Situational Anxiety and its Relation to Reading Proficiency: A Case of Iranian Intermediate EFL Learners

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ABSTRACT

This research was designed to investigate the relationship between situational anxiety and reading proficiency of Iranian intermediate EFL learners. The main research question of the present research sought to answer whether there is any relationship between situational anxiety and reading proficiency. To achieve the objective, 40 students who were studying English at Gofteman English Language Institute in Rasht were selected as Intermediate learners based on their performance on reading component of TOEFL. Learners' age was within range of 15 to 21. The reading component of Test of English as a Foreign Language for identifying the students' level of proficiency and translated State Anxiety Inventory of State and Trait Anxiety Inventory were used as instruments for data collection in this research. The possible relationship between the two variables; namely, state anxiety and reading scores was examined through running descriptive statistics and Pearson product moment correlation (Pearson r). The results obtained indicated that there was a statistically significant relationship between EFL learners' state anxiety and their reading proficiency ($P \leq$ .01). In other words, the findings implied that Iranian EFL students' high state anxiety associated with their low performance in reading and in contrast, low state anxiety led to better performance in reading.

Keywords: Anxiety, Foreign language, Foreign language anxiety, Foreign Language Reading Anxiety, Second Language

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, English is considered as the most widely used language in almost all countries of the world. That is why it is regarded as the first lingua franca (common language) in international communications and science. Also, there has been growing demand for English all around the world. In the teaching and learning of English as a second or foreign language, the effective achievements of four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing are considered important. According to Grabe and Stoller (2001) amongst the four skills reading is regarded to be the most imperative academic language skill since reading is the central means for learning new information. The importance of reading skill is not disregarded for both ESL and EFL learners. Ricahrds and Renandya (2002) argued that reading is