible ways of helping future teachers to use their personal experiences about the phenomenon of language learning to the benefit of their English language learners. Besides, future educators would take advantage of teacher education programs by being taught to identify the importance of the role of affect in language learning and how to operate to reduce its negative effect on the learning process, and achieve an ideal result. It is essential that teachers become familiar with the FLCAS instrument (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986) to increase awareness of foreign language anxiety and to be informed about different ways in which students experience it.

It should be also a main concern for the teacher to ensure that the levels of anxiety do not hamper the class progress. As MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) maintains that students feel anxious only after on-going negative experiences in the language learning environment.

Furthermore, the findings of this research are consistent with those of other studies: the female learners are more concerned about language difficulties than males, and women tend to be more anxious and worry-oriented than men. Nevertheless, in co-education systems where men and women study in the same class, there seems to be more peer-related anxiety. As Bracken and Crain (1994) state adolescence is a time for fluctuating interpersonal relationships; so that, peers become more important than teachers, and since girls depend more on their peers and social communication with them (Plancherel & Bolognini, 1995) on the one hand, and they are afraid of being laughed at or cajoled by their peers on the other hand, they feel more anxious when they take a test or asked to answer a question in class.

Consequently, if teachers encourage more cooperative learning atmosphere in which the affective safety of all the participants is considered, students will have more opportunities to interact positively with each other and, as a result, anxiety would be reduced. While accepting that a little anxiety can be considered as a motivating factor, it is important for teachers to be trained on how to adjust the dose.

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Table 1. Reliability of FLRAS's Items

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.887	34

Question	Scale mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q1	74.89	287.987	.682	.880
Q2	74.39	284.840	.588	.880
Q3	74.61	285.663	.529	.881
Q4	74.44	274.850	.787	.876
Q5	74.78	283.712	.803	.878
Q6	74.39	280.722	.664	.879
Q7	74.11	288.693	.530	.882
Q8	74.56	286.967	.618	.880
Q9	74.89	288.222	.728	.879
Q10	73.56	304.379	.137	.889
Q11	74.44	301.085	.267	.886
Q12	74.72	287.389	.587	.881
Q13	74.61	284.252	.612	.880
Q14	74.17	280.971	.622	.879
Q15	74.78	292.418	.493	.883
Q16	74.56	293.438	.436	.884
Q17	74.67	294.588	.426	.884
Q18	74.83	294.029	.389	.884
Q19	74.56	286.497	.544	.881
Q20	74.17	285.324	.521	.882
Q21	74.50	314.735	-.143	.893
Q22	74.94	293.467	.413	.884
Q23	74.28	282.801	.605	.880
Q24	73.11	312.105	-.069	.891
Q25	74.17	280.147	.725	.878
Q26	74.00	287.412	.519	.882
Q27	74.94	294.291	.391	.884
Q28	74.28	319.271	-.234	.896
Q29	74.33	302.235	.171	.889
Q30	74.94	290.408	.770	.880
Q31	74.22	298.771	.267	.887
Q32	73.39	332.605	-.506	.902
Q33	74.67	301.882	.234	.887
Q34	74.11	309.634	.007	.890

Table 2. The Mean and SD of the FLRAS' Items

Question	N	Mean	Std.Deviation
Q1	18	1.78	0.943
Q2	18	2.28	1.227
Q3	18	2.06	1.305
Q4	18	2.22	1.309
Q5	18	1.89	0.963
Q6	18	2.28	1.274
Q7	18	2.56	1.149
Q8	18	2.11	1.079
Q9	18	1.78	0.878
Q10	18	3.11	1.079
Q11	18	2.22	0.943
Q12	18	1.94	1.110
Q13	18	2.06	1.211
Q14	18	2.50	1.339
Q15	18	1.89	1.023
Q16	18	2.11	1.079
Q17	18	2.00	1.029
Q18	18	1.83	1.150
Q19	18	2.11	1.231
Q20	18	2.50	1.339
Q21	18	2.17	0.985
Q22	18	1.72	1.127
Q23	18	2.39	1.290
Q24	18	3.56	0.922
Q25	18	2.50	1.200
Q26	18	2.67	1.237
Q27	18	1.72	1.127
Q28	18	2.39	1.195
Q29	18	2.33	1.188
Q30	18	1.72	0.752
Q31	18	2.44	1.149
Q32	18	2.56	0.922
Q33	18	2.00	0.970
Q34	18	3.28	1.274

