

READING ANXIETY AMONG ARABIC SPEAKING STUDENTS

by

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ABSTRACT

Reading anxiety can become a great hindrance to an Arabic speaking student's language acquisition. The anxiety acts as a barrier to the reading process making it difficult for the student to be able to decode or interact with the text (Krashen, 1983). There is still a limited amount of research with Arabic student participants and focus has been mostly given to other areas of language anxiety (Ahmad et al., 2013; Horwitz, 2010; Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986; Huang, 2012; Saito, Horwitz & Garza, 1999). Therefore, the present study investigated Arabic speaking high school students and teachers' perceptions of the factors that correlate with reading anxiety. A five point Likert scale survey adapted from the research of Ahmad et al. (2013) was implemented to investigate student perceptions. Observations and interviews were conducted to investigate teacher perceptions. Strategy instruction was examined through observations to see whether or not teachers were incorporating strategies within the classroom to reduce reading anxiety. It was found that the Arabic students were suffering from reading anxiety and teachers were finding it difficult to generate effective strategies to alleviate their reading anxiety. Further research is necessary to determine effective strategies and methods for Arabic students to reduce reading anxiety.

Keywords: reading anxiety, Arabic high school English language learners, reading anxiety strategies

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Introduction

The acquisition of language is a difficult and complex process that has been investigated over many years. Researchers have been determined to discover and investigate the factors that cause or correlate with student achievement or failure to provide teachers with the proper techniques, strategies and methods to ensure student development. One area of investigation is English language reading anxiety interference in second language acquisition (Horwitz, 2010).

Problem

The Arabic community possibly comprises one percent of the American population. This particular population began to immigrate into the United States during the last third of the 21st century (Haddad, 2011). As a result, there is a growing number of Arabic English Language Learners (ELLs) within the school district under study that will need to navigate through the reading process to succeed academically (New York State Report Card, 2014). If this population struggles with reading anxiety, they will not be able to acquire the needed English language to succeed academically.

Anxiety is not a simple concept to define, which has caused mixed results and confusion within past research. Many times, factors of reading anxiety were not discussed or investigated (Horwitz, 2010). If specific factors of reading anxiety are never investigated, proper strategies will never be discovered to alleviate the anxiety. Therefore, this research narrowed in on situation-specific reading anxiety and was determined to find the factors of reading anxiety that were experienced by the Arabic-speaking high school ELLs.

One of the best sources of language acquisition that increases comprehensible input is reading (Krashen, 1995). Reading provides students with a richer comprehension of the English language and structure (Huang, 2012). It allows students to acquire enhanced vocabulary and

access information that would not otherwise be obtained (Krashen, 1995). According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress ([NAEP], 2013) ELLs in the twelfth grade were below basic in reading comprehension. This shows that students have only partially mastered the needed reading skills at the twelfth grade level. This is unfortunate and shows that there is a problem in the area of reading comprehension for ELLs.

This problem could stem from reading anxiety experienced by high school Arabic speaking students. Ahmad et al. (2013) explained that Arabic speaking students who experienced reading anxiety were unable to participate effectively in the reading process. Talebinezhad and Rahimi (2013) also discovered a significant negative correlation between reading anxiety and reading comprehension for Arabic speaking students. Students must be able to decode the text in order to acquire a complete understanding of the reading. The anxiety creates a barrier where the student is unable to access the background knowledge to decode or interact with the text, which decreases comprehension and increases anxiety (Atef-Vahid & Kashani, 2011; Boonkongaen, 2014; Dole, Duffy, Roehler & Pearson, 1991; Huang, 2012; Krashen, 1983; MacIntyre, 1995).

Reading anxiety may result from textual or personal factors. Textual factors include unknown vocabulary, unfamiliar culture or unfamiliar topics within the text. Personal factors of reading anxiety include student fear of making errors or worry over the outcomes of reading (Ahmad et al., 2013). When students were faced with one of these factors, it was found that they would become anxious or stressed. The anxiety interfered with their ability to interact with and understand the simple concepts within the text. These off-task thoughts of worry, fear and anxiety hindered the student's ability to access information causing even more anxiety. This became a negative cycle where Arabic speaking students endlessly struggled with reading anxiety (Ahmad et al., 2013, Atef-Vahid & Kashani, 2011; Talebinezhad & Rahimi, 2013).

Most of the research dealt with speakers of languages other than Arabic (Boonkongsaen, 2014; Horwitz, 2010; Huang, 2012). Therefore, while generating the research problem the ESL teacher was asked about the gravity of reading anxiety experienced by his students, which he responded to in uncertainty. With increased awareness from our discussion, the teacher began to perceive that his students struggled with reading anxiety, but was unsure of what factors were causing this. Therefore, further research on the factors of reading anxiety was encouraged.

Purpose

The purpose of the research was to discover whether or not students struggle with reading anxiety and the significance of the personal and textual factors of reading anxiety for the Arabic-speaking high school population. This will determine what factors correlated with reading anxiety to determine what strategies are needed. These factors were investigated through the perceptions of students and teachers. Investigation took place on the strategies used within the classroom to discover if students were being provided support to alleviate reading anxiety. This allowed the research to show if the factors were significant factors of reading anxiety and if strategy instruction is needed. The study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the Arab high school ESL students' perceptions of the factors that contribute to their reading anxiety?
2. What do the teachers perceive as the factors contributing to their reading anxiety?
3. What do the teachers perceive as the strategies for reducing the students' reading anxiety?

Significance

Teacher and student perceptions were studied to better understand the personal and textual factors of reading anxiety. This is significant due to the lack of research on teacher and Arabic students' perceptions of reading anxiety. Mellati, Fatemi and Motallebzadeh (2013) believed that it was imperative to understand teacher perceptions if one desired to improve teacher practices and educational programs. These beliefs affect the learning experience for Arabic speaking students and therefore are important for consideration. Levine (2003) explained that teacher perceptions were important for furthering research to improve the student reading experience.

Reading is an important part of the language acquisition process (Krashen, 1995, 1983). Teachers need to provide the opportunity for their students to become effective readers. Reading anxiety is something that hinders reading effectiveness. Therefore, the present research focused on reading anxiety factors to provide a foundation of knowledge on the factors of reading anxiety perceived by Arabic speaking high school students. This will allow future research to investigate strategies for students to overcome their reading anxiety and will increase teacher awareness on the significance of student reading anxiety factors.

To conclude, most of the research focused on either foreign language anxiety as a whole or speaking anxiety and failed to notice that reading anxiety was just as important (Ahmad et al., 2013; Horwitz, 2010; Horwitz et al., 1986; Huang, 2012; Saito et al., 1999). Therefore the present research will aid in providing evidence on the factors of Arabic students' reading anxiety. This will provide need information for teachers, schools and future research and will aid in student development.

Literature Review

The literature review provides the history of various perspectives on anxiety up to the present, defines reading anxiety, and then delves deeper into the factors of reading anxiety that were investigated. The personal and textual factors are correlated with reading comprehension and anxiety, followed by a discussion on the strategies to alleviate these factors of reading anxiety. This provides the foundation for the present study to investigate student and teacher perceptions of reading anxiety and how strategies may alleviate that reading anxiety.

Development of the Research on Anxiety

Anxiety has a history of complexity and confusion. According to Horwitz (2010) the first researcher only inferred anxiety as a probable learner variable (Guiora, Beit-Hallahmi, Brannon, Dull, & Scovel, 1972). Researchers became intrigued by the topic, but many of the earlier studies had varied results regarding the relationship of anxiety to the learning process. Most researchers did not fully understand, describe or define the type of anxiety being investigated and rarely provided factors that caused or correlated with reading anxiety (Horwitz, 2010).

Scovel (1978) articulated how a wide range of student variables were being placed under the same umbrella of affective factors only divergent from cognitive variables. For instance, intrinsic and extrinsic variables are different from affective variables, yet they were being studied under the same label. He argued for a more explicit definition of anxiety distinct from other learner variables. After this, studies started to show more distinct classification leading to trait, state, achievement, facilitative-debilitative, and lastly situation-specific anxiety (Horwitz, 2010).

Gardner (1985) was one of the first to explain anxiety as occurring in a specific situation. Krashen (1983) expounded upon this with his affective filter hypothesis. According to the hypothesis the students, during a specific task may only be able to access a limited amount of

language input. This is due to the raising of the affective filter due to a certain learner variable causing a barrier to the student's comprehension of new information. Gardner (1985) would agree that situation-specific language anxiety would be one of those variables that could raise the affective filter.

Horwitz et al. (1986) made a huge contribution by providing evidence and a more complete definition. Foreign language anxiety was expressed as the "subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system" (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 125). Researchers confirmed that language anxiety was in fact a situation-specific type of anxiety that affected oral performance, reading and academic language achievement (Horwitz et al., 1986; Huang, 2012; Saito et al., 1999; Yan & Horwitz, 2008).

Huang (2012) explained that situation-specific anxiety might have been stable over a period of time, but inconsistent as to where it presented itself and was triggered by a specific context including the four language domains. Students struggled to learn a language due to anxiety because they dreaded the learning process, feared failure and negative evaluation, froze while having to speak in class, had difficulty concentrating or hearing the sounds and structures of the language, came from language backgrounds that were extremely different from the English language, or avoided learning through skipping class or declining to complete homework (Horwitz et al., 1986, Huang, 2012).

Speaking anxiety was seen to negatively correlate with speaking performance achievement (Liu, & Jackson, 2014; Raju & Eng, 2012; Woodrow, 2006) and listening comprehension anxiety proved to lower student comprehensible input (Xu, 2011). Reading anxiety negatively correlated with reading achievement (Saito et al., 1999; Huang, 2012; Liu &

Samimy, 2012) and writing anxiety negatively correlated with writing achievement (Scullin, & Baron, 2013). The present research focused on reading anxiety due to it being mostly overlooked within the research (Saito et al., 1999).

Most of the early research was conducted in university foreign language classroom settings (Horwitz, 2010). There is an abundance of research that included speakers of English as a foreign language and other speakers learning English as a foreign language. Most of the non-native English speakers were Chinese, French or Spanish (Horwitz et al., 1986; Horwitz, 2010; Huang, 2012). Therefore, my present research seeks to provide evidence of how Arabic-speaking high school students perceive second language reading anxiety.

Reading Anxiety Defined

Language anxiety is usually researched through the speaking domain overlooking reading as something that causes little to no anxiety (Horwitz, 2010; Huang, 2012; Liu & Jackson, 2014; Saito et al., 1999; Raju & Eng, 2012). Saito et al. (1999) explained that reading anxiety is in fact a separate situation from foreign language anxiety with different factors, different outcomes and in need of further attention. Students may not feel anxious during the entire day or when speaking or listening, but may feel anxiety during the reading process alone. This shows that reading anxiety is a specific situation of anxiety (Huang; 2012). The student does not experience anxiety until he or she is faced with reading and then the anxiety begins to form and block the student's ability to decode or interact with the text. This anxiety blocks the students' ability to comprehend the text and access new information. The student feels anxiety through nervousness, worry, stress or apprehension due to reading aloud or silently (Ahmad et al., 2013; Horwitz et al., 1986; Horwitz, 2010; Huang, 2012).

There are two types of reading settings including formal and non-formal. The formal setting includes the educational, occupational, and professional world. The non-formal setting entails the texts that one chooses to read subconsciously or consciously (Grabe & Stoller, 2011). For language learners, reading comprehension can become a huge obstacle towards achievement. Reading comprehension comes from prior knowledge and the strategies that the student uses. Strategies are used to combine new information with prior knowledge to tackle the meaning of the text in both formal and non-formal settings (Dole et al., 1991). Reading is an “active process of emerging expertise, where readers develop strategies for comprehending increasingly sophisticated texts in increasingly complex situational contexts” (Dole et al., 1991, p. 255). It is a process where students decode words to find meaning.

Reading anxiety is seen as something that is in the middle of the reading process hindering the interacting and decoding of the text. Anxiety blocks the mind from comprehending the text by distracting the reader’s attention on to off-task and irrelevant thoughts of nervousness, worry and stress (Boonkongsaen, 2014; MacIntyre, 1995). Students may be able to read the words within the text, but understand nothing due to anxiety. Saito et al. (1999) describes that certain languages may lead to different degrees of anxiety. Students expressed feeling frozen, nervous, intimidated, confused, worried and tense during the reading process (Song, 2010, p. 60). Teachers need to become aware of reading anxiety factors in order to find effective strategies for students to alleviate their reading anxiety. This will allow students to read more, access more knowledge and increase comprehension (Ahmad et al., 2013; Huang, 2012; Krashen, 1983; Jafarigohar, 2012).

Factors Influencing Reading Anxiety

Reading is an important language domain needed for students to increase access to new information, enhance understanding and develop deeper levels of reading comprehension (Çapan & Pektaş, 2013; Huang, 2012). An educational deficit can occur when reading anxiety becomes a mental block towards accessing information (Huang, 2012; Krashen, 1983). In the following, discussion takes place on the probable factors of reading anxiety for Arabic speaking students (Ahmad et al., 2013).

Textual factors and anxiety. Textual factors include unknown vocabulary, unfamiliar topics and unfamiliar cultural topics within texts. These factors are presented within the text itself and are separate from personal factors, which are presented later (Ahmad et al., 2013). The following will discuss students' perceptions of the textual factors.

Unknown vocabulary and structure. Unknown vocabulary and structure are textual factors that present themselves when students come across difficult or unknown words in a text or when the syntactic or semantic structure is different from their own native language (Ahmad et al., 2013; Martinez & Murphy, 2011; Sedita, 2005).

Vocabulary allows students to decode a text and connect new information to their background knowledge. Without the proper amount of vocabulary they are unable to do this, which then causes anxiety. Ahmad et al. (2013) studied student perceptions to discover factors that correlated with reading anxiety. The students expressed that if the text included an increased amount of new vocabulary words it increased the difficulty of the text. The new vocabulary words made it challenging for students to decode, interact and decipher the meaning within the text as well as the other vocabulary words. Many students did not feel as though they had a wide enough range of vocabulary to understand a variety of texts. When students were unable to

understand the vocabulary it caused them to feel anxious, frustrated, less motivated and ultimately find reading in English to be unimportant.

Vocabulary was discovered to be the second highest textual factor that caused students reading anxiety within Kuru-Gonen's (2009) research. When these students faced anxiety due to the overwhelming amount of unknown vocabulary, they struggled to focus on the task at hand because they focused on off-task thoughts of reading anxiety. The anxiety hindered the students' ability to use context clues and background knowledge due to the overwhelming off-task thoughts that blocked the reading process.

Research conducted by Liu and Samimy (2012) and Saito et al. (1999) showed that students suffered from reading anxiety when faced with texts that contained syntactic differences. Anxiety decreased as the syntactic structure of the text became more familiar to the students' native language. When students were provided with a text that included syntactic similarities they showed less anxiety and were able to understand more than when given a text that was not similar syntactically to their native language (Liu & Samimy, 2012).

Within research conducted by Song (2010) English Language Learners (ELLs) expressed difficulty with the organization of English texts. Just finding the topic sentence took considerable amounts of time because students were unfamiliar with the usual English paragraph structure. Differences between the first and second language structures caused students increased reading anxiety as well as confusion (Song, 2010).

Farran, Bingham and Matthews (2012), Mace (2008) and Tawalbeh (2013) discussed the differences between the Arabic and English languages. Arabic is written left to right, the alphabetical system looks vastly different, negations and articles are not similar and letters can

be joined together within the Arabic language. These differences may cause increased reading anxiety for Arabic speaking high school students.

Unfamiliar topic. An unfamiliar topic was explained by Ahmad et al. (2013) to be a text that contained unfamiliar, uninteresting or difficult subjects or topics. Having background knowledge on the topic in a text can greatly increase reading comprehension and minimize likelihood of reading anxiety. Familiar or relative topics to the student's field of study made the reading process more enjoyable for students.

Kuru-Gonen (2009) conducted a study by investigating the student perceptions of the factors that caused reading anxiety. The primary factor of reading anxiety experienced by students was the factor of unfamiliar, difficult or uninteresting topics within texts. Students explained that when reading, they would skip unknown words in hopes that the context clues would define the word for them. When the text was unfamiliar they were unable to use context clues and had difficulty finding any clarification for unknown words (Kuru-Gonen, 2009; Song, 2010). This showed that this factor might correlate with the factor of unknown vocabulary. As the unfamiliarity within the text increases the unknown vocabulary will become more challenging to decipher, which may lead to even more anxiety. Students also struggled to understand the concepts within the text when the text was unfamiliar.

When students are faced with a difficult, uninteresting or unfamiliar texts they tend to not read for enjoyment, which leads to anxiety and the development of an ineffective reader. The reading process becomes long, arduous and overwhelming. Students should be on an active journey during the reading process and not frustrated or anxious (Dole et al., 1991). The anxiety makes the process unpleasant and the student cannot fully appreciate the reading material at hand. This becomes a vicious cycle that leads to an increase in student reading anxiety.

Unfamiliar culture. Unfamiliar culture is defined within the research as the “interaction between the reader and the shared knowledge of the cultural history in the printed materials” (Ahmad et al., 2013, p. 92). As the amount of unfamiliar cultural content increased within a text the harder it became for students to comprehend, which caused increased reading anxiety (Ahmad et al., 2013; Yousef, Karimi & Janfeshan, 2014). Ahmad et al. (2013) found after conducting research, that students expressed difficulty with English texts that included words with multiple meanings. Many students worried that they could not understand the full meaning of the text because they did not understand the culture. Students would come to the realization that the meaning they were giving to the text was illogical due to cultural misunderstanding, which then sparked immediate anxiety.

Çapan, and Pektaş (2013), Saito et al. (1999) and Kuru-Gonen (2009) found that unfamiliar culture within a text caused reading anxiety. Students expressed feeling anxious when they came across texts with unfamiliar culture, which then created a mental block where they were unable to comprehend the reading material (Kuru-Gonen, 2009). Saito et al. (1999) provided evidence that students had lower comprehension and increased anxiety when studying languages that were very different culturally from their home culture.

Ahmad et al. (2013) discussed that the most difficult texts for students were cultural texts. The students in the study were seen as having deficient cultural awareness, which could have generated increased anxiety. Suggestions were made to instruct students on strategies to increase cultural awareness to provide students with the proper methods to cope with reading anxiety (Çapan & Pektaş, 2013; Ahmad et al., 2013). The Arabic and American culture may be very different, which could increase student anxiety. The Arabic culture will be discussed in detail within a later section on Arabic culture.

Personal factors and anxiety. Personal factors that may correlate with reading anxiety include worrying about reading effects and fear of making errors. These are separate from the textual factors mentioned above. They may relate to the factors within the text, but focus on the students' personality or inward feelings that become factors of anxiety (Ahmad et al., 2013). The following will present student perceptions of the personal factors of reading anxiety.

Worry about reading effects. Worry about reading effects includes student worry that they will not be able to understand what the author is trying to say or that they will not be able to understand the simple concepts or key ideas within the text (Ahmad et al., 2013). The student then worries about the outcomes of these inabilities including their grades and what others will think of them. Ahmad et al. (2013) found that students worried about the ambiguity within the English text. Anxiety formed from the student worrying of whether or not they would be able to interpret the ambiguity properly.

