

The Effect of Summarizing and Inferencing Strategies on EFL Learners' Reading Anxiety

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ARTICLE INFO ABSTRACT

Reading in a foreign language is anxiety-provoking to some students. This means that increasing students' reading anxiety levels leads to a decrease in students' final grades. The present study aimed to examine the impact of summarizing and inferencing strategies on EFL learners' reading anxiety. The importance of reading strategies was emphasized by many scholars. It seems that inadequate localized attention to a set of effective strategies in reading is among the reasons that contribute to the learners' difficulties in reading comprehension which leads to anxiety. However, even though such need has been felt and recognized, equipping the learners with satisfactory strategies has not been fulfilled, because most of the language teachers neglect them in their teaching process. Therefore, it is necessary to search for useful strategies to increase the level of reading comprehension and lower the level of anxiety in the EFL context. Among the numerous available strategies applicable to reading, the researcher's main focus was on summarizing strategy and inferencing strategy. Being familiar with these strategies and applying them may help students become more strategic in the reading process, promote their reading performance, and lower their reading anxiety.

Keywords: Reading Anxiety, EFL Learners', Summarizing Strategy, Inferencing Strategy

Introduction

One of the most necessary skills that a person has to acquire in life is reading. Nearly every aspect of life involves reading. It is considered to be one of the most important language skills since it is a source of learning and can give the learners opportunities to receive input based on which they can develop their other language skills (Day & Bamford, 1998). The importance of reading is far more serious for EFL learners. Stressing the fact, Farhadi, Jafarpour, and Birjandi (1994) stated that, "reading is the most important of all skills for most language learners in general, and for EFL learners in particular" (P. 247).

However, for many EFL learners, reading English texts is a challenging task (Bektaş-Çetinkaya, 2011). It is widely accepted that anxiety plays a crucial role in learning a foreign language (Mohammadi Golchi, 2012). The impact of such emotional arousal in language learning has long been considered in language classrooms. Indeed, "Anxiety is quite possibly the affective factor that most pervasively obstructs the learning process" (Arnold, 2007, p. 8). In the past anxiety was mostly associated with oral production in L2; however, recently it has been extended to cover all language skills (Kimura et al., 2008). One of the most ignored but potentially the most debilitating types of anxiety is the anxiety accompanying reading comprehension which is called foreign language reading anxiety (FLRA), (Horwitz et al., 1986).

Reading strategies are effective in learners' reading comprehension and also using these strategies may reduce learners' anxiety. These strategies include eight kinds of strategies Comprehension monitoring, Cooperative learning, Graphic organizers, Question answering, Question generating, Text structure, Summarizing, Inferencing, and Multiple-strategy teaching (Reutzel, Smith & Fawson, 2005).

In addition to summarizing, generating inferences or inferencing is also another reading strategy that seems to have a great influence on the process of reading (McNamara & Kendeou, 2011). Reading theorists and researchers (e.g., Shanahan, Fisher & Frey, 2012) broadly confirmed the necessity of being able to generate inferences for reading comprehension. Making inferences as a cognitive process is mainly employed to form and get the actual meaning. According to McNamara and Kendeou (2011), "Inferring in text understanding is a constructive thinking process because the reader expands knowledge by proposing and evaluating competing

hypotheses about the meaning of the text in an attempt to progressively refine comprehension" (p. 4). Also, as Thorndike (1917) noted the inference strategy is significant in comprehending texts.

Inferencing forces the reader to engage in building meaning. When readers make inferences, they are interacting personally with the text. Skilled readers make inferences almost subconsciously, by logical assumptions based on text clues and their prior knowledge. This allows for some creativity and leads to a wider variety of interpretations (Keene & Zimmerman, 1997). The present study aimed to examine the impact of summarizing and inferencing strategies on EFL learners' reading anxiety.

What is Reading Comprehension?

