

**EXPLORING FOREIGN LANGUAGE READING ANXIETY AND THE
PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFL STUDENTS AND THE TEACHERS IN
ENGLISH PREPARATORY CLASSES**



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ENGLISH PREPARATORY CLASSES**

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ŞÖLEN ALTAY

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ABSTRACT

EXPLORING FOREIGN LANGUAGE READING ANXIETY AND THE PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFL STUDENTS AND THE TEACHERS IN ENGLISH PREPARATORY CLASSES

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The primary aim of this study is to explore the underlying factors of Foreign Language Reading Anxiety (FLRA) experienced by EFL students enrolled in advanced language preparatory classes offered by a university in Turkey. The study also attempts to investigate the perceptions of the EFL students and their instructors about FLRA in English preparatory classes. In order to identify the anxiety provoking factors, the English as a Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Inventory (EFLRAI) by Zoghi (2012) was employed to 98 EFL students in tertiary education. To gain the participants' insights about FLRA, semi-structured oral interviews were conducted with 18 students and one-to-one written interviews were carried out with 10 instructors who participated in the study on voluntary basis. The quantitative findings demonstrated that the most challenging issue for the participants was to understand the words whose meanings were unclear and the least challenging issue was to receive feedback on their pronunciation and translation mistakes. Furthermore, the findings gained from the student interviews revealed some additional factors such as the obligatory situations, frequency of the unknown words and terminology, and lack of reading strategies pertaining to different sub-categories of FLRA. Moreover, the instructors' perceptions revealed additional sources such as unfamiliar content, the length of the text, and the peer and the teacher's attitude to be influential for FLRA. Finally, the study provides

some solutions to eliminate the FLRA based on the participating instructors and the students' views.

Keywords: Reading Anxiety, Foreign Language Reading Anxiety, English as a Foreign Language Reading Anxiety, English as a Foreign Language



ÖZ

YABANCI DİLDE OKUMA ENDİŞESİNİN ARAŞTIRILMASI VE İNGİLİZCE HAZIRLIK SINIFLARINDA İNGİLİZCEYİ YABANCI DİL OLARAK ÖĞRENEN ÖĞRENCİLERİN VE ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN GÖRÜŞLERİ

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Bu çalışmanın temel amacı Türkiye’deki bir üniversitenin ileri seviye hazırlık programına kayıtlı İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen öğrencilerin tecrübe ettiği yabancı dilde okuma endişesinin altında yatan sebepleri araştırmaktır. Bu çalışma ayrıca İngilizce hazırlık programındaki yabancı dil öğrencileri ve öğretim görevlilerinin yabancı dilde okuma endişesi konusundaki görüşlerini incelemeyi hedeflemektedir. Endişe yaratan sebepleri belirlemek amacıyla, Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Okuma Endişesi Envanteri (Zoghi, 2012) yükseköğretim seviyesindeki 98 öğrenciye uygulanmıştır. Katılımcıların yabancı dilde okuma endişesi konusundaki iç görüleri hakkında bilgi toplamak amacıyla, gönüllülük esasına dayalı olarak 18 öğrenciden oluşan odak grubu ile yarı-yapılandırılmış sözlü röportaj ve 10 gönüllü öğretim görevlisi ile bire bir yazılı görüşme gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışmanın nitel veri bulguları, öğrenciler arasında anlamını bilmedikleri kelimelerle sıkça karşılaşmalarının okuma endişesi konusunda başlıca sebep olduğunu ve yapmış oldukları telafuz veya çeviri hataları konusunda öğretim görevlileri tarafından yapılan düzeltmelerin en az etkileyen neden olduğunu göstermektedir. Bunun yanı sıra katılımcı öğrencilerle yapılan röportajlar, yabancı dilde okuma endişesinin alt kategorileri ile ilişkin olarak zorunluluk içeren durumlar, bilinmeyen kelime ve

terimlerin sıklığı ve okuma stratejilerinin eksikliği gibi bazı ek sebepleri de ortaya koymaktadır. Öğretim görevlilerinin görüşleri ise bilinmeyen içerik, okuma metninin uzunluğu ve akran ve öğretmenin tutumu gibi daha fazla sayıda sebebi ortaya çıkarmıştır. Son olarak, bu çalışma yabancı dilde okuma endişesini giderme konusunda katılımcı öğretim görevlileri ve öğrencilerin fikirlerine dayalı çözümler sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Okuma Endişesi, Yabancı Dilde Okuma Endişesi, Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Okuma Endişesi, Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ETHICAL CONDUCT	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ÖZ	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	viii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ix
LIST OF TABLES	xiv
LIST OF FIGURES	xv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xvi
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Theoretical Framework	1
1.1.1 Anxiety as an Affective Agent.....	1
1.1.2 Background information on FLRA.....	2
1.1.3 The impact of reading anxiety on comprehension.....	5
1.2 Statement of the Problem	6
1.3 Purpose of the Study.....	8
1.4 Research Questions	9
1.5 Significance of the Study	9
1.6 Definition of Terms	11
Chapter 2 : Literature Review.....	13
2.1 Introduction	13
2.2 Definition of Reading Skill	13
2.3 The Process of Reading.....	13
2.3.1 Comparison of Reading Process for L1 and L2 Learners.....	15
2.4 The Purpose of Reading	16
2.5 Types of Reading.....	17
2.5.1 Reading Aloud.	17
2.5.2 Silent Reading.....	17
2.5.3 Intensive Reading.	17

2.5.4 Extensive Reading.....	18
2.6 Reading Strategies.....	19
2.6.1 Skimming.....	19
2.6.2 Scanning.....	19
2.6.3 Detailed Reading.....	20
2.7 Reading Approaches.....	21
2.7.1 Bottom-up Approach.	21
2.7.2 Top-down Approach.	22
2.7.3 Interactive Approach.....	22
2.8 Types of Anxiety	23
2.9 Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA).....	25
2.9.1 Identification of Anxious Learners' Behaviours.	28
2.10 Foreign Language Reading Anxiety (FLRA).....	29
2.11 Recent Studies on Reading Anxiety around the Globe	32
2.12 Recent Studies on Reading Anxiety in Turkey	41
Chapter 3 : Methodology	45
3.1 Research Design	45
3.2 Setting and Participants	48
3.3 Procedures	50
3.3.1 Data Collection Tools.....	50
3.3.1.1 EFLRAI	51
3.3.1.2 Students' Interviews.....	52
3.3.1.3 Instructors' Interviews.	53
3.3.2 Data Collection Procedure.....	54
3.3.2.1 Data Collection Process.	54
3.3.2.2 Types of Sampling.	55
3.3.3 Data Analysis Procedures.	56
3.3.3.1 Data Analysis of RQ1.	56
3.3.3.2 Data Analysis of RQ2	57
3.3.3.3 Data Analysis of RQ3.	57
3.3.4 Reliability and Validity.....	57

3.4 Limitations.....	59
Chapter 4 : Findings	61
4.1 Overview	61
4.2 Quantitative Data Analysis.....	61
4.2.1 Findings about the Factors of FLRA for Advanced Level EFL Students.....	61
4.3 Qualitative Data Analysis.....	70
4.3.1 Findings about the Factors of FLRA from the Students’ Perspectives.....	70
4.3.1.1 Factors related to Top-down Category of EFLRAI.	71
4.3.1.1.1 Obligations.	71
4.3.1.1.2 Major and Minor Details	71
4.3.1.1.3 Unknown Terminology.	72
4.3.1.2 Factors related to Bottom-up Category of EFLRAI.....	73
4.3.1.2.1 Frequency of the Unknown Words and Terminology.....	73
4.3.1.2.2 Complex Sentence Structures.....	74
4.3.1.3 Factors related to Classroom-Reading Anxiety of EFLRAI... 74	
4.3.1.3.1 The Implementation of Reading Activities.	75
4.3.1.3.2 Lack of Reading Strategies.....	76
4.3.1.3.3 Teacher’s Attitude.	76
4.3.1.4 Solutions for FLRA from the Students’ Perspectives.	77
4.3.1.4.1 Reading Books and Texts in English.	77
4.3.1.4.2 Teacher’s Positive Attitude.	77
4.3.2 Findings about FLRA from the Instructors’ Perspectives.	78
4.3.2.1 Factors related to Top-down Category of EFLRAI.	79
4.3.2.1.1 Unfamiliar Content.....	79
4.3.2.1.2 Unfamiliar Terminology.....	80
4.3.2.1.3 Length of the Text.	80
4.3.2.2 Factors related to Bottom-up Category of EFLRAI.....	81
4.3.2.2.1 Unknown vocabulary.	81
4.3.2.2.2 Complex Sentence Structure	81

4.3.2.3 Factors related to Classroom Reading Anxiety Category of EFLRAI.....	82
4.3.2.3.1 Reluctance.	82
4.3.2.3.2 Verbalizing	83
4.3.2.3.3 Reading Techniques	83
4.3.2.3.4 Peer and Teacher Attitude.	84
4.3.2.4 Solutions for FLRA from the Instructors' Perspectives.....	85
4.3.2.4.1 Scaffolding.	85
4.3.2.4.2 Well-designed Reading Activities.....	85
Chapter 5 : Discussion and Conclusions.....	87
5.1 Discussion of Findings for Research Questions.....	87
5.1.1 Discussion of the Findings of RQ1: What are the Factors of FLRA for EFL Students Enrolled in Advanced Level at a Language Preparatory Program?	87
5.1.2 Discussion of the Findings of RQ2: What are the Perceptions of the Students Enrolled in Advanced Level at a Language Preparatory Program about FLRA?	93
5.1.2.1 Factors related to Top-down Category.....	94
5.1.2.2 Factors related to Bottom-up Category.....	95
5.1.2.3 Factors related to Classroom Reading Anxiety Category.....	95
5.1.2.4 Solutions related to FLRA.	96
5.1.3 Discussion of the findings of RQ3: What are the Perceptions of the EFL Instructors who Teach Advanced Level Reading Course at a Language Preparatory Program about FLRA?	96
5.1.3.1 Factors related to Top-down Category.....	96
5.1.3.2 Factors related to Bottom-up Category	97
5.1.3.3 Factors related to Classroom Reading Anxiety.....	98
5.1.3.4 Solutions related to FLRA	98
5.2 Practical Implications	99
5.3 Conclusions	101
5.4 Recommendations for Further Research	102
REFERENCES	104

APPENDICES	111
A.The English as a Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Inventory.....	112
B. Interview Questions for the Students	115
C. Interview Questions for the Instructors.....	116



LIST OF TABLES

TABLES

Table 1 Details of the Instructors	50
Table 2 Research Questions and Data Collection Tools.....	54
Table 3 Reliability Statistics	58
Table 4 Items' Descriptive Statistics	62
Table 5 Measures of Skewness and Kurtosis	67
Table 6 Repeated Measures of ANOVA for the Scores of the Main Categories... ..	68
Table 7 Repeated Measures of ANOVA for the Scores of the Sub-Categories.....	69
Table 8 Sources and Solutions of FLRA from the Students' Perspectives	70
Table 9 Sources and Solutions of FLRA from the Instructors' Perspectives	79

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURES

Figure 1 Visual Model of the Research Design	47
Figure 2 The Constructs of EFLRAI in Detail.....	52



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
FL	Foreign Language
FLA	Foreign Language Anxiety
FLRA	Foreign Language Reading Anxiety



Chapter 1

Introduction

This chapter provides some general background information about the theoretical framework of reading anxiety, the statement of the problem of reading anxiety, the purpose of carrying out the study, the questions investigated in the current research and the significance of the study in literature. Finally, the chapter ends with the definition of the terminology used throughout the research.

1.1 Theoretical Framework

The following section provides a brief discussion of the phenomenon of anxiety as affective filter, the background information on foreign language reading anxiety (FLRA) with its underlying agents and the impact of reading anxiety on students' reading comprehension.

1.1.1 Anxiety as an affective agent. Affective agents like motivation, self-confidence and anxiety play important role in second language acquisition (Krashen, 1982). According to the Affective Filter Hypothesis developed by Krashen, learners who own higher motivation, higher self-confidence and lower anxiety are most likely to acquire the language input better. That is to say, learners who have lower filter are more open to the language input and readier to acquire the language. Taking this into account, it could be asserted that anxiety plays a significant role in language learning. For instance, FLA exerts a chain of effects on the process of reading comprehension of learners (Mohammadpur & Ghafournia, 2015). That is, FLA initially affects readers' curiosity, which in turn abates the functioning of their cognitive skills or their competencies like rational thinking, or questioning. As a result, reading comprehension process is interrupted.

To summarize, anxiety plays an influential role on learners' way of learning and the process of language learning. High level of anxiety blocks learners' readiness to acquire the language. Therefore, in respect of foreign language (FL) learning, the issue

of anxiety is considered as an acute problem as it might pose a negative or debilitating effect on language learning. As the focus of the current study is on FLRA, it requires a deeper look into the phenomenon of FLRA.

1.1.2 Background information on FLRA. In teaching and learning English as a Second Language (ESL), four major language skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking play an important role (Mohd. Zin & Rafik-Galea, 2010) and reading can be regarded as one of the most important skills as it provides learners with the written input necessary for learning the target language. This is valid especially for tertiary level students who need to deal with long academic written documents (Mohd. Zin & Rafik-Galea, 2010). However, reading in foreign language could be an anxiety provoking process (Subaşı, 2014). To gain more comprehensive and deeper data about FLRA, it is of the utmost importance to highlight how FLRA emerged as a phenomenon, the factors which FLRA depends on and the consequences students face due to reading anxiety.

The term FLRA drew attention with Saito, Garza, and Horwitz's (1999) study conducted with 383 students registered in French, Japanese and Russian courses in the first year of university. The data of the study was gained by means of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986), Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) and the students' final course grades. The results of the study indicated learners of Japanese scored the highest level of reading anxiety due to the orthography of Japanese language and French learners were reported to be more anxious in reading than Russian learners because Russian learners were able to capture the basics of Russian language early in the course, so they perceived reading in Russian less difficult. Furthermore, French students had the highest level of anxiety according to FLCAS since the majority of the French students took the course as a requirement and lower number of French students had joined in another course than Japanese and Russian students. The findings of the study demonstrated that FLRA was distinguishable from the general FLA which was usually referred to oral production and the perceived difficulty of reading in FL played an important role in reading anxiety level and higher level reading anxiety (and general FLA) led to low grades in reading. Briefly, FLRA at first was connected to learners' encounter with

written symbols different than the ones in their L1 and the student's perceptions about the challenges in reading in FL.

On the contrary, some subsequent studies have shown that FLRA was connected to different variables such as personal reasons (Kuru-Gonen, 2009; Subaşı, 2014), reading texts (Kuru-Gonen, 2009; Subaşı, 2014), reading course (Kuru-Gonen, 2009), teacher related issues (Subaşı, 2014), or teaching methods (Zoghi, 2012).

To begin with, the research carried out in Turkish context with fifty English language teaching (ELT) freshmen students at a state university in Turkey was conducted to investigate whether FLRA was distinguishable from general FLA and the causes of FLRA of Turkish EFL students (Kuru-Gonen, 2009). The analysis of quantitative data collected through FLRAS and FLCAS illustrated that FLRA was in relation to FLA, but different from general FLA. The results of the data gathered through students' diaries and semi-structured interviews also yielded three categories of FLRA sources including personal factors, reading text, and reading course. Firstly, the personal factors were in connection with lack of self-esteem, motivation, inability to use strategies, high-expectations, previous experiences, and concerns about comprehension. Secondly, text related factors were linked to boring and challenging texts, unknown vocabulary, challenging linguistic structures, unfamiliar cultural content, and text structure. Finally, the reading course related factors were about the course book, classroom setting, the requirement of reading as a course, reading teacher and the exams. The inappropriate strategy uses, the topics, and the course book were the most provoking factors consecutively in the sections they pertained to. Regarding the study, it could be suggested that FLRA is an elaborate issue which requires further in depth studies which pertain to each anxiety provoking factor.

Similarly, the study conducted with fifty-five freshmen year students at a state university in Turkey investigated whether FLRA was distinguished from general FLA (Subaşı, 2014) and the agents of FLRA for Turkish ELT students. Considerable amount of data gathered through the use of FLCAS, FLRAS and semi-structured interviews with highly anxious participants. The main finding of the quantitative data was that FLRA was connected to FLA, but it was distinguishable. Additionally, the reflections of the highly anxious students uncovered that the factors of FLRA were related to six main categories and some reasons which pertained to these categories.

The main six categories gathered through the interviews were “personal reasons (self-assessment ability, self-comparison to others, high personal expectations), teachers’ manner in the classroom, teaching procedures, the characteristics of reading texts (vocabulary, length of the reading text, the genre of the reading text, the background information), reading text (time, the mismatch between the test questions and content of reading lessons), and previous experience. Overall, the FLRA was not a phenomenon confined to one or two agents for language learners. Hence, it is significant that FLRA is explored by taking these factors into consideration to gain awareness.

In recent years, Zoghi (2012) investigated the factors leading to FLRA of undergraduate students who studied non-English related majors and were supposed to take English for General Purposes course in Islamic Azad University. Firstly, based on the responses of two classes with total of sixty-one students studying different majors to exploratory questions about the anxiety in reading classes, the preliminary data for the inventory was collected. After the initial form of the inventory was piloted with 33 students similar to the first sampling, the inventory was measured with the participation of 251 students from two different faculties to validate and select the items of the inventory twice after a four-week interval. The results of the student responses yielded three components of *top-down reading anxiety*, *bottom-up reading anxiety* and *classroom reading anxiety* each followed by variables pertaining to them. Firstly, the category top-down reading anxiety included the variables relevant to students’ background knowledge, cultural knowledge and general reading ability. Secondly, the category of bottom-up reading anxiety was inclusive of variables connected with vocabulary and grammar. Finally, the category of classroom anxiety included variables related to teaching methods. On the whole, the English as a Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Inventory (EFLRAI) yielded different variables effective in reading anxiety than FLRAS such as not including English writing system as a factor. Additionally, EFLRAI addresses reading anxiety of a specific group of students who study non-English majors in EFL setting.

In short, the efforts of conducting research in EFL reading anxiety have provided significant variables such as written symbols, high expectations, or reading teacher, yet for contributing to furtherance of our awareness of EFL reading anxiety, each

variable could be intertwined with different reading methods and strategies in classroom setting.

1.1.3 The impact of reading anxiety on comprehension. Apart from the causative agents, it is crucial to highlight the impact of reading anxiety on students' performance. Studies about FLRA have given some important information about the impact of FLRA on students' comprehension and achievement (Mohammadpur & Ghafournia, 2015; Mohd. Zin & Rafik-Galea, 2010; Eslami, Shaker, & Rakhsandehroo, 2018).

First, Mohammadpur and Ghafournia (2015) published an article which drew conclusion about the close link between the reading anxiety and reading success. The study was conducted with 100 Iranian students who studied at different departments at the Islamic University of Neyshabor and they were provided with reading anxiety scale and TOEFL test. The results of the study demonstrated that the level of reading anxiety had impact on the students' success in reading achievement. The data also revealed that the students with high level proficiency became more successful in the reading exam. Therefore, as for lowering reading anxiety, informing students about the existence and debilitating effects of reading anxiety, utilizing different instructional methods to address the issue of unfamiliar text structure, and forming a less stressed classroom atmosphere were suggested in the study.

Mohd. Zin and Rafik-Galea (2010) also confirmed the aforementioned findings based on the results of the study with low proficient ESL learners who were first year diploma students at a Malaysian university. The subjects were provided with FLRAS by Saito et al. (1999), the Cognitive Interference Questionnaire (CIQ) and two academic texts to identify the comprehension level of the students. It was indicated that the students who had moderate level of reading anxiety were also cognitively interfered at a moderate level and owing to the reading anxiety level, the students were easily distracted and turned their attention to ideas unrelated to the tasks. Moreover, the reading performance of the low proficient students was low due to the increase in their reading anxiety level. In other words, the reading anxiety level not only hampered the students' involvement in the task at hand but also diminished their reading comprehension. In short, highly anxious learners are most likely to fail in reading comprehension and achievement (Mohammadpur & Ghafournia, 2015; Mohd. Zin &

Rafik-Galea, 2010) as when the level of anxiety is high, it has debilitating effect on comprehension. Therefore, it is suggested that further research to be conducted to identify the factors provoking reading anxiety in reading tests and during the reading tasks.

Similarly, Eslami et al. (2018) conducted a research to explore the connection between EFL instructional method and its effect on students' reading comprehension to identify the effect of stress on language learning. The data was gained from 65 female students at Intermediate level of English in Iran by means of a reading text and indirect observation. The key findings of the study indicated that the students in class 2 provided with teacher instruction before reading the text achieved better results in tests than the students in class 1 who were asked to read and paraphrased the text by themselves. It was concluded that since the students in class 1 lacked the help of the teacher, they lost the concentration on the details in one paragraph and moved onto the next one; therefore, they showed poorer results in reading test. That is to say, the students in class 2 felt less anxious in reading comprehension because some explanation about the text was provided to them by the teacher; hence, they obtained better scores in reading test.

Based on these overviews, it could be stated that FLRA is a broad phenomenon and the impact of which on learners' comprehension of reading texts is usually severe and debilitating. Therefore, it is vital that the major factors and the subcategories of FLRA be examined carefully. In respect to the impact of FLRA on reading comprehension and performance of EFL learners at preparatory schools, it is assumed by the researcher that the FLRA might play a prominent role in learners' education as unless the hidden factors of FLRA are spotted accurately, the practical and realistic solutions could not be implemented and this might lead learners go through a process which is full of hardships during their education in English as a foreign language. The situation becomes more severe when the considerable amount of time devoted on reading skill in FL by the students and the obligation to pass the summative exams like proficiency exams are taken into consideration.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In respect to teaching and learning English in tertiary level setting, it could be stated that the receptive skill of reading in English is instructed largely with some

activities to promote the target language. Nuttall (1982) states for FL learners, the language is a tool to transfer the message to others, yet in FL classrooms the message is used as a tool to transfer the language. In other words, texts are treated with some ignorance of the message incorporated in them; but utilized as rich sources of linguistic items. The better scenario is the case in which reading is merely practised through the discussion of the meaning the text conveys; however, during the reading process, little attention is paid on students' affective filters such as anxiety. The negligence of the uneasiness, frustration, or apprehension leads FL students to compile their own record of failure in reading classes.

In view of this issue, it could be stated that it is highly significant to expose the underlying factors of FLRA since the accurately and concisely identified anxiety provoking agents in reading skill might help both FL instructors to make their lesson plans accordingly, and curriculum designers to set the educational targets related to reading skill more effectively and advantageously for the benefit of the learners. In this way, FL learners could be helped to take advantage of reading in FL immensely and they could gain pleasure of FL reading. It is also vital to realize that reading requires some cognitive skills. Sellers (2000) lists the cognitive skills as "coordination of attention, memory, perception, and comprehension process" (p.513), and the case that these skills could be adversely influenced by the underlying factors of FLRA which could be related to some personal issues deriving from the reader, the text, the background knowledge, and the teaching methods as mentioned in the previous section. Furthermore, any persistent problem or challenge specific to one of these sub-categories of FLRA might undermine the confidence of FL readers.

As for the tertiary adult learners who have to deal with long and complicated academic texts, the situation deteriorates as adult learners are often more stressed during the process of learning than younger learners (Harmer, 1998). This is consistent with the experience of the researcher of the current study who has been teaching English to university level students at preparatory classes of the university. In the meetings or progress tutorial hours with the students and the trainings in which EFL teachers share their experiences, it had been brought into attention that the students felt frustrated and anger when they were supposed to read academic texts in English as they had difficulty of understanding the texts. Therefore, further research in order

to understand the sources of FLRA was felt as a need to address the issue of FLRA from the perspective of tertiary level students who were supposed to read academic texts for their success.