Students worried that when they would read aloud they would not understand the text because they would focus on their performance instead. When students read silently it lowered their anxiety and they were able to gain back their focus on trying to comprehend the reading. Students explained that they became unsure of what they were reading because of their anxiety. They worried that they would not have enough vocabulary, cultural awareness, or knowledge to understand the concepts within the text. When the students worried about not being able to understand the text that they were going to read it caused their anxiety to increase (Ahmad et al., 2013).

The study conducted by Brantmeier (2005) showed that students worried about future reading classes and texts. They feared that they would not understand the texts and would not succeed academically. The class that students were enrolled in was created to prepare students

for future classes where they would be faced with unfamiliar, difficult and authentic texts.

Although these students were in this class, they still felt anxious about future classes and whether or not they would be able to comprehend future reading assignments. However, it is interesting to note that the students did not express feeling anxious while reading the present classroom materials on their own. Students worried about reading aloud because they thought that they would not be able to focus on comprehension, but would instead focus on their performance. They worried about having to answer comprehension questions after reading aloud knowing their focus would be centered on off-task thoughts of anxiety instead of comprehending the text (Brantmeier, 2005).

Fear of making errors. Ahmad et al. (2013) defined the fear of making errors factor as the specific situation of reading anxiety when students would fear making pronunciation errors or other mistakes while reading aloud in front of their peers. Reading aloud is a good practice that allows students to gain better pronunciation and confidence (Birch, 2002). Ahmad et al. (2013) found that 59% of the students feared reading aloud because they could make possible errors. 74% of the students preferred to prepare before reading aloud by researching and practicing the phonetic transcript of the passage. Some students wanted to avoid the situation altogether. In the end this activity made students focus on their performance of the text more than their reading comprehension and increased their reading anxiety (Ahmad et al., 2013).

Shabani (2012) found that students feared pronunciation errors, students laughing at them, speaking without preparation and so on. This study looked into speaking anxiety, which is similar to when students read aloud in front of their classmates. They are both performance based and show that students tend to fear peer evaluation, lack focus, and feel increased anxiety during the reading process.

When students read aloud they may feel anxious especially if competition exists or if the activity is graded. The anxiety makes it impossible for students to do their best because it forms into the focal point of the task while blocking the students' ability to comprehend the text (Birch, 2002; Huang, 2012).

Teacher perceptions of textual and personal factors. After reviewing the literature on student perceptions, discussion will now take place on teacher perceptions of the influence of general language anxiety factors on the student's language acquisition experience. Little research was found on the teacher perceptions of the influence that the factors of general language anxiety have on the language acquisition process of students and no research was found on the teacher perceptions of the influence that the factors of reading anxiety have on the students' reading process. This shows the need for further research on the perceptions of teachers. This section of the literature review will show that teacher perceptions are very important and affect the instructional tendencies and strategies used within the classroom as well as student development and achievement (Darwish, 2012; Trang, Baldauf & Moni 2013).

Levine (2003) conducted research to better understand student and teacher perceptions of anxiety while using the target language (TL). The results showed that teachers usually perceived higher levels of anxiety within the students than the students perceived. This was especially true for discussion of grammar, tests and administrative information in the foreign language. This shows that teacher perceptions may not be in congruence with student perceptions. Therefore, it is important to include both while conducting research to provide a wider foundation and a more complete perspective on the true student experience. It was also suggested that to create the most relaxing environment the TL should be used along with the first language (L1). Using the L1 in the classroom aided in scaffolding, understanding grammar, accessing the background

knowledge of students and decreasing anxiety (Levine, 2003). Teachers believed that using the TL would create more anxiety for students, but it was found that if students were accustomed to using the TL they did not suffer from as much language anxiety as those not accustomed.

Research conducted by Trang et al. (2013) found that three out of eight teachers found anxiety to be significant, three believed it not significant and one was unaware of the existence of foreign language anxiety (FLA). Although only three out of the eight teachers saw FLA to be a problem, seven teachers had students express to them that they were experiencing anxiety. One teacher who believed it to be a problem used student comments to improve her instruction. She provided more examples, strategies and ways to cope with anxiety for her students when they reported struggling with anxiety. Other teachers noted personal factors creating anxiety for students who would fear speaking in front of classmates. They feared failure, making mistakes and the outcomes of those mistakes including being laughed at and possible disappointment. Most of the teachers saw FLA as unimportant and thought the amount of students experiencing FLA was low. One teacher noticed anxiety in her students through confused looks but decided that it was not a big enough problem to address in her teaching. Another teacher thought it serious enough that if not addressed it would greatly affect students in a negative way causing fear of learning English. This shows that teachers have a widespread and varied viewpoint of student anxiety.

Teacher perceptions and beliefs are important because in many cases they drive the instruction (Darwish, 2012). Darwish (2012) found that teachers perceived students to understand a given topic when in reality students needed reinforcement. Many students would say words and make noises, but had no idea what they were doing. It is important for the teacher to know how the student is experiencing the TL. If the teacher incorrectly believes the student

understands the concepts it can be detrimental towards the student's educational growth. This can go along with anxiety as well. If the teacher perceives incorrectly it could affect his or her teaching and in the end the student's learning (Darwish, 2012).

Reading Comprehension and Reading Anxiety

Reading anxiety can become a barrier in the middle of the reading process where the students are unable to interact with and decode the text. Krashen (1983) explained this through his Affective Filter Hypothesis. When reading a text a student accesses background knowledge or other strategies to decode and interact with a text. If a student has anxiety, this process is blocked or the affective filter is raised and the student is unable to interact with the reading. The student's focus is entirely set on the anxiety instead of tackling the text at hand (Boonkongsaen, 2014; Krashen, 1983; Saito et al., 1999; MacIntyre, 1995). Therefore, as anxiety increases reading comprehension decreases (Krashen, 1983).

Talebinezhad and Rahimi (2013) conducted research with high school Arabic speaking students learning English as a foreign language and found a significant negative correlation between reading anxiety and reading achievement. It was suggested by the researchers to investigate reading anxiety further due to the significance of reading anxiety on future success or failure in reading performance and comprehension in the target language. Jafarigozar (2012) also found a significant negative correlation between reading anxiety and reading comprehension. It was suggested within the research to provide students with proper strategies and a safe environment to limit anxiety and increase comprehension.

Reading comprehension and reading anxiety correlate negatively with one another (Jafarigozar, 2012; Talebinezhad & Rahimi, 2013). Therefore, strategies that aid in increasing comprehension may also aid in decreasing anxiety. Therefore this section will discuss the

relationship between reading comprehension and anxiety to provide a foundation for the following section on strategy instruction.

Reading comprehension and textual factors. Vocabulary is an important part of the reading process and as stated before is a factor that may cause reading anxiety for students. Most of the research to date explains vocabulary to be individual words and their meaning. Martinez and Murphy (2011) go beyond this to also include phrases, semantic structures and idiomatic expressions. English Language Learners (ELLs) might know the definition of individual words, but within a certain context have no idea what the words mean. It was discovered that as the vocabulary, expressions and phrases increased in difficulty the student's ability to comprehend the reading material decreased (Martinez & Murphy, 2011).

In Ahmad et al.'s (2013) research, students expressed increased anxiety as the vocabulary became increasingly difficult and unknown. It was expressed that this factor of anxiety could be the reason for why students struggled with reading comprehension because the anxiety from the increased difficulty in vocabulary was blocking the students' ability to comprehend the material. Instead of trying to understand the text the students were focusing on off-task thoughts of anxiety. Kuru-Gonen (2009) found that anxiety lowered the students' ability to decipher the vocabulary, which lowered their comprehension of the text (Kuru-Gonen, 2009).

An unfamiliar topic comprises a text that is difficult, unknown or uninteresting to the reader (Ahmad et al., 2013). According to the Common Core State State Standards (CCSS, 2014) students are supposed to begin looking at texts closely using critical thinking skills starting in kindergarten. By the time these students reach high school they should be able to read difficult texts, analyze the structure and determine point of view (CCSS, 2014). Therefore, students need to be able to understand difficult and sometimes uninteresting texts to succeed throughout

school. It was discussed earlier that according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress ([NAEP], 2013) ELLs in the twelfth grade were below basic in reading comprehension. This shows that ELLs were struggling with reading comprehension, which could lead to an increase in student reading anxiety.

Baker et al. (2011) discussed that texts that included unfamiliar topics were usually texts that students read to grow academically and not necessarily for enjoyment. However, within their research, some students preferred to read this type of literature. The more challenging texts tended to include vocabulary words that were “difficult, abstract, specialized, and technical” and syntactically ambiguous sections (Attaprechakul, 2013; Baker et al., 2011, p. 199). Attaprechakul (2013) showed evidence that students struggled with difficult texts and usually tackled the texts at extremely slow rates. Many students found it challenging to grasp the main ideas even when they were presented clearly.

Talebinezhad and Rahimi (2013) went further and investigated how difficult or uninteresting texts correlated with student anxiety and reading performance. It was found that when students perceived the target language reading to be more difficult their level of anxiety increased, which then lowered their comprehension of the text. This shows that unfamiliar or difficult topics create anxiety as well as lower comprehension. However, within the research conducted by Wu (2011) anxiety and reading comprehension showed no significant correlation when the text became familiar to students and when students were given increased time to study the texts before taking comprehension tests.

Yousef (et al., 2014) determined through research that Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Arabic speaking students might not be familiar with the culture of the target language’s community leading to misunderstanding in texts with cultural topics from the target

language's community. As the text became more unfamiliar to the students, their anxiety increased and their comprehension decreased (Talebinezhad & Rahimi, 2013; Wu, 2011). During the reading process students accessed background knowledge to decipher the meaning of the new information presented within the text (Sedita, 2005; Yousef et al., 2014). This background information included the cultural knowledge that a student possessed. If the student did not possess the proper background knowledge of the culture they were not be able to connect the new information to their prior knowledge (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011; McNeil, 2011). Students need more than just a wide vocabulary to decrease their anxiety and increase their reading comprehension. They need cultural awareness and cross-cultural background knowledge. The amount of background knowledge a student has within a wide variety of cultures will determine how difficult cultural texts are to understand.

McNeil (2011) found that using the strategy of questioning the text provides students with greater comprehension than accessing student background knowledge. If a student learns to ask a text the right questions and investigates the meaning, they may comprehend more. With that being said, background knowledge still plays a significant role in comprehension. As the cultural content of a passage increased in cultural similarity, anxiety decreased and the student's ability to decipher the meaning of the text increased (Talebinezhad & Rahimi, 2013; Wu, 2011; Yousef et al., 2014).

Reading comprehension and personal factors. Worry about reading effects is a personal factor of reading anxiety experienced when the student is faced with a text and becomes worried that they will not understand the author's intent even if they understand all of the words. Students also worry that they will focus on their reading performance, while reading aloud instead of understanding the text. When students are faced with a reading material, they feel an

instant state of worry if they suffer from this factor of situation-specific reading anxiety (Ahmad et al., 2013). The fear of making errors factor of reading anxiety is experienced when students fear negative peer evaluation or making pronunciation errors while reading aloud (Ahmad et al., 2013). It was found within the research of Talebinezhad and Rahimi (2013) that personal factors of reading anxiety inhibited the student's ability to comprehend the text at hand and increased reading anxiety.

Many ELLs feel as though they are constantly behind or deficient in their second language. This leads to worrying that they will not understand the text, increasing their reading anxiety and then lowering their reading comprehension (Porter & Bruett, 2009; Talebinezhad & Rahimi, 2013). When students feel limited, they worry about their limitations and fear that they will make errors in front of their peers (Porter & Bruett, 2009). This also leads to decreased comprehension and increased anxiety.

Ahmad (et al., 2013) discussed that the reading anxiety factor of fear lowered the student's ability to comprehend the reading material. Atef-Vahid and Kashani (2011) discovered a negative correlation between the factor of fear of making errors and reading achievement. Suggestions were made that teachers should create an environment where errors are welcomed and allowed. Students should be allowed to practice before reading aloud, or the teacher should decrease the amount of reading to make the situation less overwhelming (Porter & Bruett, 2009).

To conclude, both personal and textual factors of anxiety do correlate negatively with reading comprehension negatively. However there was a limited amount of research that specifically correlated comprehension to reading anxiety. It is interesting to note that some of the researchers projected that the proper amount of reading anxiety could aid in student growth and development (Atef-Vahid & Kashani, 2011; Talebinezhad & Rahimi, 2013). However, since

most of the research showed a negative correlation between anxiety and comprehension, certain strategies used to increase comprehension may also aid in decreasing anxiety. Therefore the next section will include strategies that aid in both reading comprehension and anxiety.

Some Specific Strategies to Reduce Reading Anxiety

Within the present research, teachers were interviewed to study their perceptions of student anxiety. These perceptions may cause them to teach and not teach certain strategies. Teachers were asked about how they incorporated strategies into their classroom. This began investigation on whether or not strategies helped students overcome their reading anxiety. Students may show less anxiety if teachers provide increased strategy-instruction. With the proper tools, students should be able to overcome reading anxiety (Chen, 2007; Lesaux, Kieffer, Faller & Kelley, 2010; Lien, 2011; Song, 2010; Vogt & Echevarria, 2008).

Strategy instruction is the inclusion of strategies within the classroom setting to allow for student success. Strategies enhance the students' ability to read and comprehend information as well as lower their reading anxiety. They provide a way to tackle the reading in a comfortable way without stressing or worrying over the reading effects. Without the proper tools students will not be able to overcome their reading anxiety. Therefore it is important to provide strategies within instruction. Although this may be true, further research needs to be conducted to discover what strategies lower reading anxiety. The following strategies help to improve student reading comprehension and lower reading anxiety and should be implemented by teachers (Chen, 2007; Lesaux et al., 2010; Lien, 2011; Song, 2010; Vogt & Echevarria, 2008).

To increase vocabulary knowledge and familiarity with a text a student needs to be able to access background knowledge, draw inferences, and question the text to reach a deeper understanding of the text (Dole et al., 1991; Lesaux et al., 2010). Castillo and Bonilla (2014)

expressed that when students used strategies including skimming, scanning and making predictions it allowed the students to delve deeper in the text and increased their reading comprehension. When this happened the students were able to understand more, read a variety of texts, gain a wider perspective and increased in cultural awareness.

To access background knowledge, students need to have a wide enough vocabulary foundation. Some strategies that improved vocabulary knowledge included student creation of personal definitions, dictionaries and flipbooks (Dole et al., 1991; Lesaux et al., 2010; Vogt & Echevarria, 2008). Teachers demonstrated to students how to use context clues while reading to understand the unknown words within a text (Lesaux et al., 2010). Demonstration of strategies lead to increased use of strategies and to students using the strategies correctly increasing the effectiveness of the strategies incorporated within the classroom (Attaprechakul, 2013). Lien (2011) and Song (2010) found that students who used reading comprehension strategies including context clues, guessing meaning, accessing background knowledge, translating, taking notes, strategies involving inferences, using context clues, and guessing for meaning showed decreased reading anxiety and increased comprehension.

Within the class context the whole class can generate classroom definitions, work in pairs to find meaning in a text, create sentences with unknown vocabulary, solve idiom match-up games, generate taped texts, use unknown words within different contexts, provide multiple meanings for vocabulary words and create a four corner vocabulary worksheets (Lesaux et al., 2010; Vogt & Echevarria, 2008). Taped text is a strategy where students adapt the text by deleting unknown words and filling them with other words or synonyms in place of the unknown word.

Semantic mapping is another strategy that may be used in instruction to improve vocabulary knowledge and unfamiliar topics within texts. This is where the teacher writes a word on the board or in front of the room, students copy the word on a piece of paper, categorize it and write as much as they know about the word including examples, synonyms and antonyms (Rekrut, 1996; Reyes & Molner, 1991).

Chunking is another strategy that can be used to aid in student comprehension of unfamiliar topics and cultural concepts within texts (Porter & Bruett, 2009). Within this strategy, students break down the difficult text into smaller manageable sections. Each section is then summarized to gain deeper meaning while making the text more familiar and less overwhelming. Lien (2011) and Chen (2007) also said that students who were able to analyze a text and take notes showed lower levels of reading anxiety.

The next strategy to be discussed is called jigsaw. Students are split up into groups and then within those groups each student chooses a short section of the text to read, analyze and then teach to the rest of the group. Before the student becomes the teacher, he or she meets with other students in the classroom from other groups who chose the same section. They discuss and analyze the section together to master understanding and then go back to their groups to present their section. This was shown to increase student comprehension because it reduced the overwhelming size of the text, decreased reading anxiety, allowed students the opportunity to ask for clarification with other students who were at varying language levels, and the students became experts before presenting (Reyes & Molner, 1991).

The unfamiliar cultural concepts within texts will be easier for students if they gain cultural awareness (Yousef et al., 2014). Therefore, it actually helps to continue reading and studying cultures to gain more knowledge. Before reading the cultural text, the teacher should

activate the student's background knowledge and have students define, as a class, the unknown vocabulary and sections within the text including the cultural content to provide students with a better understanding (Anthony, 2008). Khatib and Nasrollahi (2012) suggested using short stories with language learners to increase cultural awareness. Unfortunately, the researchers saw no significant difference of cultural awareness between students who read the short stories and those who did not.

A strategy that can be used by students to understand a text with cultural or unfamiliar content is the think-aloud strategy. The teacher should demonstrate this strategy first to students by reading a passage aloud. The teacher will pause at challenging sections and ask questions out loud, write in the margins and write down questions about unknown culture. After reading the text, the teacher will go back to the questions and try to answer them with the class using the classroom resources. This strategy can be accomplished in small groups as well. This allows students to discuss difficult sections with others in the class who may have more cultural awareness and the students can help each other come to a better understanding of the text. This strategy has been shown to decrease reading anxiety (Anthony, 2008).

In a study conducted by Huang (2012) a positive correlation between foreign language anxiety and reading anxiety was found, and there were different factors discussed that were considered to be significant reading anxiety factors. Some of them were personal factors including self-confidence and worry, which were attributed to students having unrealistic goals. It was suggested that students should learn to create realistic and healthy goals or expectations to reduce reading anxiety.

Allowing for ambiguity in the text was a strategy that students used when they did not know a word or phrase within a reading. The student usually skipped over unknown words and

allowed for the context at some point in time to define the word or phrase for them. Students with higher confidence and lower reading anxiety used this strategy. They did not start to feel anxious when they came across something they did not know, but stayed calm and had confidence in their ability to figure it out by the end. These students allowed themselves to take their time with the text so that they would be able to understand more. These strategies provided students with the proper tools to gain confidence in their ability to problem solve and decrease student reading anxiety and worry (Song, 2010).

Cooperative learning strategies allowed students to overcome their worry of reading effects. These strategies included a lot of group work where students could ask each other for clarification to feel confident in their knowledge before presenting their comprehension of the text. Students were able to work with other students at various levels of English proficiency to help each other grow and understand difficult texts and concepts. This allowed the students to feel confident and lowered the student's reading anxiety (Rekrut, 1996; Reyes & Molner, 1991).

Fear of making errors according to Ahmad et al. (2013) was a factor that caused reading anxiety for students during the reading process when they were reading aloud in front of peers. Many times the students were afraid of making errors in front of their friends, which made them think of off-task thoughts of fear instead of comprehension. In Porter and Bruett's (2009) research, the teacher talked to students about not worrying about reading effects. Teachers provided students with slips of paper that contained quotes from a text that the students would later repeat out loud in front of the class. Before the students read the slips aloud, they practiced pronouncing the words to the teacher and asked questions for clarification. The teacher had students focus on the pronunciation and fluidity of their performance in front of the class instead

of understanding the character within the sentence given. This allowed students to feel less overwhelmed and reduced the amount to focus on.