Reading comprehension skills are crucial in all parts of our academic life and also, they are necessary elements to academic development. Educational systems are looking for ways to guide students to become independent and effective in the fast-paced, fast-growing society. Reading is a unique human experience that allows us to communicate with distant others. When we are striving to comprehend a text, we are getting involved in an intellectual, emotional, aesthetic, and social process. Reading is not a very simple process as a layman might consider it as a simple process of understanding the meaning of a text. The ability to read is, as Hudson (2007) says, a truly wonderful human ability. Vander Does (2012) conveys her conception of reading comprehension through the image of a harmonica by which tones are produced when a harmonica player inhales or exhales through the openings that lead to reeds inside the instrument. Vander Does (2012) stated that a reader inhales and exhales as they engage with text and meaning is shaped by the content and quality of the text and also by the reader's experience in much the same way as the quality of sound created is dependent upon the construction and quality of the harmonica and upon the experience of the player. Figure 1 displays Vander Does' conception of reading comprehension (2012, p. 6).

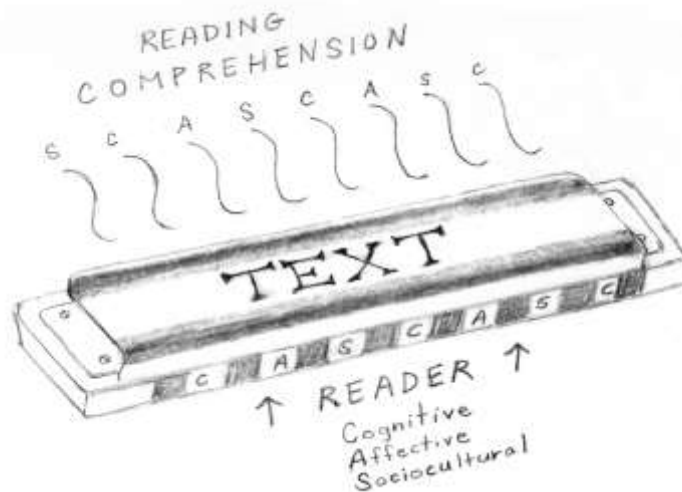


Figure 1. Conception of reading comprehension (Vander Does, 2012).

Without reading comprehension skills students struggle and face many difficulties in mastering other subject areas. Subjects, other than reading or literature, where comprehension skills are significantly important include science, social science, and math. In the area of science, research indicates that many students lack prior knowledge and reading strategies to generate inferences; thus, the students comprehend science texts poorly. Mcnamara and Kendeou (2011) argue students lack the specific reading strategies to generate inferences that aid in the understanding of science texts. Reading is fundamentally important in achieving success. It is of utmost importance to individuals' participation in the society. Snow (2002) states that literacy skills are not a luxury but an economic necessity. In this part, theoretical and empirical background for reading comprehension are presented.

Theoretical and Conceptual Background of Reading

Any attempt toward understanding the phenomenon of reading needs to be established on a solid conception of what this phenomenon is. Goodman (1967) and Smith (1982) have proposed two such fundamental theories in the domain of reading process and development and also the progression of what written language and comprehension entails. There are so many questions about the involved processes in the brain that the reader is engaged in decoding and meaning construction from a text.

There are two main approaches employed by teachers towards teaching reading comprehension. Among the well-known and frequently used methods for teaching reading are those that utilize sounding out principles, frequently referred to as phonics which put its primary emphasis on the association of letters with sounds, and each letter is claimed to produce a certain sound. Falk (1978) believed that this approach toward reading besides its benefits is not without its drawbacks. As she says to the extent that phonemic and phonetic

representations are similar, the phonics-oriented approach to the teaching of reading may be successful but if phonetic form differs substantially from the underlying representation reflected by writing, it is not clear how phonics can succeed. Another inadequacy of the phonics approach utilizing sounding out towards teaching reading is that speech is a continuum by which she means that in pronouncing words, we do not produce a series of separate sounds but, instead, a complex set of vocal movements. Falk (1978) strongly is of the view that a phonics approach to the teaching, and learning, of reading is difficult to justify because phonics is in the position of adding more and more rules to take care of exceptions, and each added rule itself subject to exceptions resulting in the appearance of 100-200 phonics rules, most of which lead from spelling to the wrong pronunciation in one out of four applications (Falk, 1978). Falk argues that the phonics approach is founded on an incorrect view of the nature of an alphabetic writing system. Contrary to "what phonics implies that our writing system is phonetic, with symbols corresponding to sounds" (Falk, 1978, p. 390), English spelling is phonemic and, more importantly, morphophonemic. However, the preliterate child, who does not know reading, may benefit from some initial instruction in the relation between sounds and letters.