To summarize, it is highly significant to be aware of the key factors of FLRA so that it is possible to help FL learners, especially, adult learners who are and will be supposed to read and comprehend academic texts in FL for their education. In other words, without diagnosing each determining factor of FLRA, it is unlikely to expect FL readers to enjoy reading in FL or develop the habit of FL reading. Therefore, the matter of FLRA is worth conducting an in-depth investigation to facilitate the comprehension of long academic texts compulsory for tertiary level students. In the light of this review and taking the concerns raised by some EFL learners at the preparatory program of the university about reading skill, the researcher of the current study has attempted to explore the anxiety provoking factors in FL reading for advanced level EFL learners who are obliged to read texts in English.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

To be exposed to the target language of English and to practise the target language skills, it is essential for FL students to read in English. However, reading in FL is not an easy process for a great number of EFL students who find reading texts challenging and complex. Furthermore, according to Sellers (2000), reading in second language is a more complex process owing to some extra agents like motivation, ability to use the language, or some more. The process of reading anxiety in FL is essential to be analysed for the identification of the real causes of the FLRA issue. Otherwise, as Kuru-Gonen (2009) states the reading process might be interrupted by reading anxiety which might lead the students to have some negative experiences related to FL reading. Moreover, FL reading anxiety might lead learners to experience failure in reading comprehension and achievement (Mohd.Zin & Rafik-Galea, 2010; Mohammadpur & Ghafournia, 2015) and cause them gain prejudice towards FL reading and accumulation of negative experiences in FL.

In the light of these observations, the current study aims to investigate the sources effective in FL reading in tertiary level EFL setting for advanced level EFL learners. Furthermore, in order to gain more in-depth data about the factors of FLRA, the present study attempts to delve into the students' and the teachers' perceptions of

reading anxiety. Overall, the current study painstakingly addresses the issue of reading anxiety in EFL to shed light on the issue for prospective researchers, the language teachers, program designers and EFL learners.

1.4 Research Questions

To meet the objectives of this study, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What are the factors of FLRA for EFL students enrolled in advanced level at a language preparatory program?
2. What are the perceptions of the students enrolled in advanced level at a language preparatory program about FLRA?
3. What are the perceptions of the EFL instructors who teach advanced level reading course at a language preparatory program about FLRA?

1.5 Significance of the Study

Anxiety could be identified in oral performance owing to the visible reactions performed by learners. For instance, students might sweat or they might freeze while speaking and could not utter a word (Horwitz et al., 1986; Young, 1992). However, in reading skill it is hard to detect that students suffer from reading anxiety unless the teacher has a close look into the matter of failure in students' exams or talk with them about it. FLRA is associated with experiencing negative feelings such as worry or stress during the reading activity in FL (Çapan & Pektaş, 2013). Correspondingly, reading anxiety leads learners to get poor grades or fail, which in turn exacerbates reading anxiety. Therefore, some efficient solutions are necessary to lower anxiety in reading classes. However, first and most importantly the factors lying behind the FLRA are necessary to be explored thoroughly and deeply. Reading anxiety could be related to a variety of sources as previously mentioned. As Saito et al. (1999) asserts exploring the process of reading in FL and recognizing the factors of reading anxiety serve for boosting the effective reading in FL. Unless the factors of FLRA are detected in details and from different perspectives, it is unlikely to address the problem directly and produce long-term and satisfactory solutions serving for EFL readers. The literature review indicates some important findings related to the agents causing reading anxiety; however, there are few studies conducted with the purpose of

identifying the sources in the context of EFL learners who study at preparatory programs of universities. The majority of the studies in Turkish tertiary context include the participants who are quite familiar with English language, for instance, the students who are first year English Language Teaching students (Çapan & Pektaş, 2013; Güvendir, 2014; Isler & Yildirim, 2017; Kuru-Gonen, 2009; Subaşı, 2014) or a doctoral TEFL student (Bektaş-Çetinkaya, 2011). Furthermore, the majority of the studies conducted with the purpose of exploring the sources of FLRA in Turkish setting have used the adapted form of FLRAS developed by Saito et al. or the adapted form of FLCAS by Horwitz et al. (1986). However, the current study utilizes the scale which was tailored specifically for undergraduate students who did not study English-related majors but studied non-English majors and are required to study English for general purposes (Zoghi, 2012). Moreover, the current study could be claimed to be a more comprehensive research related to FLRA because the issue of FLRA was investigated both from the perspectives of the students and the teachers unlike the majority of the studies conducted in the FLRA context (Jafarigohar & Behrooznia, 2012; Mohammadpur & Ghafournia, 2015; Mohd. Zin & Rafik-Galea, 2010; Rajab, Zakaria, Rahman, Hosni, & Hassani, 2012; Subaşı, 2014).

Furthermore, the current study is important in terms of exploring the FLRA of advanced level learners rather than low-level learners. Early studies focused on the fact that the unfamiliarity of the written symbols of the target language triggered the FLRA (Saito et al., 1999). Due to the fact that Turkish language shares most of the written symbols of English, for the advanced level Turkish EFL learners at preparatory classes of universities, the written symbols might be excluded as an important factor in FLRA. Also, in the present study, the unfamiliar written symbols of the target language of English was not included as the advanced EFL learners in the study had already been exposed to the target language of English, so they were considered to be familiar with English alphabet. However, other factors such as the unfamiliar culture or the authentic texts with unfamiliar content were prospected to play an important role in FLRA for Turkish EFL learners even if their proficiency was advanced. According to a study by Vande Berg (1993) it was revealed that 12 out of 29 advanced level students in an introductory class of French literature felt anxiety in reading French. It was partly attributed to the students' lack of familiarity with the concepts in

French literature (Saito et al., 1999). It could be inferred from this example that unfamiliar content could be responsible for the anxiety felt in reading for advanced level learners. Furthermore, the researcher of the current study reviewed the recent studies in Turkish context conducted in relation to FLRA and realized that the majority of the studies were carried out with EFL learners who were studying in the first year of English Language Teaching (ELT) departments of the universities in Turkey (Çapan & Pektaş, 2013; Güvendir, 2014; Isler & Yildirim, 2017; Kuru-Gonen, 2009; Subaşı, 2014). The results of the studies conducted with ELT students indicated that high proficient learners of English experienced FLRA like low level EFL students. However, Brantmeier (2005) suggests that anxiety in reading skill at advanced level might not occur due to the reading skill itself, but it exists as a result of the written and oral tasks done for the better understanding of the reading text. Therefore, a further research about FLRA for the advanced EFL learners was considered to be necessary.

In brief, the present study can benefit EFL instructors in terms of detecting and understanding the aspects of FLRA. That is, EFL instructors might find solutions to aid the anxious readers in reducing their anxiety to a controllable level (Matsumara, 2001) once they become aware of the factors of FLRA. As Ghoonsoly and Elahi (2010) state language and the feelings are connected with each other and in this connectedness feelings influence the performance. Therefore, it is utmost important to shed light on how the affective factors such as anxiety is produced and how students perceive this affective factor. Based on this information, to contribute to the existing literature, the current research attempts to add insight information about the aspects of FLRA both from the students' and the teachers' perspectives.

1.6 Definition of Terms

Anxiety: “The subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, and nervousness connected to an arousal of the autonomic nervous system, and associated with feelings of uneasiness, frustration, self-doubt, apprehension, or worry” (Brown, 2014, p.366).

Affective Filter Hypothesis: This is a hypothesis developed by Krashen. “Negative attitudes (including a lack of motivation or self-confidence and anxiety) are said to act as a filter, preventing the learner from making use of input, and thus hindering success in language learning” (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p.16).

English as a Foreign Language: English is a foreign language for learners in whose country English is not the official language, but used for some other reasons such as business, travel, education and so on.

Foreign language anxiety: “...a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (Horwitz et al., 1986, p.128).

Foreign Language Reading Anxiety: According to Saito et al. (1999), “foreign language reading anxiety as a phenomenon related to, but distinct from, general FL anxiety” (p. 211), and foreign language reading anxiety is a result of “a) unfamiliar scripts and writing systems and b) unfamiliar cultural material” (Saito et al., 1999, p.203).

Language Anxiety: “Subjective feelings of apprehension and fear associated with language learning and use” (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p. 313).

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The present chapter starts with the presentation of the definition of reading skill and then provides some information about the process of reading, the purpose of reading, the types of reading, reading strategies, and reading approaches. Then the chapter provides some background knowledge about types of anxiety, FLA with the identification of anxious learners' behaviours, FLRA including the review of the causative agents of FLRA and its effects on reading comprehension and achievement and finally the chapter presents the recent studies around the globe and in Turkey in terms of FLRA.

2.2 Definition of Reading Skill

Reading is defined by a lot of linguists and researchers in different ways. Amin (2012) states that reading includes the recognition of written symbols and this recognition initiates the retrieval of the meaning of a concept that already takes place in the reader's repertoire. Similarly, Richards and Schmidt (2010) define reading as the process by which readers comprehend the meaning of a text. From a different perspective, Grabe (2014) states that reading is a complex skill that readers use to take out and construct the meaning of a text. Based on these definitions, reading could be considered as an activity in which the reader goes through a complicated process of making meaning from letters.

2.3 The Process of Reading

Reading in foreign language might not be as simple as it seems because it is a long and laborious process readers go through (Zhao, 2009). The process of reading could be defined as complex as in the process of understanding the meaning, the written graphics or letters need to be readable (Amin, 2012). The complexity of

reading could also stem from the fact that it is more than the interaction between the *encoder* and *decoder*. In other words, although the message is received by the decoder who reads the text, there is no certainty about whether the reader has acquired the intended message (Nuttall, 1982). The message in the reading text could be interpreted by the reader since readers utilize the linguistic and background knowledge to comprehend the text (Peregoy & Boyle, 2001; Solak & Altay, 2014).

Although reading seems like an activity that is performed by one individual, it is rather an interactive process. Thornbury (2006) asserts that reading is a receptive skill yet the reader is in interaction with the text. Similarly, reading could be claimed to be an interactive process as it requires both the writer of the text and the reader make assumptions about the reading process and their roles (Nuttall, 1982). For instance, the reader is likely to think that he uses the same language with the writer and the writer has something to mention while the writer expects the reader to get the message from the text and he is likely to consider that the reader is there to understand the intended or targeted message.

Regarding the process of reading, it is also stated that a basic definition of reading might not represent the complex process of reading adequately. Instead, the definition of reading has to include the qualities of fluent reading in terms of speed, purpose, interaction, comprehension, flexibility and gradual development (Grabe, 1991). Firstly, fluent reading is fast because the reader maintains an adequate speed in the process of making connections between the ideas while comprehending the text. Secondly, fluent reading is done for an aim since the reader has a purpose to read the text and it could be either to take pleasure from reading or to get information from the written text. Reading is also interactive because the reader uses his skills and strategies, benefits from his schemata and from the text itself. In addition, reading process encompasses comprehension because the reader attempts to comprehend the text. Furthermore, reading is flexible since the reader uses various reading strategies such as making predictions or scanning at different stages of the reading process. Finally, reading skill develops slowly; it takes time for the reader to become fluent in reading as reading itself is a developing process.

To wrap up, based on the previous statements, reading could not be regarded as a one-way activity in which the reader can take on a passive role as the reader is linked to the writer of the text with invisible ties. Furthermore, reading process could not be assumed as a simple and easy process that readers go through without having any challenges. Hence, in the context of FL and L2 reading, it might require language instructors to be aware of the complex nature of reading process. Teaching reading skill or guiding language learners through this process might require both the teacher and the learner be patient as reading is a complex and time-consuming process which can not be completed at a time.

2.3.1 Comparison of reading process for L1 and L2 learners. Learning to read in L1 and L2 could be regarded as different processes due to a variety of factors. L2 users already own some L1 knowledge such as vocabulary, linguistic structures and discourse structures (Grabe, 2014; Nation, 2009). Moreover, L2 readers have already gained some cognitive skills and language skills of their first language. Since L2 learners have already been exposed to a language, they might be required to think differently and have a different attitude towards language when they read in L2. Grabe (2014) states that learners of L2 might transfer their cognitive skills, reading strategies and anticipations from L1 and some of which might hinder their reading comprehension in L2 while others might help L2 readers in understanding the text. For instance, if the learner owns some reading strategies like skimming, scanning, or detailed reading, he might be able to transfer these abilities to reading in L2. However, the general features of a language such as alphabetical symbols, sentence structures or the sound system between L1 and L2 might be different from each other. As a result, L2 reading comprehension is significantly affected because learners will need to learn the letter shapes first. In addition, L2 learners are older than L1 learners (Nation, 2009). This might have some effect on L2 reading process as the reader might show tendency of comprehending and meaning making based on his L1, for example, they might own some social and cultural expectations; rather than being unbiased in the process of making meaning from the text. Based on this information, it could be claimed that reading in FL is more difficult and complicated than reading in L1.

Briefly, regarding the limitations of cultural background knowledge, linguistic differences between L1 and L2 or FL, lack of vocabulary, unfamiliar text structure and poor cognitive strategies, it is conceivable that FL learners might tend to avoid reading in FL and develop prejudice towards reading in FL or solely the target language itself. Furthermore, reading process is likely to be hampered in the case of formal tests and exams as to reading in FL since exams might intensify the pressure.

2.4 The Purpose of Reading

Readers might have a variety of reasons to read a text. According to Amin (2012), we read to gain information, to improve our ideas on a topic, to address some problems or to enjoy. In other words, the purpose of reading might not be the same for everyone or every time one reads. For instance, reading a telephone directory is different than reading a book (Nuttall, 1982). By way of explanation, the first action might be done with the purpose of looking for specific information whereas the latter action might be performed to get pleasure from reading.

Similarly, Thornbury (2006) asserts that receiving information and taking pleasure are two main reasons for reading. However, it could be stated that receiving the message is the key and the common point to all purposes of reading (Nuttall, 1982). The message could be a fact such as the ingredients of a meal, an imaginary picture described by the writer of the text, the opinions of the writer on a topic or the emotional world of the writer. In addition, the purpose of reading could be done with the purpose of language learning. If this is the case, the purpose of reading might be narrowed to the exposure to the texts written in FL with the expectation of seeing the use of linguistic structures, checking the comprehension level, improving vocabulary knowledge in FL, recognizing the punctuation or learning about the construction of the written texts such as essays. Regarding reading in English texts, similarly, Harmer (1998) claims that students might acquire the language through being exposed to English even if they understand the language at limited level, and provided the texts are interesting, they acquire better.

Last but not the least, reading in FL could also be done with the purpose of getting education or having better career opportunities. For instance, the purpose of reading in English for learners from all across the world could be argued for seizing

better educational or business opportunities. Overall, reading is done with various purposes that readers would like to accomplish.

2.5 Types of Reading

Reading skill could be enacted through the use of diverse methods specific to reading skill in classroom setting to address students' needs and achievement. The following section aims to provide information about the types of reading methods preferred in reading courses.

2.5.1 Reading aloud. Reading aloud refers to reading a text loudly and is generally done with the purpose of having a better pronunciation. If the teacher reads aloud in FL classroom, it is usually done in the interest of presenting the excellent model for learners. It is suggested that reading aloud is often referred to when the learner is in the process of merging the words with their meanings (Amin, 2012). Therefore, it could be stated that reading aloud is used especially when learners are at the beginning of learning stages (Nuttall, 1982).

2.5.2 Silent reading. Reading silently is done without necessity of focusing on each word (Amin, 2012). Silent reading could be employed in reading classes if there is time constraint. Regarding this, McCallum, Sharp, Bell and George (2004) state that although silent reading may not lead to greater reading comprehension, it is more effective than oral reading as the text could be read much faster. However, it might present some problems like losing motivation under certain circumstances. For instance, faster readers might finish the text more quickly than slower readers while reading silently, so the faster readers might get bored of waiting while slower ones feel incompetent (Nuttall, 1982).

2.5.3 Intensive reading. Intensive reading requires learners to focus on the meaning closely and read the text slowly. As its name suggests, learners read the text paying intense concentration by using reading strategies. The main purpose of intensive reading could be claimed to comprehend the entire text in details. However, Nuttall (1982) claims that intensive reading requires two distinct instructions such as skill-based and text-based instructions. Teachers could focus on improving learners' reading skills such as guessing meaning from the context by incorporating the reading

skill into the centre of the lesson in skill-based teaching. However, text-based instruction refers to analysis and comprehension of the text and this is what is referred to when the term intensive reading is usually used. Intensive reading also includes paying attention on certain aspects such as the comprehension of the text, grammar, vocabulary, how the elements of a text are linked together, the genre qualities and techniques, and the information packaging (Nation, 2009). In short, intensive reading is more analytical and the comprehension of the text could be completed over a long period of time (Fauzi, 2018).

2.5.4 Extensive reading. Extensive reading is known as to read longer texts in a relaxed way without hurrying in order to take pleasure, acquire vocabulary, or to improve sound habits (Thornbury, 2006). Unlike intensive reading, extensive reading is usually adopted outside the classroom to develop reading habits of the learners. Readers, authentic texts or any kind of book that the learner is interested in could be used as extensive reading materials. Briefly, extensive reading is linked with students' own preferences and likes to get pleasure from reading a text (Fauzi, 2018).

In brief, it could be claimed that each reading type is in high correlation with the purpose of the reading activity or the time allocated for reading. It can be inferred that silent reading could be performed when there is time limitation since it leads students to gain more speed in the process of reading the text whereas reading aloud could be more preferable when the focus is on the use of correct pronunciation. However, with regards to reading aloud it is also known that this type of reading is likely to contribute to FL reading anxiety (Güvendir, 2014). In addition, it can also be stated that the use of external reading texts or materials addressing the interests of the students by instructors might promote learners' interest in reading and help them to develop their reading skills. Based on the review of the types of reading, it could be stated that in the current thesis, the focus is on intensive reading for a couple of reasons. Firstly, the participating students in the study are the learners of English who do intensive reading in classroom setting. They read the texts in order to understand the details such as the meaning, vocabulary, the layout of the paragraphs, or the genre and utilize reading strategies such as guessing meaning from the text, understanding the main idea, or using their schemata. The items of the English as a Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Inventory (EFLRAI) also includes the innate features of intensive reading such as

focusing on the background information, general reading abilities, vocabulary, and grammar.

2.6 Reading Strategies

As previously mentioned, reading is not a simple process, therefore possible strategies could be integrated into reading course to aid students. In addition, to read effectively, the practice of strategy is considered to help students (Nuttall, 1982). The most common reading strategies will be discussed below.

2.6.1 Skimming. Skimming is to read a text which could be an article, an essay or the chapter of a book quickly or to glance through a text in order to get the gist or the general idea of the text. It could also be done in the interest of getting the main idea of the text. In other words, skimming is usually done to get the overall picture of the text before focusing on the details such as looking through a newspaper article quickly to get the general idea. Learners need to be provided with time limitation in order to help them improve the skimming strategy. Regarding the way to train students for skimming strategy, Brown (2001) suggests assigning students a few pages of a text to glance through for thirty seconds and subsequently asking them to close their books and tell what they remember from the text. In other words, students could be prevented from immersing themselves into the text thoroughly if teachers practise skimming a text in this way. Skimming strategy could be claimed to be crucial for the students who need to do research because they usually have limited time to make a decision about the articles they benefit from.

2.6.2 Scanning. Scanning could be defined as reading a text to extract specific information such as names, dates, numbers, or definitions. In other words, scanning means that readers do not focus on each word or line; otherwise, they could not improve this strategy well (Harmer, 1998). Fauzi (2018) suggests that when specific information is needed, there is no need to read the entire text deeply, instead locating the point where the specific information exists would be enough. Brown (2001) states that scanning is an essential strategy in academic English and it is useful in general or vocational English based on the genre type such as forms or timetables. Based on this

information, it could be stated that teaching scanning strategy in reading classes is important. For instance, learners could be asked information questions in reading classes to find some specific information from the text so that they could be provided with the help of incorporating scanning strategy into their knowledge and practice. Similarly, Nation (2009) states that an ordinary scanning activity requires the reader to search for a specific quotation, a person's name, a specific number or date, a specific word or reading a list in the hope of finding the phone number, or a specific word or expression.

2.6.3 Detailed reading. Detailed reading is different than skimming and scanning strategies as both strategies could be done without going into the details of the reading text. However, detailed reading requires more attention since students or readers focus on the minutiae. In other words, the purpose of detailed reading is to read a text to learn about the details for the text (Thornbury, 2006). Therefore, it could be stated that detailed reading is a strategy needs to be improved for learners to do intensive reading. In other words, detailed reading might require teachers to focus on both the content and the linguistic features of the written text in order to assist learners with the comprehension of the text.

It is possible to add a variety of sub-skills to the list based on the review of the reading sub-skills. Thornbury (2006) lists some of the reading sub-skills as the comprehending words and identifying their grammatical role in the text, identifying grammatical traits of words and sentences, identifying the subject of the text and getting to know the shift from one subject to another, recognizing the genre, the aim, and the organization of a text, recognizing the words and phrases which organize the discourse of a text, identifying the main idea from the supporting details, spotting the most important idea of a text, deducing the attitude of the text writer, following the subject matter and how it is processed in the text, following the story of a series of events, and expressing the meaning by using different words without changing the meaning of the original text.

To summarize, reading strategies are important in terms of reading comprehension (Gamboa-Gonzalez, 2017). Therefore, learners might need to be taught to use reading strategies by teachers competent in the use of reading strategies.

Additionally, teachers might need some professional training about the practical knowledge of using reading strategies (Al-husban, 2019). Unless the students are trained well about the applications of reading strategies, students might experience problems with reading comprehension and subsequently reading achievement. Considering the review of the reading strategies, it could be stated that the current study includes the strategies of skimming and detailed reading for a variety of reasons. Firstly, some of the items of the EFLRAI are linked to the skimming strategy. Specifically, items one, four and six are connected to having difficulty with the unfamiliar title of the text, getting the gist and understanding the main idea of the text respectively. Similarly, the sub-categories of vocabulary and grammar and item five which is associated with the details of a text refer to the strategies of detailed reading. Finally, the curriculum which the institute where the participating students study requires the use of the strategies of skimming and detailed reading. That is, the participating students have dealt with these strategies since they started to receive education in the current institute.

2.7 Reading Approaches

In addition to the aforementioned strategies, the current study provides the effective approaches in teaching reading skill, the underlying tenets of them and the advantages provided for the students.

2.7.1 Bottom-up approach. Nuttall (1982) makes a resemblance between bottom-up approach and the approach adopted by a scientist using a magnifying glass to investigate a spot on the land and concludes that like the scientist, the reader who uses bottom-up approach in reading could start looking for the meaning from a very narrow point like sentence level, yet both the reader and the scientist could achieve the complete understanding when they combine the adjoining areas. In the light of this information, it could be stated that bottom up approach is more like an inductive approach which is based on discovery and reaching the complete picture from details in the text. In other words, it is a text-driven approach. Regarding the bottom-up approach, Brown (2001) states that it accounts for the recognition of linguistic indicators such as letters, syllables, words, etc. In short, bottom-up approach refers to

using individual language items and meanings of the words and sentences and subsequently getting the full comprehension of the text.

2.7.2 Top-down approach. On the other hand, top-down approach is not based on the text itself, but relies on the reader's own background or prior knowledge about the topic. In other words, the reader uses his individual experiences to the interpretation of the text (Solak & Altay, 2014). The reader is also believed to rely on some knowledge, for instance, the use of the discourse information, the schema, and the contextual knowledge. (Thornbury, 2006). In other words, by embracing top-down approach, readers use their existing knowledge about the organization of texts depending on their genre, make connection between their background knowledge about the topic and the information in the immediate text. In this respect, it could be stated that by adopting top-down approach, readers try to figure out the overall meaning of the text and make predictions about the following stages of the reading process.