Table 3. Statistics Related to Sample Population Formula

Z(Standard score)	mean	Standard deviation	Degree of freedom	Society population
1.96	71.39	21.546	0.05	542

Table 4. Sex Information

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	41	36.6	36.6	36.6
Female	71	63.4	63.4	100.0
Total	112	100.0	100.0	

Table 5. Age Information

valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
20 to 24	85	75.9	75.9	75.9
25 to 29	15	13.4	13.4	89.3
30 to 34	9	8.0	8.0	97.3
Upper than 34	3	2.7	2.7	100.0
Total	112	100.0	100.0	

Table 6. Statistics Related to Number, Mean and SD of Each Question

Question	Number	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q1	112	1.85	1.050
Q2	112	2.50	1.259
Q3	112	2.17	1.185
Q4	112	2.57	1.176
Q5	112	2.13	0.960
Q6	112	2.83	1.229
Q7	112	2.66	1.270
Q8	112	2.06	1.025
Q9	112	2.04	1.077
Q10	112	3.31	1.245
Q11	112	2.09	0.906
Q12	112	2.04	1.170
Q13	112	2.61	1.276
Q14	112	1.82	1.266
Q15	112	1.95	0.994
Q16	112	2.54	1.251
Q17	112	2.35	1.213
Q18	112	1.99	1.135
Q19	112	2.08	1.121
Q20	112	2.82	1.296
Q21	112	2.59	1.249
Q22	112	3.01	1.29
Q23	112	2.55	1.229
Q24	112	3.22	1.071
Q25	112	2.37	1.099
Q26	112	2.45	1.229
Q27	112	3.19	1.026
Q28	112	2.76	1.033
Q29	112	2.66	1.212
Q30	112	1.96	1.134
Q31	112	2.67	1.052
Q32	112	1.66	0.999
Q33	112	1.66	0.869

Table 7. Statistics Related to Number and Percent of Each Chosen Alternative

Question	Strongly Agree		Agree		No Comment		Strongly Disagree		Disagree	
	1	P	2	P	3	P	4	P	5	P
Q1	55	49.1%	33	29.5%	12	10.7%	14	8.9%	2	1.8%
Q2	29	25.9%	36	32.1%	16	14.3%	24	21.4%	7	6.3%
Q3	42	37.5%	35	31.3%	11	9.8%	22	19.6%	2	1.8%
Q4	22	19.6%	40	35.7%	19	17.0%	26	23.2%	5	4.5%
Q5	37	33.0%	32	28.6%	35	31.3%	8	7.1%	0	0.0%
Q6	21	18.8%	25	22.3%	25	22.3%	34	30.4%	7	6.3%
Q7	24	21.4%	36	32.1%	13	11.6%	32	28.6%	7	6.3%
Q8	37	33.0%	48	42.9%	11	9.8%	15	13.4%	1	0.9%
Q9	42	37.5%	41	36.6%	13	11.6%	14	12.5%	2	1.8%
Q10	11	9.8%	17	15.2%	34	30.4%	26	23.2%	24	21.4%
Q11	35	31.3%	38	33.9%	33	29.5%	6	5.4%	0	0.0%
Q12	49	43.8%	33	29.5%	9	8.0%	19	17.0%	2	1.8%
Q13	29	25.9%	28	25.0%	19	17.0%	30	26.8%	6	5.4%
Q14	8	7.1%	48	42.9%	12	10.8%	26	23.2%	18	16.1%
Q15	1	0.9%	6	5.4%	28	25.0%	28	25.0%	49	43.8%
Q16	25	22.3%	39	34.8%	20	17.9%	18	16.1%	10	8.9%
Q17	32	28.6%	37	33.0%	24	21.4%	10	8.9%	9	8.0%
Q18	49	43.8%	33	29.5%	17	15.2%	8	7.1%	5	4.5%
Q19	44	39.3%	34	30.4%	20	17.9%	10	8.9%	4	3.6%
Q20	22	19.6%	29	25.9%	17	15.2%	33	29.5%	10	8.9%
Q21	31	27.7%	18	16.1%	36	32.1%	18	16.1%	8	7.1%
Q22	58	51.8%	6	5.4%	5	4.5%	39	34.8%	3	2.7%
Q23	26	23.2%	36	32.1%	17	15.2%	26	23.2%	6	5.4%
Q24	7	6.3%	16	14.3%	50	44.6%	21	18.8%	17	15.2%
Q25	29	25.9%	36	32.1%	24	21.4%	19	17.0%	2	1.8%
Q26	32	28.6%	29	25.9%	25	22.3%	17	15.2%	7	6.3%
Q27	57	50.9	35	31.3%	8	7.1%	7	6.3%	3	2.7%
Q28	13	11.6%	30	26.8%	45	40.2%	15	13.4%	7	6.3%
Q29	23	20.5%	32	28.6%	21	18.8%	28	25.0%	6	5.4%
Q30	50	44.6%	35	31.3%	13	11.6%	6	5.4%	6	5.4%
Q31	18	16.1%	29	25.9%	38	33.9%	22	19.6%	3	2.7%
Q32	15	13.4%	50	44.6%	5	4.5%	33	29.5%	9	8.0%
Q33	27	24.1%	28	25.0%	42	37.5%	12	10.7%	1	0.9%