Another widespread approach taken by teachers towards teaching reading is another common method which is called the whole-word approach and sometimes it is referred to as look-and-say and has intended to fulfill those needs that arose after the introduction of phonics in teaching reading and the subsequent drawbacks that appeared. It seeks to avoid the problems involved in phonics by having children recognize whole words, rather than sounding them out but it fails to utilize the great number of regularities that are undoubtedly important in converting a non-reading child into a literate person. This approach seeks to enable the child to recognize the words through the use of various clues, such as the overall shape and configuration of words, making sense through context, identifying roots and affixes, and so on. According to Falk (1978), this approach avoids some of the inherent problems in phonics but it is incomplete for many of the same reasons due to the very fact that full comprehension depends on interpreting the surface structure of a text before utilizing one's internalized knowledge of syntax and semantics to comprehend the meaning that underlies what is visible. What is of primary significance in this approach is a de-emphasis on detailed, structured methods of teaching and a new orientation toward the child's contribution to the learning process, as well as the teacher's role in facilitating that process.

Bearing what has been mentioned above, the diagnosis of reading progress is accomplished through tests in which the child is required to read aloud since true reading which is done silently, is not observable directly, but it should be recognized that the ability to read with comprehension and the ability to read aloud without errors are not equivalent.

In addition to the above classification of approaches towards teaching of reading phonics and whole-word approaches are another classification for approaches that encompasses two major mainstreams of bottom-up and top-down approaches toward reading. Bottom-up theorists such as Chall (1983) who's also a proponent of the phonics approach, LaBerge and Samuels (1974), and Gough (1972) argue that reading is the ability to decode or put into sound what is seen in a text so they emphasize the decoding skills and ignore whatever the reader brings to the information on the page. Contrary to what the bottom-up model of reading theorists believe, the top-down model of reading does just the opposite and focuses on what the reader brings to the process (Goodman, 1967; Smith, 1982). Between these two polarized views of reading, exists the interactive approach (Rumelhart, 1977) which is an amalgamation of the two extremes of bottom-up and top-down models of reading. This model stresses both what is on the written page and what the reader brings to it by contrasting it with their world knowledge, helping to make sense of what is written. Throughout this process the reared constructs meaning from and makes sense of the printed page. Pearson (1985) has presented differences between various views of what reading is, focusing on traditional views and a new definition of what reading is. The following table presents old and new theories of reading.

Table 1. Changing the Face of Reading Comprehension Instruction (Extracted from Pearson, 1985 as cited in Zurek Cadena, 2006).

| | Traditional Views | New Views of Reading |
|------------------------|---|--|
| Research Base | Behaviorism | Cognitive sciences |
| Goals of Reading | Mastery of isolated facts and skills | Constructing meaning and self-regulated learning |
| Reading as Process | Mechanically decoding words; memorizing by rote | Interaction among the reader, the text, and the context |
| Learner Role/ Metaphor | Passive; vessel receiving knowledge from external sources | Active; strategic reader, good strategy user, cognitive apprentice |

As can be seen in Table 1, new theories on reading focus on reading as the cognitive process through which no reader will produce the same meaning for a given text, and no reader's constructed meaning out of a text will ever completely match with that of the writers. In contrast to new trends in reading,

traditional trends assume readers as passive recipients of knowledge from external sources involved in the mechanical decoding of words, and reading skills are acquired using mastery of isolated facts and skills.

Foreign Language and Reading Anxiety

Earlier investigations on second language learning have referred to individual differences in L2 learning to cognitive factors including language aptitude and intelligence. Nevertheless, given that human beings are emotional individuals, it is clear that human conducts are considerably affected by affective variables. From this view, foreign language instructors have been concerned with the important role of affective variables in second language learning (Gokulnathan, 1971; Liu & Jackson, 2008). Among various affective variables, anxiety poses main problems in the cognitive process of learning (Ahmad & Zafar, 2010; Sharma & Gandhi, 1971).