2.7.3 Interactive approach. Readers might use different reading strategies such as top-down and bottom-up simultaneously in the process of discovering the meaning of the text and this is called interactive approach. Interactive approach is divided into two (Grabe, 1991). The first one includes the interaction between the reader and the written document and the reader is known to use both the information from the text and his schema. The second approach includes the use of cognitive skills simultaneously. Hedge (2000) states the skills that the reader brings with himself as syntactic, morphological, sociocultural, genre, topic and general world knowledge. Based on this information, it could be stated that the reader might utilize both the top-down and bottom-up approaches simultaneously in interactive approach (Nuttall, 1982).

Overall, it could be stated that although these three strategies could be automatically used by readers, they could be practised in classes to help students become competent readers. This is utmost important in academic education since undergraduate students are supposed to read long articles, chapters of books, research papers, and a variety of studies. With regard to the review of these approaches, it could

be stated that the present study entails both the bottom-up and the top-down approaches. Firstly, some of the items of EFLRAI refer to the unfamiliar title of the text, the culturally unfamiliar ideas, the lack of previous knowledge about the ideas in the text, and the inability of getting the gist of the text and the main idea. In other words, because the mentioned items refer to the participating students' existing knowledge and background information, in the present study top-down approach is addressed to. The bottom-up approach is also focused on in the current study in respect to the items of the questionnaire. The items in the sub-categories of vocabulary and grammar refer to the language difficulties at word or sentence level.

2.8 Types of Anxiety

The following section attempts to underline the perspectives maintained in the phenomenon of anxiety and how anxiety has been classified by various viewpoints in language learning with an emphasis on its influence and its possible sources.

Anxiety plays an important role in the success of language learners. With regard to the impact of anxiety on FL learning process, it is commonly argued that learners may not display their true performance in the comprehension of a text in the target language (Mohd. Zin & Rafik-Galea, 2010) or their production is impaired due to high level of anxiety (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). Therefore, it is of crucial importance to review how anxiety has been divided into specific categories.

In respect to the results of early studies, it could be stated that the impact of anxiety on FL performance included contradictory findings. For instance, Chastain (1975) carried out a study with students at university level who were provided with Spanish, French, and German courses. The students were at the elementary level. The aim of the study was to explore the impact of the affective characteristics, in comparison with selected student ability features, on their course grade. Briefly, regarding test anxiety, Chastain's study indicated that students instructed with French audio-lingual method were negatively correlated. On the contrary, the anxiety level and the test scores were positively correlated for German and Spanish students who were traditionally instructed. In other words, it seems that anxiety had impact on the students' scores; however, for some it had positive effect while for the others, it had negative effect.

The subsequent study by Kleinmann (1977) provided the definition of two different terms of *facilitating* and *debilitating* anxiety and yielded results about the impact of these two anxiety types on students' language performance. The study was conducted with 39 students at the intermediate level of English course in the University of Pittsburgh. 15 of the participants were composed of Spanish and Portuguese native speakers, 24 of them were native speakers of Arabic, besides a control group of 15 native speakers of English took part in the study. The English syntactic structures were opted for the study based on the divergence between the characteristics of English, Spanish and Arabic languages. It was reported that some Spanish and Arabic speaking English learners who scored the highest level on the facilitating anxiety scale did not avoid using some different and challenging English syntactic structures like infinitive complements and passive voice, yet they tended to use them. That is to say, anxiety exerted a facilitating effect on the learners' performance beyond the expectations.

From a broader perspective, the findings of the study by Chastain (1975) corroborated the outcomes of the study conducted by Kleinmann (1977). As for French students, anxiety exerted debilitating effect on the students' final grades whereas it had facilitating effect on Spanish students' final grades. In other words, French students scored low in the test due to the weakening effect of anxiety whereas Spanish students scored high owing to the positive effect of anxiety. However, anxiety could not be seen as a simple construct and it requires a multifaceted perspective to understand it (Scovel, 1978).

Apart from the facilitative and debilitating anxiety types, anxiety is categorised into three types: trait, state, and situational (Zhao, 2009). As its name suggests, MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) attribute trait anxiety to the personality of an individual. Brown (2014) expresses that trait anxiety is a more permanent tendency to be anxious whereas state anxiety is associated with a specific event or behaviour. State anxiety was also explained as the subjective intense feelings such as being worried, tense, apprehensive, and nervous (Spielberger & Reheiser, 2009). Thirdly, situational anxiety is seen as an alternative to state anxiety and it exists as a result of a routine situation (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). Owing to the fact that the inefficiency of trait and state anxiety to embody the essence of FL learning process, the situational anxiety was maintained as a perspective in recent years (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). Namely, the

performance of two students owning the same level of trait anxiety could vary quite significantly from each other depending on the type of the test they are capable of achieving. To put it another way, the trait anxiety is believed to lose its ground when the situational factors become more effective.

In a nutshell, the type of anxiety felt by language learners could be interpreted in different perspectives. That is, anxiety might exert either destructive or constructive effect on learner performance depending on the anxiety level. On the other hand, the trait, state and situation anxiety types are reflective of the sources of the anxiety. In other words, they are not categorised depending on their effects on readers.

2.9 Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA)

Students' linguistic competence plays an important role on their success in learning a FL; however, affective factors such as motivation and anxiety could also be considered highly effective in students' performance (Henter, 2014). Anxiety, one of the affective factors on language acquisition, has drawn attention in foreign language learning since it has profound influence on language learners' emotional state, achievement and performance. Therefore, the contributions to the issue of FLA is worthwhile to review in order to capture how the term FLA evolved in time and what the underlying agents pertain to this phenomenon (Horwitz et al., 1986; Young 1991).

It was not until 1986 that FLA was recognized as a distinct and separate phenomenon specific to language learning (Young, 1991). Horwitz et al. (1986) developed a new concept of anxiety especially in L2 settings and it was called 'foreign language anxiety' which is also referred to as language anxiety. Horwitz et al. initiated three group meetings with seventy-five beginner level language learners from four intact Spanish classes at the University of Texas to collect and record data about the concerns of these students pertaining to foreign language class. Having amassed substantial amount of data through group discussions with the students about challenges in language learning including presentations on the strategies of promoting language learning, and practices in anxiety management during the summer term of 1983, Horwitz et al. developed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). The key findings of the study formed the items of the scale reflecting the learner's performance anxiety in three areas of "1) communication apprehension, 2) test anxiety, 3) fear of negative evaluation" (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 127).

To explain in more detail, communication apprehension is connected to social situations just as fear of negative evaluation. Horwitz et al. (1986) stated that communication apprehension was considered to emerge when the person was in communication with others. According to Horwitz et al. communication apprehension is felt not only as a speaker in a conversation or dialogue with others, but also while listening to the speaker and it is labelled as “receiver anxiety”. Owing to communication apprehension, learners might avoid using oral production in target language due to feeling overwhelmingly embarrassed to speak the language. Secondly, test anxiety surface due to the fear of failure in tests (Horwitz et al., 1986). Test anxiety is debilitating factor in the success of language learner as the anxiety acts a filter and impairs the true performance of the learner during the test. Horwitz et al. asserted that speaking exams are more likely to exacerbate both the communication apprehension and test anxiety simultaneously in sensitive students. Finally, fear of negative evaluation is affiliated with the feeling of apprehension about others’ judgements and their evaluation. Therefore, fear of negative evaluation might resemble to the test anxiety, yet it should be treated from a broader perspective as the speaker might be involved in a social situation requiring oral production in FL, viz. meeting with the clients rather than test setting in which the language performance is tested.

However, the causative agents of FLA were not confined to the aforementioned sources. Young (1991) compiled the causative agents of FL anxiety specific to classroom setting into six categories and stated that “From an analysis of this research, language anxiety arises from: 1) personal and interpersonal anxieties; 2) learner beliefs about language learning; 3) instructor belief about language teaching; 4) instructor-learner interactions; 5) classroom procedures; and 6) language testing” (Young, 1991, p. 427). To gain deeper understanding of FLA, these elements are better to be looked at in more detail.

Initially, learners’ negative beliefs and judgements on their own performance or competency in language such as low self-esteem is considered to be connected with personal anxieties (Young, 1991). In the same way, the fear of being judged by peers or being unable to attain the desired rate of success like peers are believed to raise the issue of interpersonal anxieties. As regards these two points, Young (1991) states that the problems deriving from personal and interpersonal anxieties in FL learning context

are also attached to worries related to communication, socializing, and specific to learning a language.

Secondly, learners' individual judgements about a language skill or their preferences and likes in terms of a specific aspect of language learning could also lead to FLA. Namely, learners' utterances about the significance of speaking FL in perfect accent or their sharp and precise estimate for the length of language learning process could be thought as causative agents of anxiety relevant to learner beliefs.

In addition to students' assumptions about language learning, instructors' expectations and opinions as to language learning could be considered as an anxiety provoking factor in language learning (Young, 1991). For instance, it is likely that some instructors embrace pressurizing approaches such as creating a teacher-dominated classroom atmosphere with the fear of losing the control of the classroom. It thus matters to acknowledge that such behaviour of instructors might lead to some possible hazardous effects on learners. If it is persisted for longer time, it might even lead to some chronic anxiety.

Furthermore, the interaction or the rapport between the learner and the instructor in language classes is of critical importance as weakened interactions might carry the risk of provoking anxiety for language learners. The cold and harsh manner throughout feedback sessions and in the process of correcting mistakes adopted by teachers was reported to be anxiety provoking factor (Young, 1991). In a recent study conducted with fifty-three ESL students in Canada to investigate the instructor feedback and student anxiety, it was found out that the students with more positive perceptions about instructor feedback on written practice exam felt less anxiety (Di Loreto & McDonough, 2013). Therefore, it was correspondingly suggested that encouragement and approval while giving feedback to students or when students feel frustrated due to low grades are significant for student development. In short, positive interactions between the instructor and the learner in FL classes play a crucial role to eliminate or reduce the student's anxiety.

Apart from the factors specific to persons in the classroom environment and summarized so far, the current causative agent of FLA is linked with the classroom procedures. The procedures were reported to be usually in connection with speaking FL in front of peers (Young, 1991). This might be considered to be linked with the

interpersonal factor mentioned above as the first agent of FLA. Since the classroom activities that require students produce the target language in front of their peers might provoke FLA, classroom activities that stimulate group interaction and sharing rather than demonstrating knowledge could be better to be utilized in order to prevent anxiety.

2.9.1 Identification of anxious learners' behaviours. FLA was mostly referred to the anxiety in the process of making oral production in the target language (Young 1991, 1992). The recognition of students' anxious behaviours and the physical signs of anxiety when students speak a foreign language requires to delve into the field of social anxiety. Regarding the signs of social anxiety, "Leary offers three categories of behaviour arising from social anxiety: "1) arousal-mediated responses; 2) disaffiliative behaviour; and 3) image protection behaviour" (Young, 1991, p.429). These three categories of behaviour have been benefited in order to interpret the physical signs students reveal when they speak a foreign language.

Firstly, playing with hair or dresses, stuttering, or stammering while speaking were considered as the arousal-mediated responses owing to feeling anxiety at high level throughout the interaction with others (Leary, 1982). In the light of this information, it could be stated that these signs displayed by FL learners could be interpreted as a reaction and sign of feeling anxiety. However, it is also known that some learners show their anxiety in a more obvious and sudden way. For instance, in an interview, Terrel contends that some learners unexpectedly burst into laughter and make jokes abundantly (Young, 1992). Therefore, to prevent or reduce the stress, instructors could be suggested to pay attention to these reactions and moves presented by their learners and employ small group practices or dyads in which students feel less stressed and more secure to practise the target language.

Secondly, individuals' acceptance of passive behaviour during the interaction, for example, avoiding communication with others and tendency to be silent are referred as disaffiliative behaviours (Leary, 1982). Similarly, in an interview with Rardin, it was reported that students' freezing-up in the middle of oral performance, avoidance to speak, and not remembering expressions or words are behavioural signs of anxiety in the process of social interactions conducted in foreign language (Young, 1992). In other words, lack of reaction from the students while speaking could be

considered as a sign of the desire to end the social connection due to anxiety. Therefore, some instructional methods such as small group work or practising in pairs could be suggested for teachers to avoid these situations.

Finally, the third category of image protection behaviours are reported as using gestures like nodding or giving noncommittal feedback frequently instead of making long statements during the conversation with the purpose of protecting their self-image (Leary, 1982). In the light of this information, students' often tendency to make short sentences or nod while interacting with others could be regarded as a sign of anxiety.

Briefly, students might display unusual physical reactions, verbal responses, or stay unexpectedly silent throughout the conversation in FL. Therefore, the role of the instructor is to recognize these distressing signs to address the difficulties faced by learners in language learning.

2.10 Foreign Language Reading Anxiety (FLRA)

FLA and FLRA are two different terms as the first one usually refers to the general form of FLA while the latter one is specific to one receptive skill that is reading (Saito et al, 1999). In regard to language learning, Horwitz et al. (1986) state anxiety hinders people from revealing their real success in the fields of science or math and similarly, people feel stressful about learning a language, especially in classroom environment. In respect to this information, it could be stated that anxious learners are overwhelmed by the negative feeling of anxiety; therefore, they could lose their concentration and interest in the activity, performance or task, as a result of which they experience failure and low self-esteem. Language anxiety is specific to situations, so different contexts of language yields to specific types of anxiety such as reading, writing, listening and speaking (Nejad & Keshavarzi, 2015). In respect of FLRA, Zhao, Guo, and Dynia (2013) asserted that compared to FLA, FLRA is experienced by learners in the performance of reading.

FLRA could be associated with different situations related to reading skill. Learners might feel anxious when they are exposed to a text written in a different alphabet than the one used in their native language (Saito et al., 1999). Zhao et al. (2013) correspondingly contended that students might experience reading anxiety owing to the unfamiliarity of the written characters in two different languages. FLRA was investigated in the context of learning Chinese at a state university in the US (Zhao

et al., 2013). The data was collected by the means of FLCAS, FLRAS, and interview with students via email, a questionnaire to learn about students' background knowledge and chapter and final tests for reading scores. The results of the study displayed that unfamiliar written symbols (script), unfamiliar subject of the text and students' concerns about understanding the text were the top anxiety provoking factors. It was also revealed that Intermediate level students in the study experienced reading anxiety at a higher level than Elementary level students. This result was attributed to Pinyin text that was used by Elementary level students and included the sound system similar to English and secondly to the less complicated texts used by Elementary level students. Therefore, it is important for teachers to notice these agents and apply different strategies or reading methods which help learners to lower anxiety in reading.

Moreover, lack of vocabulary is regarded as one of the most important agents that cause FLRA (Subaşı, 2014). FL learners might develop reading anxiety due to the unknown vocabulary, especially if they lack reading strategies such as guessing the meaning from the context. It is reported that learners lose their interest in reading text and show reluctance to continue reading owing to lacking vocabulary in English (Subaşı, 2014). Furthermore, complicated linguistic structures are also regarded as contributing factors in FLRA (Kuru-Gonen, 2009). The language of the reading text makes the comprehension more difficult for learners and this might lead to FLRA.

Furthermore, Mohammadpur and Ghafournia (2015) state reading anxiety could be a result of the organization of the rhetorical patterns and cultural subjects. The educational background of learners might be effective as the organization of the ideas in the immediate texts might look different than they are familiar with. This becomes harder particularly for university level FL learners who are supposed to deal with lengthy texts. Teaching text organization is significant to help learners improve their understanding and learning (Grabe, 2003). Furthermore, the genre and the long size of the reading materials could lead to reading anxiety (Subaşı, 2014). The EFL learners in the study reported that they felt frightened whenever they were given a full page of English written text. Briefly, reading texts could be regarded as anxiety provoking if they are too long or organized in the way students are unaccustomed to.

Moreover, the lack of cultural background knowledge specific to target language might be considered as a factor hindering students' comprehension of the topic (Aisyah, 2017). Aisyah looked at the students' reading anxiety level and the causes of reading anxiety with the participation of thirty-three junior high school children in Bandung. The instruments used were FLRAS by Saito et al. (1999), a questionnaire proposed by Ahmad et al. (2013) and an interview with some of the students. The data analysis of FLRAS showed that most of the students (51%) experienced medium level anxiety in reading English. The findings also revealed that vocabulary, topic, and culture which were unfamiliar to the students were consecutively the top three factors that provoked reading anxiety for the students. Therefore, instructors were suggested to be alert and notice when their students felt anxiety in reading and apply different methods to lower their anxiety level.

Similarly, limited or lack of background knowledge about the topic independent from the cultural aspects could lead to reading anxiety as students lose their interests in the reading topic (Subaşı, 2014). In other words, the content or the themes which do not appeal students might be obstacles for students to pay attention to reading texts and cause them reading anxiety. In a previously mentioned study, Subaşı (2014) reports that some EFL students in her study clearly stated they felt safe when they were provided with their interests such as music. Based on this information, it could be stated that reading texts could provoke anxiety if they are not familiar to students in terms of their content.

Besides, pedagogical applications such as setting a classroom atmosphere leading to low filter are attached great importance in L2 acquisition as much as the language input (Krashen, 1982). In respect of reading courses which provide a substantial amount of written input for EFL learners, stress-free learning environment is likely to improve their concentration on reading texts and subsequently promote the comprehension of the written input and increase motivation of the learners for the intake. On the contrary, teachers' use of the materials and activities which do not address students' interests and their rigid attitude towards students are considered as some of the factors effective in FLRA (Subaşı, 2014). To prevent this, language teachers could establish warm and safe atmosphere in which learners push their negative thoughts aside, so reading comprehension is promoted (Mohammadpur &

Ghafournia, 2015). That is to say, teachers' interaction with learners and teaching techniques or instructional methods could be associated with creating a positive, welcoming and stress-free atmosphere.

Furthermore, teachers could be suggested to set up reading activities performed in groups since students could identify themselves with other group members experiencing the same challenges with word recognition and support one another apart from lowering the reading anxiety owing to unfamiliar topics and high level reading texts (Zhao et al., 2013).

To wrap up, FLRA might emerge as a result of one of the situations or the merge of more than one situations mentioned above. For example, students in a reading course might feel anxiety merely as a result of having not adequate vocabulary related to the reading text or they could experience anxiety owing to unfamiliar content and lack of reading strategies simultaneously. That is, the underlying reasons for FLRA might vary and change depending on the background knowledge of readers. Therefore, in the current study, the aim was to explore and identify the factors of FLRA of the participating students.

2.11 Recent Studies on Reading Anxiety around the Globe

The relevant and brief literature provides the summary of the studies carried out around the world in respect to FLRA. Recent studies compiled below encompass the question of FLRA from diverse aspects. A part of the brief literature review focuses on the level of reading anxiety of the students, the impact of language or reading anxiety on the students' reading comprehension, reading achievement or reading performance while some of them are based on the connection between reading anxiety and a variety of variables such as self-efficacy, gender, age, reading comprehension, reading performance, diverse majors, reading strategies and different levels of reading texts (Abubakar and Hairuddin, 2020; Sellers, 2000; Ghoonsoly & Elahi, 2010; Jafarigohard & Behrooznia, 2012; Rajab et al., 2012; Bargezar & Hadidi, 2016; Marashi & Rahmati, 2017; Torudom & Taylor, 2017; Bahmani & Farvardin, 2017). Few studies have been conducted directly on the sources of FLRA in the last decade and these studies have yielded findings showing similarity with each other such as personal factors as well as different results such as the lack of reading strategies

(Abubakar & Hairuddin ,2020; Ahmad et al., 2013; Bensalem, 2020; Matsumara, 2001; Shao, 2014; Tsai & Lee, 2018).

To begin with, to determine the level of reading anxiety of the EFL young learners, explore the symptoms of the anxiety and their opinions about the reading skill and English, Abubakar and Hairuddin (2020) carried out a study at a junior high school in Makassar. 30 students at the ages of 13-14 were the participants and the FLRAS by Saito et al. (1999) was used in the study. The outcomes of the study demonstrated that the participants had high level of anxiety based on the mean score of 65 ,633. Briefly, the symptoms of the reading anxiety were feeling upset due to being unsure about the comprehension of the reading text, feeling nervous because of not understanding the writer's claim, feeling confused due to unfamiliar topic, feeling both confused and nervous owing to unfamiliar words, ending up translating each word, and not understanding and not remembering the text due to the written symbols and letters. Finally, it was stated that the participants were contented with their reading ability in English and reading English. To conclude, the study reveals that although the students were anxious at some points in reading in English, they perceived their reading ability and reading in English positively.

Sellers (2000) aimed to investigate the effect of language anxiety on the language students' reading comprehension and recall aside from the impact of language anxiety on reading process. The data was collected from eighty-nine native English speakers learning Spanish through the means of Reading Anxiety Scale adapted from Zbornick and Wallbrown (1991) and FLCAS, Cognitive Interference Questionnaire to identify side talks unrelated to the tasks, written recall protocol and a multiple-choice test. The students were placed into two levels; Level 1 was having a Spanish course in third semester while Level 2 was in advanced oral expression course. The findings of the research indicated that reading anxiety exist as a distinct concept from general FL anxiety. In addition, it was revealed that learners who experienced high level of anxiety could remember less amount of information than less anxious learners. Additionally, the study showed that reading anxiety affected the type of information that the readers recall. That is to say, readers who had high level of reading anxiety could recall fewer main ideas whereas readers who had high level of FL classroom anxiety could recall fewer supporting details from the reading texts. Finally,

the analysis of the questionnaire showed that the students experienced high level anxiety were interfered by off-task ideas more than lower anxious students. Briefly, both reading anxiety and FL classroom anxiety negatively affected students' concentration on reading texts and reading comprehension.

To investigate the connection between EFL learners' self-efficacy in reading comprehension and reading anxiety and the relationship between EFL learners' self-efficacy and their reading achievement, Ghoonsoly and Elahi (2010) conducted a study with 150 second grade university level students in Iran. The participants were the students in English literature department of three universities. The data was collected through the scale developed by the author for the identification of EFL learners' self-efficacy in understanding reading text and FLRAS by Saito et al. (1999). The results of the study indicated that the students who perceived that they were able to succeed had lower reading anxiety than the students who did not believe that they were able to succeed. Also, data analysis showed that the students with high-efficacy were better in reading comprehension and reading achievement than the students with lower efficacy. The study is important as it enlightens EFL teachers about the important role of self-efficacy and its connection with reading anxiety. In other words, teachers could help EFL learners develop positive views about their ability to succeed, so that students' reading anxiety could be lowered to a certain extent and they could become more willing to read in English.

Jafarigohar and Behrooznia (2012) explored the relationship between FLRA and reading comprehension, gender, and age in the setting of distance learning. The participants of the study were 112 female and male students who were junior and senior students studying EFL at a university in Iran and their ages varied between 20 and 40. The FLCAS by Horwitz et al. (1986) was adapted by the researcher taking L2 reading and the setting of distance education into consideration. In addition to the reading anxiety scale, a questionnaire related to the demographic information of the participants and multiple-choice reading comprehension test were used. The findings of the study showed that there was significant relationship between FLRA and reading comprehension performance of the participants. It was also revealed that female participants had higher level of anxiety in reading than male participants. Finally, it was reported that age was not effective on FLRA. Consequently, it was also pointed

out that teachers should create a friendly classroom atmosphere and eliminate the debilitating effects of anxiety on students' comprehension and join in trainings to raise their awareness on the issue of anxiety and its negative role on learning.