To conclude, strategies may help to ease student anxiety while reading a text, which may help increase student comprehension. The strategies discussed were shown to lower reading anxiety and increase reading comprehension (Chen, 2007; Lesaux et al., 2010; Lien, 2011; Song, 2010; Vogt & Echevarria, 2008). Therefore, the present research will look to see if teachers provide instruction in strategy-use. This may show why students feel or do not feel anxious during the reading process. It may also explain why certain factors are more significant than others.

Arabic Language and Culture

It is important to know the population being studied to have better understanding of why they may be experiencing anxiety. Therefore, basic information is included about the Arabic speaking high school population that participated in the research.

Differences in the English and Arabic languages. According to Ennaji (2005) there are three major dialects of Arabic, including Classical, Standard and Moroccan Arabic. Classical Arabic (CA) is used in the Islamic religion, classical poetry and literature, Islamic Affairs, and in the Ministries of Justice. Moroccan Arabic (MA) is mostly spoken and used in colloquial settings. Standard Arabic (SA) is used within the media, political or science discourse, schools and in writing. SA was derived from CA into a simplified version and therefore very similar to CA. This is important because it became the middle ground between the varieties of the Arabic dialects, and includes a written form. Therefore, it is used within the school systems, encouraged by many Arabic governments, and use within the modernized culture of the Arab world. CA allows no linguistic change and therefore has become fossilized and difficult to use in the

modern context. SA allows for change and creation of new words. Due to SA being used within the schools, it will be used to discuss differences between the English and Arabic languages. Some students, who use a form of Arabic that does not have a written form, may suffer from increased reading anxiety compared to others who do not (Ennaji, 2005).

The first difference is that SA is written from right to left and English is written from left to right. The other difference is that SA is an alphabetical language, but not like English (Mace, 2008). Short vowels are usually not written and letters can be joined together into one word depending on where they are placed. The SA alphabetical Semitic language system looks vastly different from the English alphabetical system (Farran et al., 2012; Mace, 2008). Students also may struggle with negations and articles in English (Tawalbeh, 2013). These may play a role in the students' reading anxiety.

There are some similarities between SA and English because English has been influential in the creation of SA within the linguistic syntactic and lexical areas of the written language. Over time some words have been taken from the English language and SA has started to use the subject-verb-object order, which is similar to English, as well as their traditional verb-subject-object order. Lastly SA, unlike CA, started using punctuation, which is similar to English (Mace, 2008). These similarities may help student comprehension.

Cultural differences. Within the American school system some believed that this particular population of students were being discriminated against, overlooked or neglected. Within a conference in Detroit, it was found that students might not have been getting the proper education they needed to succeed. The students from Detroit only had one ESL teacher, which according to the school counselors was not good enough (Higgins, 2012). The superintendent of the Detroit school district denied all claims of student neglect.

Haddad (2011) explains that because of September 11, Arabs as well as their Islamic faith are viewed in a very negative way in America. Even in the media including video games and Disney, the Arabic community is perceived negatively (Al-Khatib, 1999). This impacts their learning because it impacts those that are around them in the school environment. The culture creates the perceptions teachers and other students have about this group. This then impacts the way the teachers view Arabic students and changes the way the teachers provide instruction. The negative perceptions challenge the Arabic students' cultural and linguistic identity.

The Arab community in America is a very diverse widespread group. Many live in metropolitan areas and around one-third live in New York, California and Michigan. Some try to assimilate into the American culture and others try to maintain their Arab culture (Haddad, 2011). The countries that have SA as their official language include Yemen, Algeria, Bahrain, Chad, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestinian Territories, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Syria, Tunisia, and United Arab Emirates (Bassiouney, 2009). Therefore if students speak SA, they may come from one of these areas. According to the 2009 World Refugee survey, some of these countries also have refugees, asylum seekers, and may include Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE) students (Office of Bilingual Education and Foreign Language Studies, 2014; World Refugee Survey 2009). Many of these students may be running from oppressive governments and may be seeking opportunity for a better life (Haddad, 2011). Some students have never attended school and do not have literacy skills. This may influence their ability to read in English if they do not have the primary language literacy skills to process the second language of English (Farran et al., 2012).

Cultural differences in gender may be another factor that correlates with reading anxiety or reading comprehension. Bassiouney (2009) explains that certain cultures are patriarchal

societies where men dominate and create the rules that govern society leading to women having reduced rights and privileges. Due to the marginalization of women in some cultures, women suffer from linguistic deprivation. Women are not allowed the same access as men. When it comes to the Arab culture, women tend to be more silent than their male counterparts. Women may also have different utterances than men. The position of women continues to change within society, as it becomes more modern increasing the opportunity women have to learning language. Bassiouney (2009) explained how in modernizing Arabic countries women were starting to gain more access to language by showing how the literacy rate in certain countries has increased over the years. In Oman, for instance, the literacy rate for women has increased by 22 percent in the year 2004 alone. This shows the increased access of language to women in these countries.

This is important to note, because some students in the second language classroom may come from situations where because they were female they were not provided access to literacy. Bassiouney (2009) explains that in many Arabic cultures, women do have power but it is within a different context than men. For instance, men have power in the workplace, but women have power at home and with the children. This may seem demeaning to Western thinkers, but it is not in their culture. Men and women share the power but possess it in different contexts. Although in certain Arabic contexts, women do have less power than men. In the Arabic context, many gender differences occur during speaking; therefore, there may be no change in the context of reading anxiety (Bassiouney & Katz, 2012). However, the literacy rate is lower for women than men impacting students in the second language classroom as stated earlier (Bassiouney, 2009; Bassiouney & Katz, 2012).

Iranian students were also seen to read to improve academically instead of for enjoyment. Therefore, these students often read difficult or unfamiliar texts within and without the classroom context. They needed to have the proper strategies to be able to tackle the reading they did on their own as well as at school (Naseri & Zaferanieh, 2012). This may be true for some of the students within the present research. Some students may only read difficult texts. Therefore, they may have less anxiety or they may use strategies that help them with unfamiliar texts.

When it comes to texts in the English language, many Arab students may not understand the references to Christianity, the Bible or other religious texts due to most of the nations they are coming from being primarily Islamic. The Christian church also looks very negatively towards the Islamic faith and views it as heresy. Christianity tends to depict the Islamic faith in a very demeaning way. They both see each other as enemies. If this were to come across in the texts or even in the schools it could make Islamic students feel extremely uncomfortable as well (Labib, 2008).

Conclusion

The research showed that anxiety acts as a barrier within the reading process lowering the student's ability to decode and interact with the text (Ahmad et al., 2013; Huang, 2012; Krashen, 1983; Saito et al., 1999). Therefore, it is important to investigate what factors may cause reading anxiety so students are provided with the proper strategies or modifications to access information without anxiety hindering the process (Krashen, 1983). Most of the research studied the university foreign language classroom and little research focused on the English as a second language classroom (Ahmad, 2013; Al-Shboul, 2013; Boonkongsaen, 2014; Çapan & Pektaş, 2013; Huang, 2012; Liu & Samimy, 2012). There is a desperate need for research within the English as a second language classroom. The research also suggested further study with Arabic-

speaking students and increased investigation in reading anxiety (Ahmad, 2013; Al-Shboul, 2013; Huang, 2012; Saito et al., 1999). Therefore the present research sought to understand what factors were significant factors of reading anxiety for Arabic speaking students within the English as a second language classroom. Strategies were also observed to note whether or not students were being provided with the proper tools to overcome their reading anxiety. This was to also understand why certain factors were more significant than others. This will hopefully provide future research with the necessary foundation to investigate strategies and modifications for students to overcome and lower their reading anxiety.

Methodology

Reading anxiety is a hindrance to a student's ability to read and comprehend a text. As the student reads the anxiety slowly builds and becomes a barrier to the student's ability to acquire the language and interact with the text (Horwitz, 2010; Jafarigohar, 2012; Krashen, 1995; Talebinezhad & Rahimi, 2013). Reading anxiety can be broken down into two types of factors including textual and personal (Ahmad et al., 2013). The present study seeks to understand student and teacher perceptions of these factors of reading anxiety and whether or not strategies were used to alleviate that anxiety.

Research Design

The study included a mixed-methods triangulation design with both quantitative and qualitative data (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). This was chosen to provide a wider perspective of the student anxiety experience. Student and teacher perceptions may not always be similar, which is why it is important to incorporate both to gain a more complete understanding of how students struggle with reading anxiety (Trang et al., 2013). The teachers interviewed and observed within the study had experience working with the Arabic-speaking students. Therefore, these teachers were able to provide a valid perception on the students' reading anxiety experience as well as the strategies incorporated within the classroom and student work.

Qualitative research incorporates the setting as well as interviews into the data source. Data usually shows itself in the form of words, pictures and perspectives instead of numbers. Therefore, this type of research was used to allow investigation on teacher perceptions through interviews and classroom observations. Quantitative research includes data in the form of numbers with statistical data analysis. Focus is based on a specific set plan with predetermined questions (Fraenkel et al., 2012). This was chosen for the incorporation of the five point Likert

survey to understand student perceptions of reading anxiety. The teacher and student perceptions of student anxiety were of equal importance when compared and analyzed.

Setting

Students may be greatly impacted by the community in which they live. Therefore it is important to know the setting, which contains the community, home and school that surround the student's life. Awareness of the setting is important to fully understand and analyze the students' experience with reading anxiety.

School community. The Arabic community possibly comprises one percent of the American population. This particular population began to immigrate into the United States during the last third of the 21st century (Haddad, 2011). This means that this particular population most likely has grown within the American school system over the past years.

The research was conducted at two high schools within a union free school district. The district had 7,369 students enrolled in the years 2012 through 2013, which is a decline from the previous year of 175 students. Of the remaining students, 1% was American Indian or Native Alaskan (68 students), 6% were Black or African American (416), 5% were Latino (349 students), 1% was Asian or Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (91 students), 85% white (6,269 students), and 2% were multiracial (176 students). Only 2% or 113 students were considered Limited English Proficient. 39% (2853) of students were considered economically disadvantaged. 27% of students were eligible for free or reduced lunch (1,983 students). The average class size included 22 to 25 students based on the different subject areas. The turnover rate for teachers with less than five years experience was 40%. All teachers had a valid New York State certification in teaching (New York State Report Card 2012-2013, 2014).

Students at the two high schools within the union free school district considered English Language Learners (ELLs) came from homes where another language other than English was spoken. According to the cooperating teacher, Arabic was one of the top three languages represented in this school district. There was one ESOL teacher in the two high schools with more than five years of experience. There were approximately 113 ELLs ranging from beginning to advance in the district. Within the high school there were 33 Arabic speakers, 6 Nepalese speakers, 6 Chinese speakers and 3 Spanish speakers. The number of ELLs has grown significantly with 81 more students than in the 2005-2006 school year (New York State Report Card 2012-2013, 2014; New York State Report Card 2005-2006, 2014).

Program for English language learners. ELLs were supported through the push-in and pullout English as a second language (ESL) program. In the high schools, students received English language instructional support through self-contained classes or co-taught content classes as part of their daily schedule. Students were taught conversational and academic language to be successful academically. Teachers instructed in English and used the native language of students to provide additional support when necessary. The classrooms that were observed never utilized the home languages represented by the students. Since they were at the high school level and there was more than one language represented within the classroom, the teacher believed that it was best to only use English. However, beginner students were allowed to discuss with others in Arabic and Google translate to provide additional support through their native language.

Participants

The participants included 13 of the 33 Arabic-speaking students within the ESL program at the two high schools within the anonymous school district. In the 2012 to 2013 school year, I

was able to work alongside the ESOL teacher within this classroom and with some of the students. Therefore, some students already felt comfortable with my presence. These students had one ESOL teacher and were high school students ranging from freshmen to seniors. Their proficiency levels in English ranged from beginner to advanced learners. According to the ESOL teacher, these students worked hard, strived to do their best and sometimes struggled learning academic and conversational English. During observations the students were eager to participate and wanted to learn more about reading anxiety and strategies that would help them overcome their reading anxiety. They continued to ask if I was going to provide instruction in reading anxiety or comprehension strategies. Unfortunately, I was unable to provide strategy instruction due to the limited time allotted.

According to the New York State Report Card (2014) for the school year of 2012 through 2013 there were 81 more ELLs than in the 2005 to 2006 school year. This shows that there was an increase in ELLs within this school district, which was why this school district was chosen. As the number of ELLs continues to increase, there will be a need for increased understanding on how to support these particular students, reduce their reading anxiety and improve their academic achievement. Therefore, it was beneficial to conduct research to see whether or not these students experienced reading anxiety to allow proper strategies to be investigated to reduce reading anxiety. There was a limited amount of research on Arabic-speaking students, which is another reason why they were chosen to be participants (Huang, 2012; Saito et al., 1999).

The other participants within the study were the one ESOL teacher and three other content-area teachers. All of these teachers were New York State certified and had at least five years of teaching experience (New York State Report Card 2012-2013, 2014). The content area teachers were a variety of teachers that worked with the ELLs including one English and theater

teacher, one health teacher and one economics and social studies teacher. The variety of teachers was chosen to provide a wealth of information on the teachers' perceptions of student anxiety. Due to the limited amount of research, this will provide research in a needed area on teacher perceptions of student reading anxiety. The teachers were able to provide information on strategy-instruction, student involvement and achievement (Darwish, 2012; Trang & Moni, 2013).

Both the teachers and students were purposive sampling because they were chosen to fulfill data that is needed within research (Fraenkel et al., 2012). Most of the past research conducted included university level students in the foreign language setting (Ahmad et al., 2013; Horwitz, 2010; Huang, 2012; Liu & Samimy, 2012). The only study found that dealt with Arab-speaking students was conducted by Ahmad et al. (2013). Therefore, there is a need for increased research with Arab-speaking students in the high school second language setting. It was unknown if the students suffered from any form of anxiety, but the one ESOL teacher, after informal discussion suspected that anxiety could be a potential struggle for the students. These specific teachers were chosen, because they worked with this population during the school year and were able to observe student achievement, involvement and anxiety. Therefore, they were able to provide the most informative answers out of all the teachers.

Firstly, the school and teachers were given consent forms. The four teachers provided consent to be participants within the observations and interviews. Interviews allowed the research to study teacher perceptions of student reading anxiety as well as strategies the teachers incorporated into the classroom. The observations provided additional information on strategy instruction and the classroom environment that was not mentioned within the interview.

Students were provided consent forms next followed by their parents. For students to have participated within the study, they and their parents needed to fill out separate consent forms that were in both English and Arabic. Translations were finished through the certified ABS Language Services. Students needed Arabic as their native language to participate in the study. I attended one of the classes to explain the research process and procedure at the beginning of the study to allow for student questioning. Many of the students did not understand what their role would be if they chose to be participants. Therefore, further explanation was provided to the students on their role as participants. The 33 Arabic students learned about the research procedures, the research purpose and that their grade was not dependent upon their participation. After discussion, many students provided their consent and were given parental consent forms. 13 students brought back signed parental consent forms. The other students continued to forget and were therefore not allowed to participate within the research.

Data Collection

Data were collected through student survey responses, teacher interviews and classroom observations. The surveys were conducted first at the beginning of the research followed by the interviews and then observations.

Survey. The first instrument that was incorporated into the beginning of the study was the cross-sectional quantitative survey adapted from Ahmad et al.'s (2013) research. This survey was chosen because it was specific to reading anxiety and included all the probable factors of Arabic speaking high school students' reading anxiety.

The instrument contained 28 statements on the textual (unknown vocabulary, unfamiliar topic, and unfamiliar culture) and personal factors (afraid of making errors and worry about reading effects) of reading anxiety. Statement 27 and 28 were added to the survey to gain further

understanding of the textual factors that students faced during the reading process. These statements were provided to some of the participating students and one colleague from the Teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) program at the State University of New York (SUNY) at Fredonia beforehand to make sure the statements were coherent and easily understood. Research showed that the writing system itself may cause anxiety especially if the sentence structure, paragraph organization or alphabetical system is different from the native language (Liu & Samimy, 2012; Mace, 2008; Saito et al., 1999; Song, 2010). Students evaluated each statement of the survey based on how strongly they agreed or disagreed. Evaluation was based on a five-point Likert scale system with one being strongly disagree (SD), two disagree (D), three neither agree nor disagree (N), four agree (A) and five strongly agree (SA). The instrument was in both Arabic and English and was translated in Arabic by the certified ABS Language Services.

13 students from two high schools within the union free school district participated in the survey process individually. Not every student was present on the first day after parental consent forms were obtained. Some students took the survey a day earlier during a different ESL class period than other students. I administered the survey and for most students the survey lasted about thirty minutes or less. Students participated in the survey at their respective high school. Many participants had questions for clarification on certain statements, but after discussion were able to understand each statement. Some students asked for the survey in both English and Arabic to provide for greater understanding. The survey is provided within Appendix A.

Interview. After this, the next instrument conducted was the semi-structured interviews with the one ESOL teacher and three other content area teachers who worked with the Arabic population. The three content area teachers included one theater and English teacher, one social

studies and economics teacher and one health teacher. These teachers provided consent and were able to participate within the research.

The qualitative semi-structure interview format was chosen so further questions for clarification could be asked. This consisted of 11 questions, found in Appendix B, pertaining to teacher perceptions on student anxiety, reading comprehension and the strategies to reduce anxiety. During interviews, some questions were skipped because the teacher had already answered the question and some were restated for clarification.

The interviews were conducted in the teachers' classrooms or office based upon what was most comfortable. The health teacher's interview was an approximate 20 minute duration and all three other teachers' interviews were about a 23 minute duration making a total duration of about 89 minutes. All interviews were followed with informal discussion as teachers remembered more information that they wanted to add. One teacher was not recorded, but her answers were written in shorthand through anecdotal notes, during the interview. They were not transcribed word for word due to a limited amount of time. The other interviews were all recorded using iMovie on a computer. These interviews were saved and referred back to when needed for analysis and classroom observations. Duration of the interviews was presented within Table 1.

Having four teachers interviewed instead of one provided a wider perspective, clearer information, and a greater understanding of teacher perceptions of student reading anxiety. It also allowed me, as the researcher, to observe more classrooms. Every teacher may have differing opinions, which is why it is best to have as many teachers as possible within the research. Do to the limited amount of time, only four teachers were chosen to participate. Teachers were asked about the strategies incorporated into their classrooms to aid in student

comprehension and lower anxiety. Teachers responded on whether or not anxiety was debilitating or facilitative, their reading anxiety definition, their awareness of student anxiety and their perspective of the significance of reading anxiety on the reading process. Many teachers provided follow-up information on their perspective and extra strategies incorporated within the classroom. The interview was utilized to gain a better understanding of teacher perceptions, student reading anxiety and strategy-instruction.

Observation. The last instrument included qualitative classroom observations conducted through a non-participant observer. The ESOL teacher was observed seven times with one time including a student teacher. Each observation was one approximate 45-minute class at both high schools. One high school was observed four times and the other three times. One content area teacher was observed one time during two class periods for a total of approximately 65 minutes. The other content area teachers were observed two times during two one period sessions. The total amount of minutes observed was approximately 200 minutes, which is approximately three hours and twenty minutes. Duration of the observations and the number of observations were presented within Table 1. Each observation was conducted within the classroom setting and included ESL students.