Anxiety plays a significant role in L2 learning (Horwitz et al., 1986). Various definitions and categorizations of anxiety have been suggested. Horwitz et al. (1986) defined language learning anxiety as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of language learning process" (p. 128). According to Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986), foreign language anxiety is a "distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p. 128). They argued that foreign language anxiety is a separate and complex phenomenon that might come from the mismatch between foreign language learners' mature thoughts and their immature foreign language competency (Mohammadpur & Ghafournia, 2015).

Situation-specific anxiety, state anxiety, and trait anxiety, all of which can be either facilitative or debilitating are different kinds of foreign language anxiety that have been recognized (Zarei, 2014). Foreign language anxiety is a form of situation-specific anxiety stemming from negative experiences, particularly early in language learning (Horwitz et al., 1986). Language learning anxiety is usually connected with productive skills. Today, anxiety in receptive skills is more recognized; that is, listening and reading. Reading anxiety is a situational type and a negative reaction toward reading including physical and cognitive reactions (Jalongo & Hirsh, 2010).

Although reading comprehension is one of the main focuses of most foreign language-teaching programs, the relationship between second-language reading and anxiety has been examined less extensively (Dewaele et al., 2008; Horwitz et al., 2009). It might sound at first glance that L2 reading is less affected by foreign language anxiety, yet many students do experience reading-related anxiety, which can lead to weak reading comprehension. Anxiety arousal is related to self-related thoughts and concerns. Anxiety initiates processing capacity and decreases the amount of attention that should be dedicated to the completion of a special task (Eysenck & Calvo, 1992). Given that human beings are restricted in their attention and capacity, self-related cognition plays a negative role including a distracter or barrier during cognitive reading processing. Therefore, poor reading performance of anxious students may depend to a great extent on reading anxiety. On the other hand, non-anxious students may be less annoyed by task-irrelevant thoughts; thus, they may have more attention and capacity to contribute to the process of reading comprehension.

Saito et al. (1999) were the first researchers who found that foreign language reading anxiety is a separate phenomenon but related to foreign language anxiety in general. They referred to two aspects of foreign language reading that evoke anxiety; unfamiliar scripts and writing systems: They argued that L2 learners who are more familiar with the scripts of the L2 would be less expected to experience anxiety in the process of reading. For example, Arab language learners who need to learn English are less anxious than those who need to learn a language that is odd to them because of the unfamiliarity of the writing system such as Japanese, Chinese, Korean languages and so on so forth. Therefore, learners are more likely to experience the anxiety of reading when they try to decode the scripts because they would immediately experience problems in the act of reading. Unfamiliar culture: it might not create immediate anxiety as the earlier one. The learners can decode the words and translate the sentence. Although, at some point in the reading act, the reader would not understand the whole text because of the incomplete knowledge of the cultural material underlying the text. Saito et al. (1999) suggested a scale to measure foreign language reading anxiety. They developed a five-point Likert inventory including 20 items ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree as a specific inventory to measure foreign language reading anxiety. In their preliminary research, they used both the foreign language classroom anxiety scale (FLCAS) and the foreign language reading anxiety scale (FLRAS) to test reliability and validity.

Reading Comprehension Strategies

According to Cubukru (2007), a strategy is a person's comprehensive approach to a task, such as how an individual thinks and acts when planning and assessing his or her study conduct. Cubukru (2007) also mentions that a strategy includes guidelines and rules related to choosing the best tactics and deciding about their use. Because of the growing interest in the relationship between comprehension and reading strategies, studies into the use of reading strategies for boosting comprehension have developed over the past decades (Korthof & Guda, 2016). In most of the reading investigations, the term strategy refers to the mental operations involved when readers purposefully approach a text to make sense of what they read. These may be either conscious techniques controlled by the reader or unconscious processes applied automatically. Both good