Rajab et al. (2012) aimed to measure the reading anxiety level of final year science and non-science university students, to explore and compare the reading anxiety level between these two groups of students and to identify the relationship between their reading performance and reading anxiety level. The participants were 91 undergraduate students who were studying English as a second language and they were taking the Reading for Specific Purposes Course, which was an elective advanced reading course. The data was collected through a questionnaire developed by the researchers related to L2 reading anxiety and the participants' final course grades in reading course. The results of the study demonstrated that while 47.3 % of the participants had high level of reading anxiety, 52.7 % of them experienced low level of reading anxiety. It was also reported that there was no significant difference between science and non-science students in terms of reading anxiety level. The surprising result was claimed to be linked with the fact that non-science students had also been exposed to science subjects when they were in secondary school in Malaysia. The final finding of the study was that the majority of the participants' final grades in reading course were either A or B and this meant that the students were not under the effect of reading anxiety regarding reading comprehension. However, it was also mentioned that further research was necessary to make the study more generalizable and representative even though the results of the current study indicated low level reading anxiety felt by the participants.

With respect to the agents of FL reading anxiety, Ahmad et al. (2013) conducted a study with Jordanian EFL learners. The aim of the study was to investigate the factors lying behind FLRA and to measure the extent of these factors. The data was collected through questionnaires based on the criteria of quota sampling from the undergraduate university students from a variety of departments. The data analysis demonstrated that English language reading anxiety of the respective participants was related to two major causes of text features and personal factors. The text features included the sub-categories of vocabulary, topic and culture unfamiliar to the students whereas the personal factors were subdivided into two categories like fear of making mistakes and

worry about reading effects. That is to say, the students were afraid of making mistakes and they were concerned about reading in the classroom loudly. Briefly, the study confirms the previously mentioned studies that include the relationship between the unfamiliarity of the reading texts and reading anxiety.

Regarding the causes of FLRA, Shao (2014) also conducted a study to explore the factors lying behind Chinese college students' reading anxiety in EFL setting. The data was collected from 265 first year university students whose ages ranged between 17 and 21. The participants had 9 years of experience in studying English. The quantitative data from the participants was obtained through Chinese College Students English Reading Anxiety Scale (CCSERAS) which was developed by the researcher based on FLCAS. Additionally, the qualitative data was collected through interview with some students. The results gained through the calculation of each participant's scores and the mean score for each item in the questionnaire demonstrated that Chinese college students experienced high level of FLRA. The data from the questionnaire and the interview also yielded five significant factors provoking FLRA: the lack of cultural knowledge related to the target language, students' lack of confidence, the lack of reading skills, the lack of English linguistic knowledge, and having no interest in reading in English.

From a different perspective, Bargezar and Hadidi (2016) explored the correlation both between the L2 learners' reading anxiety level and their performance on IELTS reading comprehension and the item types of reading section of IELTS. The study was conducted with the participation of 94 upper-intermediate and advanced level male and female students from three different institutes. The ages of the participants ranged between 15 and 60. The data was collected through the use of Persian version of FLRAS developed by Saito et al. (1999) and the General Reading Training Paper of IELTS. The descriptive data analysis was conducted to see the mean score of the participants both from the reading section of IELTS and the reading anxiety scale. Also, the Pearson product moment correlation was used to identify the correlation between the reading anxiety and IELTS reading module and the item types of the IELTS reading section. The findings of the study indicated that there was a negative significant correlation between reading anxiety level and the comprehension performance of the reading section of IELTS. Furthermore, the results revealed that

skimming, scanning, table completion, classification, and true/false item types were in correlation with the reading anxiety level of the participants from the highest to the lowest level sequentially. Therefore, it was suggested that test developers take the affective factors into consideration in the process of developing test. Furthermore, teachers were suggested to help their students gain alternative strategies to cope with the anxiety and introduce them different item types in reading comprehension.

The effect of reading strategies on reading anxiety level has been studied in the field of EFL. Marashi and Rahmati (2017) carried out a study to explore the impact of reading strategies on EFL learners' reading anxiety. The participants were above 18 and they were students in a private language school in Tehran. 90 intermediate level students took Cambridge ESOL PET and 55 of them were chosen for the purpose of the study. Then the participants were assigned to experiment and control classes randomly. The data was collected from the participants by FLRAS as pre and post-tests. The intervention took 14 sessions. The experimental group was exposed to six reading strategies (making predictions, predicting, questioning, monitoring, visualizing, and summarising) whereas the control group was asked to respond to reading comprehension questions before the class, and in the lesson they had to read aloud the texts and were helped them to understand the language and the vocabulary by the teacher. The analysis of the pre-test indicated that there was no significance difference between the control and experimental group in respect to reading anxiety level while the analysis of the post-test revealed that there was a significance difference between the experimental and the control group in terms of reading anxiety level. Hence, it was concluded that teaching reading strategies was effective in reducing the students' reading anxiety. It was also emphasized that students should be equipped with reading strategies to improve their comprehension and the program developers and material producers should include the six strategies into their agenda to boost language learners' comprehension.

Torudom and Taylor (2017) carried out a study to investigate the reading attitude, reading motivation, and reading anxiety of science and non-science Thai EFL learners whose English proficiency level varied. The participants collected through the use of convenience sampling were 494 undergraduate students at a public university in 2015. The participants belonged to 3 different levels based on their scores in English

placement test. The scores of the first group was between 0 and 30; the scores of the second was between 31 and 50 and the scores of the third group was between 51 and 70. The data was gained through the instruments of The Foreign Language Reading Attitudes and Motivation Scale (FLRAMS) and The Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale. The results of the study demonstrated that the students who studied non-science subjects owned a more positive reading attitude and motivation in English than science students had. The analysis of FLRAS demonstrated that science students had higher level of reading anxiety than non-science students as they had to spend more time on science subjects than learning English, so they were engaged in learning English less. In addition, it was reported that the students who had lower proficiency level in English had less positive reading attitude and motivation in English and they had higher level of reading anxiety. In brief, the key findings of the study signify that the level of reading anxiety of EFL learners is subject to their proficiency in English and the subjects. Therefore, it could be suggested that EFL instructors consider these crucial factors to eliminate or lessen anxiety provoking factors in reading skill.

From a different perspective, Bahmani and Farvardin (2017) investigated the FLRA. The aim of the study was to explore the effects of English texts with different levels of difficulty on EFL students' FLRA and their comprehension of reading texts. The study was carried out with the participation of 20 male and 30 female EFL learners at a language course in Iran. The CEFR Headway placement test was administered to test the participants' proficiency level at the beginning of the study. Based on the test results, they were grouped into A2 level. The participants formed 2 classes and were provided with texts the difficulty of which were '*i+1*' and '*i-1*'. In the following week, they were provided with FLRAS by Saito et al. (1999) and a reading comprehension test. Then, the group '*i+1*' was provided with graded readers above their proficiency level whereas the group '*i-1*' was given with graded readers lower than their proficiency level for four months. After the intervention, the post-test of FLRAS and a similar reading comprehension test were administered. The findings indicated that both groups improved their reading comprehension. It was also concluded that the group '*i-1*' experienced lower level of FLRA at the end of the intervention period while the groups '*i+1*' showed higher level of FLRA. It was emphasized that the finding is contradictory with the previous studies implying that the level of FLRA has a negative

correlation with the reading comprehension level of the students. The contradictory finding of feeling higher level of reading anxiety but getting higher scores was attributed to the background English knowledge of the students.

Tsai and Lee (2018) conducted a study with 202 intermediate level EFL learners in Taiwan to explore the agents effective in FLRA. The data were collected through a questionnaire consisting of items related to background information about the participants and the agents influencing FL reading anxiety in order to investigate about variables such as gender, age, department, and the time consumed in reading English texts and the sources of reading anxiety. In addition, Liu's (2011) version of the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) and semi-structured interview were used to explore about the factors of the FL reading anxiety. The analysis of the responses through one-way ANOVA demonstrated that gender, age, and major were not linked to the FL reading anxiety level of the learners. On the other hand, it was demonstrated that the learners spent more time on reading English texts felt lower reading anxiety than the others. The Pearson correlation analysis also indicated that FLRA was positively connected to text-related and personal factors. Specifically, the majority of the learners in the study felt FLRA due to having almost no cultural background knowledge about the reading texts in terms of text-related factors and they were worried about misunderstanding the English texts in terms of personal factors. In respect to reading strategy use, using dictionary for comprehension was the most popular strategy among the learners. Furthermore, it was indicated that reading strategy use was negatively correlated with FLRA. That is, the learners felt less anxious when they used the reading strategies. Briefly, the study shows that the time spent on reading English texts and the use of reading strategy play important role in lowering reading anxiety.

Bensalem (2020) conducted a study about FLRA in a variety of aspects in two state universities in Saudi Arabia. In total, 225 undergraduate students from elementary, pre-intermediate, intermediate and advanced level responded the FLRAS. As a result of the factor analysis, three factors were obtained and called as worry about comprehension, lack of satisfaction in reading and unfamiliar phonic rules respectively. Moreover, the participating students were reported to own different levels of anxiety such as low, average, and high. However, most of the students were

identified with high level of anxiety. Thirdly, it was seen that female students experienced anxiety at a higher level than male students. Finally, the students' level of anxiety was in relation with self-perceived proficiency, having experience abroad, and knowledge of a third language from the highest to the lowest respectively. In conclusion, it was evident that the affective construct of anxiety was likely to arise due to divergent variables. Matsumara (2001) investigated the degree of the perception of reading anxiety based on the data collected from Japanese university students, the link between the reading anxiety and reading performance and the agents behind FLRA. To gain data FLRAS, FLCAS, and two different reading tests were used. In total 75 female students from intermediate, low intermediate level and low level proficient students participated in the study. The findings of the study showed that there was a high level of correlation between FLCA and FLRA and there was a low correlation between FLRAS two reading tests whereas there was a high correlation between FLCAS and SLEP reading test. In addition, it was found out that the students at low proficiency level had higher anxiety than the students who were at intermediate level. Moreover, the Factor Analysis revealed that the participants felt reading anxiety due to 4 Factors which were briefly related to unfamiliarity (grammar, words), unfamiliarity of the reading due to some constraints, the lack of self-confidence and positive approach for reading, lack of knowledge about the text. Finally, the study showed that the participants at low proficient in reading has less motivation to read in English. Briefly, it can be claimed that further research is necessary to find out the sources of reading anxiety specific to EFL students' proficiency.

To summarize, there is considerable amount of studies focusing on the connection between FLRA and some other variables. These studies show that reading anxiety could be regarded as a phenomenon linked to some variables such as low self-efficacy, gender and major of the students. Furthermore, there are some studies indicating that FLRA might be the contributory cause of the students' failure in the comprehension of reading texts in FL. However, the brief review of the worldwide studies imply that FLRA is a domain in which more in-depth studies are necessary as FLRA might be associated to various elements.

2.12 Recent Studies on Reading Anxiety in Turkey

The following part of the literature review focuses on the studies carried out in Turkey with the purpose of investigating FLRA of Turkish students. The following studies have been opted out as they have been conducted in recent years. Some of these recent studies were launched to explore the correlation between FLRA and some other variables such as reading strategy training and the ambiguity level of the students (Çapan & Pektaş, 2013; Genç, 2016) whereas a couple of them mainly oriented toward the factors of FLRA (Güvendir, 2014; Isler & Yildirim, 2017). Furthermore, one case study was executed for an in-depth exploration of reading process of a doctoral student (Bektaş-Çetinkaya, 2011).

Bektaş-Çetinkaya (2011) investigated the reading process of a Turkish graduate student of Teaching English as a Foreign Language. The study was a qualitative descriptive case study and the participant was a Turkish male doctoral student in Foreign Language Education. The data was collected through interview with the participant, think-aloud and recall protocols, and the notes taken during the text analysis. The analysis of the data yielded the finding that the participant went through difficulties during the process of reading texts based on varying factors. It was emphasized that the unknown vocabulary, low self-efficacy about his English proficiency and reading skill, and reluctance or lack of interest in reading compulsory academic English texts all impeded his comprehension of texts and provoked his reading anxiety. Finally, it was suggested that language instructors become alert about the challenges the learners experience while reading in FL and guide the students by providing them with necessary reading strategies.

Çapan and Pektaş (2013) aimed to explore the relationship between FLRA and reading strategy training in FL reading courses. The study conducted with 39 Turkish students of ELT at a public university was implemented with the training of some reading strategies of activating schemata, skimming, scanning, keeping reading journals and reflective thinking. The students were taking advanced level reading course during the study. The data was collected by the means of FLRAS by Saito et al. (1999) and semi-structured interviews. The data gained through the analysis of FLRAS displayed that reading anxiety level increased in the experimental group of students, yet lowered in the control group. It was concluded that the high school which

the learners graduated from could be the factor in the increased level of FLRA. By way of explanation, the text types, teaching styles of the teacher, and reading activities done in the high school of the learners might have been effective in provoking the reading anxiety for the students. It was also noted that the gender, age and the parents' educational history were not related to FLRA. On the contrary, the interview data demonstrated that the participants had positive perceptions about the reading strategies. Güvendir (2014) aimed to carry out a study to investigate the causes of FLRA. The participants were 30 students in total and they were first year English Language Teaching department students who attended advanced English preparatory classes for one year before they started the education in the department. The data was collected through think- aloud procedure. Data analysis conducted by two raters yielded 12 categories of FLRA. These agents were summarized in the order of importance in the following way: "metaphorical title, unknown vocabulary, exam, read aloud, text length, time, teacher's questions, topic familiarity, linguistic structures, students' questions, coherence among paragraphs and text type" (Güvendir, 2014, p.113). Therefore, it was suggested that instructors identify the underlying factors of FLRA and take initiatives to eliminate the agents. The study demonstrates that the sources of reading anxiety could be connected to considerable variables which require EFL instructors to foresee the possible consequences of them and take initiatives to help language learners lower their affective filters.

Genç (2016) conducted a more comprehensive study to explore the correlation between the ambiguity tolerance level of Turkish EFL learners and their reading anxiety level. In addition, the study was carried out in the interest of identifying whether the FLRA varied based on gender, success in reading in FL, and ambiguity of tolerance, and finally whether gender, success in reading in FL and ambiguity tolerance help to predict the reading anxiety level. The participants were 295 students whose ages ranged between 18 and 28 and they were at elementary level. The students had to study English for a year in the School of Foreign Languages before they start their education in their departments. The data was collected through the use of The Second Language Tolerance of Ambiguity Scale (SLTAS) and FLRAS developed by Sahin (2011) to measure the elementary level Turkish EFL students' reading anxiety. The findings of the study revealed that the participants showed low level of ambiguity

tolerance and they were less tolerant towards ambiguity in speaking and writing than in reading and listening. In addition, data analysis of the reading anxiety scale pointed out that the participants experienced reading anxiety at different levels and the anxiety provoking factors were related to the nature of the text, personal variables, attitude of the instructor, reading tasks and the classroom climate from the highest to the lowest level respectively. The study also revealed that the female students were more anxious in reading in English than male students in terms of the above mentioned categories; the successful and unsuccessful students varied in terms of their reading anxiety and the less tolerant students towards ambiguity felt more reading anxiety. The final conclusion drawn from the study was that second language ambiguity tolerance, gender, and success in reading in FL were predictors of FLRA. Therefore, it was suggested that the underlying reasons of less ambiguity tolerance of EFL learners should be found out to help them read more effectively and the reading texts should be selected by taking the students' interests, likes, and preferences into consideration.

Isler and Yildirim (2017) aimed to investigate the potential factors in FLRA of Turkish EFL learners. The data was gathered from fifty freshmen students of English Language Teaching Department through the use of the instruments of FLRAS developed by Saito et al. (1999) and semi-structured interview with six participants. The quantitative data was analysed through the calculation of mean score of each participant's response to FLRAS whereas the qualitative data was analysed through the use of coding method and identification of the recurring themes. The major findings of the study indicated that the participants had moderate level of FLRA. More specifically, forty-five participants experienced the FLRA at moderate level, four of them experienced it at high level, and one of them experienced it at low level. In addition, the analysis of the interview with the subjects yielded three main sources of reading anxiety with some sub-factors: personal factors, features of reading text, and reading course. Personal factors included the inability to use reading strategies adequately, lacking self-confidence, and setting high standards for themselves. The second main source of FLRA contained sub-categories like the unfamiliarity of the topic and vocabulary, the complexity of the structures in the text, the length of the text and the figurative language. The final main factor was connected to the sub-categories of compulsory reading lessons and the stress of passing the course. Overall, the study

implies that FLRA might be in relation to student-based factors as well as text-based or curriculum-based factors and the multi-dimensional solutions to lower reading anxiety are necessary.

To conclude, the recent studies in Turkish setting demonstrate that FLRA might be connected to various agents and the meticulous effort in the identification of these factors play a significant role in leading FL instructors to find and apply solution-oriented remedies for the anxious readers. Besides, it can be inferred from the review of the literature that the majority of the studies have been conducted with ELT undergraduate students in Turkish context. Therefore, the current study explores the factors of FLRA of EFL students enrolled at a language preparatory school of a university and from their perceptions. It can also be claimed that the current study is important in this respect since the study incorporates the use of a scale not employed by the studies mentioned above.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This chapter provides a detailed explanation of the research methods applied in the interest of identifying the factors of FLRA for EFL students enrolled in advanced level at a preparatory program. The current chapter focuses on the research design, setting and the participants, procedures including the data collection instruments and data collection procedure along with the types of sampling. The chapter also includes data analysis procedure with the validity and reliability of the current research, and finally, the limitations of the study is presented. The previously stated goal of the study could be formulated into the following research questions:

1. What are the factors of FLRA for EFL students enrolled in advanced level at a language preparatory program?
2. What are the perceptions of the students enrolled in advanced level at a language preparatory program about FLRA?
3. What are the perceptions of the EFL instructors who teach advanced level reading course at a language preparatory program about FLRA?

3.1 Research Design

The term ‘paradigm’ refers to theoretical groundwork, assumptions, beliefs and generally agreed rules and features in a particular area of study (Richards & Schmidt, 2010). Quantitative research is an accepted paradigm which includes data analysis to be conducted by using a software program such as Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and presented in numerical forms. On the other hand, qualitative research is mainly focused on the perceptions of participants (Stake, 2010). In addition, qualitative data is displayed in the researcher’s words and statements and may include direct quotations from the participants. Therefore, it could be stated that personal, interpretive, and experiential qualities are inherent in qualitative research. Data analysis in qualitative research is performed by coding, re-coding, categorisation or

thematization. Either one of these two research paradigms could be preferred to be adopted in one specific study; yet the current studies in the field of educational and social sciences include the application of both research types and the combination of them is referred to as mixed method.

The implementation of mixed method research design in a study is considered to be employed with several major purposes. Using mixed methods may help the researcher to provide more solid, rigorous and powerful data for the research inquiry, to obtain comprehensive data from different type of sources to support the initial database and to provide a different viewpoint to the research (Creswell, 2012). From a more specific perspective, the use of mixed-method approach is preferred to provide extensive and comprehensive findings to the study which ensures the reliability of the research and might help to make generalizations about the findings.

Furthermore, the mixed-method approach includes six method designs employed in a variety of studies (Creswell, 2012). Convergent parallel design refers to the process in which the researcher gathers both quantitative and qualitative data, analyses them one by one, then compares the results and interprets the findings by clarifying the similarities and the differences between the data and in which both data types are given the equal significance. The explanatory sequential design or two-phase model includes the use of quantitative data at the initial stage. Based on the results of the quantitative data, the qualitative data collection is initiated to elaborate the initial results. The exploratory sequential design consists of two stages similar to the explanatory sequential design; however, the researcher initiates the study with the qualitative data in the exploratory sequential design and then proceeds to the quantitative data. The exploration of phenomenon in the exploratory sequential design yields the development and the test of an instrument (Creswell, 2012). In embedded design either the qualitative or the quantitative data is given priority and the one referred to as a second data collection method is conducted with the aim of supporting the primary data. The transformative and multiphase designs are referred to as the designs which are getting popularity today in social sciences. The transformative design includes the use of one of the four above mentioned designs to conduct the study from a framework of a specific social group. Finally, the multiphase mixed

methods design consists of different phases or studies conducted on a specific issue by a team of researchers.

In the light of above review, it could be stated that a mixed type research was adopted in the current research since it helped to gather enough data to draw conclusions by corroborating the findings of the study (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, & Razavieh, 2010). Specifically, the convergent design was employed in the present study as both the quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analysed separately and then the results were compared with each other in the interpretation part of the study. Figure 1 displays the visual representation of the research design.

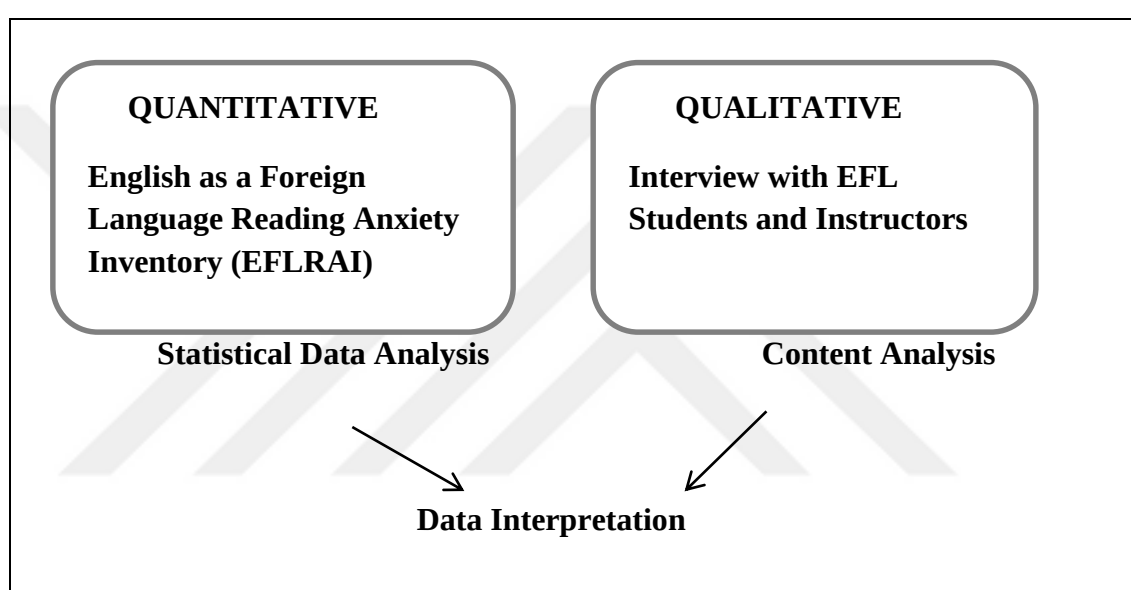


Figure 1. Visual model of the research design.

The quantitative data for the purpose of the study was collected through the use of English as a Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Inventory (EFLRAI) which consists of 27 items referring to three sections of Top-down Reading Anxiety, Bottom-up Reading Anxiety and Classroom Reading Anxiety. Since the purpose of the study was solely based on the investigation of the causative agents of the FLRA, variables such as gender and age were not taken into consideration. To gain deeper understanding of the perceptions of the EFL students about the factors of FLRA, a structured interview was held with some voluntary participants and some voluntary instructors studying at the preparatory program of the university.