During the observation I sat in the back of the room and took anecdotal notes on the strategies that were being incorporated by the teachers and students. Each classroom environment was noted using a worksheet that was filled out by the observer only. Strategies were listed and then if seen during observation were noted as being observed by a check mark and then described in detail. There was a section for extra comments and explanation as well. Within this section the environment was described as well as student reactions to instruction and

strategy-use during the class period. The observation sheet is listed within Appendix C. This highlighted strategies that the teacher forgot to mention during the interview.

Table 1

Duration and Number of Interviews and Observations with Teachers

Teachers Observed and Interviewed	Amount of Observations per Teacher	Duration of Classroom Observations for the Specified Teacher Total Minutes: ~200	Duration of Interviews per Teacher Total Duration: ~89 minutes
ESOL teacher	7	~45 minutes	~23 minutes
English and Theater teacher	2	~45 minutes	~23 minutes
Economics and Social Studies teacher	2	~45 minutes	~23 minutes
Health teacher	1	~65 minutes	~20 minutes

Note: ~ This symbol means approximate

Data Analysis

Each instrument was analyzed to investigate the students’ experience with reading anxiety while reading aloud or silently. Three instruments provided a wider perspective and increased detail on student reading anxiety.

Survey. The first instrument to be analyzed was the quantitative cross-sectional survey. Analysis was generated through descriptive statistics just as Ahmad et al. (2013) analyzed the results in the study that the survey was adapted from. Within the results section, the percentages for each point of agreement within the five point Likert scale were determined for each statement and shown in Table 2 through 7. After, percentages were found for student agreement to disagreement with each factor of reading anxiety and were shown within Table 8 and Figure 1. Statements one through six belonged to the textual factor of unknown vocabulary and were presented in Table 2. Statements seven through ten belonged to the textual factor of unfamiliar topic and were presented in Table 3. Statements 11 through 15 belonged to the textual factor of unfamiliar culture and were presented in Table 4. Statements 16 through 20 belonged to the

personal factor of fear of making errors and were presented within Table 5. Statements 21 through 26 belonged to the personal factor of worry about reading effects presented in Table 6 and the last two statements presented in Table 7, dealt the differences between the languages.

Each factor's significance was analyzed based on the percentage of agreement. Then each factor of reading anxiety was categorized in order of significance within the results section, Table 8 and Figure 1. Comparison was also made based on the percentage amount of disagreement to the percentage amount of agreement.

Interview. Three of the four interviews were recorded using iMovie on my computer. These recordings were used to analyze how teachers viewed the student reading anxiety experience; whether or not they thought it was significant, if they incorporated strategies into their instruction to lower student reading anxiety and more. The fourth interview was recorded using anecdotal notes as explained above. Each of the interview questions is listed within Appendix B. When listening to the recording or looking at the notes I looked for teacher emphasis within their responses. Some of the teachers would say that certain factors were definitely significant of anxiety whereas when asked about other factors the teachers were hesitant or unsure as to the significance. I was able to listen for all the strategies provided and instructed by teachers to reduce anxiety and increase reading comprehension. These were written and discussed within the results section.

I listened to the recordings multiple times to find the answers to put within the results section. I looked at the anecdotal notes from the fourth interview to see how many strategies the teacher used, perspective on reading anxiety and whether or not she believed it to be significant. Responses were categorized within the results section by factors of anxiety and specific teacher. Results showed whether or not the teacher believed each factor to be significant, the teacher

belief on anxiety, and whether or not they incorporated strategies to increase comprehension and decrease reading anxiety. I analyzed the interview answers to see if teacher perceptions showed student anxiety with the textual or personal factors. The interview responses showed how many teachers were aware of reading anxiety and if they saw any symptoms of each factor of reading anxiety within the students. Each strategy was used to counter the factors therefore analysis took place to see if each factor was being addressed through strategy instruction.

Observation. Anecdotal notes including a checklist on the observations were analyzed to see if the strategies mentioned in the interview took place in the classroom or if strategies, not mentioned during the interview, needed to be added to the data. The strategies from the observation were categorized based on which factor of reading anxiety they addressed within the results section. Analysis took place on how many strategies were actually used or suggested within the classroom by the teachers or students. The environment was noted on the worksheet and described through if realistic expectations were presented, positive feedback given, use of the native language incorporated and if students felt comfortable. During observation it was noted on what kind of environment was being created, what strategies were being used and if students seemed to be anxious. The observations presented further understanding on why students may be suffering from anxiety and what could possibly alleviate the problem.

Observations were used alongside the interviews to analyze teacher perceptions. This was done by looking at what teachers seemed to emphasize as being significant by using words such as “definitely” and by their responses to questions on reading anxiety factors. This provided clarity on what teachers thought to be significant factors of reading anxiety. Strategies used within the classroom and stated within the interview showed teachers’ perceptions as well. If they used more strategies for a specific factor, it probably meant that they perceived students to

struggle with that factor and maybe more than the others. If many strategies were used for a specific factor, then it should be less significant than other factors.

All instruments were compared to see how teachers instructed strategies and helped students to achieve higher levels of reading comprehension and lower levels of reading anxiety. Teacher perceptions of student reading anxiety were compared with student perceptions. This was done by analyzing the survey, listening to the recordings and looking at the observation worksheets and comparing the responses. The study looked at the factors that caused student reading anxiety and if the teachers instructed strategies to allow students to overcome those strategies. This was accomplished by identifying the students' perceptions from the percentages of significance for each factor from the survey to what teachers perceived to be significant factors within the interview. Then comparison was made to see what factors students struggled with to whether or not teachers incorporated strategies for those particular factors.

If the students struggled with certain factors not addressed through strategy-instruction then this might show that those factors needed instruction. If students are given the proper strategies, it is suggested that they may overcome their reading anxiety and improve their reading comprehension.

Validity Considerations

In my prior field placements at SUNY Fredonia, I was able to work alongside with the ESOL teacher within the study. I only worked with the participants for 25 hours, but the students were for the most part comfortable around me, though, not as comfortable as their own teacher. This could cause potential validity issues where the students feel pressured into answering a certain way, having to participate even if they do not feel comfortable with the study, or students

may react differently due to my presence in the classroom. Therefore, further explanation was provided that students did not have to participate and were not being graded for participation.

My own personal bias may also present itself within the results of this study. According to Al-Khatib (1999) perceptions play a large role in how we view each other from our own background and the culture around us. I am a graduate of Wheaton College and Iroquois High School and am attending the State University of New York at Fredonia. I grew up in a smaller town in the rural countryside of Western New York in a predominately white neighborhood. Therefore, I may carry certain prejudices that I do not even realize.

The survey and interview questions may have some validity concerns. There may be more variables involved increasing student anxiety. The students may not fully understand the items within the survey. The survey will be in both Arabic and English for increased comprehension. The English was translated into Arabic by ABS language services. Some of the students were beginners in English and were not very advanced in Arabic therefore they may not have had fully understood the statements presented. This may have lead to confusion on how to respond to the statements. Therefore, students were allowed to ask for clarification during the time of survey, which many students took advantage of. This allowed the survey to have greater validity because the students were able to comprehend the statements. The survey was used within Ahmad et al. (2013) research and was found to be valid and reliable. A colleague from SUNY Fredonia reviewed the survey to ensure no statement was ambiguous.

Validity during the interview and observation may have also been hindered by my presence as an outsider or as someone evaluating perceptions. Some of the content area teachers seemed weary of answering questions or nervous during the interview. This could have hindered them from answering the questions in full. Therefore, I allowed for informal conversation and

discussion outside of the interview for teachers to add in anything they thought they might have forgotten. I created a semi-structured interview format, as well so that I could ask additional questions for clarification when it was needed. I had a fellow teacher review the questions to ensure no statement was ambiguous. Observations were also conducted to provide additional information. Together, the two instruments will provide valid results.

Results

Reading can be a wonderful way for a student to acquire needed language input. When reading anxiety is introduced into the reading process it acts as a barrier. This barrier stops the student from being able to decode or interact with the text due to off-task thoughts of nervousness, anxiety or stress. This then hinders the student's ability to comprehend the text at hand due to the anxious feelings being experienced (Ahmad et al., 2013; Huang, 2012; Krashen, 1983, 1995). Possible factors of reading anxiety included textual factors of unknown vocabulary, language differences, unfamiliar topic and culture, and personal factors of worry about reading effects and the fear of making errors. Therefore, the purpose of this research was to investigate the student and teacher perceptions of the student's reading anxiety as well as to investigate whether or not teachers use strategies to help students overcome their reading anxiety. This research is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the Arab high school ESL students' perceptions of the factors that contribute to their reading anxiety?
2. What do the teachers perceive as the factors contributing to their reading anxiety?
3. What do the teachers perceive as the strategies for reducing the students' reading anxiety?

To determine the depth of impact that these factors have on the Arabic high school student population a survey adapted from Ahmad et al. (2013) was utilized. This survey was analyzed using the same method of descriptive analysis used within Ahmad et al.'s (2013) research. Teacher perceptions and strategy instruction were investigated through classroom

observations and interviews. The four teachers within the research will be given pseudonyms including teacher one, teacher two, teacher three and teacher four, for the purpose of anonymity.

Student Perceptions Through the Survey

Tables 2 through 8 shows the results through descriptive analysis of the Likert scale decision of combined participants within the study. Tables 2 through 7 show the total out of 13 students including percentages for each chosen subsection of agreement for each statement. The results provided the amount of agreement or disagreement for each statement to determine the gravity of each factor within reading anxiety. Table 8 shows the averaged percentages of agreement to disagreement for the statements related to each factor of reading anxiety. This was generated to analyze the significance of each factor of reading anxiety.

Table 2

Student Responses to the Unknown Vocabulary Survey Statements

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
1. When I am reading in English, I get very upset and worry whenever I encounter strange vocabulary.	8%	8%	0%	31%	54%
2. I focus on words in reading English texts because if I know the terms, I can understand the text.	8%	0%	31%	31%	31%
3. I feel anxious in reading English when I encounter series of three strange words.	0%	8%	8%	54%	31%
4. I enjoy reading a text in English when I know its translation.	8%	0%	0%	31%	62%
5. I do not like to read an English text that has lots of difficult words	15%	23%	15%	15%	31%
6. When I am reading in English, I feel upset and anxious if I encounter words the meaning of which I do not know.	23%	8%	23%	38%	8%

Note: Data is rounded to the nearest whole percentages.

The first statement of the survey began the section of unknown vocabulary within Table 2 and stated, “When I am reading in English, I get very upset and worry whenever I encounter strange vocabulary.” According to table one, 85% of participants agreed, 0% neither disagreed nor agreed, and 16% disagreed with the statement. After looking at the responses from the present study conclusion can be made that students find strange vocabulary to be a source of reading anxiety. The one student who strongly disagreed with the statement was one of the more

advanced English speakers. The strong disagreement could have been due to the student using more effective strategies or the student having more exposure to strange vocabulary therefore, the student showed little to no anxiety for this factor. The other student may not experience as much anxiety due to her confidence within the classroom and her strategy-use of asking for clarification often on unknown or strange vocabulary during class.

The second statement was, “I focus on words in reading English texts because if I know the terms, I can understand the text.” According to table one, 62% of the participants agreed, 31% percent neither disagreed nor agreed, and 8% of student participants disagreed with the statement. From these responses, one may conclude that students believed that if they could understand the words within a text they would be able to understand the text itself. It was when they did not understand the vocabulary that comprehension became difficult, which then caused anxiety. Ahmad et al. (2013) found similar conclusions and added that vocabulary was an essential foundation students needed to acquire to diminish reading anxiety. Without the ability to understand vocabulary or use strategies to increase comprehension students will have increased reading anxiety.

Statement number three said, “I feel anxious reading in English when I encounter a series of three strange words.” 85% of students agreed with the statement, 8% neither disagreed nor agreed, and 8% disagreed with the statement. This again showed that when students were faced with unknown or strange vocabulary they became anxious. When the strange vocabulary was then surrounded with more unknown vocabulary it increased anxiety even more, which then caused difficulty in comprehension.

The fourth statement said, “I enjoy reading a text in English when I know its translation.” 93% of the students agreed, 0% neither disagreed nor agreed and 8% disagreed with the

statement. After looking at results it was determined that comprehension of words within a text increased reading enjoyment and decreased reading anxiety. After conversing with the students' teachers it was expressed that when students enjoyed reading they tended to have greater comprehension, an increasing desire to read and showed a decrease in anxiety.

Statement number five said, "I do not like to read an English text that has lots of difficult words." During the survey some of the students said that they would feel anxious but were up for the challenge. They wanted to learn as much of the English language as possible and therefore enjoyed difficult texts. Although unknown vocabulary words made them feel anxious they wanted the practice so they could increase their level of comprehension. 46% of the participants agreed with the statement, 15% neither disagreed nor agreed, and 38% disagreed with the statement.

The study showed that fewer than half of the students did not like reading texts with difficult vocabulary while others may have enjoyed the process. Although some students became anxious it did not necessarily mean that they stopped enjoying the reading process. Teachers should provide texts with difficult words to challenge students so they can increase their vocabulary knowledge and comprehension level. These students seemed to get nervous while reading, but instead of stopping they tried to overcome their anxiety and continue reading. They were excited to be a part of the study because they wanted to learn how to increase their reading comprehension and lower their anxiety. These students were motivated to improve academically and desired strategies to aid in comprehension and anxiety. Ahmad et al. (2013) found that texts with difficult words made students dislike the reading process and it caused increased reading anxiety. Therefore, it was important to enhance student vocabulary. The Arabic student population within the present study needed increased vocabulary knowledge as well; however,

difficult vocabulary did not necessarily make them dislike the reading process.

Statement six said, “When I am reading in English, I feel upset and anxious if I encounter words the meaning of which I do not know.” 46% of students agreed with the statement, 23% of students neither disagreed nor agreed, and 31% disagreed with the statement. Therefore it was concluded that students struggled with the factor of unknown vocabulary of reading anxiety. Although this is true, I found that some students within the study expressed feeling anxious or upset, but still desired the challenge of reading texts infused with unknown or difficult vocabulary. It was observed that they felt discouraged at first, but they quickly asked for help and the teachers around them responded promptly. These students may have needed strategies to aid them in tackling the difficult vocabulary within the text. Enhancing vocabulary knowledge was also emphasized within Ahmad et al.’s (2013) research. Just because students may feel anxious does not mean that they do not want to be challenged. They just need the strategies to overcome their reading anxiety.

The first six statements were written to illuminate whether or not unknown vocabulary was a legitimate factor of reading anxiety for Arabic high school students. After looking at all six questions through descriptive analysis it was presented within Table 8 that 69% of students agreed, 13% neither agreed nor disagreed and 18% disagreed that unknown vocabulary was a factor of reading anxiety. From the results it was determined that anxiety increased as the words within the text became more unknown or difficult. Although their anxiety increased some of the students still desired to read in English when there were difficult vocabulary words. Therefore teachers should continue challenging their students by giving appropriate English proficiency level reading materials so that students have the opportunity to grow in reading comprehension and vocabulary.

Statement number seven began the section of unfamiliar topics with the text within Table 3 and said, “I enjoy English reading when I understand at least some portion of the text.” 85% of respondents agreed while 15% neither agreed nor disagreed and 0% of students disagreed with the statement. Students had a better reading experience if they were able to understand at least part of the text. If they did not understand what they were reading they did not enjoy the reading process and became more anxious. Students enjoyed familiar topics more than unfamiliar topics because their comprehension level of the familiar text was greater.

Table 3

Student Responses to the Unfamiliar Topic Survey Statements

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
7. I enjoy English reading when I understand at least some portion of the text.	0%	0%	15%	31%	54%
8. I do not prefer reading unfamiliar topics, particularly in the English language.	0%	38%	38%	15%	8%
9. Most things I like to read in English are short stories because they have easy words and their topics are common.	8%	0%	46%	15%	31%
10. I feel anxious when I am reading a topic in the English language, which I have no idea about	0%	23%	8%	46%	23%

Note: Data is rounded to the nearest whole percentages.

Statement number eight stated, “I do not prefer reading unfamiliar topics, particularly in the English language.” 23% of students responded in agreement, 38% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 38% disagreed with the statement. During the survey some of the students were unsure of their response. They expressed wanting to read unfamiliar topics in English to improve their English proficiency. Therefore, they did not agree with the statement, but they also realized that they enjoyed reading in their native language or a text that was more familiar because it usually was easier to comprehend. Participants expressed feeling anxious while reading unfamiliar topics. Through this discussion, it was shown that students desired to learn and to be challenged, but they sometimes experienced anxiety while being challenged. With that being said, results showed that as the reading became more familiar anxiety decreased.

Statement number nine said, “Most things I like to read in English are short stories

because they have easy words and their topics are common.” 46% agreed, 46% neither agreed nor disagreed and 8% disagreed with the statement. Students showed uncertainty with their responses. Many of them discussed liking shorter stories because it was not as overwhelming or stressful, but the students also wanted to be able to reach the English proficiency level that would allow them to read a wider variety of texts and topics. Longer or more difficult texts caused anxiety, but students still desired the chance to tackle those difficult readings. In the end, short stories tended to decrease anxiety due to more common or easily comprehended topics and words, but it did not mean that students preferred these texts.

Statement number ten said, “I feel anxious when I am reading a topic in the English language, which I have no idea about.” 69% expressed agreement, 8% neither expressed agreement nor disagreement, and 23% expressed disagreement with the statement. This concludes that when information within a text was not well known it became a factor of anxiety.

Statements six through ten discussed the unfamiliar topics factor of reading anxiety. After looking at all of the scores through descriptive analysis the responses showed 56% agreement, 27% neither in disagreement nor agreement, and 17% in disagreement that unfamiliar topics generated reading anxiety for students. While it is true that unfamiliar or difficult topics were factors that generated reading anxiety for students, students expressed that they desired the challenge of reading demanding texts. Students did not want the teacher to water down the material for easier comprehension. Instead, Arabic students wanted to learn strategies to be able to tackle difficult or unfamiliar topics. Enthusiastic students often came to me asking if I was going to give them strategies or show them how to increase their comprehension level. They were eager to learn and desired to be challenged academically.

Statement 11 began the next category of unfamiliar culture within Table 4 with the

statement of, “In reading English, I hardly understand the idea if there is more than one meaning for each word.” 46% of students agreed, 31% neither agreed nor disagreed, 23% disagreed with the statement. The study concluded that participants showed reduced comprehension when texts included words with more than one meaning. These can be simple words that students know, but within the context have cultural meanings that the students are unaware of. This then caused the students to misunderstand the text and have increased anxiety.

Table 4

Student Responses to the Unfamiliar Culture Survey Statements

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
11. In reading English, I hardly understand the idea if there is more than one meaning for each word.	8%	15%	31%	15%	31%
12. When I read English, I often understand the words, but I still cannot quite understand what the writer says.	8%	31%	15%	31%	15%
13. I usually translate word by word when I am reading English.	23%	8%	8%	54%	8%
14. It is frustrating in reading English when one word is connected with another to change the meaning.	8%	31%	23%	8%	31%
15. I must often feel that I cannot understand an English text even though I know every word’s meaning.	23%	46%	8%	15%	8%

Note: Data is rounded to the nearest whole percentages.