(successful) and poor (unsuccessful) strategies exist, yet the term strategy as used in pedagogical materials often implies those that are successful (Klapwijk, 2015; Korthof & Guda, 2016). Recently, types of strategies and impacts on language learning have drawn investigators' attention. One of the strategies is reading strategies. Reading strategies are of consideration for what they show about the way readers maintain their interaction with written text and how these strategies are related to text comprehension. Studies in second language reading reveal that learners use a lot of strategies to help them with the acquisition, storage, and retrieval of information. Oxford and Crookall (1989) argue that strategies are learning skills, performances, interpreting, or study expertise which make learning more influential and efficient. Regarding second language learning, a comparison can be made between strategies that make learning more influential, versus those that improve comprehension. The prior is generally referred to as learning strategies in the SL literature. Comprehension or reading strategies, on the other hand, show how readers receive a task, how they understand what they read, and what to do when they don't understand the reading texts. In short, such strategies are processes utilized by the learner to improve reading comprehension and overcome comprehension difficulties. Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) remark that learners' awareness of reading strategies will assist them enhance reading comprehension. Since the early seventies, for the most part, studies in this domain have concentrated on teaching second language students to apply a variety of language strategies to improve reading. Reading strategies are problem-solving strategies used by readers to cope with reading texts. There is a lack of agreement in reading study literature about exactly what constitutes reading strategies. However, complete catalogs of types of L2 reading strategies have been suggested by some scholars based on their experimental studies (Block, 1986). Many influential reading strategies are mentioned in the Interviewer Guide for Reading Strategies suggested by Hosenfeld et al. (1981). This list of observed reading strategies is often offered to improve learners' reading strategies and to urge them to employ effective strategies. These strategies include a whole range of strategies such as (Hosenfeld et al., 1981),

Skimming and scanning, contextualization, meaningful reading, activating background knowledge, schematization, note taking, summarizing, paraphrasing, predicting, analyzing, using context clues to create mental images of the text, semantic mapping, using keywords, employing word associations, placing new words into context, and guessing while reading, or using reference materials such as dictionaries to mention just a few (p. 14).

According to an analysis of think-aloud protocols of university-level students (six ESL and three native-English-speaking), Block (1986) classifies their reading strategies as general (i.e., comprehension-gathering and comprehension-monitoring) and local (i.e., attempts to understand specific linguistic units). Drawing insights from investigation on writing, Block also describes two different modes in readers' strategies, in short extensive (readers focusing on understanding the writer's ideas) and reflexive (readers relating ideas in the text to themselves, affectively and personally).

Holding the perspective that the L2 reading process is the interlingual transfer of reading skills from the readers' L1 and based on the L2 learners' think-aloud data, Sarig (1987) categorizes their reading strategies (or moves) into four categories (such as both comprehensions promoting and deterring moves), as follows: 1. Technical-aid moves generally effective for decoding at a local level: skimming, scanning, skipping, writing key elements in the text, marking parts of text for different aims, summarizing paragraphs in the margin, and utilizing glossary. 2. Clarification and simplification moves indicate the reader's aim to make clear and/or simplify text utterances: substitutions, paraphrases, circumlocutions, and synonyms. 3. Coherence-detecting moves showing the reader's aim to produce coherence from the text: influential use of content and formal schemata to predict upcoming text; identification of individuals in the text and their perspectives or actions; cumulative decoding of text meaning; depending on summaries given in the text; and identification of text theme. 4. Monitoring moves displaying active monitoring of text processing, whether metacognitively conscious or not: conscious change of planning and doing the tasks; abandoning a hopeless utterance (e.g., "I don't understand that, so I'll read on."); flexibility of reading rate; correction of mistakes; and continuous self-evaluation. Sarig's (1987) classification is considered the first important attempt to group learners' reading strategies into categories. Anderson (1996) mentions that reading strategies are -deliberate, cognitive steps that readers can use to help in acquiring, storing, and retrieving new information. It can be concluded that reading strategies are actions that readers use to conceive the text. Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) also designed a survey of reading strategies (SORS) and they categorized reading categories into three main classifications. These classifications are: (1) the Global Reading Strategies (GLOB) are intentional techniques by which readers monitor their reading, including previewing the text for its organization, (2) the Problem-Solving Reading Strategies (PROB), are localized, focused problem-solving or repair strategies employed when problems arise in comprehending textual information; for instance, guessing the meaning of unknown words and rereading the text to enhance comprehension, and (3) the Support Reading Strategies (SUP) refer to basic support mechanisms intended to help the readers in understanding the texts including using dictionary, taking notes, and underlining (Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002). Reutzel, Smith, and Fawson (2005) categorized reading strategies as "(1) Comprehension monitoring, (2) Cooperative learning, (3) Graphic organizers, (4) Question answering, (5) Question generating, (6) Text structure, (7) Summarization, (8) Inferencing, and (9) Multiple-

strategy teaching" (p. 278). In this study, among the above-mentioned strategies summarizing and inferencing are hypothesized to promise significant contribution to the reading comprehension process and in turn decrease the sense of apprehension associated with reading in non-native passages for EFL learners.