3.2 Setting and Participants

The study was carried out at a non-profit private university, Turkey. The preparatory school of the university is located in the main campus which was established in 1997. The main aim of the preparatory program is to help the students be equipped with the necessary academic skills in English so that they could use these skills to follow the lessons in their departments in the following years. The preparatory program consists of three periods of Fall, Spring, and Extended Spring semesters. Students are placed into the preparatory program at the beginning of each academic year unless they pass the English Placement and Proficiency test. Fall and Spring semesters consists of 16 week periods whereas the Extended Spring semester lasts 8 weeks. The course levels are designed as beginner, pre-intermediate, intermediate, upper intermediate and advanced levels. The program is based on the improvement of the reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills and the students are also provided with courses in which they improve linguistic and lexical knowledge. The students receive education in English 25 hours per week by two instructors and they are offered with 2 office hours by their instructors to help them about the points that they have difficulty with. The students are assessed and evaluated with two quizzes of vocabulary and grammar knowledge, one mid-term exam and one final exam per semester. In addition, their performance of portfolio and performance in the class are evaluated by the instructors.

The current study was conducted with the advanced level students at the preparatory program of the university. The EFL program including 145 advanced level students provided 25 hours of English course per week. The students were provided with an average of 10 to 11 hours of reading course and the remaining hours were allocated for listening and writing part of the program. For the reading course, the advanced level students were supposed to do lexical, pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading activities. The reading textbooks and the topics to be covered in the class were determined by the curriculum unit of the program prior to the start of the academic year. The topics of the reading course were based on the units of the reading and writing book. The textbooks were compulsory to be instructed in all the classes at the same level each week and the students were tested on the content of the reading texts in portfolio writing hours. The task questions of the portfolio were directly linked

and aligned with the units of the reading and listening books since both books contained the same sequence and scope in terms of the topics. The reading course was based on the use of following activities: pre-reading activities including activating schema through some relevant questions to the topics, making predictions about the topic, understanding the key vocabulary; while-reading activities such as matching the paragraphs with the main ideas, detailed reading exercises containing true/false questions and open-ended comprehension questions, identifying the purpose of the reading text, or guessing the meaning of the words from the context, and finally the post-reading activities such as discussion or writing a short text. Also, the reading course was incorporated with the instruction of the accuracy of word forms, and various types of rhetorical patterns such as compare and contrast or cause and effect rhetorical patterns.

The participants of the study were EFL students studying at the English preparatory program of the university in which the researcher worked as a teacher. The participants who took part in the study were the students of 6 advanced level classes and the total number of the participants was 98 including 42 male and 56 female students whose ages ranged between 18-20. The advanced level participants had completed the previous semester with the average score between 65 and 100, but failed to pass the proficiency exam and the students who received the average score between 0 and 64 but could not fulfil the requirements to take the proficiency exam in the previous semester.

The qualitative part of the study was conducted with 18 volunteers. 9 of the students were male and 9 of them were female. In addition, there were 10 instructors who volunteered to be interviewed about FLRA in the study. Table 1 illustrates the details about the educational background and the teaching experience of the instructors.

Table 1

Details of the Participating Instructors

Participants	Years of Experience as an English Teacher	Educational Background	Experience in the Current Institute	Ever Taught EFL Reading Course for Upper-Intermediate and above Levels	Frequency of Teaching Reading Course as an EFL teacher for Upper-Intermediate and above Levels
T1	1-5 years	MA Degree	8 months	Yes	Once or twice
T2	More than 21 years	BA Degree	Over 10 years	Yes	5 times or more
T3	11-15 years	MA Degree	10 years	Yes	2-5 times
T4	6-10 years	MA Degree	5 years	Yes	2-5 times
T5	1-5 years	BA Degree	4 years	Yes	5 times or more
T6	11-15 years	MA Degree	1 year	Yes	5 times or more
T7	16-20 years	MA Degree	3 years	Yes	Once or twice
T8	11-15 years	MA Degree	5 years	Yes	5 times or more
T9	6-10 years	MA Degree	6 years	Yes	2-5 times
T10	6-10 years	PhD Degree	6 years	Yes	2-5 times

3.3 Procedures

In this part of the study, data collection tools, data collection procedure, data analysis procedures, the reliability and validity of the study and the limitations were presented. The data collection procedure was presented in detail with data collection process and the type of sampling.

3.3.1 Data collection tools. The data was collected through the use of both quantitative and qualitative data collection tools as the study was composed of a mixed-type research. For the quantitative part of the study the questionnaire of English as a Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (EFLRAI) by Zoghi (2012) was used

in order to gain data about the factors of FLRA whereas the qualitative part of the study included oral interviews with some voluntary students and written interviews with voluntary instructors with the purpose of gaining in-depth information about the agents of FLRA.

3.3.1.1 English as a Foreign Language Reading Anxiety (EFLRAI). To measure the reading anxiety in EFL classroom, the English as a Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Inventory (*Appendix A*) was taken from the original version developed by Zoghi (2012). The inventory was originally developed based on the question of what experiences of reading anxiety non-English major university students had in class while reading in English as a foreign language. In respect to the EFLRAI, Zoghi stated that no specific scale had been developed for undergraduate, non-English major students who had to study English in English for General Purposes course before, but this group of learners were known to be not ready to use EFL reading skills in tertiary education. Furthermore, the EFLRAI was based on three causal factors accounting for reading anxiety in EFL context. The first factor of Top-down Reading Anxiety (TRA) was reader-specific, the second factor of Bottom-up Reading Anxiety (BRA) was text-specific, and the third factor is Classroom Reading Anxiety (CRA) was related to how reading lessons are instructed. It was thus considered that the EFLRAI was comprehensive and strongly corresponded with the current research as it included not only reader and text specific anxiety provoking items but also agents based on teaching methods applied in EFL reading classes. The following figure shows the constructs of EFLRAI in detail:

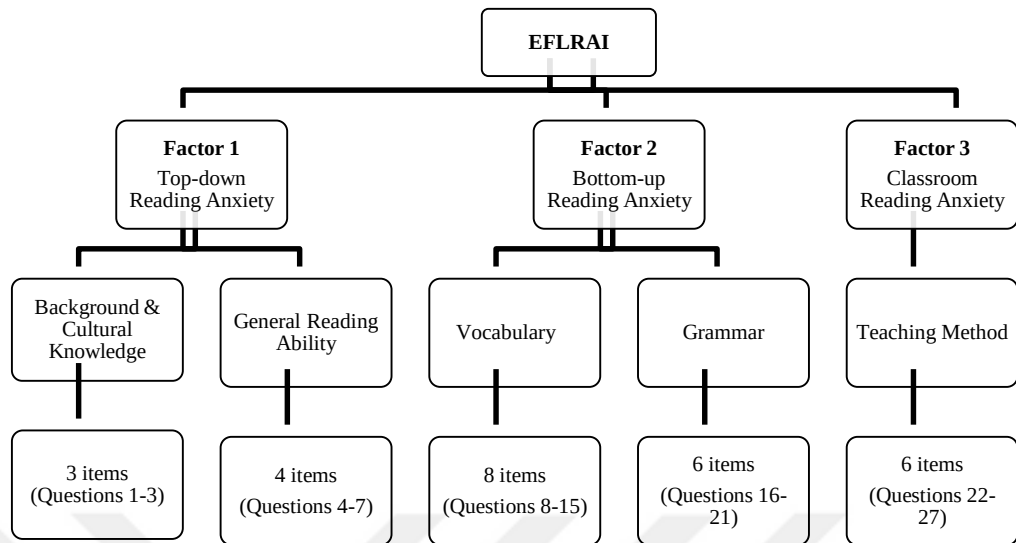


Figure 2. The constructs of EFLRAI in detail (Zoghi, 2012, p.44)

The scale consisted of 27 items in total and was rated on 4-point Likert design with categories 1 (totally disagree), 2 (somewhat disagree), 3 (somewhat agree), and 4 (totally agree). The scores in total ranged from a low of 27 to a high of 108 and higher scores are associated with higher levels of perceived reading anxiety. It could be concluded that students who get higher scores from the EFLRAI have higher level of reading anxiety whereas students who get lower score from the EFLRAI have lower level of reading anxiety.

3.3.1.2 Students' interviews. Ary et al. (2010) argue that qualitative interview is the most common and basic method of collecting qualitative data and it enables the researcher to gain extensive data about the participants' experiences and how the participants relate themselves with their experiences. In the light of this review, interviews with the voluntary students were held in the current research. In order to explore the students' perceptions of the factors of FLRA, semi- or partially structured interview was preferred instead of structured-interview so that the researcher would be provided with the opportunity to alter the questions in her mind and the flow of the conversation when necessary, depending on the responses of the interviewees (Ary et al., 2010). Semi-structured interview was also conducted in order to enable the researcher to be fully concentrated on the participants' speeches and reading between the lines so that unclear and vague statements could be eliminated through the use of

some follow-up questions. Yin (2011) states that second-hand evidence is the filtered data as it comes from the participant who talks about the past events which he observed or witnessed. Within this framework, the responses of the students to the interview questions could be regarded as secondary or second-hand evidence.

In respect to the implementation of the interviews with the voluntary students, focus group interviews were employed since this type of interviews were considered to provide advantages in terms of time and encouragement of the interviewees to voice their opinions more (Creswell, 2012). That is, focus-group interview was conducted to allow the students to speak out their ideas more willingly and honestly.

Finally, the questions of the interviews with the students were developed by the researcher by taking the items of the EFLRAI into consideration. In respect of the interview with the students, 8 questions were created in total and these questions were aligned with the three categories of the EFLRAI in the following way. The first four questions were generated in connection with the Top-down category, the fifth question addressed the items in the Bottom-up category, and the sixth and seventh questions were pertinent to the category of the Classroom Reading Anxiety. The eighth question was posed in order to gain some information about the participants' suggestions about how to reduce the FLRA.

3.3.1.3 Instructors' interviews. In this study, one-to-one written interviews were conducted with 10 voluntary instructors due to time constraints. One-to-one interviews were also held since they were considered to be more appropriate for the interviewees who were not hesitant to reveal their ideas (Creswell, 2012). In addition, structured interviews were carried out since they allowed all the participants to be asked the same questions in order to collect specific information (Ary et al., 2010).

Moreover, the interview questions for the instructors were developed based on the items of EFLRAI. 6 questions were designed in total and they were allocated in the following way: the first question of the interview was about the Top-down category, the second question was connected to the Bottom-up category and the third, the fourth, and the fifth questions were related to the Classroom Reading Anxiety category of the questionnaire. The final question of the interview was designed to gain the participants' opinions about resolving the issue of FLRA rather than addressing to

any of the categories above. Table 2 presents the summary of the research questions and the data collection instruments.

Table 2

Research Questions and Data Collection Tools

Research Questions	Data Collection Tools
What are the factors of FLRA for EFL students enrolled in advanced level at a language preparatory program?	EFLRAI
What are the perceptions of the students enrolled in advanced level at a language preparatory program about FLRA?	Semi-structured Interview
What are the perceptions of EFL instructors who teach advanced level reading course at a language preparatory program about the factors of FLRA?	Structured Interview

3.3.2 Data collection procedure. This part of the study provides information about data collection process, and the types of sampling in detail.

3.3.2.1 Data collection process. For the purpose of the study, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. Quantitative data was collected by the use of EFLRAI to identify the anxiety provoking factors in FL reading for advanced level EFL students with no focus on the variables of gender and age. Firstly, the author of the scale was sent an email to receive permission to use the EFLRAI via e-mail. Then the process of collecting quantitative data was initiated. The online version of the scale was sent to the advanced level EFL students at the preparatory program of the university via a link and the data was collected in two weeks. The total number of the participants from whom the quantitative data collected was 98. However, one of the participants was excluded from the analysis as the participant had left most of the questions unanswered.

The qualitative data was collected to investigate about the students' opinions related to the factors of FLRA. Therefore, the EFL students were informed about the

interview verbally by their class teachers and asked if they would like to volunteer for the focus group interview in order to provide their opinions about the factors of FLRA. 18 EFL students volunteered for the study. To prevent any ethical issues related to the data collection procedure, the students were sent the consent forms to get permission for the record. In addition, at the beginning of the interview, the researcher assured the volunteers that they could leave the interview whenever they wanted or they could reject to answer a question if they did not want to answer and this would not deteriorate the relationship between the teacher and the students. The interviews with the volunteers were held in two different groups and on two consecutive days. The interviews were recorded on an online video recording tool. After the interviews with the volunteers were completed, the qualitative data collection process with the instructors was designed.

Since the qualitative part of the study also included the exploration of the instructors' perceptions about FLRA, interviews with some voluntary instructors who worked at the same institute with the researcher were conducted. Firstly, the instructors were kindly asked to participate in the study via a text message or an email. 10 instructors were volunteered for the study. They were sent the written interview documents and the consent form via email. The interviewees responded the questions and sent them back to the researcher in three weeks via email. At the end of the data collection process, the data analysis procedure was initiated by the researcher.

3.3.2.2 Types of sampling. Drawing a sampling from the population is highly significant as the subjects in the sampling become the cross- section representatives of the target population (Ary et al., 2010). The two primary types of sampling in a research are probability and non-probability samplings. Probability sampling is referred to in quantitative studies and is considered to be known as the most rigorous type of sampling as the samples chosen for the research represents the population strongly and provides the researcher to make generalisations about the population based on the results of the research (Creswell, 2012). In short, the chance factor plays an important role in probability sampling. However, in educational context conducting probability sampling might not be possible as the school principle and administration might not allow the use of specific classes. Therefore, non-probability sampling is preferred by researchers (Ary et al., 2010). The three types of non-probability

samplings are convenience, purposive (judgment), and quota samplings. According to Creswell (2012), non-probability sampling includes convenience and snowball approaches to be adopted.

In the current thesis, the convenience sampling was referred to in the process of participant recruitment due to the availability and ease of access to the participants in the institute where the researcher was working as an EFL teacher.

3.3.3 Data analysis procedures. In the current study, both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered, analysed and interpreted to fulfil the purpose of the study. Regarding the quantitative data, English as a Foreign Language Anxiety Inventory (EFLRAI) was used whereas qualitative data were collected through interviews with the voluntary students and the instructors. The quantitative part of the study was analysed through the use of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

3.3.3.1 Data analysis of RQ1. To address the first research question, the data collected from EFLRAI was analysed through SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). To analyse the sources of FLRA for the participating students, descriptive statistics were used. That is, the mean scores and the standard deviations referring to the items (Table 4), the sub-categories (Table 7), and the main categories of the scale (Table 6) were inspected. More specifically, EFLRAI mean scores of the subjects ranged between 1 and 2 indicated the less effective sources, between 2 and 3 referred to the sources effective in medium level and between 3 and 4 pointed out the highly effective sources of reading anxiety based on the 1-4 scoring continuum. In addition, in order to determine whether the scores were normally distributed or not, the skewness and kurtosis statistics (Table 5) were measured. Furthermore, to identify whether there was any statistically significant difference between the scores of the main categories of the scale (Top-down Reading Anxiety, Bottom-up Reading Anxiety, Classroom Reading Anxiety) and between the scores of the sub-categories of it (Background and Cultural Knowledge, General Reading Ability, Vocabulary, Grammar, Teaching Method), repeated measures of ANOVA was employed. In the process of repeated measures of ANOVA, Mauchly's test of sphericity indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been violated, so Greenhouse-Geisser row of the Tests of Within

Subjects Effects was followed to determine the statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the main categories of EFLRAI and between the mean scores of the sub-categories of the scale.

3.3.3.2 Data analysis of RQ2. Apart from the quantitative data collection and analysis, the qualitative data was gathered through the means of interviews with the focus group of the participating students. Firstly, the data from the interviews with 18 voluntary students were transcribed once the interview was carried out to prevent any potential bias stemming from selection or interpretation of the data (Ary et al., 2010). For familiarization with the data and to prevent any mistyped or missing data, the transcription was re-read by the researcher simultaneously while listening to the interview at least twice. Then open coding and vivo coding (spoken by the participants) were employed to each transcribed data. In addition, analytic coding was also referred to when the statements made by the participants led to inferential data. After the completion of the initial coding stage, re-coding was carried out. As a result, the intrarater method was conducted and data saturation was completed in the current research. Finally, to reduce the large number of individual codes into more controllable and workable categories (Ary et al., 2010), the researcher compared and contrasted the codes from each transcribed data and clustered the recurrent themes. In this way, the final major and minor themes for research question two were finalized.

3.3.3.3 Data analysis of RQ3. To address the last research question, the qualitative data was collected from 10 voluntary instructors through the means of written interviews. Once the data collection procedure was completed, the interviews were read twice to get familiarized with the content. Then the coding and recoding stages were conducted as stated above. In the process of coding, analytic coding and vivo coding were used. The recurring themes were connected together and the major and the minor themes were created in the same way as the data analysis of the research question two. In this way, data analysis of the research question three was completed.

3.3.4 Reliability and validity. This part of the study includes the reliability and validity procedures in terms of the quantitative and qualitative data instruments.

Validity and reliability are two significant notions researchers must take into consideration when measuring the instruments (Ary et al., 2010). Validity could be

ensured in different aspects. For instance, the construct validity refers to the degree that a test measures the psychological construct that is aimed to be measured. In order to eliminate the threat of false measurement to the construct validity, the current research included a reading anxiety inventory that was well-established. The scale was comprehensive in terms of the items included and also directly relevant to the needs of the sampling. Regarding the external validity, it could be stated that it refers to the generalizability of the research to the other subjects, or settings (Ary et al., 2010; Creswell, 2012). However, due to convenience sampling conducted in the present research, the findings of the research are not likely to be generalised. In other words, the external validity of the study is restricted.

In respect to the reliability of the measurements, it could be stated that reliability refers to the scores of the measurements which are stable when the tests are administered at different times (Creswell, 2012). To ensure the reliability of the scale in the present study, the Cronbach's alpha value of the scale was measured to prove the reliability of the instrument after the piloting session was completed. In the piloting session of the study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was found to be 0.75, which meant that the scale used in the study was at the satisfactory level for the reliability. However, after all the data from the participants collected, the Cronbach's alpha value of the scale was measured again. Table 3 presents the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of EFLRAI.

Table 3
Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.867	27

As shown in Table 3, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of EFLRAI was found to be .86. A coefficient of .93 is a high coefficient; .6 is acceptable level for the scale to be regarded as having internal consistency and a coefficient of .72 is the satisfactory level for the reliability for the scores (Creswell, 2012). Based on this information, the coefficient of .86 indicates that the scale has high reliability to be used as a measurement tool.

On the other hand, the standards of the instruments and the data collection procedure in qualitative research are identified in different terminologies. That is, the nature of the data and the philosophical theories on which the quantitative and qualitative data depend on vary (Ary et al.,2010). Based on this information, the following part presents the rigour or the reliability and the validity of the qualitative section of the current research.

Firstly, credibility refers to the confidence and trustworthiness of the findings based on the design of the study, participants, and context (Ary et al., 2010). In order to ensure the credibility of the current study, the methods of triangulation, member checks, peer debriefing, and low-inference descriptors were used. Firstly, the current study included the triangulation method by the employment of two data collection methods (the EFLRAI and the interviews). Secondly, member –check procedure was run with the clarification of some unclear statements by the volunteers after the interviews were transcribed. In addition, peer debriefing session was held with one of the peers of the researcher. Finally, low-inference descriptors such as verbatim were used in the current research.

Furthermore, the qualitative study may not allow the generalizability of the findings, but the researcher tries to provide rich descriptions of the participants and the context (Ary et al., 2010). Based on this information, to enhance the transferability of the data, the detailed description of the setting, the data collection tools and methods, and the limitations were provided so that the following researchers could identify the similarities and differences between the current research and the future studies. In addition, to increase the trustworthiness, the researcher used the code-recode strategy.

In short, the reliability and validity of both quantitative and qualitative data instruments and the data collection procedure were taken into consideration in the current research to prevent possible factors posing threat to the credibility and validity of the research.

3.4 Limitations

The current research was limited due to some application processes. The major limitation of the research was connected to the generalizability of the findings since the sample size (N=97) was not very high. Therefore, further studies could be

conducted with larger sample size to gain more reliable and valid results. Also, the quantitative data was gathered through the use of digital version of the scale. Therefore, it was unlikely to be sure whether the students responded the scale under any effect or not and this might have had some impact on the accuracy of the data results. Furthermore, the research was restricted to a specific level since it was conducted with only advanced level students rather than students from a variety of levels; therefore, the findings of the research could not be generalized to all EFL learners in different contexts. Thus, there is room for further researchers to conduct the same research with participants from various levels to obtain more comprehensive results. In addition, the research was limited in terms of excluding the variables of gender, age or major of the students into consideration. Hence, the replication of the current study could be conducted to see whether the level of FLRA could change depending on these variables. Finally, interviews were conducted with the students and the instructors from one university, which might not be valid for all EFL students at the same level and the instructors from different contexts.

Chapter 4

Findings

4.1 Overview

This chapter provides the findings of the study conducted with the aim of investigating the factors of FLRA for EFL students enrolled in advanced level at a language preparatory program. Also, the following chapter provides the findings for any significant relationship between the sub-categories of the FLRA of the participants. In addition, the chapter presents the perceptions of the students and the instructors. Simply, in the following chapters, the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data is presented respectively.

4.2 Quantitative Data Analysis

In the quantitative part of the study, the factors that contributed to FLRA for EFL advanced level students were analysed. The following sections detail the findings about the aforementioned point.

4.2.1 Findings about the factors of FLRA for advanced level EFL students.

The questionnaire used in this study, English as a Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Inventory (EFLRAI) consists of 27 items and indicates that there are five basic categories to EFL learners' reading anxiety. These components are background and cultural knowledge (Items 1-3), general reading ability (Items 4-7), vocabulary (Items 8-15), grammar (Items 16-21), and teaching method (Items 22-27). The initial purpose in the current study was thus to identify the causes of FLRA for the EFL students enrolled in advanced level at a language preparatory program.

The following table presents the items based on the order by which the items appear on the scale. The first six highlighted numbers at the top of the table and the last six bold scores at the bottom of it refer to the items which constituted the highest

and the lowest challenge for the participating students in foreign language reading respectively.