Statement 12 said, “When I read English, I often understand the words, but I still cannot quite understand what the writer says.” 46% of respondents agreed, 15% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 39% disagreed with the statement. The results from this statement showed that almost the same amount of students agreed as disagreed. Some students had more experience tackling texts with cultural aspects or words with multiple meanings infused and some students understood these aspects due to living in the United States for a longer period of time. With that being said many students continued to struggle with comprehending cultural aspects within the texts.

Statement 13 said, “I usually translate word by word when I am reading English.” 62% of the students agreed, 8% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 31% of students disagreed with the statement. The responses showed that most students relied on a literal translation using their

native and target language for the meaning of the text. When translating a text it can be difficult to maintain the true meaning behind a phrase or word. Words may have multiple meanings causing students to be confused and unable to comprehend the translation (Martinez & Murphy, 2011). This could make the text difficult to understand leading to increased anxiety.

Statement 14 said, "It is frustrating in reading English when one word is connected with another to change the meaning." Some students seemed very confused by this statement and asked for clarification. After clarification was provided, 39% of students agreed, 23% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 39% of students disagreed. This showed that the same amount of students agreed as disagreed with the statement. This could conclude that words with multiple meaning did not cause as much of a struggle for some students, but for others was a factor of reading anxiety. In the previous statement, anxiety was attributed to words with multiple meanings and translation problems. However, the students' responses to this statement show that words with multiple meanings may not be as significant of a factor as other factors.

Statement 15 said, "I most often feel that I cannot understand an English text even though I know every word's meaning." 23% of students agreed, 8% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 69% of students disagreed with the statement. This showed that many students were able to understand the text even when they were not able to decipher the meaning of every word. This showed that words with multiple meanings might not have caused this particular population of students reading anxiety. Although previous statements showed that this was a more significant factor of reading anxiety, this percentage is significantly lower than the previous statements.

Statements 11 through 15 evaluated the factor of unfamiliar culture within a text on reading anxiety for Arabic speaking students. After looking at the results through descriptive analysis, results showed that 43% of students agreed, 17% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 40%

of students disagreed that this is a significant factor of reading anxiety. This did not show a significant difference between those who agreed and those who disagreed. Therefore, some students struggled with cultural aspects or words with multiple meanings in the text whereas others did not. This is interesting because there are cultural differences between the American and the Arabic cultures that students come from including religion and status of men and women. Therefore, there could have been cultural topics that students may have struggled with, but responses showed that this was not as significant as other factors (Farran et al., 2012; Labib, 2008; Mace, 2008, Tawalbeh, 2013). It is interesting to note that Ahmad et al. (2013) determined that the most difficult texts for students were cultural texts. However, within the present study, it looks as though unfamiliar topics within a text would cause more anxiety than unfamiliar cultural topics within a text. Therefore, certain populations of Arabic speaking students may have more anxiety due to the factor of unfamiliar cultural topics than this particular population of Arabic speaking high school students.

Table 5

Student Responses to the Fear of Making Errors Survey Statements

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
16. I feel anxious in reading aloud in fear of making errors.	15%	46%	0%	15%	23%
17. I feel embarrassed in front of others if I pronounce a simple and easy word wrongly.	38%	0%	8%	38%	15%
18. I prefer to prepare too much and search for the phonetic transcript prior to the class if I was expected to read in the class.	15%	8%	8%	38%	31%
19. I feel irritated if I encounter a word I do not know how it is pronounced.	23%	23%	8%	31%	15%
20. I prefer silent reading rather than reading aloud.	8%	8%	23%	31%	31%

Note: Data is rounded to the nearest whole percentages.

Statement number 16 began the next section of fear of making errors within Table 5 with the statement, “I feel anxious in reading aloud in fear of making errors.” 38% of students agreed, 0% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 61% students disagreed with the statement. The results showed that students for the most part did not face this factor of fear of making errors when

reading aloud in front of their peers. In the ESL classroom students seemed to be eager to read aloud in front of their peers without hesitation. The room had a very positive atmosphere where students helped each other pronounce words and encouraged each other to read. In the content area classrooms the teachers also presented a positive classroom environment. Teachers expressed to the other students about how difficult it would be to move to another country and have to learn another language. This created a respect towards the ESL students within the classroom that seemed to lead to a comfortable environment where they could read aloud without fear. There were also realistic expectations that students were able to achieve. Although this is true, there were still five students who agreed that they feared reading aloud in front of their peers. Therefore, teachers should continue providing a safe and nurturing environment where students may learn and participate without fear. Strategies to overcome fear may also help these particular students.

Statement 17 said, "I feel embarrassed in front of others if I pronounce a simple and easy word wrongly." 53% of students agreed, 8% neither agreed nor disagreed, 38% disagreed with the statement. This did not necessarily go against the previous statement. Students may have felt embarrassed when they made a pronunciation mistake with an easy word, but that did not mean that they were afraid of reading in front of their peers. They may have just felt instant anxiety when they made a mistake but not when they decided or were called on to read aloud in front of the class. The different outcome of these two statements could have been due to when the student experienced anxiety when reading aloud.

Statement 18 said, "I prefer to prepare too much and search for the phonetic transcript prior to the class if I was expected to read in the class." 69% of students agreed, 8% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 23% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. Conclusion can

be made that the students suffered from reading anxiety when reading aloud, which is why they preferred to prepare ahead of time. Preparation may allow the students' anxiety to decrease. This would mean that the teacher would have to allow extended time for practice as well as provide reading materials prior to the lesson for student study.

Statement 19 said, "I feel irritated if I encounter a word I do not know how it is pronounced." 46% of the respondents agreed, 8% neither agreed nor disagreed, 46% disagreed with the statement. This showed that the same amount of students agreed with the statement as disagreed with the statement. Almost half found it irritating to not be able to pronounce a word and half did not. Many students were eager to read aloud because they wanted to practice speaking English. Therefore these students may have made mistakes, but they did not become irritated or fearful. This may not be as significant of a factor of anxiety for some students as other factors might be.

Statement 20 said, "I prefer silent reading rather than reading aloud." 62% of respondents agreed, 23% neither agreed nor disagreed, 16% disagreed with the statement. Preferring to read silently may suggest that reading aloud caused increased anxiety or the students had more strategies for overcoming anxiety when reading silently. Students may enjoy reading silently because they usually were allowed to choose the text or topic and were able to read at their own pace. With that being said, more students preferred to read silently.

Statements 16 through 20 included the factor of fear of making errors within reading anxiety. This included the fear of not knowing words or making pronunciation errors when reading aloud in front of classmates. According to the average percentages of the statements within this factor, 54% of the students agreed, 9% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 37% of students disagreed that fear of making errors was a factor of reading anxiety. Although the first

statement showed more students disagreeing with this as a significant factor, when all of the statements were combined and averaged, results determined this to be a legitimate factor of reading anxiety. Students agreed that increased preparation before reading aloud would benefit their performance and lower anxiety. Within the research of Porter and Bruett’s (2009) teachers allowed students to practice before reading aloud, which decreased this factor of reading anxiety. Therefore the students within the present study may have reduced anxiety if allotted extra time to practice beforehand.

Table 6

Student Responses to the Worry About Reading Affects Survey Statements

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
21. When I am reading aloud, I focus on reading correctly rather than focusing on understanding the text.	0%	38%	23%	23%	15%
22. In reading aloud in the class, I do not understand the text even though it is easy.	23%	38%	8%	15%	15%
23. I enjoy silent reading because I can easily understand the text.	8%	8%	31%	15%	38%
24. When reading English aloud in the class I focus on word accent rather than understanding.	8%	31%	8%	23%	31%
25. I get upset when I am not sure whether I understand what I am reading in English or not.	23%	31%	8%	31%	8%
26. When reading English, I get disturbed and do not remember what I have read.	23%	23%	15%	8%	31%

Note: Data is rounded to the nearest whole percentages.

Statement 21 began the next category on the factor of worry about reading effects and was presented within Table 6. The statement said, “When I am reading aloud, I focus on reading correctly rather than focusing on understanding the text.” 38% students agreed, 23% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 38% disagreed with the statement. This showed the same amount of agreement as disagreement with both being low percentages. Not many students seemed to have difficulty focusing on reading comprehension itself instead of worrying about reading correctly concluding that this factor was not as significant as some of the others.

Statement 22 said, “In reading aloud in the class, I do not understand the text even though it is easy.” 30% of students agreed, 8% neither disagreed nor agreed, and 61% disagreed with the

statement. This showed that many students understood the text while reading aloud in front of the class when it was easy. For these texts, anxiety was significant enough to cause students to only focus on anxiety or worry instead of comprehension.

Statement 23 said, "I enjoy silent reading because I can easily understand the text." 53% of students agreed, 31% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 16% disagreed with the statement. This showed that student comprehension increased when the student read silently instead of aloud. This may be due to the student having less anxiety while reading silently, thus increasing the student's ability to focus on comprehension. In a previous statement, eight out of 13 students preferred reading silently than aloud. This greater enjoyment for reading silently may be why the students comprehended more during a silent read and showed lowered anxiety. Reading aloud may be a significant factor of anxiety that caused students to focus on worrying instead of comprehension.

Statement 24 said, "When reading English aloud in the class I focus on word accent rather than understanding." 54% of students agreed, 8% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 39% disagreed with the statement. This was interesting because a previous statement talked about focusing on reading correctly and only 38% agreement was found whereas focus on word accent was at a 54% agreement. Therefore more than half of the students may have in fact focused more on off-task thoughts of pronunciation or accent while reading instead of reading comprehension. The worry could have hindered their reading comprehension, which could be why they agreed to preferring and having increased reading comprehension while reading silently rather than aloud.

Statement 25 said, "I get upset when I am not sure whether I understand what I am reading in English or not." 46% of students agreed, 23% neither disagreed nor agreed, and 30% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. This showed an increase in student agreement

for anxiety while reading. Students worried when they did not understand what the intended meaning of the text. They may have even worried that they would not be able to understand the reading material before they were to read it.

Statement number 26 said, “When reading English, I get disturbed and do not remember what I have read.” 39% of students agreed, 8% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 54% disagreed with the statement. This showed that most students did not agree with this statement. Conclusion can be made that students tended to be able to remember what they have read. This may show that the worrying about reading effects may not be a significant factor hindering the students’ ability to comprehend the material. The students’ may be able to focus on the reading and memory rather than worry, fear or anxiety.

Statements 21 through 26 were to determine the significance of the factor of worry about reading effects within reading anxiety. After the statements’ percentages relating to the factor were averaged together the significance was shown through 44% student agreement, 17% neither in agreement nor in disagreement, and 40% student disagreement that this was a significant factor within reading anxiety. Conclusion can be made that this factor may not be as significant as some of the other factors. Although that is true, many students still struggled with worrying about reading effects. This can be anywhere from worrying about not being able to understand a passage, to not being able to remember what one reads, to making mistakes while reading aloud. The worry becomes the center of focus instead of the reading itself, making it difficult for the student to read correctly or remember what was read. It was found that many students struggled with worrying about producing the right accent while reading instead of the reading itself.

Statement number 27 began the next category, within Table 7, of language differences and says, “I feel anxious reading in English due to the difference in the way the alphabetical

system looks in written English compared to written Arabic.” 39% students agreed, 15% of students neither agreed nor disagreed and 46% of students disagreed with the statement. This showed that fewer than half agreed with the statement, which may mean that this was not a significant factor compared to some of the others.

Table 7

Student Responses to the Language Differences Survey Statements

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
27. I feel anxious reading in English due to the difference in the way the alphabetical system looks in written English compared to written Arabic.	23%	31%	8%	31%	8%
28. I feel anxious reading in English because it uses a different sentence order than Arabic.	8%	38%	23%	15%	15%

Note: Data is rounded to the nearest whole percentages.

Statement number 28 says, “I feel anxious reading in English because it uses a difference sentence order than Arabic.” 30% of the respondents agreed, 23% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 46% disagreed with the statement. This showed that more students disagreed with this statement than agreed. After looking at both statement twenty-seven and twenty-eight, it can be determined that the differences between the languages including the way the language looks and the sentence structures were not significant enough to cause stress for students. Some found these issues to create levels of stress, but most did not. When combining these statements and then finding the average of agreement on the significance of this factor, it was found to only be 35% in agreement, 19% neither in agreement nor in disagreement, and 46% in disagreement.

Student and Teacher Perceptions of the Six Factors

Within this section of the study, teacher perceptions of the existence of reading anxiety were discussed followed by each factor of reading anxiety analyzed and categorized by significance. The student and teacher perceptions were discussed for further explanation on the significance of each reading anxiety factor. Teacher perceptions were analyzed from the interviews and classroom observations. Each factor of reading anxiety was correlated to their

responses and strategy-use in the classroom. Student perceptions were investigated using the survey. Figure 1 and Table 8 above showed each factor of reading anxiety along with the percentage of agreement, disagreement and neither for each.

Table 8

Percentage of Agreement on the Six Domains

No.	Domain	SD	D	N	A	SA	Type of Anxiety
1-6	Unknown Vocabulary	10%	8%	13%	33%	36%	Textual
7-10	Unfamiliar Topic	2%	15%	27%	27%	29%	Textual
11-15	Unfamiliar Culture	14%	26%	17%	25%	18%	Textual
16-20	Afraid of Making Errors	20%	17%	9%	31%	23%	Personal
21-26	Worry about Reading Effects	13%	27%	17%	23%	21%	Personal
27-28	Language Differences	15%	31%	19%	12%	23%	Textual

Note: Data is rounded to the nearest whole percentages.

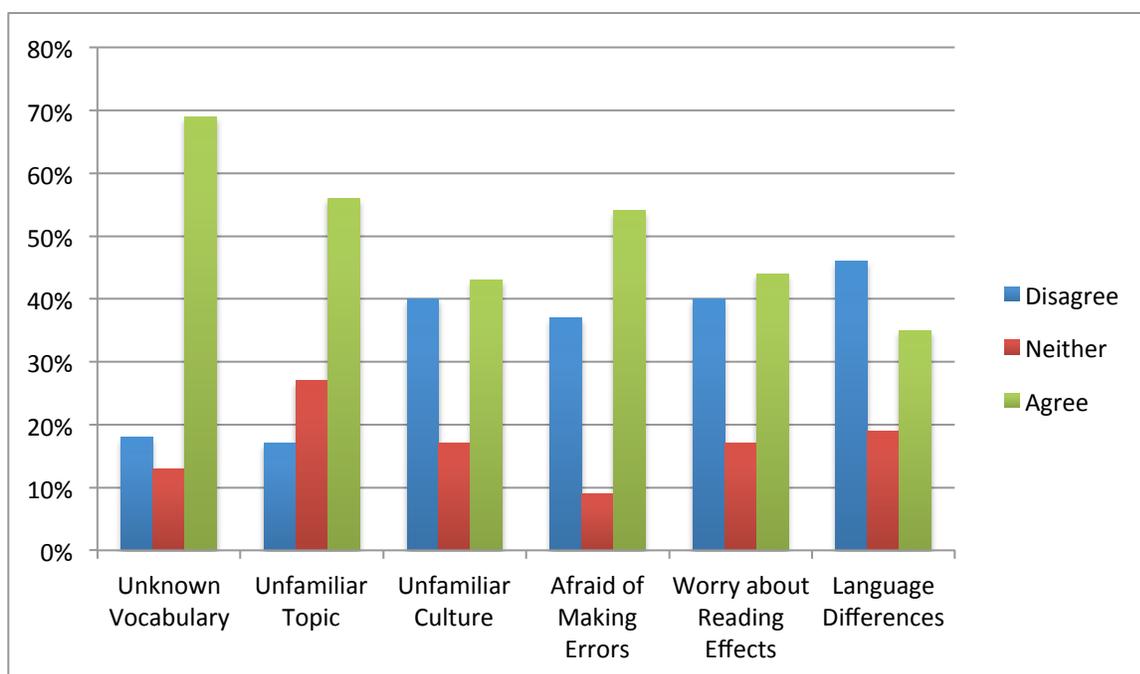


Figure 1. The Percentage of Agreement to Disagreement of the Reading Anxiety Factors

Teacher perceptions on the existence of reading anxiety. Within the interview the questions along with some follow-up conversations were conducted to determine the teacher perception of student anxiety. Teacher number one and two expressed that reading anxiety was

something that many students struggled with due to a lack of exposure and foundational skills. Teacher four expressed that if students were provided the proper foundation, translation help and an effective ESL teacher they would be fine and not feel anxiety. Teacher three went on to further explain that many ESL students were thrown into the regular content classroom with no background or support with the expectation that they would be able to pass the class. This created an overwhelming situation for students, outside of the teachers' control. This was due to unrealistic expectations that students could handle the content classroom before being provided the needed support. This caused increased anxiety and lowered student reading comprehension.

Students approached teacher two saying that they hated reading. She explained that good readers or those without anxiety would enjoy the reading process instead of hating it. Ahmad et al. (2013) found this to be true with Arabic speaking university students. Therefore, teacher two concluded that these students were struggling with reading anxiety. However, the students within the present study never mentioned this to me and many of them expressed enjoying the reading process even when the reading included difficult, unknown or unfamiliar cultural topics. The teachers expressed that anxiety could be a motivational factor where students desire to overcome their anxiety, but for some hinders their growth, participation in the classroom and academic development. From the responses to the survey above one may conclude that this population struggled with reading anxiety.

Teacher and student perceptions of the most significant factor. After analyzing each factor of reading anxiety, unknown vocabulary was considered the most significant factor for students with a student agreement of 69% presented within Table 8 and Figure 1. During informal discussions with teachers, it was expressed that teaching vocabulary was very difficult

and that finding effective strategies for enhancing vocabulary was a life-long struggle. This could be why students struggled more with this factor of instead of the other factors of reading anxiety.

Teacher one discussed the importance of vocabulary as a foundational skill for students to be able to comprehend a text. The most difficult type of text that the students faced was usually scientific texts. The teacher explained that for these students the scientific higher-level-thinking vocabulary was way above what they were capable of. The students were unable to understand ninety percent or more of the vocabulary and therefore struggled with comprehension. To enhance student vocabulary this teacher provided short reading examples that the students would be able to relate to. This helped increase their vocabulary knowledge while not overwhelming them.

Strategies that were used within teacher one's classroom to overcome anxiety due to unknown vocabulary included vocabulary pre-teaching, making parallel connections, and increased exposure to vocabulary. The teacher tried to incorporate new vocabulary throughout the day in a variety of contexts. During classroom observations it was discovered that the teacher incorporated other strategies as well as including highlighting unfamiliar words, defining unknown vocabulary using synonyms and conversational language and relating the difficult word to the every-day life of the student.

Teacher number two explained that students struggled with comprehending difficult vocabulary. Therefore, teacher and her co-teachers tried to focus on enhancing the students' vocabulary knowledge. Strategies incorporated within the classroom included self-regulated learning, classroom definitions, pre-teaching difficult vocabulary, paint chips with definition, synonyms and the word written on them (similar to four corner vocabulary activities), classroom three-foot tall bookmarks of literary elements and definitions, and root identification (Vogt &

Echevarria, 2008). Students were motivated to use sophisticated vocabulary to gain reward cards as well.

The third teacher expressed right away that unknown vocabulary would be a factor even before it was mentioned within the interview. He expressed that English speakers become anxious when faced with unknown vocabulary. Therefore, ESL students must feel even more anxiety when it is not their native language. He tried to provide extra support through extended time, using visuals, changing the length or layout of the text, providing synonyms, relating it to the students, and looking at the word's basic parts. The teacher expressed not having certain resources like adapted versions, which could have been beneficial.