Investigators have also investigated different aspects of strategy applied in second and foreign language reading, including the following (Bennett, 1989, p. 70):

1. Descriptions of strategies naturally employed by second or foreign-language readers;
2. The transfer of first language strategies to second or foreign language reading;
3. The real usefulness of strategies generally considered successful;
4. Learners' thoughts about what they carry out when they read (their metacognitive perception);
5. The relationship between readers' metacognition and their comprehension and real strategy use; and
6. The effectiveness of training learners to use productive strategies.

Reading strategies research in a second or foreign language has also revealed that strategies can be instructed effectively and that explicit reading strategies instruction aims to enhance reading comprehension (Taylor, Stevens, & Asher, 2006). Therefore, the studies suggest that strategy teaching should be an important component of reading comprehension instruction (Grabe, 2009). For language teachers trying to integrate reading strategies into the language curriculum, identifying and considering important individual differences between learners' strategy usage is also significant to providing the most influential instruction possible (Oxford & Ehrman, 1992). Klapwijk (2015) is of the perspective that learners continue to struggle with it and instructors continue to ignore it in their teaching. The instructors' ignorance of this significant element of the reading process (comprehension) could be attributed to different factors. For instance, Klapwijk (2015) states that instructors simply do not seem to regard comprehension as part of the reading process, are not able to instruct the notion, and are not taught to do so during their teaching training years. Teachers can play a significant role in teaching a variety of reading strategies to improve learners' knowledge about what is going on in the world around them. As Paris, Lipson, and Wixson (1983) pointed out most of the instructors attempt to help their learners to become self-directed learners to read based on their intention, choices, and attempts.

Summarizing Strategy

The reading act requires the use of reading strategies. According to Harderbeck (2006), reading comprehension strategies are mental operations, tools, or plans utilized by readers to improve and develop their comprehension. In addition, reading strategies show how readers see a task, what contextual cues they attend to, how they comprehend the reading passages, and what they carry out when they do not comprehend. Reading strategies ranged from fix-up strategies including rereading difficult parts and guessing the meaning of an unknown word from context, to more main strategies such as summarizing and relating what is being read to the reader's background knowledge. Different investigations showed that more and less proficient readers employ strategies in different ways (Richards & Renandya, 2002). By considering the significance of the comprehension process, investigators must cope with the problem of identifying the best strategy for the aim of contributing to its development. Some might think that summarization as a kind of reading strategy would be a useful strategy to smooth the development of the cognitive process of comprehension (Khoshsima & Rezaeian Tiyar, 2014). According to Corder-Ponce (2000), "summarization is probably the most significant and encompassing of all reading strategies available to the learner for effective studying and comprehension" (p. 330). Summarization is an influential learning strategy that can aid learners in constructing and memorizing a summary of the main propositions from the text. The act of summarization focuses attention on the main points of the texts and provides the reader with a conceptual framework that develops both memory and comprehension. Summarization is based on Strategy Intervention Model (SIM) which regards learners' difficulties by teaching them how to employ strategies (Palincsar, 1987). Knowing how to learn through teaching in summarizing strategy is the major focus of the SIM strategy. Summarizing the act contributed to the purpose of providing a critical foundation of factual and conceptual knowledge since it acted to improve the memory representation of the content beyond that success through reading (Kintsch & Van Dijk, 1978). Moreover, summary writing demonstrates a mixture of reading and writing. Writing a summary of a text can aid students connect the gist of ideas, processing thoughts, rephrasing, and restructuring them in their own words (Pressley, 2002). If instructors become aware of the numerous advantages for learners, and of influential methods of instructing it, they might be convinced to consider summarization as a significant skill that their learners should practice as frequently as possible, as part of an integrated reading and writing program. As learners encounter text in different areas, they require an approach to sort information, and they are required to attend to how people with enough background knowledge identify the main information and summarize it. Asking learners to read and summarize reading parts without the instructor describing and routinely modeling how to utilize a suitable summarization strategy, especially of varying text length, content area, and complexity, will not enhance the proficiency of learners to summarize. Nonetheless, since almost all learning in school entails a learner condensing and recalling what has been read, summarization comprehension strategies are significant to teach. Studies on instructing summarization are mostly according to Brown and Day's (1983) model of text comprehension. Three kinds of events that occur during reading are considered by these models such as: (1) the elements of meaning are integrated into a coherent whole; (2) the whole meaning of the text is condensed into its main notion; and (3) the gist is utilized to modify those elements which have previously been constructed and to have an influence on those yet to be constructed. In the