Table 4

Items' Descriptive Statistics

	1 totally disagree		2 somewhat disagree		3 somewhat agree		4 totally agree		M	SD
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
1. I do not feel at ease when the title of the text is unfamiliar to me.	2	2.1	24	24.7	54	55.7	17	17.5	2.89	0.705
2. It is worrying to me when the ideas expressed in the text are culturally unclear.	8	8.2	25	25.8	47	48.5	17	17.5	2.75	0.842
3. I get upset when I lack the previous knowledge about the ideas expressed in the text.	5	5.2	26	26.8	35	36.1	31	32.0	2.95	0.894
4. I worry when I cannot get the gist of the text although no new vocabulary items or grammatical points exist in the text	1	1.0	15	15.5	54	55.7	27	27.8	3.10	0.684
5. When I cannot recognize minor ideas (details) of the text is worrying to me.	4	4.1	21	21.6	53	54.6	19	19.6	2.90	0.757
6. I am nervous when I cannot spot the main idea of a certain paragraph.	2	2.1	18	18.6	41	42.3	36	37.1	3.14	0.790
7. It bothers me when I cannot express my opinions or feelings about the text.	4	4.1	16	16.5	51	52.6	26	26.8	3.02	0.777
8. I feel uneasy when I cannot figure out meanings of unknown words.	3	3.1	11	11.3	49	50.5	34	35.1	3.18	0.750
9. It bothers me when I encounter a lot of words whose meanings are unclear.	2	2.1	12	12.4	37	38.1	46	47.4	3.31	0.769
10. I get upset when I cannot figure out the meaning of a word that I feel I have seen before.	2	2.1	15	15.5	37	38.1	43	44.3	3.25	0.791
11. It bothers me when I feel unable to look up a word in the dictionary.	11	11.3	26	26.8	45	46.4	15	15.5	2.66	0.877
12. I get confused when the word that I know has a different meaning in the sentence.	5	5.2	30	30.9	35	36.1	27	27.8	2.87	0.885
14. It makes me feel uneasy when an unfamiliar is made up of several parts or syllables.	9	9.3	21	21.6	45	46.4	22	22.7	2.82	0.890
15. I feel worried when the unknown word is difficult to pronounce.	19	19.6	22	22.7	31	32.0	25	25.8	2.64	1.072

Table 4 (cont.d)

Items' Descriptive Statistics

	1 totally disagree		2 somewhat disagree		3 somewhat agree		4 totally agree		M	SD
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
16. I am nervous when a certain sentence is long and has a complex structure.	8	8.2	19	19.6	39	40.2	31	32.0	2.96	0.923
17. When a certain sentence is grammatically unfamiliar is worrying to me.	4	4.1	24	24.7	40	41.2	29	29.9	2.97	0.847
18. It bothers me when a passive voice is used in a sentence.	40	41.2	20	20.6	26	26.8	11	11.3	2.08	1.067
19. I feel upset when the tense of a certain sentence is unclear to me.	6	6.2	27	27.8	46	47.4	18	18.6	2.78	0.819
20. I worry when I am unable to recognize different parts of speech such as adjectives, adverbs, or connective words	9	9.3	33	34.0	45	46.4	10	10.3	2.58	0.801
21. I get confused when what I know about a grammatical point does not make any sense.	11	11.3	20	20.6	47	48.5	19	19.6	2.76	0.899
22. It bothers me when the instructor calls on me to read out.	29	29.9	29	29.9	24	24.7	15	15.5	2.26	1.054
23. It worries me when the instructor calls on me to translate a piece of an English text into our first language.	25	25.8	40	41.2	23	23.7	9	9.3	2.16	0.921
24. When the instructor asks me reading comprehension questions is worrying to me.	21	21.6	36	37.1	26	26.8	14	14.4	2.34	0.978
25. It upsets me when the instructor chooses uninteresting texts to read in class.	15	15.5	16	16.5	38	39.2	28	28.9	2.81	1.024
26. It makes me feel uneasy when the instructor corrects my pronunciation or translation mistakes.	44	45.4	18	18.6	28	28.9	7	7.2	1.98	1.020
27. I am nervous when the instructor uses English as a medium of instruction and hardly ever makes use of our first language.	26	26.8	30	30.9	30	30.9	11	11.3	2.27	0.984

As can be seen in Table 4, the mean scores of the participants' FLRA varied between 1.98 and 3.31. Namely, the EFL participants felt reading anxiety mostly when they encountered a lot of words which they did not know the meaning of (Item 9) and they felt reading anxiety the least when their pronunciation or translation mistakes were corrected by their instructors (Item 26). The section below provides the mean score results of each item from the highest to the lowest based on the sub-categories of the scale.

Regarding the items of the sub-category of Background and Cultural Knowledge, the participants scored the highest for the item "lacking the previous knowledge about the ideas expressed in the text" (Item 3) with a mean score of 2.95. Subsequent to Item 3, Item 1 "I do not feel at ease when the title of the text is unfamiliar to me" ranked the second in inducing anxiety for EFL participants in the aforementioned subcategory ($M=2.89$, $SD=0.70$). Finally, Item 2 which was "It is worrying to me when the ideas expressed in the text are culturally unclear" ($M=2.75$, $SD=0.84$) was the source of reading anxiety at the lowest level in this sub-category. Overall, the mean score of the statements in this sub-category indicated that the items of Background and Cultural Knowledge posed challenges in reading English texts to the EFL participants to a medium level as the mean scores belonged to the range of 2-3, which was the medium range of the scoring continuum.

Furthermore, in respect to the sub-category of General Reading Ability, it was found out that three items of this sub-category were among the six items with the highest mean scores of the entire scale. More specifically, Item 6 "I am nervous when I cannot spot the main idea of a certain paragraph" and Item 4 "I worry when I cannot get the gist of the text although no new vocabulary items or grammatical points exist in the text" with the mean scores of 3.14 and 3.10 respectively were identified to be most anxiety provoking sources for the EFL sample. The third highest mean score of the participants ($M=3.02$, $SD=0.77$) in this sub-category belonged to Item 7 "It bothers me when I cannot express my opinions or feelings about the text". In other words, the lack of reading skills to identify the main idea and the general meaning of a written text, and the lack of paraphrasing skills could be considered to be highly effective in causing anxiety in reading courses for the participating students. Finally, the mean

score 2.90 for Item 5 in this sub-category showed that EFL students' reading anxiety was at a medium level due to "not recognizing minor ideas (details)". That is, the identification of the supporting ideas in a text had a debilitating effect on the EFL students to some extent. To sum up, the absence of basic reading skills like skimming and high order reading skills such as paraphrasing and summarizing were likely to heighten the level of reading anxiety for the EFL participants to a great extent.

Moreover, the remaining three items with the highest mean scores of the entire scale were in connection with the sub-category of Vocabulary. When the items were inspected closely, it was seen that the highest mean score ($M=3.31$, $SD=0.76$) of the whole text was on the item "It bothers me when I encounter a lot of words whose meanings are unclear" (Item 9). It was followed by the item "I get upset when I cannot figure out the meaning of a word that I feel I have seen before" (Item 10) and the item "I feel uneasy when I cannot figure out meanings of unknown words" (Item 8) with the mean scores of 3.25 and 3.18 alternately. In the light of these facts, the gap between the readers' vocabulary knowledge and the text, the inability to recollect the meaning of the words, and the deficiency of the skills like guessing meaning from the text could be considered to induce anxiety at a high level for the participants. Furthermore, the remaining five statements of this sub-category (Items 13, 12, 14, 11, and 15) were identified to be significant factors of FLRA at a medium level as the results of the mean scores varied between the ranges of 2 to 3 of the scoring continuum. More precisely, idiomatic expressions in English which were beyond the memory of the participants were the cause of stress and worry in reading process (Item 13) with a mean score of 2.90. Following this, it was found out that the participating students' responses to the items "encountering a word that they knew had a different meaning in the sentence" and "an unfamiliar word which had several parts or syllables" had the mean scores of 2.87 and 2.82 respectively, which meant that when the participants in the current study encountered with the second meaning and the figurative meaning of the familiar words and the multisyllabic and polysyllabic words and possibly the close and hyphenated compound nouns, they felt stress. Finally, a mean score of 2.66 was identified on Item 11, which also indicated that the students were bothered when they were unable to look up a word in their dictionaries and as stated in Item 15 ($M=2.64$,

$SD=1.07$), they felt worried when the unknown word was hard to pronounce. In view of the items discussed, the facts revealed that vocabulary knowledge, along with general reading ability, led to difficulty in reading and increased the amount of apprehension for the participants.

Regarding the sub-category of Grammar, the mean scores of Item 17 ($M=2.97$, $SD=0.84$) and Item 16 ($M=2.96$, $SD=0.92$) demonstrated that the subjects experienced anxiety to a large extent owing to “a grammatically unfamiliar sentence” and “a long and complex sentence” respectively. That is, the highest mean scores in this sub-category were related to the structures of the sentences in English. The two agents were followed by Item 19 “I feel upset when the tense of a certain sentence is unclear to me” ($M=2.78$, $SD=0.81$) and Item 21 “I get confused when what I know about a grammatical point does not make any sense” ($M=2.76$, $SD=0.89$). That means, the participants had difficulty in comprehension of the sentences with different grammar forms, they felt lost while reading lengthy sentences, and they developed affective agents like anxiety when they could not recognize or distinguish the tense of a sentence. Furthermore, the mean score ($M=2.58$, $SD=0.80$) of Item 20 demonstrated that the EFL participants felt reading anxiety due to “different parts of speech such as adjectives, adverbs, or connective words”. To recap, the syntactic form of a word was one of the determinants of anxiety arousal for some of the EFL students. On the contrary, the mean score of 2.08 unearthed that the use of passive structure in texts (Item 18) was the penultimate contributory cause of reading anxiety for the participating students. In a nutshell, almost all the items in the sub-category of Grammar led to a moderate level of anxiety in reading a text.

The final sub-category of Teaching Method consisted of six items in total and five of the items in this sub-category were discovered to be the least effective sources of FLRA for the EFL students. Specifically, the subjects scored 2.81 and 2.34 alternately in the items stating that they experienced distress and worry when their instructors chose “uninteresting texts to read in class” (Item 25) and asked them to respond to “reading comprehension questions” (Item 24). Similarly, the mean scores of 2.27 and 2.26 respectively demonstrated that the participating students felt nervous at moderate level when the instructor showed less tendency to use their first language

(Item 27) and when he asked the students to read aloud (Item 22), which meant that the students' reading out the text and the constant use of the target language by the instructor led to reading anxiety to some extent for the EFL participants. Furthermore, it was found that the EFL students were less anxious or worried about "translating a piece of an English text into the students' first language" (Item 23) in reading courses. This was identified by the mean score of 2.16, which was close to low range of the scoring continuum. Finally, the mean score result of the statement "It makes me feel uneasy when the instructor corrects my pronunciation or translation mistakes" ($M=1.98$, $SD=1.02$) showed that the current sample felt uncomfortable at the lowest level when they received correction on their pronunciation and on the piece of work which they translated (Item 26). In other words, the instructor's correction had little debilitating effect on them. Overall, the results indicated that the items of the sub-category of Teaching Methods had less negative emotional impact on the participating students than the other items of the scale.

Furthermore, to determine the conformity of the measured values to the normal distribution, the Skewness and Kurtosis statistics were computed. Table 5 provides the Skewness and Kurtosis values.

Table 5

Measures of Skewness and Kurtosis

	N	M	Max.	Min.	Skewness	Kurtosis
Background & Cultural Knowledge	97	2.86	4.00	1.33	-0.140	-0.009
General Reading Ability	97	3.04	4.00	1.75	-0.168	-0.209
Top-down Reading Anxiety	97	2.96	4.00	1.86	0.110	0.354
Vocabulary	97	2.95	4.00	1.38	-0.373	0.370
Grammar	97	2.69	4.00	1.17	-0.123	0.060
Bottom-up Reading Anxiety	97	2.84	4.00	1.64	-0.139	0.240
Teaching Method	97	2.30	4.00	1.00	0.251	-0.584
Classroom Reading Anxiety	97	2.30	4.00	1.00	0.251	-0.584

As shown in Table 5, the skewness and kurtosis coefficients referring to each sub-category and the main category of the EFLRAI were found out to be within the boundaries of -2 and +2 (George & Mallery, 2003). That is, based on the reference values, the data set were found out to be normally distributed. For the purpose of finding out the statistically significant difference between the scores of the main categories of EFLRAI, a repeated measures ANOVA test was used. The following table presents the findings of the test.

Table 6

Repeated Measures ANOVA for the Scores of the Main Categories

	M	SD	df	Error df	F	p
Top-down Reading Anxiety	2.96	0.44				
Bottom-up Reading Anxiety	2.84	0.45	1.500	143.990	79.201	0.000*
Classroom Reading Anxiety	2.30	0.67				

* $p < 0.05$

Table 6 indicates that there was a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the different main categories of the scale as determined by repeated measures of ANOVA $F = (1.500, 143.990) = 79.201, p < .001$. Post Hoc analysis with Bonferroni adjustment revealed that the mean score of Top-down Reading Anxiety ($M = 2.96, SD = 0.44$) was different than the mean score of Bottom-up Reading Anxiety ($M = 2.83, SD = 0.45$), a statistical significant mean decrease of .13, $p < .001$. Also, the mean score of Top-down Reading Anxiety ($M = 2.96, SD = 0.44$) was different than the mean score of Classroom Reading Anxiety ($M = 2.30, SD = 0.66$), a statistical significant mean decrease of .66, $p < .001$. Finally, the mean score of Bottom-up Reading Anxiety ($M = 2.83, SD = 0.45$) was different than the mean score of Classroom Reading Anxiety ($M = 2.30, SD = 0.66$), a statistical significant mean decrease of .53, $p < .001$. In other words, there were statistically significant differences in the mean scores of the main categories of the scale. Hence, it can be concluded that the sources in the category of Top-down Reading Anxiety constituted the highest challenge for the participating students whereas the items in the category of Classroom Reading Anxiety were challenging at the lowest level and the sources related to Bottom-Up Category were in the middle. In order to determine the statistically significant difference between the

scores of the sub-categories of EFLRAI, a repeated measures ANOVA test was employed (see Table 7).

Table 7

Repeated Measures ANOVA for the Scores of the Sub-Categories

	M	SD	df	Error df	F	p
Background & Cultural Knowledge	2.86	0.57				
General Reading Ability	3.04	0.50				
Vocabulary	2.95	0.52				
Grammar	2.69	0.54	3.517	377.585	45.056	0.000*
Teaching Method	2.30	0.67				

* $p < 0.05$

According to Table 7, there was a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the sub-categories of Background and Cultural Knowledge, General Reading Ability, Vocabulary, Grammar, and Teaching Method as determined by repeated measures of ANOVA, $F(3.517, 337.585) = 45.05$, $p < .001$. Post Hoc analysis with Bonferroni adjustment revealed that the mean score of Background and Cultural Knowledge ($M=2.86$, $SD=0.57$) was statistically significantly different than the mean scores of General Reading Ability ($M=3.04$, $SD=0.50$), Grammar ($M=2.69$, $SD=0.54$), and Teaching Method ($M=2.30$, $SD=0.67$); the mean score of General Reading Ability ($M=3.04$, $SD=0.50$) was statistically significantly different than the mean scores of Grammar ($M=2.69$, $SD=0.54$), and Teaching Method ($M=2.30$, $SD=0.67$); the mean score of Vocabulary ($M=2.95$, $SD=0.52$) was statistically significantly different than the mean scores of Grammar ($M=2.69$, $SD=0.54$), and Teaching Method ($M=2.30$, $SD=0.67$) and finally the mean score of Teaching Method ($M=2.30$, $SD=0.67$) was statistically significantly different than the mean score of Grammar ($M=2.69$, $SD=0.54$). However, the mean score of Vocabulary ($M=2.95$, $SD=0.52$) did not significantly differ from the mean scores of Background and Cultural Knowledge ($M=2.86$, $SD=0.57$) and General Reading Ability ($M=3.04$, $SD=0.50$). Taken together, these results suggest that the sub-category of General Reading Ability constituted the highest challenge for the participating students. This was followed by the sub-categories of Vocabulary, Background and Cultural Knowledge, and Grammar consecutively. The lowest effective agent of FLRA for the participants was the sub-category of Teaching Method. However, the Vocabulary items did not appear to affect

the participants' FL reading anxiety at a more significantly different level than the items of Background and Cultural Knowledge and General Reading Ability.

4.3 Qualitative Data Analysis

In the qualitative part of the study, the aim was to get a deeper understanding of the factors of FLRA from the students' perceptions. In addition, to gain a wider perspective, instructors' perceptions about FLRA were also investigated. Therefore, the current part of the study consists of two sub-sections. In the initial sub-section, the perceptions of the students about the factors of FLRA were reported and in the latter sub-section the instructors' perceptions about were accounted.

4.3.1 Findings about the factors of FLRA from the students' perspectives.

The third research question in the study aimed to find out the students' perceptions about the factors of FLRA. The interview questions were aligned with the categories of the scale in order to gain in-depth information from the participants, except the last inquiry in the interview. Specifically speaking, the first four questions of the interview were aimed at getting information about the factors of the Top-down category of the questionnaire. The fifth question was related to the Bottom-up category and the sixth and the seventh questions were connected to the Classroom Reading Anxiety category of the inventory. The final question was posed in order to gain suggestions from the participants to address the matter of reading anxiety. The following table presents the findings in respect to the categories of the scale.

Table 8

Sources and Solutions of FLRA from the Students' Perspectives

Sources	Top-down	Obligations
		Not understanding the major and minor details
		Unknown terminology
	Bottom-up	Frequency of unknown words and terminology
		Complex sentence structures
	Classroom-Reading Anxiety	The implementation of reading activities
		Lack of reading strategies
		Teacher's attitude
Solutions		Reading books and texts in English
		Teacher's positive attitude

4.3.1.1 Factors related to top-down category of EFLRAI. The first part of the interview questions tried to gain data about how students felt when they were not able to understand the title of a text, when they encountered a text with unfamiliar culture, when they lacked the background information, and when they could not comprehend the gist, the main idea or the minor details in a text. As a result of the analysis of the students' responses, three major themes which signpost their perceptions about the factors of FLRA in terms of top-down category items were identified, which namely were obligations, not understanding the major and minor details and the unknown terminology (related to unfamiliar culture and lack of background knowledge of a text). However, for the majority of the participants, not understanding the title of a text was not an issue.

4.3.1.1.1 Obligations. The analysis of the interviews with the students revealed that for half of the interviewees, obligatory situations such as completing an assignment or taking an exam initiated the feeling of anxiety when the students had to read a text in English, which is indicated in the following excerpts:

[...] Not understanding the text completely of course creates a negative feeling for me. Like my friends mentioned, if I have to read this type of text- especially if it is an assignment, it becomes more disturbing for me. (S3, Interview Data, 18.08. 2020)

[...] The major reason why we feel anxiety is reading a text is based on a grade-oriented system. When you read a text just for reading, even if you do not have any idea about it, you read it with some interest. (S17, Interview Data, 17.08. 2020)

Based on the reflections of the interviewees, it can be concluded that advanced level students felt reading anxiety more, specifically when they had to read a text as a part of an obligation or in compulsory situations like exams. Thus, it might be inferred that the students might need to learn to use reading strategies to handle with reading texts in limited time.

4.3.1.1.2 Major and minor details. One of the most frequently occurring finding was related to not understanding the main idea and the supporting details of a text. The

interviewees reported that they felt worried when they could not fathom the meaning of a text. The following extracts support this finding:

[...] I feel frustrated when I do not understand the gist, main or minor ideas of a text. (S7, Interview Data, 18.08. 2020)

[...] I feel that my English is not enough when I don't understand the main ideas or the details of a text. (S3, Interview Data, 18.08. 2020)

[...] I would call that feeling 'anxiety' when I don't understand the main or minor ideas of a text. (S7, Interview Data, 18.08. 2020)

In brief, it can be interpreted from the excerpts of the interviewees that the students experienced anxiety due to the challenges of dealing with the details and the major ideas in a text. Thereby, it could be stated that the students lacked some reading skills such as skimming or reading between the lines.

4.3.1.1.3 Unknown terminology. The findings of the transcribed interviews with the students indicated that not knowing the terminology embedded in the reading texts led to anxiety for some of the students. Below are some statements in support of this finding:

[...] For example, it is not an issue in terms of content; however, if it includes with some terminology, I mean with some unfamiliar words, then it becomes so terrifying. (S3, Interview Data, 18.08. 2020)

[...] I would try to empathize myself in that culture. I would think that how I would behave if I were living in that culture and what ways I would follow. That is, by empathizing, I would try to grab the meaning of that text. However, like my friends said if I had difficulty with the words of the text, I would consider that there was nothing to do. I would feel down. (S7, Interview Data, 18.08. 2020)

[...] When I have no idea about the content of the text, the vocabulary used in the text is usually composed of the words that I do not know about. Then I try to translate those words, but translating the words becomes too frustrating after a while. (S9, Interview Data, 17.08. 2020)

Based on the findings, the interviewees tried to deal with the texts culturally unfamiliar, but the existence of unknown terminology or vocabulary in a text

discouraged and frustrated them. In addition, it can also be inferred that the frequency of the unknown words and the lack of the competency to use the technique of guessing meaning from the context led them to experience anxiety in reading a text in English as they showed the tendency to translate the words.

4.3.1.2 Factors related to bottom-up category of EFLRAI. The second part of the interview questions attempted to collect data about how participants felt when they encountered words, phrases, idioms, word forms, long sentences in a written English text and the details about these points. The analysis of the qualitative data yielded two major themes named as the frequency of the unknown words and terminology, and complex sentence structures. The following section discusses the details about these three major themes.

4.3.1.2.1 Frequency of the unknown words and terminology. Half of the interviewees pointed out that the frequency of the unknown terminology and words and complex sentences structures led to anxiety and discouragement, as is shown in the following excerpts:

[...] I feel that I must have already learned and I must be knowing about these words because I have been provided with a text with these words. If I encounter these words (unknown words) in an exam, my stress level increases more and more. (S10, Interview Data, 17.08.2020)

[...] Teacher, something like this happens...when the number of the things which I do not know about in the text increases, I lose my interest to read it. Let's imagine that I have some interest in the topic of crypto currency, but if I can not understand the text because it includes terminology about this topic, I get bored and lose my motivation to read the text. I also feel anxiety about getting the correct meaning out of the text. (S2, Interview Data ,18.08.2020)

[...] If I encounter an unknown word or an idiom more than once in a text, I give effort to understand it, but if it is a complicated sentence or phrase, I get overwhelmed because it makes me feel bad. I get the feeling that it might be something really important. (S10, Interview Data, 17.08.2020)

To summarize, the findings revealed that the students felt anxiety and frustration when their vocabulary knowledge was not adequate to understand a text. Furthermore,

the situation was anxiety provoking for them especially when the frequency or the number of the unknown words, phrases, or terminology was higher. Thus, it could be concluded that for advanced level students, the large number of unfamiliar words could be regarded as more effective in feeling reading anxiety than one or two unknown words.

4.3.1.2.2 Complex sentence structures. The analysis of the transcribed interviewees showed that another most frequently mentioned theme was encountering complex sentence structures in reading texts for the interviewees. Considering these findings, two of the participants stated:

[...] I lose my motivation to read the text and give up reading it when I encounter complicated sentences. (S3, Student Interview, 18.08.2020)

[...] When I first encounter a complex sentence in a text, the first thing that comes to my mind is this: 'If our teacher has given this text to use to read, we must be having an idea about it and we must already know about it', so I start getting anxiety. I start speculations like what if others know about it or what if I am the only one who does not know about it. (S15, Interview Data, 17.08.2020)

Considering these findings, the students lost their motivation to continue reading a text when they encountered sentences longer than expected. For some of the students, the underlying reason was that they believed that they should have understood it at this level or they had less self-confidence in themselves. Consequently, it could be inferred that the students needed some training or consultation prior to being exposed to reading texts including complex sentence structures in order to make them emotionally ready for the texts.

4.3.1.3 Factors related to classroom-reading anxiety of EFLRAI. The third part of the interview questions aimed to gather information about the teaching techniques and classroom reading activities which led the students to experience anxiety. As a result of the analysis of the transcribed interview, three major themes emerged in respect to classroom reading anxiety, which were named as the implementation of reading activities, lack of reading strategies, teacher's attitude in reading courses. The following section illustrates the details about the aforementioned major themes.