Teacher number four incorporated Google translate, introduced synonyms for unknown vocabulary and relied heavily on the support of the ESL teacher. Many students felt comfortable enough to ask for clarification if they came across unknown vocabulary. However, during observations when students asked for clarification, they were still unable to comprehend the text.

All of the teachers agreed with the students' perceptions that unknown vocabulary was a significant factor of reading anxiety. Some teachers expressed not having the proper techniques, strategies or resources to properly teach vocabulary. The teachers perceived that the strategies being used were not working properly and were insufficient. Therefore students were not being provided with effective strategies to overcome this factor of reading anxiety, which could be why it was ranked most significant.

Teacher and student perceptions of the second most significant factor. The second most significant factor of reading anxiety was the factor of unfamiliar or difficult topics within texts at a student agreement of 56% presented within Table 8 and Figure 1. This showed that students struggled with reading anxiety when they were faced with unfamiliar or difficult topics.

This factor was closely related to unknown vocabulary because if the topic was unknown usually there was unknown vocabulary involved. This may be why this factor was higher than some of the other factors.

Teacher one discussed that unfamiliar and difficult texts were definitely an area of anxiety for students. Students struggled most with the scientific texts given in the content classrooms. Some students were not able to understand the entire text but were able to take out key words or concepts depending on how advanced the student was in English proficiency and how advanced the reading was. The teacher was able to get through an entire novel with the students, but it took an extended period of time and was adapted for ESL students. Students were able to make it through the text, but discussion and additional support was needed especially for beginners to understand the main concepts within the text. The teacher tried to incorporate short stories to increase their literacy skills and lower their reading anxiety. Other strategies used by the teacher during the classroom observations and stated within the interview included summarizing, chunking, breaking the text down, enlarging the font, activating student background knowledge, relating the text to the student's life, using the think-aloud strategy, and highlighting key details within the text. Students were taught to take notes in the margins, make parallel connections, and write in translations.

Teacher one brought up that the district would bring in many new strategies and then take them away while adding new ones. This tended to bring confusion for students and a chaotic situation for teachers. The teacher believed that the students needed to start creating decisions on their own so they could become individual self-regulated learners. Students were encouraged to use strategies but strategies were not enforced. Although this was said it was also stated that some of the students used the strategies incorrectly, which could be why they still suffered from

reading anxiety. Some students did not have the educational background in literacy and were never taught strategies. According to teacher one, the American strategies can be difficult for them to understand as well because they come from cultures that do not implement strategies within the classroom. The teacher would introduce strategies to students, but noticed that they did not necessarily use them, but seemed to sometimes have their own or do well anyways. This was seen within the observation as well. The students were given highlighters and the teacher discussed making notes in the margins, but not all of the students actually used the resources or suggestions that were given to them. This did not seem to bother the teacher.

Teacher number two expressed how the Common Core and English classroom presented challenging texts containing unfamiliar and demanding topics. Examples of difficult or unfamiliar texts read in the classroom included Shakespeare, short essays depicting political ideas and novels. Strategies used to alleviate this factor of reading anxiety seen throughout the observations and expressed during the interview within Teacher two's classroom included chunking or breaking down the text into smaller and more manageable sections to then analyze or summarize, retelling the text, building background, relating to the student experience, incorporating the reading process, annotation, small group discussions or cooperative learning, and an eight week lesson on reading strategies and how to use them. The eight-week lesson on reading comprehension strategies used at the beginning of the year began with a crime scene where students walked into the classroom to discover a fake dead body. Through the experience students learned that to be a good reader meant to be a good investigator. They needed to survey the situation (skimming/scanning the reading), find key details, question the text, and so on. Through this lesson, the students learned the strategies and practiced them through a hands-on cooperative-learning approach. These strategies were then used throughout the year giving

students the opportunity to become familiar with the strategies. However, the teacher expressed that due to the demands of the Common Core, the teachers were unable to provide enough strategy instruction. Therefore, the students may not know how to use the strategies in the most effective way. Metacognitive minutes was another strategy used within the classroom where students would stop and think about how they would tackle a problem within the text that they came across.

Teacher number three expressed that when introducing difficult or uninteresting texts it was crucial to relate the information with the students. He made connections to the student workplace or known places within the community. Questioning the text and activating background knowledge were strategies used to make connections and fully understand the text. When taking notes the teacher explained to the students to draw pictures so they would remember more. Post-its were sometimes provided for each page of the text to write down important key details. This teacher provided reading ahead of time for an extended period of time to read and comprehend the new material. This allowed these students to ask for help from the ESL teacher if needed. Teacher number four incorporated the use of highlighters to highlight key details in a text.

All teachers were in agreement with students that this was a significant factor of reading anxiety. There were many strategies that were incorporated within the different classrooms to aid students in reading comprehension. Therefore, the students were being provided with support, but still seemed to struggle with reading anxiety. This factor may have been the most significant if it was not for the extra support.

Teacher and student perceptions of the third most significant factor. The third most significant factor was the fear of making errors at a student agreement of 54% presented within

Table 8 and Figure 1. During observations there were certain students who would refuse to read aloud even when their classmates were encouraging them. This could be due to their fear of making pronunciation errors or not knowing certain words that may appear within the text. At the same time other students were eager to read aloud even when they would make many pronunciation errors. The teacher provided positive feedback, realistic expectations and encouraged students to do their best. The classroom environment was nurturing, comfortable and a safe place where students helped each other overcome their fear. Therefore, I was surprised that the number was still as high as 54%. It may have been even higher if it were not for the positive atmosphere created by the teacher and students.

Teachers agreed that students suffered from reading anxiety while reading aloud in front of others. One teacher explained that students would most likely decline reading aloud even if the text was in their native language due to their fear. Teacher number two explained that social pressures created reading anxiety for students while reading aloud or analyzing a text aloud. Students did not want to look stupid in front of their peers. Teacher number three tried to create a comfortable and safe environment for his students so they felt welcomed and less anxious. He incorporated a getting-to-know you lesson and talked with the other students about how they would feel in a similar situation. The class discussed the feelings of anxiety they would have in the ESL students' place and the need for respect for everyone within the classroom. There were few strategies used by students to overcome this factor of anxiety, which could be why this was the third ranked factor with a significantly high percentage of agreement. Teacher number one expressed that the students will never feel comfortable reading aloud if they do not practice reading aloud. Yet some of the teachers were okay with them not practicing. Teacher four would ask if the students felt comfortable reading aloud and if they did not she would just not call on

them. The students need to have the exposure and practice as well as the strategies to overcome this factor of anxiety.

Teacher and student perceptions of the fourth most significant factor. The fourth most significant factor was worrying about reading effects with a 44% student agreement presented within Table 8 and Figure 1. Fewer than half of the participants struggled with this factor and it was significantly lower than unknown vocabulary with a 25% gap. Therefore, it was not as significant as unknown vocabulary for this particular population. Although that is true, it is still a factor of reading anxiety for some students. After looking at responses conclusion was made that students worried mostly about using proper word accent as well as future comprehension of the text if read aloud. Students did not seem to worry about understanding an easy text, but they became anxious if they perceived that they did not comprehend the intended meaning.

Teachers agreed with students that this was a significant factor of reading anxiety. They perceived that students worried about making mistakes, their peers laughing at them, people making fun of them for silly pronunciation mistakes and more. This worry then formed into anxiety and if the student was called upon to read aloud they either declined or began reading but were unable to focus on the text due to the anxiety taking over. This was alleviated by teacher three's students coming for help if they felt worried about their reading. Teacher number three stressed to students that it was not about the content but was about learning English. He encouraged students to focus on English and to not worry about understanding everything. This provided a more comfortable and relaxing environment where students were able to learn at their own pace without worry of failure or lack of comprehension.

Teacher and student perceptions of the fifth most significant factor. The fifth most significant factor was unfamiliar culture with a student agreement of 43% presented within Table 8 and Figure 1. This was significantly lower compared to unknown vocabulary with a 26% gap. The teachers seemed to perceive a higher amount of student anxiety with this factor than what was perceived by students. Many teachers stressed that this would be a definite struggle and was just as significant as the other factors if not more. Teacher number two expressed that culture was very difficult for students due to their limited awareness of outside cultures from their own known environment.

Students may not have struggled with unknown cultural concepts within texts because they had more exposure with these types of texts. Teacher one used a reading material that covered a wide range of cultures, holidays and perspectives, which allowed students to gain cultural awareness. They may have had strategies to overcome this factor of reading anxiety as well. During observations the students were quick to ask for clarification when the culture within the text was confusing. Teachers would pre-teach certain words or phrases that contained multiple meanings, build background. Teacher number three provided detailed descriptions, hand gestures, visuals or made connections to what the students understood when time allotted.

Texts within teacher four's classroom usually offended the parents and students' cultural beliefs, which caused conflict between the teacher and students. The teacher was unable to change the curriculum of study due to the New York state standards. Therefore, cultural topics within some of the texts caused anxiety because students were being offended by the topics. This was not necessarily due to students not being able to comprehend the cultural differences. To conclude, this factor may not be as significant of a factor due to the increased exposure to cultural topics and the strategies incorporated within the classes.

Teacher and student perceptions of the sixth most significant factor. The sixth most significant factor was the difference between the two languages with a student agreement of 35% presented within Table 8 and Figure 1. This was much lower than the factor of unknown vocabulary with a 34% gap showing that most students did not struggle with this factor. Many of the students did not see the appearance of the alphabetical systems or semantic differences to be factors of anxiety. This could be due to the amount of exposure to the English language that they have experienced. During the observations the semantic structure of the English language was instructed, which may have helped to lower student reading anxiety.

The teachers' perception of this factor's significance seemed to be higher than the students' perceptions. After being asked if this was a factor the teachers would respond quickly in definite agreement whereas students did not perceive this to be a significant factor. Teacher one explained that students from different alphabetical systems struggled more with reading anxiety due to the parallelism of the languages not being present. The connection between the two languages was not strong and therefore may have caused them more anxiety than students with other native languages. According to the teacher and the research, the spoken language had some connections due to French and English influence but when the written text was compared it did not have that same connection (Farran et al., 2012; Mace, 2008).

Teacher two definitely thought that the difference between the languages would cause major anxiety problems for students. She said that she "could not even imagine being in their shoes" and "cannot believe how quickly they are acclimating and figuring it out" (Interview, 04/01/2015). The teachers started the year with both Arabic and English around the classroom and then as the year progressed, slowly transitioned away from using the home language. Using the home language along with the instruction on semantic features, may have allowed students

the opportunity to slowly acclimate to the English language without feeling overwhelmed. With that being said, some students found this to be a significant factor, while most did not.

Discussion

Many investigations have been made to discover how students struggle with anxiety, but few have been conducted on reading anxiety specifically and even fewer with Arabic high school students (Horwitz, 2010). Ahmad et al. (2013) focused on reading anxiety with Arabic-speaking university students while the present study focused on Arabic-speaking high school students. This population has very little research and there is limited research on the perceptions of both teachers and students. Therefore this investigation aided in filling the gaps while illuminating other areas of further research needed.

This study determined to find the factors that truly impacted the Arabic high school student population. This was done through student and teacher perceptions of the six known factors of reading anxiety. Five factors including unknown vocabulary, unfamiliar topics or culture, fear of making errors and worry about reading effects, were pulled from the research of Ahmad et al. (2013). The sixth factor was deemed important due to the research of Liu and Samimy (2012) and Saito et al. (1999) finding the structure of the language or differences between the languages to be a factor of anxiety.

Teacher Perceptions of Reading Anxiety

100% of teachers perceived that reading anxiety was a significant problem for their students. This was very high compared to previous research. Within the research of Trang et al. (2013) only three out of eight teachers perceived reading anxiety as a significant problem for students and one teacher was completely unaware of the existence of reading anxiety. The present study found that some of the teachers were aware of the existence of reading anxiety, but never thought about how it could affect their students until I asked permission to interview and observe them. They also never thought about incorporating strategies specific to overcoming

reading anxiety. Strategies were mostly used to improve comprehension. After the teachers within the present study were asked to participate within the research they started thinking about their students and reading anxiety. Three out of the four teachers mentioned noticing their students struggle with reading anxiety after they began to think about the concept. One teacher even stated that students would tell her that they hated reading. She determined that these kinds of comments stemmed from students having reading anxiety.

One teacher, within the research of Trang et al. (2013) was found to use student comments of anxiety to improve her instruction. This shows the importance of teacher perceptions. Oftentimes the perceptions of teachers will lead to instructional tendencies and strategies implemented within the classroom (Darwish, 2012; Trang et al., 2013). Therefore, teachers need to be aware of reading anxiety and how it affects their students. All of the teachers within the present study perceived that students struggled with the factor of fear of making errors. Therefore they tried to create environments where students felt comfortable and unafraid of making mistakes. Teachers changed their instruction to accommodate these students and their fear of making errors. Again, this shows the importance of the teacher perceptions and how they inform and affect instruction.

Within Trang et al.'s (2013) research there was one teacher who instead of incorporating strategies to help students reduce their anxiety, the teacher did nothing. The awareness of the anxiety did not cause the teacher to help the student in overcoming their fear. This was also found within the present study. One teacher knew that her students struggled with fear of making errors especially in reading aloud, but did not provide strategies to help the students. Instead she told them that they did not have to read. This did not help the student overcome their reading anxiety. This showed that awareness did not always help to inform instruction or that the teacher

did not know what strategy could be used to help the student. Therefore, training for teachers on strategies to reduce anxiety may be helpful.

Within the present study, it was found that teachers perceived all of the factors to be significant factors of reading anxiety. There were some factors that seemed to be more significant than others including unknown vocabulary. This perception is in congruence with the student perception of unknown vocabulary as the most significant factor. Teachers perceived a higher significance of the factors of unfamiliar culture and language differences than the students. Many students did not see the differences between the languages to be a factor of anxiety at all. No research was found showing teacher perceptions on the textual factors. However, the research showed that teachers perceived the personal factors to be significant in reading anxiety (Trang et al., 2013).

Student Perceptions of the Most Significant Factors

The most significant factor perceived by students was unknown vocabulary at an agreement of 69%. This was the highest ranked factor of reading anxiety in Ahmad's et al. (2013) research at 70% student agreement. This was the second highest factor perceived by students within the research of Kuru-Gonen (2009). These findings showed that for Arabic high school students, reading anxiety increased when students were faced with unknown vocabulary.

Vocabulary is an important part of the reading process that allows students to interact with the text and connect their background knowledge to the text. These findings showed that many of these students struggled with the reading process because the unknown vocabulary factor of reading anxiety blocked the students' ability to interact and connect with the text. Martinez and Murphy (2011) as well as Ahmad et al. (2013) discovered that as unknown

vocabulary and expressions within a text increased the student's ability to comprehend the text decreased.

The second most significant factor, with a student agreement of 56%, was the factor of unfamiliar topics within the texts. In Ahmad et al.'s (2013) research, this factor was tied in third along with worrying about reading effects at an agreement of 59%. This was the most significant factor of the research of Kuru-Gonen (2009) who found that as the topic increased in unfamiliarity anxiety increased. Unknown vocabulary was found to be increasingly difficult to decipher within the text as the topic increased in unfamiliarity due to a decrease in background knowledge. If the student does not possess the proper background knowledge they will not be able to connect the new information to their prior knowledge (Gilakjani, & Ahmadi, 2011; McNeil, 2011). From the research it was determined that students struggled with reading anxiety due to the factor of unfamiliar topics.

The third most significant factor was fear of making errors at a student agreement of 54%. Within Ahmad et al.'s (2013) research this factor was ranked second with a 64% student agreement. This is a ten percent gap between the present study and Ahmad et al.'s (2013). Other studies found fear of making errors as a significant factor of reading anxiety (Birch, 2002; Huang, 2012; Shabani, 2012). Therefore, this may be more significant than what students perceived within the present study or these students felt more comfortable making mistakes. Most of the research was conducted with university students (Ahmad et al., 2013; Huang, 2012). The university setting may create increased anxiety compared to the high school setting. This particular high school established a positive environment with realistic goals and a relaxing atmosphere within the classrooms. The students seemed eager to participate within most of the classrooms. However, some of them seemed more comfortable in certain classrooms than others.

Porter and Bruett (2009) encouraged teachers to create classroom environments where student errors were welcomed and allowed.

The fourth most significant factor of reading anxiety included worry of reading effects at a student agreement of 44%. Within Ahmad et al.'s (2013) research there was a 59% agreement among participants and was ranked 3rd along with the factor of unfamiliar topics within texts. This shows that the participants within the present study struggled less with this factor than those within Ahmad et al.'s (2013). This could again be due to the setting or classroom environment. Brantmeier (2005) found this factor to be significant and that the university students often worried about the future and if they would be able to comprehend texts. Therefore, this factor may be more significant within the university setting.

The fifth most significant factor of reading anxiety was unfamiliar cultural topics with an agreement of 43%. In Ahmad et al.'s (2013) research, agreement was at 42% for the factor of unfamiliar cultural topics, which shows similar results as the present study. This was the lowest ranked factor within Ahmad et al.'s (2013) research, which may mean that this population does not struggle with this particular factor of anxiety as much as the other factors. Çapan, and Pektaş (2013), Kuru-Gonen (2009), Saito et al. (1999), and Yousef et al. (2014) found that unfamiliar cultural topics within a text caused reading anxiety. With that being said, this factor may cause increased reading anxiety for students, but it was not as significant as the others and may not be as significant for this particular population. These students also had an increased amount of exposure to different cultural topics through the use of short stories within the ESL class. Ahmad et al. (2013) discussed that the most difficult texts for students were cultural texts. The students in the study were seen as having deficient cultural awareness, which could have generated increased anxiety. However, in the present study, the students were exposed to a wide variety of

cultural short stories and were similar in agreement with only a 1% gap between the two studies. Therefore, further investigation is needed to see whether or not increased amounts of cultural exposure aids in student achievement.

The least significant factor perceived by students, was language differences with an agreement of 35%. This factor was not a part of Ahmad's et al. (2013) research. It was added to see whether or not this was a significant factor. Within other research it was shown that students with less similarities between their target and native language usually struggled more with reading anxiety (Liu & Samimy, 2012; Saito et al., 1999). With that being said, this was the lowest ranked factor of reading anxiety at only a 35% student agreement. Although many students did not see this as an area of reading anxiety struggle, 100% of teachers interviewed perceived this to be a significant factor of reading anxiety.

Significant Factors Related to Strategy Use

The present study found that students struggled with reading anxiety. This was investigated through the perceptions of teachers and students. The last question within the research investigated whether teachers incorporated strategies within the classroom to reduce anxiety. Research has shown that increased use of strategies reduces reading anxiety and increases comprehension (Attaprechakul, 2013; Chen, 2007; Lesaux et al., 2010; Lien, 2011; Song, 2010).

Textual factors and strategy use. Teachers expressed difficulty in providing proper materials and strategies to students to enhance vocabulary comprehension. This may be why unknown vocabulary was such a significant factor of reading anxiety for these Arabic speaking students. If they were given proper strategies or increased exposure they may have shown less reading anxiety for this particular factor. For example, the ESL teacher incorporated a vast

amount of texts with unfamiliar culture. When students took the survey, results showed that unfamiliar culture was only the fifth most significant factor at an agreement of 43%, which is significantly lower than unknown vocabulary at an agreement of 69%. Students had more exposure to unfamiliar cultural topics through the short stories, which created cultural awareness and reduced their anxiety. Yousef et al. (2014) explained that the unfamiliar cultural concepts within texts were easier for students if they had gained cultural awareness.