comprehension process students before having a text-based summary, mentally summarize all the elements into a gist.

Inferencing Strategy

Reading strategies are techniques or conscious acts taken to enhance comprehension and solve problems encountered in reading. According to Martínez (2011), reading strategies consist of "skimming, scanning, inferring, activating schemata, recognizing text structure, using mental imagery, visualizing, generating questions, monitoring comprehension, evaluating strategy use, etc." (p. 21). One of the most significant strategies in reading strategy is drawing inferences. Therefore, in drawing inferences, you are getting at the final meaning of things – what is significant, why it is significant, how one event affects another, and how one occurring leads to another. Simply understanding the facts in reading is not sufficient –you must think about what those facts mean to you (Azizmohammadi, 2013). It is generally argued that reading is an active process in which readers utilize their background knowledge and some contextual clues to make inferences (Smith, 1979, 1982).

Drawing inferences indicates information that is implied or inferred. This means that the information is never obviously stated. Writers often tell the readers more than they state directly. They give them hints that assist readers read between the lines. Utilizing these clues to give readers a deeper comprehension of their reading is called inferring. By inferring, readers go beyond the surface details to consider other meanings that the details propose or imply (not stated). When the meanings of words are not said clearly in the context of the text, they may be implied –that is, proposed or hinted at. When meanings are implied, readers may infer them (Azizmohammadi, 2013). Martínez (2011) also stated her view about drawing inferences: Proficient readers use their prior knowledge about a topic and the information they have gleaned in the text thus far to make predictions about what might happen next. When teachers demonstrate or model their reading processes for students through think-aloud, they often stop and predict what will happen next to show how inferring is essential for comprehending text. Below are some tips and instances for drawing inferences which have been proposed by Smith (2004) as:

1. Assure your inferences rely chiefly on the author's words rather than your senses or experience. You aim to read the author's mind, not create your message.
2. Control to examine if your inference is contradicted (proven wrong) by any statements in the paragraph. If so, it is not a suitable or effective inference.
3. If the passage is a hard one, control to examine if you can identify the statements that led you to your conclusion. This kind of close reading is an effective comprehension check. It will also assist you to recall the material.

Discussion

Concerning anxiety in reading classes, Sellar (2000) explored the relationship between language anxiety and reading anxiety among university students. 89 American university students learning Spanish as a foreign language took part in her study. Different types of instruments were used to collect data. Two scales were used to measure anxiety: The Reading Anxiety Scale (RAS), and the FLCAS (Howritz, et al., 1986). Free written language recall protocol scores and multiple-choice test scores were used to measure comprehension. Also, a think-aloud interview was used to reveal strategies used by students during the reading process. To measure cognitive processes during reading, the Cognitive Interference Questionnaire was utilized. The findings showed a consistent inverse effect of language anxiety on reading comprehension and recall. This study revealed that more highly anxious students remembered less passage content in comparison to less anxious learners. It was concluded that the less anxious students utilized various types of metacognitive strategies than their highly anxious classmates.

In another study conducted by Saito et al. (1999), two aspects of foreign language reading were investigated. They developed the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) to measure the anxiety level of 383 students. Foreign Language Class Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) were used to measure the students' classroom anxiety and reading anxiety, respectively. They found that despite the intuition of teachers, reading in a foreign language is anxiety-provoking to some students. Moreover, the study showed that reading anxiety is distinct from general types of foreign language anxiety. It was also found that increasing students' reading anxiety levels leads to a decrease in students' final grades. Saito et al. (1999) hypothesized that "the participants experienced anxiety as a result of actual difficulties in text processing rather than the reading difficulties stemming from anxiety reactions" (p. 215).