4.3.1.3.1 The implementation of reading activities. Based on the data analysis of the interviews, it was revealed that the way the reading activities carried out in lessons caused anxiety for this specific group of students. The in-depth look into their statements showed that groups work, time constraints and pre-reading activities conducted in lessons provoked anxiety for the interviewees, as displayed below:

[...] In group work, the following things happen. I think that I would do something different than my group members if I were alone, but I feel that I have to care about my group member's opinion. I also think that in daily life, I have to think about things on my own; not with others, so I do not think it is beneficial. Teacher, also the major problem is the feeling of inferiority. For example, if all group members agree on one idea, but I speak out something more different and difficult than theirs, I become suspicious about if anyone laughing behind my back. (S2, Interview Data, 18.08.2020)

[...] Actually the texts have not always been too difficult, but because of the lack of self-confidence, I feel anxiety considering that my group members are able to complete the exercises, but I can not keep up with them. When I ask them, they say that they also have difficulties, but not because they do not know about anything. They feel worried because of the time constraints. (S15, Interview Data, 17.08.2020)

[...] When we are asked question and expected to give answers in a short time, we feel stressed and anxiety, but when we are given enough time to comprehend the test, there occurs no problem. (S12, Interview Data, 17.08.2020)

[...] The texts assigned us to read before the lesson cause anxiety in me because I do not remember the information. By the way, I do not read them, but even if I read the text in the class, I still feel the need to re-read it. Doing reading exercises without reading them in lesson sounds ridiculous and leads to anxiety. (S17, Interview Data, 17.08.2020)

[...] There are some questions at the beginning of the units. Before we learn about anything about the unit, we are asked to discuss those question with our classmates. When the teacher asks us to discuss those questions before we read anything to get idea about, we feel anxiety and worried because we try to make

correct sentences in English and at the same time we do not master the topic. (S14, Interview Data, 17.08.2020)

To wrap up, the students felt anxious when they worked in groups with their classmates as they observed their peers and compared themselves with their own performance. In addition, they reported that the allocation of time for exploitation of reading texts caused anxiety since they felt under pressure due to time limitation. Finally, the statements of the students showed that the students needed some visual aids in pre-reading stages of the lessons rather than the discussion questions as warming-up.

4.3.1.3.2 Lack of reading strategies. The inspection of the interviewees' excerpts one more time showed that when the students lacked reading strategies, they felt tense and worried that they would not be able to respond to any questions in the text or comprehend it at all. Their perceptions are reflected below:

[...] Teacher, I get too much stressed when we try to find the main idea of a text in the lessons. I feel like I will not be able to find the main idea. OK, we somehow find it at the end, but that is how I always feel. (S1, Interview Data, 18.08.2020)

[...] Teacher, I also get tense about some of the activities that we do. We read the paragraphs of the texts one by one and then try to find the answers to the questions. (S3, Interview Data, 18.08.2020)

Based on the statements above, it could be interpreted that the advanced level interviewees experienced problems about dealing with the details of a text like, which was also mentioned in the top-down category. Simply, their statements indicated that they needed to improve their skimming skill and some other reading skills.

4.3.1.3.3 Teacher's attitude. The final most recurring theme in respect to classroom reading anxiety was about teacher's attitude. The interviewees reported that they felt under pressure when the teacher insisted them on doing something when they could not. The following excerpts support this finding:

[...] If no one understands the test or the majority of us do not understand the text, but the teacher gives us some time and puts pressure about finding the topic of the text, I feel anxiety. (S16, Interview Data, 17.08.2020)

[...] If I can not pronounce a word because I get nervous and the instructor puts pressure on me, this provokes anxiety in me as I become unsuccessful. When something is asked to do with pressure, something bad occurs in my heart. This is sadness and anxiety... It happens in reading lesson. I read something there and I pronounce the word. (S18, Interview Data, 17.08.2020)

In brief, teachers' insistence on students for doing something led to anxiety in lessons. For this, insistence on pronouncing a word which was hard for the student while reading aloud or completing an activity when they were not able to do in reading lessons were provided as examples.

4.3.1.4 Solutions for FLRA from the students' perspectives. The last question aimed to obtain data about how to address the issue of reading anxiety from the interviewees' perspectives. The major themes emerged in this section are reading books in English and teacher's positive attitude. The following section supports the gathered findings.

4.3.1.4.1 Reading books and texts in English. The findings pointed out that reading books and texts in English was the most recurring theme as a solution. The students believed that reading in English could help them lower their reading anxiety and enhance their motivation. The students' perceptions are expressed as follows:

[...] To me, if we start reading books at a lower level than our own level, this could increase our motivation. In this way, we can see that we can understand it. (S6, Interview Data, 18.08.2020)

[...] Reading books in foreign language. (S10, Interview Data, 17.08.2020)

[...] We can read daily news. (S12, Interview Data, 17.08.2020)

As can be concluded from the extracts, reading books in English was regarded as the most acceptable solution to reduce the reading anxiety level by the students. This could be linked to the students own past experiences. In other words, because their level was high, they might have taken advantage of this solution in previous years.

4.3.1.4.2 Teacher's positive attitude. For some other interviewees, teacher's positive attitude and approach allowed them to be more comfortable and relaxed in their lessons, which is indicated in the excerpts below:

[...] Teacher, you know sometimes teachers say something like this: ‘today’s reading text is a bit more difficult’. I think that statement really affects us negatively because as a student you think that you will not be able to do the reading text because you are not used to read this type of texts. However, when the teachers do not reveal their opinions beforehand or when they make more constructive comments, even the text is more difficult than the previous ones, it does not create a problem (S2, Interview Data, 18.08.2020)

[...] Yes, I agree with my friend (S2). We do not approach the text with prejudice. (S3, Interview Data, 18.08.2020)

As can be understood from the above excerpts, it was obvious that teacher’s utterances about the difficulty of reading text affected the students negatively since they caused the students to form prejudice against the reading texts. Thus, it could be suggested that teachers make unbiased statements in order not to exert negative impact on students’ minds.

4.3.2 Findings about FLRA from the instructors’ perspectives. The fourth research question in the study aimed to find out the instructors’ perceptions about FLRA. To collect data, one-to-one written interviews were conducted with the voluntary instructors. The interview questions were aligned with the sections of the scale in order to gain in-depth and relevant information from the participants. Specifically speaking, the first question of the interview was designed to be in connection with the Top-down category of the questionnaire. The second question referred to the Bottom-up category. The third, fourth, and the fifth questions were connected to the Classroom Reading Anxiety category of the inventory. Finally, the sixth question aimed to gain some possible solutions from the participating instructors. The data obtained from the instructors were analysed based on the categories of EFLRAI accordingly. In the following table, the details related to the major themes were illustrated.

Table 9

Sources and Solutions of FLRA from the Instructors' Perspectives

Sources		
	Top-down	Unfamiliar content
		Unfamiliar terminology
		Length of the text
	Bottom-up	Unknown vocabulary
		Complex sentence structures
	Classroom Reading	Reluctance
	Anxiety	Verbalizing
		Reading techniques
		Peer and teacher attitude
Solutions		Scaffolding
		Well-designed reading activities

4.3.2.1 Factors related to top-down category of EFLRAI. The first part of the interview included a question to gain some data about text based factors which provoked anxiety in FL reading for advanced level EFL students and the reasons for it. As a result of the analysis of the instructors' responses, three major themes which in relation to the top-down category items were identified, which namely were unfamiliar content, terminology, and the length of the text. The section below provides more details about the themes.

4.3.2.1.1 Unfamiliar content. For all the instructors in the interview, the unfamiliar content of the text was the common anxiety provoking factor for the advanced level students. Some instructors explained it as the following:

[...] Unfamiliar content because learners do not have any background knowledge about it and this makes texts boring/uninteresting for them (from time to time) and comprehension harder. (T8, Interview Data, 28.09.2020)

[...] Unfamiliar content is another issue surely. Reading a text that they can relate to is always easier for advanced level learners. But if the text is about, for instance artificial intelligence, the assumptions about comprehension are always on the negative spectrum. (T5, Interview Data, 29.09.2020)

As can be understood from the above statements, texts which students lack background information might raise some challenges in reading lessons since students can not fathom the content of it. Thereby, students might feel alienated and assume

that they are not competent enough to deal with reading texts, which is likely to lead to anxiety.

4.3.2.1.2 Unfamiliar terminology. Furthermore, 5 of the interviewees claimed that the unfamiliar terminology embedded in reading texts led to reading anxiety for their students; however, the use of unfamiliar terminology was provided as the explanation of the logic behind the difficulty of comprehending the unfamiliar content. Considering these findings, the teachers said:

[...] Texts with abstract or academic content as the terminology is hard to understand and the topic is new. (T8, Interview Data, 28.09.2020)

[...] When the learners lack this (background)knowledge, the reading passage will be more difficult to deal due to the fact that the details as well as the lexical resources included in that passage are new, this can result in high level of anxiety. (T2, Interview Data, 30.09.2020)

The records of the instructors demonstrated that special words and expressions used in reading texts might be overwhelming for the students especially if the topic of it does not sound familiar to them. Thus, it can be concluded that the unfamiliar content would be composed of unfamiliar lexis or subject-specific terminology that is beyond students' knowledge and their skills to guess the meaning out of the text, which might exacerbate the reading anxiety.

4.3.2.1.3 Length of the text. The final common response gained from the interviewees was the length of the text. Their answers are shown below:

[...] Similarly, the length of a text might cause anxiety especially for younger generation. In a world everything is served and fed in bits of information, dedication to a long text is a challenge in terms of concentration and time-management. (T7, Interview Data, 29.09.2020)

[...] The length of the text is one source of anxiety. If learners first take a look at how many pages there are and see that the number is more than 6-7 pages, they automatically perceive the text as overwhelming and full of challenging vocabulary. (T5, Interview Data, 29.09.2020)

The records of the participants pointed out that the text length was the last but not the least important factor of reading anxiety in respect to top-down category. As it

was stated in the excerpt, this might be linked to the tendency of the students since they were born into digital age and were not used to handle with long passages.

4.3.2.2 Factors related to bottom-up category of EFLRAI. In the second question, the interviewees were asked whether there were any linguistic elements that triggered reading anxiety for advanced level learners and what they were. Also, the interviewees were asked about its underlying reasons. The findings were categorised in two major themes such as unknown vocabulary and complex sentence structure. The section below presents more information about these major themes.

4.3.2.2.1 Unknown vocabulary. All the interviewees attributed reading anxiety of their students at advanced level to unknown vocabulary. Some of them explained it as follows:

[...] Too much unfamiliar vocabulary might give some students reading anxiety because some students fixate/ focus on the unknown vocabulary while reading and get anxious about not understanding what they are reading. (T4, Interview Data, 22.09.2020)

[...] Lexicon and syntax are the first areas that occurred to me. The academic level of vocabulary surely influences their perception of the text. If a sentence contains more than one or two unknown items, the learners start to feel inadequate. (T5, Interview Data, 29.09.2020)

The comments emphasized that like the effect of terminology in the top-down category, the unknown words in bottom-up category might disrupt the process of comprehension of a text in foreign language. This challenge might be associated to the feeling of low self-efficacy as pointed out in the second excerpt. That is, students might develop suspicion about their competency to deal with the vocabulary if the text includes plenty of unfamiliar words.

4.3.2.2.2 Complex sentence structure. Moreover, 8 of the respondents attributed reading anxiety to the complexity of grammar structures besides the unknown vocabulary in terms of linguistic factors. Some respondents explained it further as:

[...] From my experience, some complex grammar structures as well as semantics could lead to reading anxiety. For example, they may feel perplexed

as they read some complex and compound sentences, while discovering the various meanings besides the basic meaning of words/phrases may confuse them and affect their willingness and motivation. (T10, Interview Data, 2.10.2020)

[...] I suppose difficult terminology, long sentences with reduced relative clauses and long passive structures are the linguistic elements which make the text more difficult for the students to understand. (T9, Interview Data, 14.10.2020)

Briefly, it was apparent from the statements of the interviewees that the complex grammar structures could be considered as the linguistic agents effective in reading anxiety for advanced level learners. This challenge might be related to the lack of grammar knowledge or learning grammar structures for the sake of achievement in grammar exams rather than for utilizing them to comprehend a text. That is, students at higher levels might still have not mastered the complex grammar topics.

4.3.2.3 Factors related to classroom reading anxiety category of EFLRAI. In the third section of the interview, before the interviewees asked about the factors of FLRA, they were asked about how they could recognize the signs of FLRA in their lessons. As a result, two major themes appeared as reluctance and verbalizing.

4.3.2.3.1 Reluctance. More than half of the interviewees reported that they noticed that their students lost motivation or interest in the process of reading the text when they gave up proceeding to read. Some of the participants said:

[...] They either tend to read the text in a superficial manner, and are generally slipshod while completing the related follow-up activities, that is they don't apply themselves fully, or they may become too dependent, either on their peers' performance or on the teacher throughout the activity. (T2, Interview Data, 30.09.2020)

[...] They are reluctant in actively participating and expressing their answers/opinions. Also, when I ask them individually, I get the answers that explain their reluctance and embarrassment with reference to their reading anxiety." (T10, Interview Data, 2.10.2020)

As it was stated by the instructors, their students showed some physical reactions like stopping reading, relying on their peers, or becoming silent. Therefore, it could be

concluded that students might display various reactions when they are under pressure or anxiety.

4.3.2.3.2 *Verbalizing*. Some interviewees stated that their students clearly expressed that they were feeling anxiety while they were reading a text in English. Some relevant extracts are provided below:

[...] Some of my advanced students feel reading anxiety. They either verbalize it or lose interest in the reading activity. (T4, Interview Data, 22.09.2020)

[...] Some feel reading anxiety and I can see it when they lose their concentration and show it with their body language. Some show/say it openly. (T7, Interview Data, 29.09.2020)

The excerpts highlighted that for some EFL students at high proficiency level, it was easier to share how they felt when they could not deal with the challenges in reading complex texts. This might be due to the rapport between the students and the instructor or the personality traits. However, as shown above, it was harder for some other students to directly express affective factors like anxiety.

Furthermore, the analysis of the fourth and the fifth interview questions aimed at delving into the base of reading anxiety. The interviewees were asked whether the anxiety that their students felt was specific to the reading skill or the classroom atmosphere and what the factors of classroom reading anxiety were for their students with the underlying reasoning. The findings of the data revealed two major themes as reading techniques and peer and teacher attitude.

4.3.2.3.3 *Reading techniques*. Half of the instructors stated that their students felt reading anxiety due to the issues encountered in reading skill, as displayed below:

[...] With advanced levels, it is usually specific to the reading skill. (T4, Interview Data, 22.09.2020)

[...] Students might also suffer from a lack of paraphrasing skills required while answering the comprehension questions and this can lead to anxiety. (T8, Interview Data, 28.09.2020)

[...] Scanning, finding the main idea (of both the whole text and paragraphs), and inference questions give the most feeling of anxiety. They believe it is never enough to scan a piece to find the overall idea, and they are anxious due to the

possibility of making mistaken inference when that is the question. (T10, Interview Data, 2.10.2020)

[...] Open ended, critical thinking-based questions which do not have a direct answer within the text but can be addressed by reading between the lines. Answers to such questions need to be formulated with their own words, students usually find hard to do. (T9, Interview Data, 14.10.2020)

The comments of the instructors revealed that the lack of higher-level reading strategies such as making inferences, critical thinking, paraphrasing or summarising a text might impede reading and comprehending a text for their students. That is, reading anxiety might be directly linked to the lack of these reading strategies for advanced level students.

4.3.2.3.4 Peer and teacher attitude. For many of the instructors, the classroom atmosphere shared with other classmates and the teacher might give rise to reading anxiety, as is evident in the following viewpoints:

[...] Peers and classroom atmosphere also determine how students approach the texts and how safe they feel if they need peer help. Peer pressure and tight deadline to finish a task also struggle students. (T7, Interview Data, 29.09.2020)

[...] If the classroom environment is one built on a culture of sharing, warmth and the principle that you learn from your mistakes/what you don't know, then of course the students' anxiety levels may be reduced by the teacher or peers in these circumstances. However, if the classroom environment is not built on this basis then the students' anxiety may increase because they will worry what the teacher may say or how their peers will react if any one finds out that they were finding it difficult or didn't understand the text altogether. (T1, Interview Data, 29.09.2020)

[...] The fact that how supportive a teacher is in classroom has an important role to play in controlling learners' anxiety. The-pre reading tasks and activities that teacher use in order to trigger learners' schema and to provide learners with effective scaffolding can make a marked difference. (T6, Interview Data, 05.10.2020)

To wrap up, the findings indicated that the atmosphere of the classroom in which students felt relaxed and comfortable exerted a positive effect on students' approach

to a text or on their performance. It was evident from the excerpts that students were likely to struggle in a receptive skill like reading due to anxiety as a result of negative peer reaction, negative rapport with or lack of support from the instructor.

4.3.2.4 Solutions for FLRA from the instructors' perspectives. The final question of the interview aimed to find out the possible solutions suggested by the participating instructors for FLRA. The findings of the analysis implied two major themes such as scaffolding, and well-designed reading activities.

4.3.2.4.1 Scaffolding. In respect to the elimination of FLRA for EFL students, scaffolding was the most favourable solution suggested by the instructors. More than half of the interviewees written responses indicated that students ought to be prepared for reading texts. They explained it further in these excerpts:

[...] The reading passages can be less stressful for learners if they contain information about more familiar topics, have an acceptable length and linguistic density. Effective scaffolding techniques used by teachers can be helpful. (T5, 05.10.2020)

[...] I think the emotional readiness of students can be supported by exposing them to materials with familiar topics. This way, the obstacle of unfamiliar content can be overcome. (T9, 14.10.2020)

As it can be understood from the statements, scaffolding strategies such as modifying a text or activating their schema were considered as the most effective way of diminishing the level of reading anxiety in foreign language from the participants' view.

4.3.2.4.2 Well-designed reading activities. Some of the instructors noted that reading activities could be developed by taking the students profile into consideration in order them to develop more positive feelings towards reading, as shown below.

[...] Adapting the relevant activities according to the needs of the students help a lot. Some are good at getting the gist while some are keener on catching the details. (T3, Interview Data, 25.09.2020)

[...] Through comprehensible and well-structured activities (from more controlled to less controlled) which will allow them to process a long text in digestible amounts. (T2, Interview Data, 30.09.2020)

To wrap up, it is clear that instructors emphasized reading activities as well. This might be related to the fact that they have to follow the curriculum which does not offer them the opportunity to skip the reading texts provided by the university. However, it is in instructors' hand to identify the challenges their students have to cope with, so they could prepare back-up materials to find a solution or create and design workable reading activities to lower students' reading anxiety and enhance their reading motivation.



Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusions

5.1 Discussion of Findings for Research Questions

The main purpose of the study was to seek the agents of FLRA for the EFL students enrolled in advanced level at a language preparatory program. Furthermore, another purpose of the study was to look into the perceptions of the participating students and the instructors about FLRA. In this regard, the quantitative data was collected through the use of English as a Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Inventory (EFLRAI) developed by Zoghi (2012) whereas the qualitative data were gathered by the interviews conducted with the students and the instructors. In the following section, the findings of each research question were discussed in details.

5.1.1 Discussion of the findings of RQ1: What are the factors of FLRA for EFL students enrolled in advanced level at a language preparatory program? The purpose of the first research question was to identify the causes of FLRA for the current EFL sample. The findings were discussed below based on the mean scores of the main categories with the sub-categories and the items pertaining to them from the highest to the lowest consecutively. In other words, the discussion was detailed commencing from the category of Top-down Reading Anxiety ($M=2.96$, $SD=0.44$), followed by Bottom-up Reading Anxiety ($M=2.84$, $SD=0.45$) and ended with the category of Classroom Reading Anxiety ($M=2.30$, $SD=0.67$).

To begin with, a part of the category of Top-down Reading Anxiety, the mean score of the sub-category of General Reading Ability ($M=3.04$, $SD=0.50$) demonstrated that the participating students experienced frustration and anxiety in reading in English due to the points reflected in this category to a great extent. In this regard, two items, namely “not locating the main idea” (Item 6) and “not identifying the gist” (Item 4) evoked the negative feeling of anxiety in the process of reading a text in English. These two findings confirmed the value of the instruction of the basic

reading skill of skimming. That is, the participants might have developed the habit of coping with some minor details, some pieces of information and examples in reading texts instead of improving their skills to identify the big picture in texts. Therefore, it could be suggested that the students need to be provided with the resources to practice how to discover the main ideas in a text (Brown, 2001). In addition, the following results uncovered that the EFL students had issues related to “expressing their opinions about the text” (Item 7). The inability to discuss their views about the reading text could be regarded as a consequence of the inability to share their ideas with their own words clearly or the inadequate comprehension of the text. That is to say, the participating students were deprived of the skills to capture the meaning of the text and to paraphrase their own thoughts on it, which necessitated the training of sophisticated reading skills. Similarly, Marashi and Rahmati (2017) supported that to lower reading anxiety, the students must be explicitly instructed with some reading comprehension strategies such as questioning and summarising. The final challenge in this sub-category for the students was the inability to capture the minor details (Item 5). This finding indicated that the participants lacked the skill of scanning a text for details. Overall, the group of items in this sub-category was specified to be one of the reader-oriented anxiety factors (Zoghi, 2012). Thus, it is significant that the readers are equipped with the fundamental practical knowledge and abilities to minimize or eliminate their weaknesses in the aforementioned points.

Moreover, in relation to the category of Top-down Reading Anxiety, the other effective sources of reading anxiety for the EFL participants belonged to the sub-category of Background and Cultural Knowledge ($M=2.86$, $SD=0.57$). According to the results, for the participants, the item “lacking previous knowledge about the ideas in the text” (Item 3) caused them to feel upset. To clearly state, the participants felt worried and sad when the content of the text was beyond their knowledge. This finding supported another research in the existing literature by Matsumara (2001) who termed the reason as “anxiety arising from lack of prior knowledge about the topic”. In addition, the title of the text (Item 1) was found to be completely challenging for 17.5 % of the participants and agreed to a certain level by 55.7 % of them. In other words, the title of a reading text in English had some influential role on the EFL students. This argument was in line with a research by Güvendir (2014) who reported that for 90%

of the participants in his study, the use of metaphorical title in a text in English was a source of reading anxiety. Finally, the cultural content of the text (Item 2) was identified to be causing reading anxiety by the participants. In other words, texts containing information about a different culture than the readers' own culture was an indicator of anxiety. Shao (2014) correspondingly contended that the lack of knowledge about the culture of the target language led to reading anxiety for Chinese first-year university students who had the experience of learning English. This factor was also aligned with the study carried out by Tsai and Lee (2018) who reached the same conclusion that the majority of the participating learners felt FLRA owing to the lack of cultural background knowledge about the texts.

Furthermore, the mean score of the category of Bottom-up Reading Anxiety ($M=2.84$, $SD=0.45$) placed it in the second row as an effective agent of FLRA level of the students in terms of the main categories. Furthermore, as a component of Bottom-up Reading Anxiety, the sub-category of Vocabulary ($M=2.95$, $SD=0.52$) was as effective on the participating students' FLRA level as the sub-categories of Background and Cultural Knowledge and General Reading Ability since there was no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of Vocabulary and the aforementioned sub-categories. More specifically, Vocabulary was a text-specific anxiety factor (Zoghi, 2012) and three of the items in this sub-category were amongst the items that induced anxiety at a high level for the participants. In respect to vocabulary oriented sources, for the majority of the EFL participants, namely "encountering a lot of words whose meanings are unclear" (Item 9) was an important source of anxiety with the highest mean score of all the items of the scale ($M=3.31$, $SD=0.76$). To put it differently, the emergence of FLRA was not only as a result of the lack of vocabulary knowledge, but it was also connected to the density of the words whose meanings were vague to the students. This was followed by the items "not figuring out the meaning of a word" (Item 10) that they have seen before, and "not figuring out the meanings of unknown words". That is, either the words in the text were new to the participants or were studied before, once the EFL students could not solve the meaning of them, it lessened their calmness. This outcome was in line with the findings of Aisyah (2017) who found out that for 46% of the thirty-three junior high school children, unknown vocabulary was the top ranked cause of reading anxiety

in English. Similar conclusions were also derived from the study carried out by Güvendir (2014) who reported the unknown vocabulary as the second identified reason in order of importance in his study conducted with the first year students of ELT department. In the same sub-category, similar to the unknown vocabulary, the next two effective factors in reading anxiety were found to be associated with the idiomatic expressions in English (Item 13) and the use of the words in different meanings which were beyond the students' memory (Item 12). That means, the idioms in the target language, some colloquial language, and the figurative use of the words could be regarded as some potential challenges that might initiate anxiety in the participants. Moreover, for the participants, the structure of a word which was consisted of more than one or two syllables were likely heighten the anxiety level apart from its unfamiliarity (Item 14). The penultimate effective agent of anxiety was the situation in which the dictionary was out of reach for the participants. This outcome was indicative of the fact that the participants were dependent on external resources like dictionaries and had greater tendency for the use of extra sources in the case of ambiguity. Another study in line with this finding was by Matsumara (2001) who concluded that some constraints like the absence of dictionary led the participants in the study suffer from anxiety, which was a sign of overdependence on dictionary. The final source of anxiety in terms of vocabulary was the pronunciation of the words (Item 15). To explain in more detail, the participants felt bothered when they were supposed to read out a word whose pronunciation was difficult to them. Similarly, Genç (2016) pointed out that Turkish EFL participants in his study showed less tolerance towards ambiguity to some aspects of target language and some of them were related to pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. Given aforementioned results, the hardships in line with vocabulary indicated the pivotal role of language strategies to keep the new words in memory, to recall them when necessary, to infer the meaning of them from the text, to deal with multisyllable words and to be able to pronounce the words which sounded strange to the subjects.