Within Ahmad et al.'s (2013) research, the students disliked reading uninteresting, difficult or unfamiliar texts, which then caused increased anxiety. The researchers concluded that when students disliked the text they tended to dislike reading and had increased reading anxiety. Kuru-Gonen (2009) and Song (2010) discovered a positive correlation between text difficulty and reading anxiety. In the present study some of the students may have preferred familiar topics, but there were students who preferred unfamiliar topics for academic purposes. Students explained that they did not necessarily want something that was easy, but instead desired to have strategies or methods that would help them overcome demanding texts. This coincides with the findings of Naseri and Zaferanieh (2012) where it was discovered that Iranian students enjoyed reading difficult texts within and without the classroom because they usually read to increase their knowledge and academic literacy skills. Students just need the proper strategies to tackle these demanding texts.

Teachers provided many strategies for texts with difficult, unfamiliar or uninteresting topics. This factor was 13% lower than unknown vocabulary, which could have been due to the increased amount of strategies incorporated to overcome anxiety. Teachers seemed to be more knowledgeable on difficult, uninteresting or unfamiliar topics instruction than unknown vocabulary instruction. However, the percentage was still significantly high, showing that

although strategies were incorporated within the classroom and used by many students, there was still a struggle with this factor of anxiety.

Students may not be using the strategies effectively or may not be using them at all. During classroom observations some of the teachers would provide resources to allow students the opportunity to use certain strategies. Many times the students would not use the resources and teachers had to continue encouraging students to mark up their paper, use highlights or write notes. Within one classroom observation, students were not given the second worksheet until they showed strategies being used within the reading including underlining, highlighting and taking notes in the margins. In another classroom, strategies were never encouraged. One teacher believed that encouraging students to use strategies was good, but in the end the students needed to make their own decisions and become self-regulated learners. Therefore, the teacher would provide opportunities for students to use strategies, but did not enforce it. Research found that when teachers demonstrate strategies there was an increase in strategy effectiveness by students because they knew how to use the strategies (Attaprechakul, 2013). Strategies have been found to reduce this factor of reading anxiety (Song, 2010).

Some teachers were able to come up with strategies for the textual factors of reading anxiety, but expressed frustration at the effectiveness of the strategies. The teachers expressed that the school district provided strategies for the teachers to incorporate within the classroom. After a time, the strategy would be taken away and a new one would be provided. This seemed to create more anxiety in students as well as confusion and seemed to frustrate teachers. Providing strategies and allowing time for students to feel comfortable using them would most likely be better way to lower anxiety. One teacher explained that certain strategies might not work for some students. Therefore, it may also be beneficial to differentiate the strategies for students as

well as provide strategy instruction. This may allow for a more comfortable environment where students use strategies in an effective way to decrease their anxiety while increasing their reading comprehension. Research has shown that when strategies were used effectively they lowered reading anxiety and increased reading comprehension (Attaprechakul, 2013; Chen, 2007; Lesaux et al., 2010; Lien, 2011; Song, 2010; Vogt & Echevarria, 2008).

The reading anxiety factor of language differences was not mentioned within this section due to the low percentage of significance found. However Liu and Samimy (2012) and Saito et al. (1999) found this to be a significant factor. Therefore there may need to be strategy-instruction for this particular factor of anxiety, but not necessarily with this population of students. Within the classroom being observed, instruction was given on semantic features of the English language, which may be why this factor was not as significant.

Personal factors and strategy use. Fear of making errors and worry about reading effects were the third and fourth most significant factors. Worry about reading effects was at a 44% student agreement, which was 25% lower than the factor of unknown vocabulary. Fear of making errors was at a student agreement of 54%. Both of these factors were lower within the present study than within Ahmad et al's (2013) study. This was projected to be due to the differences within the high school and university settings. In many of the content area rooms as well as the ESL room there was a focus on learning English. English language learners (ELLs) were not supposed to worry about the state exams or the content, but were to just practice their English while helping their friends. With this kind of environment the ELLs felt comfortable and were not afraid of making errors, worried about getting bad grades or comprehending every single word within a text. Teachers did not have adapted textbook versions for ELLs, therefore teachers encouraged students to not worry about understanding every single word, but to allow

for ambiguity. They were to focus on key details and important vocabulary words. The ESOL teacher worked along side the students as they read to provide additional support through finding key details, making connections, defining new vocabulary and summarizing information. The environment was very conducive in reducing this type of anxiety, which could be why it was not as significant as vocabulary or unfamiliar topics.

Teachers included getting to know you lessons, provided some readings ahead of time, generated positive feedback, incorporated realistic goals and made sure that non-ESL students respected the ESL students. Other than those strategies, not many strategies were used to reduce personal factors of reading anxiety. It was projected that the main factor for lowering reading anxiety was the classroom environment and the realistic goals. Previous research discovered that cooperative learning strategies, practice beforehand and teacher discussions with students lowered reading anxiety, but many of them did not look to the classroom environment to lower reading anxiety (Porter and Bruett; 2009; Rekrut, 1996; Reyes & Molner, 1991; Song, 2010). However, Talebinezhad and Rahimi (2013) discovered that when teachers created safe and nurturing environments for high school students in Iran it lowered their students' foreign language reading anxiety. This is a very similar population to the present study and therefore classroom environment may be a factor for the present Arabic speaking high school students as well. Within the research of Levine (2003) it was suggested that to create the most relaxing environment the target language should be used along with the first language (L1). This was not seen often within the present study, which may be why personal factors were more significant than others.

The need for a safe environment for this particular population is also important. One teacher explained that students had increased fear and worry due to peer pressure. Shabani

(2012) found that students feared pronunciation errors, students laughing at them, speaking without preparation and so on. This shows that peer pressure may influence reading anxiety. Arabic students may feel targeted by other students. Haddad (2011) and Al-Khatib (1999) discussed that since September 11, Arabs as well as their Islamic faith have been viewed in a very negative way in America. This impacts the students' learning because the negative viewpoint within the media and American culture affects the way teachers and other students' perceive and view this minority group within the school system. The negative perceptions challenge the Arabic students' cultural and linguistic identity and may even cause teachers to provide instruction differently towards the Arab students (Haddad, 2011; Al-Khatib, 1999). Therefore, it is extremely important to create a safe and nurturing environment for this particular population and to be aware of how they may be feeling and perceived in the classroom.

Limitations

Further research needs to be conducted due to the limitations within the present study. Conclusions were made based off of the perceptions of only thirteen students. The research would be more accurate for this population if there had been more students within the study. To generalize the anxiety level of all Arabic high school students based upon only 13 students would be misleading.

Time constraints became an area of limitation as well. Observations were difficult to conduct because some of the teachers did not do many reading lessons and the different teachers' classes seemed to be at the same time. Therefore it was difficult to observe the content area teachers. I was not able to do many observations. It would have been better if I had been able to observe teachers over a longer period of time.

Using teacher and student perceptions provided a rich amount of information of student anxiety. However, perceptions on student anxiety would have been more complete if participants included more faculty, students and administration as well as others who work with these students. Only two viewpoints were investigated within the research including the students and teachers' viewpoints. Therefore the investigation is limited to their perceptions on student anxiety. Further investigation to see if strategy-use reduces anxiety would be encouraged. This was impossible to study within the present research due to time constraints. Therefore, further investigation needs to take place on how Arabic students experience reading anxiety.

Implications

The first suggestion for teachers is to investigate strategies that may reduce anxiety for the significant factors of reading anxiety. After these strategies are found and shown to be effective the teachers should provide extended time to allow students to feel comfortable with the strategies. Based upon the discussion with the ESL teacher within the present study, it was shown that students needed time to learn and become familiar with the strategies. Some of them may come from backgrounds where strategies were never used or taught. Some dialects of Arabic do not have a written form, which may have caused an increase in student reading anxiety (Ennaji, 2005). Some students might have been refugees. These students may have never entered a school or may have interrupted formal education. Therefore, they might not have the literacy skills or strategies needed to acquire language (Farran et al., 2012). Therefore teachers need to demonstrate reading strategies through instruction and classroom activities for students to fully understand how to use strategies in an effective way. Again, research showed that when strategies were used effectively they lowered reading anxiety and increased comprehension (Chen, 2007; Lesaux et al., 2010; Lien, 2011; Song, 2010; Vogt & Echevarria, 2008).

After effective strategies are found, it is suggested to teachers to differentiate the strategies for the different needs within the classroom. This was a suggestion by the ESOL teacher within the research as well. Every student is unique and therefore, not every strategy will work for every student. Teachers should encourage students to become self-regulated learners that use strategies and desire to grow academically.

Another suggestion for teachers is to challenge your students. The students within the research wanted to read challenging texts. They did not want watered-down texts, but desired to obtain the strategies needed to overcome their reading anxiety and gain higher levels of reading comprehension. This was true for a similar population in Iran where students read to improve academically (Naseri & Zaferanieh, 2012). Therefore, this population may prefer to read difficult texts due to their love for learning and desire for a challenge.

Teachers need to provide an environment where students feel comfortable and safe. Students need to know that it is okay to make mistakes and that they do not have to worry about future texts or outcomes. Teachers within the study were able to create safe and nurturing environments through the use of realistic expectations, getting-to-know-you discussions, one-on-one discussions and positive feedback. It was suggested within the research of Talebinezhad and Rahimi (2013) that unrealistic expectations may cause an increase in reading anxiety. Therefore, realistic expectations from teachers are important and the teachers within the present research should continue incorporating them in their classrooms.

Further research needs to begin to investigate how to create safe and nurturing environments to reduce reading anxiety. Talebinezhad and Rahimi (2013) found the classroom environment to be a factor that could either increase or lower reading anxiety for Arabic speaking students. A safe and nurturing environment where mistakes are welcomed or

encouraged is very important and will lower reading anxiety (Porter & Bruett, 2009). Levine (2003) also suggested using the native language of students within the classroom to create a more relaxing and comfortable atmosphere. One teacher in the study mentioned peer pressure generating increased reading anxiety. Teachers need to make sure that there is mutual respect among their students. Some students may have negative perceptions of Arabic speaking students and the teachers need to make sure that this does not affect the Arab students, and that all students grow to respect one another (Al-Khatib, 1999; Haddad, 2011). Further research should be conducted to reduce negative peer pressure and increase positivity within the classroom environment.

The last suggestion for further research is to investigate how teacher perceptions affect their instruction and student reading anxiety. If teachers perceive that their students struggle with reading anxiety, it may cause them to teach strategies that will reduce reading anxiety. Darwish (2012), Mellati, Fatemi and Motallebzadeh (2013) and Trang et al. (2013) discovered that the perceptions of teachers often lead to instructional tendencies and strategies implemented within the classroom. Therefore, teachers need to be aware of reading anxiety and how it affects their students. Research needs to determine if teacher training and awareness lowers student reading anxiety. If teachers are aware of reading anxiety and trained on how to lower student reading anxiety, they may positively inform their instruction and student anxiety may be reduced.

It is interesting to note that some teachers viewed anxiety to be a good motivational tool while others thought it to be a hindrance to a child's education. Research has found reading anxiety to only be debilitating or to lower reading comprehension (Ahmad et al., 2013; Atef-Vahid & Kashani, 2011; Talebinezhad & Rahimi, 2013). Therefore, it needs to be dealt with and students need the strategies to overcome their reading anxiety.

To conclude the present study showed that Arabic high school students suffered from reading anxiety. The factors of reading anxiety that were studied included unknown vocabulary, unfamiliar topics and culture, worry about reading affects, fear of making errors and language differences. The most significant factor was unknown vocabulary followed by unfamiliar topics, fear of making errors, worry of reading effects, unfamiliar culture and then language differences. The study projects that strategies and a positive classroom environment could reduce the significance of the factors at hand. It also showed that future research is needed to discover effective strategies to reduce anxiety as well as other areas of research to improve the student reading experience. Students should not have to face the struggle of reading anxiety without support and teachers need to have the tools and strategies to help their students overcome reading anxiety.

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*Appendix A***Survey Protocol for Students**

Name: _____

Directions: Next to each statement rate yourself on a scale from 1 to 5 on how strongly you agree or disagree with the sentence. If you strongly agree with the statement you will write a 5 next to the sentence.

The numbers will mean this:

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither Disagree nor agree
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

_____ 1. When I am reading in English, I get very upset and worry whenever I encounter strange vocabulary.

_____ 2. I focus on words in reading English texts because if I know the terms, I can understand the text.

_____ 3. I feel anxious in reading English when I encounter series of three strange words.

_____ 4. I enjoy reading a text in English when I know its translation.

_____ 5. I do not like to read an English text that has lots of difficult words.

_____ 6. When I am reading in English, I feel upset and anxious if I encounter words the meaning of which I do not know.

_____ 7. I enjoy English reading when I understand at least some portion of the text.

_____ 8. I do not prefer reading unfamiliar topics, particularly in the English language.

_____ 9. The most things I like to read in English are short stories because they have easy words and their topics are common.

_____ 10. I feel anxious when I am reading a topic in the English language, which I have no idea about.

_____ 11. In reading English, I hardly understand the idea if there is more than one meaning for each word

_____ 12. When I read English, I often understand the words, but I still cannot quite understand what the writer says.

- _____ 13. I usually translate word by word when I am reading English.
- _____ 14. It is frustrating in reading English when one word is connected with another to change the meaning.
- _____ 15. I must often feel that I cannot understand an English text even though I know every word's meaning.
- _____ 16. I feel anxious in reading aloud in fear of making errors.
- _____ 17. I feel embarrassed in front of others if I pronounce a simple and easy word wrongly.
- _____ 18. I prefer to prepare too much and search for the phonetic transcript prior to the class if I was expected to read in the class.
- _____ 19. I feel irritated if I encounter a word I do not know how it is pronounced.
- _____ 20. I prefer silent reading rather than reading aloud.
- _____ 21. When I am reading aloud, I focus on reading correctly rather than focusing on understanding the text.
- _____ 22. In reading aloud in the class, I do not understand the text even though it is easy.
- _____ 23. I enjoy silent reading because I can easily understand the text.
- _____ 24. When reading English aloud in the class I focus on word accent rather than understanding.
- _____ 25. I get upset when I am not sure whether I understand what I am reading in English or not.
- _____ 26. When reading English, I get disturbed and do not remember what I have read.
- _____ 27. I feel anxious reading in English due to the difference in the way the alphabetical system looks in written English compared to written Arabic.
- _____ 28. I feel anxious reading in English because it uses a different sentence order than Arabic.

Translated Survey

الأسم : _____

توجيهات: بجوار كل بيان قم بتحديد أين يقع رأيك داخل الميزان من 1 وحتى 5 من حيث شدة تأييدك أو رفضك لهذا البيان. إذا كنت توافق بشدة أكتب الرقم بجوار الجملة.

ستكون دلالة الأرقام كالتالي:

- 1 - لا أوافق بشدة
- 2 - لا أوافق
- 3 - لأعلم (لا أوافق ولا أرفض)
- 4 - أوافق
- 5 - أوافق بشدة

1. _____ عندما أقرأ بالإنجليزية ، أكون غير مستريح وقلق كلما قابلت مفردات غريبة.
2. _____ عند قراءة النصوص الإنجليزية أركز على الكلمات لأنني إذا عرفت المفردات ، أستطيع فهم النص .
3. _____ أشعر بالقلق عند القراءة بالإنجليزية إذا قابلت ثلاث كلمات غريبة متواصلة .
4. _____ أستمتع عند قراءة نص ما بالإنجليزية كلما كنت أعرف ترجمته .
5. _____ لا أحب قراءة نص بالإنجليزية يحتوي على العديد من الكلمات الصعبة .
6. _____ عندما أقرأ بالإنجليزية ، فإنني أشعر بالضيق والقلق إذا ما قابلت كلمات لا أعرف معناها .
7. _____ أستمتع بالقراءة بالإنجليزية عندما أفهم على الأقل بعض أجزاء النص .
8. _____ لا أفضل القراءة في موضوعات غير مألوفة ، وبالذات باللغة الإنجليزية .
9. _____ أفضل الأشياء التي أحب أن أقرأها بالإنجليزية هي القصص القصيرة لأنها تحتوي على كلمات سهلة كما أن موضوعاتها شائعة .
10. _____ أشعر بالقلق عند قرأتي باللغة الإنجليزية عن موضوع لا أعلم عنه شيئاً .
11. _____ عند القراءة بالإنجليزية يكون من الصعب علي أن أفهم الفكرة إذا كان هناك أكثر من معنى واحد لكل كلمة .
12. _____ عندما أقرأ بالإنجليزية ، كثيراً ما أفهم الكلمات ، ولكنني أظن لا أفهم جيداً ما يقوله الكاتب .
13. _____ أنا عادة ما أترجم الكلمة بالكلمة عند قرأتي باللغة الإنجليزية .
14. _____ إنه من المحبط في القراءة بالإنجليزية عندما ترتبط كلمة ما مع الأخرى مما يبذل المعنى .
15. _____ لأبد كثيراً أن أشعر بأنني لا أستطيع فهم نص ما باللغة الإنجليزية حتى لو عرفت معنى كل كلمة فيه .
16. _____ أشعر بالضيق عند القراءة بصوت عالي خوفاً من حدوث أخطاء .
17. _____ أشعر بالحرج أمام الآخرين إذا ما نطقت بالخطأ كلمة بسيطة وسهلة .
18. _____ إنني أفضل أن أستعد كثيراً وأن أبحث عن كيفية نطق نص ما ، إذا كان من المتوقع أن أقرأه في الفصل .
19. _____ أشعر بالغضب إذا قابلت كلمة لا أعرف كيف يكون نطقها .
20. _____ أنني أفضل القراءة بدون صوت عن القراءة بصوت عالي .
21. _____ عندما أقرأ بصوت عالي ، فإنني أركز على القراءة بدون أخطاء أكثر من التركيز على فهم النص .
22. _____ عند القراءة بصوت عالي في الفصل ، لا أستطيع فهم النص بالرغم من أنه سهل .
23. _____ أنا أستمتع بالقراءة بدون صوت لأنه يمكنني بسهولة فهم النص .

- _____ 24. عند قراءة الإنجليزية في الفصل بصوت عالي فإنني أركز على لهجة قراءة الكلمة لا على فهم معناها .
- _____ 25. أشعر بالغضب عندما أكون غير متأكد من أنني أفهم معنى ما أقرأ بالإنجليزية أو لا أفهم .
- _____ 26. عند قراءة الإنجليزية ، يحدث إنزعاج لي ولا أتذكر ما قد قرأته .
- _____ 27. أشعر بالقلق عند القراءة بالإنجليزية بسبب الفرق في شكل نظام التهجئة في المكتوب باللغة الإنجليزية عن المكتوب باللغة العربية .
- _____ 28. أشعر بالقلق عند القراءة بالإنجليزية لأنها تستخدم ترتيبا مختلفا للجملة عما هو مستخدم في اللغة العربية .