Table 8. The Correlation between FLRA and Reading Comprehension Scores

		Exam	Q
Exam	Pearson Correlation	1	-.211
	Sig. (2- tailed)		.026
	N	112	112
Q	Pearson Correlation	-.211	1
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.026	
	N	112	112

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

Table 9. t-Test Results Concerning the Difference between Men and Women

Gender	N	Percent	Mean	SD	t	df	t-critical value
Male	41	36.6	71.56	18.18	2.34	110	1.98
female	71	63.4	82.00	14.44			

Note. The result is significant at 0.05 level.

Table 10. One-way ANOVA Concerning the Relationship between FLRA & Age

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	447.651	3	149.217	0.511	0.676
Within Groups	31557.412	108	292.198		
Total	32005.063	111			

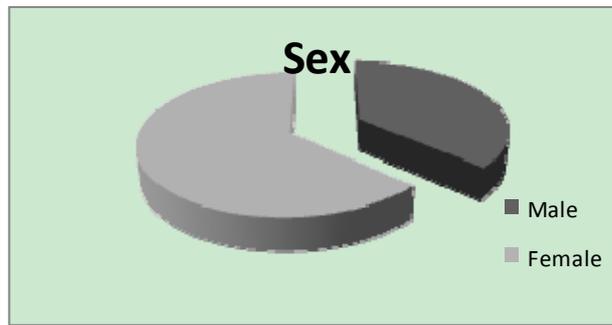


Figure 1. Circular Diagram of the Gender of the Population

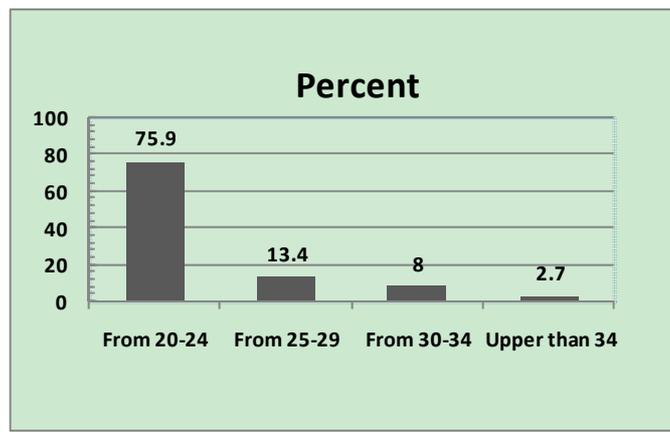


Figure 2. Bar Graph of the Age of the Participants

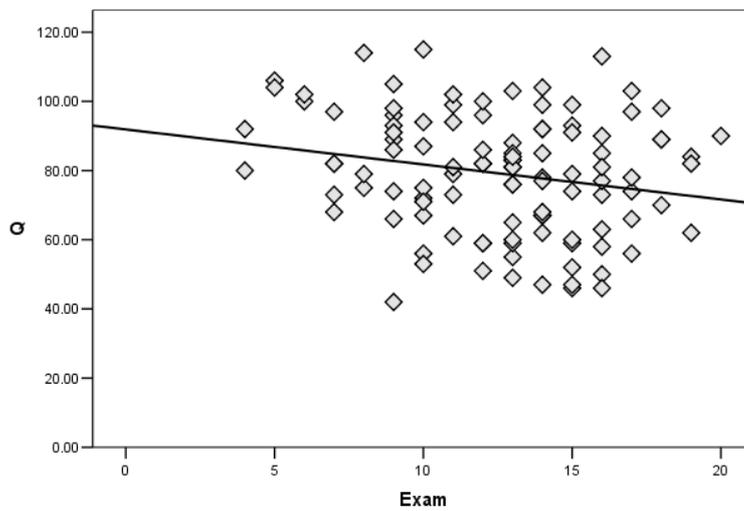


Figure 3. The Scatter Plot of the Relationship between FLRA Scores & Reading Comprehension Scores

Appendix

Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale

The following statements concern the situation of foreign language reading anxiety. There are no right or wrong answers. Please rate how much these statements reflect how you feel or think personally. Please select the choice corresponding to the degree of your agreement or disagreement.

1=Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3= No Comment, 4=Strongly Disagree, 5= Disagree

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1. I become anxious when I should read in English outside of this course for homework.					
2. I become anxious when I have to read in English out loud in class.					
3. Generally speaking, I become anxious when I have to read English in class.					
4. I become anxious when I have to answer questions orally in class about what I have read in English.					
5. I feel afraid when I have to read lengthy texts in English as homework in future English courses.					
6. I fear not understanding the lengthy texts I will have to read in future English courses.					
7. I become anxious when I am asked to write compositions in English about what I have read in this class.					