Furthermore, the scores of the subjects in the sub-category of Grammar ($M=2.69$, $SD=0.54$), a part of the category of Bottom-up Reading Anxiety, varied between 2.08 and 2.97 which located around the midpoint of 1-4 scoring continuum. Based on the analysis of the participants' responses, when the participants did not recognize the

sentence structure, they felt worried (Item 17). Besides, the scores indicated that the sentence length placed stress on them (Item 16). Similar to these findings, Isler and Yildirim (2017) found out that complex or sophisticated sentence structures triggered the possibility of failure and caused reading anxiety for the participants who were ELT students at a public university. The third item which was agreed by the participants (47.4 % somewhat agree, 18.6 % totally agree) was related to the ambiguity of the tense in reading texts (Item 19). In other words, the participants felt nervous when they could not perceive the time flow in a reading text. Another challenging situation for the students was the presence of the unfamiliar grammar structures in reading texts (Item 21). A possible reason for this was because the students concentrated grammar topics in order to succeed in grammar exams rather than to use them as tools to understand a text. That is, the students were less inclined to understand the grammar in context might have raised affective filter when they came across with advanced grammar units like reduced relative clauses. This outcome contradicted the findings of Abubakar and Hairuddin (2020). In their study, one inquiry was about the reading anxiety symptoms of the EFL participants at a junior high school and they found out that the participants did not feel reading anxiety due to unknown grammar points. Regarding the contradictory finding between these two studies, it could be stated that the ambition to pass the proficiency exam might have forced the participants of the current study to focus on understanding each unfamiliar grammar structure in a reading text too heavily, which meant that it might have caused them to perceive unknown grammar structures as anxiety provoking source unlike the participants in Abubakar and Hairuddin 's study. In addition, in the current study, it was unveiled that the part of speech of the words posed challenges for the participants and led to anxiety (Item 20). That is, they were unable to make a connection between the word form that existed in their minds and the part of speech which they just encountered in reading texts, so they felt bothered. The final and least effective agent of this sub-category was about the use of the passive structure in reading text (Item 18)), which was also the penultimate cause of reading anxiety of the entire scale. For the subjects in the study, the use of passive structure was tolerable and almost half of the participants totally disagreed that they felt anxiety when it was used in texts. Conclusively, it can be inferred that the complexity, unfamiliarity and the vagueness of some structures in

English texts led to apprehension and frustration for the subjects. Therefore, they needed to be instructed about the use of specific reading skills to overcome the challenges.

Finally, the findings revealed that the items in the category of Classroom Reading Anxiety and the sub-category of Teaching Method were directly linked to how the reading lessons were provided to the students (Zoghi, 2012). In other words, the participating students felt reading anxiety as a result of the instructor's approach to reading texts and attitude towards the students' performance. The scores of the subjects in the sub-category of Teaching Method ($M=2.30$, $SD=0.67$) varied between 1.98 and 2.81. When closely inspected, in the current study, five items (Items 24, 27, 22, 23 and 26) in this category were less effective in the participants' reading anxiety than the other sources mentioned in the scale (see Table 4). However, four of these items belonged to the range of 2-3, which was the midpoint of the scoring continuum whereas one of them belonged to the range of 1-2, which was the lowest range of the scoring continuum. In view of the findings, reading texts which did not address the students' interests caused stress for the EFL students (Item 25). That means, being engaged in the passages of the compulsory reading books and texts lowered the motivation of the students and heightened their level of stress. In parallel, Subaşı (2014) claimed that for highly anxious participants in her study, uninteresting reading materials were reported to be causing anxiety. Moreover, for the EFL students in the current study, responding to reading comprehension questions caused anxiety as well. (Item 24). Similar to this finding, Güvendir (2014) reported in his study that more than half of the subjects felt anxious when they were questioned about the reading text. The similarity between these two findings showed that regardless of the context in which the students received education, when Turkish EFL students were posed inquiries about the reading text, their anxiety level was exacerbated to a large extent. In addition, reading out in lessons was perceived as an effective factor that induced reading anxiety at medium level (Item 22). It should be noted that this outcome was consistent with the result of a study of Ahmad et al. (2013) who concluded that two reasons for FLRA for Jordanian participants were making mistakes and reading aloud in the classroom. Similarly, Güvendir (2014) reported that 70% of the learners in his study disliked reading aloud due to possible pronunciation mistakes. Therefore, it could be suggested

that EFL students feel intimidated when they read texts for others loudly in lessons as they are scared to be judged by the other attendees. Moreover, the mean score result for Item 27 ($M=2.27$, $SD=0.98$) meant that the participants were bothered when the instructor almost never used L1 and when he constantly and persistently maintained the communication in English. This outcome could be regarded in relation to the stress of passing the course. Since the current participants were at the highest proficiency level and owned the opportunity to take the proficiency exam, they were eager to understand the entire input or instruction provided by the instructors, so when the instructor never switched into L1, they might have felt frustration and stress as they thought that they missed significant points in the lessons. Therefore, it can be deduced that the high proficient participants needed to interact in English with their instructors at certain times. Also, the students felt anxious about translating a piece of text into their first language (Item 23), which might be due to the fear of making mistakes in front of their peers while making translation or the difficulty of providing accurate translation of the text in their first language. The final and the least effective agent of reading anxiety for the participants was the instructors' feedback on their pronunciation or translation (Item 26), which was the only item placed in the lowest range of the scoring continuum. The study by Subaşı (2014) who reported that the EFL students were in favour of the use of gentle error correction method, otherwise they felt hesitation to participate in reading courses corroborates the finding of the current research. Namely, both studies revealed that the students shied away from being corrected by the instructor in class. Briefly, it was clear that the teaching methods and the instructor's reactions towards students' mistakes and preferences about the use of reading materials were all effective in emotional situation of the students and were likely to raise concerns for the advanced level students to some extent.

5.1.2 Discussion of the findings of RQ2: What are the perceptions of the students enrolled in advanced level at a language preparatory program about FLRA? The detailed analysis of the semi-structured interviews with 18 volunteers demonstrated that the participating students were concerned with reading English texts for a variety of reasons and they held some views about the solutions. In the light of

the analysis of the interview, the section below entails the findings pertaining to each category of the interview questions.

5.1.2.1 Factors related to top-down category. Initially, the participants stated that they were susceptible to anxiety when they did not know the meaning of the words or the meaning of the special words and phrases incorporated in reading texts. This finding was in parallel with one of the findings in Bektaş-Çetinkaya's study (2011). She examined the reading process of a graduate student of TEFL and in the think-aloud protocol discovered that the student showed anxiety when he encountered with unknown words and tended to ensure himself about understanding each word clearly. This finding is also line with Güvendir (2014) and Aisyah's findings (2017) as previously explained in the findings of the first research question. In addition, for the participants in the current study, reading something for an assignment or to get a grade was reported to be an anxiety provoking factor. This finding complies with Bargezar and Hadidi's study (2016) in which they found out that there was a statistically significant relationship between reading anxiety level and the comprehension performance of the items in IELTS for the upper-intermediate and advanced level participants from three different institutes. Similarly, Isler and Yildirim (2017) claimed that compulsory reading courses and the pressure of achieving a passing grade were factors of FLRA for EFL students. Considering these reviews and the finding of the current study, it could be asserted that some compulsory situations like an exam or some obligations, viz. completing an assignment could exacerbate reading anxiety for EFL students. Furthermore, the outcome of the study marked that the students' incompetency in locating the main idea and minor details led them to feel anxiety. This was considered to be in connection with the lack of some reading strategies, which in turn hindered the students' comprehension skills. This finding concurred with the results of the study by Fauzi (2018) who carried out a research about the effect of skimming and scanning reading skills on the students' understanding of reading texts and their reading pace. It was revealed that the treatment with reading skills heightened the comprehension level and the reading speed of the experimental group. Briefly, the conclusions drawn about vocabulary and reading strategies up to this point are supportive of the findings related to the research question one in the current study.

5.1.2.2 Factors related to bottom-up category. The other key findings were the frequency of the unknown words and terminology and the complexity of the sentence structure in reading texts. These two recurring themes are in line with the research by Kuru-Gonen (2009). To attempt to find out whether FLRA was distinguishable from FLA and the causative agents of FLRA, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected in her study. One of the outcomes gained in the study was that text-related agents which were inclusive of boring texts, unknown vocabulary, complex linguistic structures, unfamiliar cultural content, and text structure were effective in causing reading anxiety in English. Similarly, Güvendir (2014) confirmed that linguistic structures were effective elements in FLRA. Last, but not least the extracted themes in this sub-category corroborates the results gained in the quantitative section of the study in terms of vocabulary and grammar items. To sum up, it could be inferred that EFL learners need more support and trainings to overcome the challenges of advanced level vocabulary and academic words and complicated aspects of sentence structures and linguistic elements.

5.1.2.3 Factors related to classroom reading anxiety category. Further major findings were concluded about the implementation of reading activities, the lack of reading strategies, and teacher's attitude. As stated in the analysis section, for some participants, group work initiated anxiety in them as they considered themselves not as successful as the others. In addition, the pressure to give a response to a sudden question about the text in a limited time was also quoted to be an anxiety provoking factor. These conclusions correspond with another study by Subaşı (2014). In the study, 'asking sudden questions' was categorised in relation to Teacher's Manner in the Classroom and 'making negative self-assessment of their skills' was allocated to Personal Factors. Moreover, the lack of reading strategies which was also discussed above were regarded as a factor of reading anxiety in a study by Tsai and Lee (2018) who conducted a research to find out the agents of FLRA. 202 EFL learners in Taiwan participated in the study. Apart from the quantitative data collection, semi-structured was used to gather data. One of the findings indicated that FLRA was negatively correlated with learning reading strategies. However, the result of the current study contradicts with the findings of the study by Çapan and Bektaş (2013). The study which aimed at finding out the relationship between reading strategies and FLRA

showed that the level of FLRA increased in the experimental group who were instructed with reading strategies. Finally, teacher's dominant manner was identified as an agent of FLRA. Similarly, Subaşı (2014) reported that the teacher's way of correcting the students' pronunciation mistakes was identified as a factor of FLRA.

5.1.2.4 Solutions related to FLRA. Finally, as for the solution to eliminate FLRA, a couple of the most common solutions offered by the participants were reading story books, texts and newspapers in English and teacher's positive behaviour. Specifically, the participating students were in favour of practicing the comprehension skills by being exposed to texts in English, which could be considered to be in line with the tenets of extensive reading (Thornbury, 2006) in which readers acquire new words while reading in pleasure and in a relaxed way. This finding confirmed the results of a study conducted with the aim of investigating the impact of the instruction with the mixture of intensive and extensive reading activities on EFL students' attitude towards reading (Atay, 2013). As pointed out by Atay, the application of guided extensive reading for a six-week period enabled to decrease the anxiety level of the experimental group, to feel more relaxed in reading in English and improved their ability to deal with the unfamiliar words in reading texts. In regard to teacher's behaviour, the teacher's judgments and utterances about the text to be exploited in lessons were regarded as anxiety provoking factor. As such, instructors' ideas and expectations about language learning were likely to cause anxiety (Young, 1991). To finalize, the recommendation by the participating students reiterates the important role of the development of reading habits and the rapport between the teacher and the students.

5.1.3 Discussion of the findings of RQ3: What are the perceptions of the EFL instructors who teach advanced level reading course at a language preparatory program about FLRA? To elucidate the perceptions of the participating instructors about FLRA and the solutions of it, the findings were categorised into the sub-sections in relation to the interview questions as given below.

5.1.3.1 Factors related to top-down category. The overall findings in this section introduced three major themes which could be listed as unfamiliar content, unfamiliar terminology and the length of the text. The first major finding, unfamiliar content was

regarded as a challenge giving rise to anxiety by the participating teachers. However, this finding was not directly recognised as an anxiety provoking factor by the participating students. Nevertheless, it was reflected as an issue within the scope of their vocabulary knowledge. On the contrary, the finding about the unfamiliar terminology overlapped with students' views. In other words, the shortage of lexical resources and lingo were assumed to heighten concerns and frustration for the students. The final outcome about the length of the text was not verbalised by the participating students much. The exclusion of the lengthy text as a factor coincides with the finding of Abubakar and Hairuddin's (2020) study. They found out that the second-grade students at junior high school did not feel nervous when they saw a long text in English. However, the participating instructors' observations and experiences in the current study revealed that their students had short attention span due to being exposed to short blocks of texts on the internet. Besides, the students' prospects of the degree of difficulty in a lengthy text were reported to cause them to feel in a predicament. This finding could also be considered in line with Tsai and Lee's (2018) study in which the lack of self-confidence was categorised as one of the personal factors of reading anxiety. In respect to the item of the scale, it was claimed that the participating students lacked self-confidence in reading lengthy texts.

5.1.3.2 Factors related to bottom-up category. The findings of the bottom-up category from the instructors' view are in parallel with the students' perceptions and with some other researches (Aisyah, 2017; Güvendir, 2014; Isler and Yildirim, 2017) carried out with EFL students and as alluded previously. As both the participating instructors and students stated the established features of written text might include words, structural parts, linguistic elements beyond the bounds of the students' capacity, so the students might surrender to make endeavour. Briefly, it is utmost important for the instructors to acknowledge the true strengths and weaknesses of their students' linguistic competence which entails the knowledge of spelling, vocabulary, pronunciation, word formation, grammatical and sentence structure, and semantics (Hedge, 2000). In this way, the weaknesses causing anxiety in the process of reading could be alleviated to some extent.

5.1.3.3 Factors related to classroom reading anxiety. The section details two themes for the identification of anxious manners and the factors of FLRA. Firstly, the findings yielded two major themes as regards the signs or symptoms of reading anxiety detected by the participating instructors and the themes were named as reluctance and verbalizing. Apart from hearing their concerns, worries, and frustrations specific to reading skill and course, it was possible for the instructors to notice their students' anxious reactions. The students' reluctance or avoidance to be engaged in the reading activities or over dependency to their peers were the perceptible signs of their struggle with anxiety, which complies with Leary's (1982) description of learners' passive behaviour as a consequence of feeling anxiety in oral production. This result is also similar to the participating students' statements about losing enthusiasm and taking decision to quit reading the text. This being said, in respect to the sources of FLRA, a couple of themes were identified and called reading techniques and peer and teacher's attitude. The initial conclusion of the lack of reading techniques consolidates the finding about General Reading Ability as detailed previously. It unearths the information that the students lacked not only basic skills like skimming and scanning, but also high order reading skills including summarising, paraphrasing, and critical-thinking. The other recurring theme detected was about the peer and teacher's attitude, which was agreed by the participating students as well. Based on the claims, it was evident that the existence of peers and their reaction or judgemental reflections towards the reader's performance at any stage of the reading process laid severe stress on them. The absence of teacher's assistance was also regarded as a negative causal agent, which complies with Eslami et al.'s study (2018) in which the class who was supplied with teacher's help before a reading text achieved better than the other class who attempted to fathom the details on their own. In conclusion, it is obvious that there is a close connection between the anger, resentment, frustration or anxiety students experience and the other attendants' attitude in the classroom.

5.1.3.4 Solutions related to FLRA. The key themes about the suggestions to eliminate reading anxiety were scaffolding and well-designed reading activities. This being said, how to use the technique of scaffolding was discussed in a multi-dimensional way by Nuttall (1982) and it was suggested that teachers provide some guidance by encouraging, prompting, probing, modelling, and clarifying rather than

solving the challenging situation for the students. The need for scaffolding was implied by the participating students who mentioned that they lost their eagerness to read and did not know how to put their interpretation of the text into words. Furthermore, well-designed activities such as group work or controlled and less controlled activities were offered. However, according to participating students, the use of group work led to anxiety because they felt under pressure of the group. Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that students need support and guidance in the receptive skill of reading and the instruction addressing to their learning needs considering the affective agents like anxiety.

5.2 Practical Implications

The present study suggests some implications for further research, instructors, and course and material designers based on the quantitative and qualitative conclusions of the study.

Firstly, and most importantly, the study revealed that FLRA is an affective variable which might exert some major impact on FL readers due to various agents. In the light of the key findings reported as a result of the analysis of the data gained from the participating EFL students, and considering these determinants of reading anxiety, it could be inferred that students with higher level of proficiency are likely to experience anxiety in reading a text in foreign language, which is indicative of the need for taking measures. Thereby, regarding the language elements of reading texts such as vocabulary and language structures, it could be worth to consider the reading approaches to be applied in the lessons. To illustrate, the feedback gained from the students might imply that the text in hand will deter or discourage them from comprehending the text owing to the language elements. In this case, the preference of bottom-up reading approach or interactive approach rather than top-down approach might be more appropriate to employ for an instructor to prevent affective variable of anxiety. Furthermore, the study revealed that the advanced level students need to be equipped with reading strategies parallel with their level to be able to comprehend the reading text thoroughly and clearly. In this respect, it should be noted that further research is necessary aiming at identifying merely the specific reading strategies of advanced level students. In the current study, it was found out that the students faced challenges with the identification of minor and major details in a text and could not

paraphrase their comprehension, which indicates that there could be insurmountable difficulties resulting from the lack of advanced level reading strategies such as paraphrasing, critical reading or reading between the lines. Also, this finding underlines the significant role of the curriculum designers in not only integrating the instruction of reading strategies into the program, but also allocating more teaching hours for the instruction of the strategies so that the students could master the strategies. Finally, it could be suggested that reading instructors be more sensitive about their approach in connection with their choice of reading types such as silent reading or reading aloud, feedback types such as corrective feedback, individual feedback, and spontaneous feedback, and how to apply reading activities such as in groups or individual in order to overcome the challenges related to teaching methods.

In the light of the findings connected to the instructors' perceptions, it could be stated that the text length and the unfamiliar content were the mere points that were emphasized by the participating instructors but not by the participating students in the interviews. Thus, regarding the text length, it should be noted that it is necessary to train students about shifting their focus from the length of the text to the content of the text because the language and the content might not be really discouraging even the text is so long. This could be supported with some exemplary reading texts. In addition, the students might be helped to look through the lenses of a fluent reader by getting training with the application of top-down approach. With the use of top-down approach, the students might be assisted to familiarize themselves with the layout of a lengthy text, so it might enable them to notice how the information is divided and ease their job to overcome the difficulties of comprehension to some extent. Finally, the factor of unfamiliar content could be eliminated by the use of warm –up and schema activating activities in pre-reading stages of reading lessons.

Finally, the findings related to the solutions provided by the participating students and the instructors vary to some extent. The initial practical implication is about the scaffolding, which was implied by both participants. It is clear that students with higher level of proficiency needed to be guided carefully and kindly. To explain more specifically, it was evident that they needed to be provided with a prompt or clue about how to deal with the text in a better and easier way. Also, it was inferred that the students were to be encouraged to read more as they were aware of the pivotal role of

reading books in English. Therefore, reading clubs promoting pleasure reading for students with higher level of proficiency could be advisable. The final implication for the solutions is the employment of reading activities. The participating instructors suggested to use group work whereas it was considered as the cause of resentment and anxiety by the students. Taking this discrepancy into consideration, it might be suggested that allocating students into groups at this level ought to be done by bearing the student profile in mind. Otherwise, the students might avoid showing their true performance in front of their peers in reading lessons.

Overall, the outcomes of the present study are vital in terms of enabling reading in English as a foreign language efficacious for the students and helping it to be perceived as a skill free of anxiety.

5.3 Conclusions

The current study mainly aimed at finding out the factors of FLRA for the advanced level students registered at a language preparatory program. This being said, the quantitative findings demonstrated that the items specific to general reading ability, vocabulary, background and cultural knowledge, and grammar were indicative of the leading sources of anxiety in reading course for the students. Results of the statistical analysis also revealed that the items of teaching method were less effective in reading anxiety for the current participants. Furthermore, the study contributes to the literature by specifically analysing the anxiety provoking factors of a group of EFL students who had high level proficiency. The findings of the participating students' perceptions complied with the findings of the quantitative outcomes when the grammar and vocabulary items were taken into consideration. Moreover, the qualitative findings based on the students' perspectives helped to detail the factors more closely. It was revealed that the unknown terminology, the obligatory situations, the frequency of unknown words rather than the unknown words, the lack of reading strategies, the way the reading activities carried out in lessons, and the teacher's approach could lead to reading anxiety. On the other hand, the study entails the factors from the instructors' approach. The findings briefly indicated that unfamiliar content, unfamiliar terminology, the length of the text, the grammatical and sentence level difficulties, reading techniques, peer and teacher's attitude, the lack of teacher's guidance were anxiety provoking factors. Finally, the current study is significant in terms of

encompassing a variety of solutions against reading anxiety from the students and the instructors' perceptions. In particular, the suggestions could be outlined as reading texts and books in English and teacher's positive utterances and attitude, scaffolding, and well-designed reading activities.

In a nutshell, the outcomes of the present study pointed out that students with higher level of proficiency experienced reading anxiety owing to divergent factors in relation to reading texts, the students, the instructor, and the reading strategies. Therefore, it is utmost important for instructors, program coordinators, syllabus and curriculum designers to consider the anxiety provoking factors previously stated while planning lessons, curriculum, or program for the students with higher level of proficiency at preparatory schools in order to lower the debilitating effect of reading anxiety.

5.4 Recommendations for Further Research

The current study entails a number of recommendations for further researchers in the domain of FLRA. First of all, this study included a moderate number of students at advanced level (N=97). Thus, a replication of the study with higher number of participants is necessary to generalize the findings for the advanced level students at preparatory programs. Furthermore, the sample number for the interview with the students (N=18) and the instructors (N=10) were small. Hence, the qualitative part of the study could be carried out with a larger group of interviewees. In addition, the interview questions could be revised taking each item of the scale into consideration separately rather than reducing the items into a few groups. In this way, a mass of data in depth referring to each item of the scale could be gained from the students. Moreover, it is recommended that the current study be conducted with the aim of investigating the relationship between the demographic features of the participating students such as age, gender, years of language experience, or educational background and the factors of reading anxiety. Considering the role of the demographics, the scope of the research could be broadened. Furthermore, the findings of the current study reiterate the role of reading strategies and necessitates further research in order to identify the advanced level reading strategies and the impact of these strategies on students' comprehension and reading anxiety. The final recommendation for

researchers is that the qualitative data collected from the instructors could be supported with the use of other qualitative instruments such as teacher reflective journals in order to increase the reliability of the findings.



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APPENDICES