*Appendix B***Interview Protocol for Teachers**

Teacher Interview Questions:

1. What do you think about reading anxiety?
2. How do you think reading anxiety effects students? Do your students struggle with reading anxiety? Have they ever expressed struggling with reading anxiety?
3. What factors do you think cause student reading anxiety? For example a factor could be self-confidence, classroom set-up, or the text itself.
4. What strategies would you use to help students overcome reading anxiety?
5. What strategies do you use to enhance reading comprehension?
6. How do you inform students on unknown vocabulary?
7. How do you aid students in tackling difficult or uninteresting texts?
8. How do you aid students in understanding the culture presented within texts?
9. When students read aloud during class, do you think that they become anxious during the process? What do you do to alleviate that anxiety?
10. How do you help students overcome worrying about future reading assignments?
11. Do you think that the difference in the alphabetical system increases anxiety for students?

Appendix C

Observation Protocol For Classrooms

Checklist For Observations

Observation #: _____

Classroom Teacher: _____

Strategies:

_____ Highlighter/Underline: Explain Use: _____

_____ Post-it Note: Explain Use: _____

_____ Activation of Background Knowledge: Explain Use: _____

_____ Summarize/Retell: Explain Use: _____

_____ Define Unknown Vocabulary: Explain Use: _____

_____ Personal Dictionary/Flip Book/Classroom Definition: Explain Use: _____

_____ Visuals: Explain Use: _____

_____ Adapted Version: Explain Use: _____

_____ Read Aloud Strategies: Explain Use: _____

_____ Teacher Encouragement Strategy to Prevent Worry/Anxiety: Explain Use: _____

_____ Think-Aloud Strategy: Explain Use: _____

_____ Draw Inferences/Predictions: Explain Use: _____

_____ Question the Text: Explain Use: _____

_____ Context Clues: Explain Use: _____

_____ Translating: Explain Use: _____

_____ Taking Notes: Explain Use: _____

_____ Teacher Demonstration of Strategies: Explain Use: _____

_____ Partner Help: Explain Use: _____

_____ Idiom Games: Explain Use: _____

_____ Taped Text (Students adapt the text by taking out unknown words and replacing with synonyms): Explain

_____ Semantic Mapping: Explain Use: _____

Appendix D

Student Consent Form

Description of the research and your participation

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Miss Kress. The purpose of this research is to investigate what may cause reading anxiety for Arabic speaking students. This will allow future research to come up with strategies to help reduce reading anxiety.

Your participation will involve completing a survey with 28 statements. You will be able to evaluate each statement on a scale from one to five with one meaning strongly disagree, two meaning disagree, three as neither disagree or agree, four as agree and five meaning strongly agree. After reading the statement you may circle the number that best describes how strongly you agree or disagree with the statement. This is all you will need to do and it will only take one class period.

Risks and discomforts

There are some known risks associated with this research. Some students may not fully understand each statement. If this happens the student will be allowed to ask for clarification or may skip the statement. If the student feels uncomfortable with answering agreeing or disagreeing with a statement they may also skip the statement. The survey will be in both Arabic and English.

Potential benefits

This research may help us to understand what you think causes you reading anxiety. With this knowledge we may be able to come up with strategies to help you overcome your reading anxiety if you have reading anxiety.

Protection of confidentiality

We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. Your identity will not be revealed in any publication resulting from this study. You will remain anonymous within the study. This will in no way affect your grades and will remain separate from them.

Voluntary participation

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate and you may withdraw your consent to participate at any time. You will not be penalized in any way should you decide not to participate or to withdraw from this study.

Contact information

If you have any questions or concerns about this study or if any problems arise, please contact Miss Kress at 716-697-0957. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a

research participant, please contact the State University of Fredonia Review Board at 716 673-3528.

Consent

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give my consent to participate in this study.

Participant's Name _____

Participant's signature _____ Date: _____

If you choose to participate, another consent form will be given to you to be completed by your parent or guardian. Please bring the other consent form back as soon as possible. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Translated Student Consent Form

نموذج موافقة الطالب على الإشتراك في دراسة بحثية القلق في القراءة فيما بين الطلبة الذين يتكلمون العربية

وصف البحث وكيفية مشاركتكم

لقد تمت دعوتكم للمشاركة في دراسة بحثية يتم إجرائها من قبل الأئسة "كريس". إن الغرض من وراء هذا البحث هو التحقق من أسباب حدوث قلق القراءة للطلبة المتكلمين باللغة العربية. وهذا سوف يتيح البحث المستقبلي للوصول إلى الإستراتيجيات التي من شأنها المساعدة في تقليل قلق القراءة. إن إشتراككم سوف يتطلب إكمال إستقصاء من 28 بيان. سوف يمكنكم تقييم كل بيان على ميزان يتدرج من واحد وحتى خمسة حيث رقم واحد يعني "لا أوافق بشدة"، واثنين تعني "لا أوافق"، وثلاثة تعني "لا أوافق (لأعلم)"، وأربعة تعني "أوافق"، وخمسة تعني "أوافق بشدة". بعد قراءة البيان، يكون عليكم أن تحيط بدائرة الرقم المناظر بقوة لما تراه في هذا البيان. وهذا كل ما عليكم فعله وذلك سيستغرق فقط مدة حصة واحدة.

المخاطر والمضايقات

توجد هناك بعض المخاطر المعروفة في هذا البحث. فبعض الطلبة قد لا يستوعبون كلياً بيان ما. إذا ما حدث ذلك، سيسمح للطلاب أن يسأل كي يستوضح أو أن يترك ذلك البيان. وإذا ما شعر الطالب بعدم القدرة على معرفة ما إذا كان موافقاً أو غير موافق على بيان ما، فيمكنه تركه. الإستقصاء سيكون باللغتين العربية والإنجليزية.

الفائدة المرجوة

قد يساعدنا هذا البحث على فهم العوامل التي تظن أنها تؤدي بك إلى القلق في القراءة. وبالحصول على هذه المعلومات قد يمكننا التوصل إلى الإستراتيجيات التي تساعدك في التغلب على قلق القراءة إذا كنت تعاني من قلق القراءة.

حماية السرية

إننا سوف نبذل كل ما يمكننا لحماية خصوصيتك. فلن نعلن عن هويتك في أي نتيجة معلنة لهذا البحث. سيظل إسمك مجهولاً خلال هذه الدراسة. كما أن ذلك لن يؤثر بأي شكل على درجاتك وسيظل منفصلاً عنها.

مشاركة تطوعية

إن مشاركتك في هذه الدراسة البحثية هو عمل تطوعي. ويمكنك أن تختار عدم مشاركته، كما يمكنك سحب هذه الموافقة في أي وقت. ولن تعاقب بأي شكل حين إنسحابك وعدم مشاركتك في هذه الدراسة.

معلومات التواصل

إذا ما كان لديك أية أسئلة أو توضيحات حول هذه الدراسة أو إذا ما نشأت أي مشكلة، يرجى الإتصال بالأئسة كريس على الهاتف 716-697-0957. وإذا ما كان لديكم أية أسئلة أو توضيحات حول حقوقكم كمشارك في البحث، يرجى الإتصال بمجلس مراجعة فريديونيا بجامعة الولاية على الهاتف 716-673-3528.

موافقة

لقد قرأت نموذج الموافقة كما قد تم منحي فرصة توجيه الأسئلة. إنني أمنح موافقتي على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة.

إسم المشارك: -----

توقيع المشارك: ----- التاريخ: -----

إذا ما اخترت المشاركة، فهناك نموذج موافقة آخر سوف يعطى لك لكي يستكمله والدك أو الوصي عليك. يرجى أن تحضر نموذج الموافقة الأخر في أقرب فرصة ممكنة. ونشكركم على وقتكم وتفهمكم.

Appendix E

Parental Consent Form

Description of the research and your participation

Your child has been invited to participate in a research study conducted by Miss Kress. Miss Kress is a student from SUNY Fredonia and is involved in the Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) program. The purpose of this research is to investigate what may cause reading anxiety for Arabic speaking students. This will allow future research to come up with strategies to help reduce reading anxiety.

Your child's participation will involve completing a survey with 28 statements. Your child will evaluate each statement on a scale from one to five with one meaning strongly disagree, two meaning disagree, three as neither disagree or agree, four as agree and five meaning strongly agree. After reading the statement your child may circle the number that best describes how strongly they agree or disagree with the statement. This is all your child will need to do and it will only take one class period.

Risks and discomforts

There are some known risks associated with this research. Some students may not fully understand each statement. If this happens the student will be allowed to ask for clarification or may skip the statement. If the student feels uncomfortable with answering agreeing or disagreeing with a statement they may also skip the statement.

Potential benefits

This research may help us to understand what factors cause your child to have reading anxiety if they have reading anxiety. This study does not mean that your child has reading anxiety and you should have no worries about your child's education or academic achievement. With this knowledge we may be able to come up with strategies to help students overcome reading anxiety.

Protection of confidentiality

We will do everything we can to protect your child's privacy. Your child's identity will not be revealed in any publication resulting from this study. Your child will remain anonymous within the study. This will in no way affect your child's grades and will remain separate from them.

Voluntary participation

Your child's participation in this research study is voluntary. You or your child may choose not to have your child's participation and you may withdraw your consent at any time. Your child will not be penalized in any way should he or she decides not to participate or withdraw from this study.

Contact information

If you have any questions or concerns about this study or if any problems arise, please contact Miss Kress at 716-697-0957. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a parent to a research participant, please contact the State University of Fredonia Review Board at 716-673-3528.

Consent

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give my consent to allow my child to participate in this study.

Parent Name _____

Parent signature _____ Date: _____

Please have your student bring this consent form back as soon as possible. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Translated Parent Consent Form

نموذج موافقة الوالدين على الإشتراك في دراسة بحثية القلق في القراءة فيما بين الطلبة الذين يتكلمون العربية

وصف البحث وكيفية مشاركتكم

لقد تمت دعوة إبتكم للمشاركة في دراسة بحثية يتم إجرائها من قبل الأنسة "كريس". إن الأنسة "كريس" طالبة من "صني فريدونيا" (SUNY Fredonia) وهي مشتركة في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية لمن يتكلمون اللغات الأخرى "برنامج تيسول" (TESOL). إن الغرض من وراء هذا البحث هو التحقق من أسباب حدوث قلق القراءة للطلبة المتكلمين باللغة العربية. وهذا سوف يتيح البحث المستقبلي للوصول إلى الإستراتيجيات التي من شأنها المساعدة في تقليل قلق القراءة. إن إشتراك إبتكم سوف يتطلب إكمال إستقصاء من 28 بيان. سوف يقوم إبتكم بتقييم كل بيان على ميزان يتدرج من واحد وحتى خمسة حيث رقم واحد يعني "لا أوافق بشدة"، واثنتين تعني "لا أوافق"، وثالثة تعني "لا أوافق أو أوافق (لا/علم)"، وأربعة تعني "أوافق"، وخمسة تعني "أوافق بشدة". بعد قراءة البيان، يكون على إبتكم أن تحيط بدائرة الرقم المناظر بقوة لما يراه في هذا البيان. وهذا كل ما على إبتكم أن يفعله وذلك سيستغرق فقط مدة حصة واحدة.

المخاطر والمضايقات

توجد هناك بعض المخاطر المعروفة في هذا البحث. فبعض الطلبة قد لا يستوعبون كليا بيان ما. إذا ما حدث ذلك، سيسمح للطلاب أن يسأل كي يستوضح، أو أن يترك ذلك البيان. وإذا ما شعر الطالب بعدم القدرة على معرفة ما إذا كان موافقا أو غير موافق على بيان ما، فيمكنه تركه.

الفائدة المرجوة

قد يساعدنا هذا البحث على فهم العوامل التي تؤدي بإبتكم إلى القلق في القراءة، إذا ما كان لديهم هذا الإحساس بالقلق في القراءة. وهذه الدراسة لاتعني أن إبتكم لديه قلق في القراءة ولا يجب أن تشعروا بالقلق على نجاح إبتكم التعليمي أو الأكاديمي. بالحصول على هذه المعلومات قد يمكننا التوصل إلى الإستراتيجيات التي تساعد الطلبة في التغلب على قلق القراءة.

حماية السرية

إننا سوف نبدل كل ما يمكننا لحماية خصوصية إبتكم. فلن نعلن عن هوية إبتكم في أي نتيجة معلنة لهذا البحث. سيظل إسم إبتكم مجهولا خلال هذه الدراسة. كما أن ذلك لن يؤثر بأي شكل على درجات إبتكم وسيظل منفصلا عنها.

مشاركة تطوعية

إن مشاركة إبتكم في هذه الدراسة البحثية هو عمل تطوعي. ويمكنكم أو يمكن لإبتكم أن تختاروا عدم مشاركته، كما يمكنكم سحب هذه الموافقة في أي وقت. ولن يعاقب إبتكم أو إبتكم بأي شكل حين إنسحابهم وعم مشاركتهم في هذه الدراسة.

معلومات التواصل

إذا ما كان لديكم أية أسئلة أو توضيحات حول هذه الدراسة أو إذا ما نشأت أي مشكلة، يرجى الإتصال بالأنسة كريس على الهاتف 716-697-0957. وإذا ما كان لديكم أية أسئلة أو توضيحات حول حقوقكم كوالد لمشارك في البحث، يرجى الإتصال بمجلس مراجعة فريدونيا بجامعة الولاية على الهاتف 716-673-3528.

موافقة

لقد قرأت نموذج الموافقة كما تم منحي فرصة توجيه الأسئلة. إنني أمنح موافقتي على السماح لإبني / إبنتي بالمشاركة في هذه الدراسة.

إسم الوالد:-----

توقيع الوالد:----- التاريخ:-----

يرجى أن يحضر إبتكم / إبتكم نموذج الموافقة هذا في أقرب فرصة ممكنة. ونشكركم على وقتكم وتفهمكم.

Appendix F

Teacher Consent Form

Description of the research and your participation

You have been invited to participate in a research study conducted by Michelle Kress. Michelle Kress is a student from SUNY Fredonia and is involved in the Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) program. The purpose of this research is to investigate what factors cause reading anxiety for Arabic speaking students. This will allow future research to investigate what strategies help reduce reading anxiety.

Your participation will involve one interview and two to three classroom observations. Your students will also be taking one survey that will take place in the English as a Second Language classroom. The interview will ask questions about your perceptions of student reading anxiety and what strategies you use to help reduce reading anxieties. The interview will be audio recorded and will include fourteen questions. Classroom observations will be implemented within the study to further understand how you use those strategies and instruct reading comprehension. The students will complete a survey before the teacher interviews and classroom observations. The survey will investigate student perceptions of the factors that may or may not cause them reading anxiety.

Risks and discomforts

There are some known risks associated with this research. Some students may not feel comfortable having an unknown person within the classroom. I will do my best to stay in the background and not interfere with the classroom routine. You may also not be able to show all of the strategies that you implement into your instruction. Therefore, please try to include as many as you can think of that you use and even would like to use during the interview.

Potential benefits

This research may help us understand what factors cause student reading anxiety if they have reading anxiety. This study does not mean that your student has reading anxiety and with this knowledge we may be able to come up with strategies to help students overcome reading anxiety.

Protection of confidentiality

We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. Your identity will not be revealed in any publication resulting from this study. You will remain anonymous within the study and your information will help provide more information to better understand student anxiety.

Voluntary participation

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or withdraw your consent at any time. You will not be penalized in any way should you or your student decide not to participate or withdraw from this study.

Contact information

If you have any questions or concerns about this study or if any problems arise, please contact Miss Kress at 716-697-0957. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a teacher to a research participant, please contact the State University of Fredonia Review Board at 716-673-3528.

Consent

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give my consent to participate in this study.

Teacher Name _____

Teacher signature _____ Date: _____

Thank you so much for your time and consideration! I really appreciate it!

Appendix G

CITI Certificate

**COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI)
HUMAN RESEARCH CURRICULUM COMPLETION REPORT
Printed on 12/12/2013**

LEARNER	Michelle Kress (ID: 3881233) 11088 Porterville Road East Aurora New York 14052
DEPARTMENT	Education
PHONE	716-697-0957
EMAIL	kres9290@fredonia.edu
INSTITUTION	SUNY - College at Fredonia
EXPIRATION DATE	12/11/2015

GROUP 1.

COURSE/STAGE:	Basic Course/1
PASSED ON:	12/11/2013
REFERENCE ID:	11813114

REQUIRED MODULES	DATE COMPLETED
Introduction	12/11/13
History and Ethical Principles - SBE	12/11/13
Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE	12/11/13
The Regulations - SBE	12/11/13
Assessing Risk - SBE	12/11/13
Informed Consent - SBE	12/11/13
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE	12/11/13
Research with Prisoners - SBE	12/11/13
Research with Children - SBE	12/11/13
Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBE	12/11/13
International Research - SBE	12/11/13
Internet Research - SBE	12/11/13
Avoiding Group Harms - U.S. Research Perspectives	12/11/13
Vulnerable Subjects - Research Involving Workers/Employees	12/11/13
Conflicts of Interest in Research Involving Human Subjects	12/11/13
SUNY Fredonia State College	12/11/13

For this Completion Report to be valid, the learner listed above must be affiliated with a CITI Program participating institution or be a paid Independent Learner. Falsified information and unauthorized use of the CITI Program course site is unethical, and may be considered research misconduct by your institution.

Paul Braunschweiger Ph.D.
Professor, University of Miami
Director Office of Research Education
CITI Program Course Coordinator

*Appendix H***HSR Approval Letter**

26 January 2015

Michelle Kress
c/o Sovicheth Boun, Ph.D..
Language, Learning and Leadership
College of Education
The State University of New York at Fredonia

Re: Michelle Kress—Reading Anxiety Among Arabic Speaking Students

Your research project using human subjects has been determined Category 1, Exempt, under the United States Department of Health and Human Services Code of Federal Regulations Title 45 Public Welfare, Part 46 Protection of Human Subjects, 46.101, Subpart A (b) (1) and/or (2). This document is your approval and your study titled “Reading Anxiety Among Arabic Speaking Students” may proceed as described. **Your approval is valid from February 10, 2015 through April 1, 2015.**

Thank you for keeping the high standards relating to research and the protection of human subjects under the auspices of the State University of New York at Fredonia.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Judith M. Horowitz'.

Judith M. Horowitz, Ph.D.
Associate Provost, Graduate Studies, Sponsored Programs
and Faculty Development
Human Subjects Administrator

*Appendix I***Permission from the School****Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda Union Free School District**

Robin B. Zymroz
Assistant Superintendent for
Instruction & Student Services

February 26, 2015

Michelle Theresa Kress
11088 Porterville Rd.
East Aurora, NY 14052

Dear Michelle:

We are in receipt of your application to conduct research in the Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda Union Free School District.

After careful review and consideration, the following action has been taken:

- Approved
- Approved, pending IRB approval (send proof to KTT UFSD)
- Approved, with the following contingencies:
- Denied

Your research request will be sent to the following buildings: Kenmore East and Kenmore West High Schools

The Curriculum and Instruction Department must be informed prior to any changes in the original proposal that would affect the Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda UFSD.

Upon completion of the study, applicants will file a summary of the results of their research with the Curriculum and Instruction Department as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Robin B. Zymroz'.

Robin B. Zymroz
Asst. Superintendent for Instruction & Student Services

cc: D. Mirand, Superintendent of Schools
P. Heyden, Principal Kenmore East HS
D. Johnson, Principal Kenmore West HS
N. Bourke, ESLO Teacher
P. Stuhlmiller, President KTA
B. Banker, President KAA

RZ/mjv

1500 Colvin Boulevard, Buffalo, New York 14223-1196
Phone: (716) 874-8400 ext. 5333 Fax: (716) 874-8624
RZymroz@kenton.k12.ny.us