8. I become anxious when I have to answer the multiple choice questions about what I have read in English.					
9. I would feel anxious while reading English in class.					
10. I would feel less nervous about reading English in front of others if I knew them.					
11. I feel very relaxed in English class when I have studied the scheduled learning contents.					
12. I am anxious in class when I am the only person answering the question advanced by my teacher in English class.					
13. I start to panic when I know I will be graded in English class.					
14. I fear giving a wrong answer while answering questions in English class.					
15. I enjoy English class when I know that we are going to read in English.					
16. I feel shy when I read in English on the stage in front of the class.					
17. When it comes to being corrected by my teacher, I am afraid of taking English class.					
18. I am so nervous that I tremble when I am going to attend the English written tests.					
19. I get frustrated when I am asked to read with classmates in English in a short period of time.					
20. I worry about the written test in English class.					
21. I would feel better about reading in English if the class were smaller.					
22. I feel relaxed in English class when I preview very well.					
23. I stumble when I answer questions in English.					
24. I like going to class when I know that written tasks are going to be performed.					
25. I know that everyone makes mistakes while reading in English, so I am not afraid of being laughed at by others.					
26. I like to volunteer answers in English class.					
27. I am more willing to get involved in class when the topics are interesting.					
28. I don't feel tense in written test if I get more practice reading in class.					
29. I feel pressure when my teacher corrects my written mistakes in class.					
30. Going to English reading class makes me more nervous than going to other classes.					
31. I feel anxious while doing reading tasks when there is no teacher to guide me.					
32. I feel anxious because generally in distance education I feel unsure of myself and my abilities.					
33. I feel anxious because I am older than the other students in class and I feel unsure of my learning abilities because of that matter.					