Brantmeier (2005) assessed the effect of students' anxiety levels on reading comprehension tasks among 92 students enrolled in an advanced-level Spanish grammar and composition course. In his study, the anxiety questionnaire was modified according to FLCAS into three categories representing different dimensions of L2 reading and anxiety: general L2 reading; L2 reading and oral tasks, and L2 reading and written tasks. Besides the reading selection, the written recall, and 10 multiple-choice questions, along with a background

questionnaire were used to collect data. It turned out that students at advanced levels of language instruction did not show reading anxiety but expressed anxious feelings about the readings in the upcoming literature courses.

Zarei (2014) investigated the relationship between reading anxiety and motivation, and the effect of reading anxiety and motivation level on the choice of global, supportive, and problem-solving reading strategies. To this end, 120 EFL female pre-university students were given three questionnaires: FLRAS, SORS, and AMQ. The findings showed a significant low positive relationship between reading anxiety and motivation. It was also found that motivation level influences EFL learners' choice of reading strategies. However, no statistically significant differences were found among the effects of reading anxiety levels on the choice of reading strategies.

Marashi and Rahmati (2017) explored the effects of teaching reading strategies on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' reading anxiety. To fulfill the purpose of this study, 55 intermediate EFL learners were selected among a total number of 90 through their performance on a sample piloted Preliminary English Test (PET), and then randomly assigned to two experimental and control groups (27 in the control and 28 in the experimental groups). Subsequently, the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) was administered between the two groups to make sure that both groups were homogeneous in terms of their reading anxiety at the outset. Then both groups underwent the same amount of teaching time (14 sessions) by the same teacher using the same textbook. The students in the experimental group also received instruction on the Super Six Comprehension Strategies (i.e. making connections, predicting, questioning, monitoring, visualizing, and summarizing). Finally, the FLRAS was administered again as the posttest to both groups and their mean scores on the test were compared through an independent samples t-test. The results of 0.05 led to the rejection of the null hypothesis, thereby indicating that there was a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group. In other words, the instruction of reading strategies significantly lowered EFL learners' reading anxiety.

In addition, several studies have also been conducted regarding different types of strategies and their effects on language learning, especially reading comprehension. In a study examining the differences in the reported use of reading strategies when reading academic materials by 302 college students (150 native-English-speaking and 152 ESL students), Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) concluded that: First, both native-speaking and ESL students were aware of almost all of the strategies included in the survey. Secondly, both groups, regardless of their reading ability, reported using cognitive, metacognitive, and supportive strategies. Thirdly, both native-speaking and ESL high-reading-ability students reported using a higher degree of usage for cognitive and metacognitive strategies than lower-reading-ability students in receptive groups. Lastly, it was reported that native-speaking females use a significantly higher frequency of strategies.

In many researches, teaching learners how to employ summarization strategies is considered to have a significant influence on their comprehension (Armbruster, Anderson, & Ostertag, 1987; Doctorow, Wittrock, & Marks, 1978). Doctorow, Wittrock, and Marks (1978) proposed that the process of creating summaries assists readers build relations among notions contained in a text as well as linking these notions to prior knowledge.

Conclusions

Reading in a foreign language is anxiety-provoking to some students. This means that increasing students' reading anxiety levels leads to a decrease in students' final grades. The importance of reading strategies was emphasized by many scholars. It seems that inadequate localized attention to a set of effective strategies in reading is among the reasons that contribute to the learners' difficulties in reading comprehension which leads to anxiety. However, even though such need has been felt and recognized, equipping the learners with satisfactory strategies has not been fulfilled, because most of the language teachers neglect them in their teaching process. Therefore, it is necessary to search for useful strategies to increase the level of reading comprehension and lower the level of anxiety in the EFL context. Among the numerous available strategies applicable to reading, the researcher's main focus was on summarizing strategy and inferencing strategy. Being familiar with these strategies and applying them may help students to become more strategic in the reading process, promote their reading performance, and lower their reading anxiety.

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