

**Impact of foreign language classroom anxiety on reading performance of secondary school
students**

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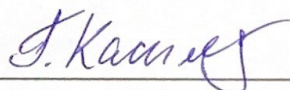
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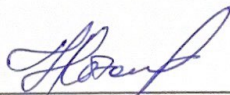
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Impact of foreign language classroom anxiety on reading performance of secondary school students

Abstract

The study investigates the relationship between Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) and reading performance of Kazakhstani secondary school students who study English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The majority of previous research about FLCA has studied university students and speaking abilities, however this study examines how anxiety impacts reading performance which receive limited attention in this field. The research design employed a quantitative method. The research involved 90 students from Grades 7 to 9 at a private educational center in Almaty. The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) was administered first to students to assess their anxiety levels. The students then took the Cambridge English Preliminary Reading Test to evaluate their reading performance. The research data indicated that students experienced anxiety levels ranging from moderate to severe as their FLCAS scores averaged 98.29. The reading performance of students remained low because more than 65% of them achieved scores between 2 or lower. The research established a moderate negative relationship ($r = -0.344$) between FLCA and reading scores which showed that students with elevated anxiety levels performed less well. The regression analysis established FLCA as a significant predictor of reading performance because it explained 11.8% of the score variance ($R^2 = 0.118$, $p < .001$). The findings indicate that anxiety produces negative effects on reading performance of students although reading is typically viewed as a low-pressure skill. The research demonstrates the need to understand emotional factors in classrooms as lowering anxiety levels could lead to better reading performance.

Орта білім беретін мектеп оқушыларының оқу үлгеріміне шет тілін қолдану кезіндегі қобалжудың әсері

Аңдатпа

Бұл зерттеу Қазақстандағы орта мектеп оқушыларының ағылшын тілін шет тілі ретінде меңгеру барысында шет тілін қолдану кезіндегі қобалжу деңгейі мен олардың оқу үлгерімі арасындағы байланысты қарастырады. Бұған дейінгі зерттеулердің көпшілігі университет студенттеріне және сөйлеу дағдыларына бағытталған болса, бұл зерттеу шет тіліндегі оқу үлгеріміне әсерін зерттейді. Зерттеу сандық әдіске негізделді. Алматы қаласындағы жеке білім беру орталығында оқитын 7–9 сыныптағы 90 оқушыдан деректер жиналды.

Оқушылар алдымен шет тілін қолдану кезіндегі қобалжу деңгейін бағалайтын арнайы шкала (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) толтырды. Кейін олар ағылшын тілінен Cambridge English Preliminary оқу тестін орындады. Жиналған мәліметтер сипаттамалық статистика, Пирсон корреляциясы және регрессиялық талдау әдістері арқылы өңделді.

Нәтижелер көрсеткендей, оқушылардың көпшілігі шет тілін қолдану кезінде орташа немесе жоғары деңгейде қобалжу сезінген, орташа ұпай – 98.29. Сонымен қатар, олардың оқу үлгерімі төмен болды: 65%-дан астамы 2 немесе одан төмен ұпай жинады.

Корреляциялық талдау нәтижесі теріс орташа байланысты көрсетті ($r = -0.344$), яғни қобалжу деңгейі жоғарылаған сайын оқу нәтижесі төмендеген. Регрессиялық талдау шет тілін қолдану кезіндегі қобалжу оқушылардың оқу үлгерімінің маңызды болжаушысы екенін анықтады ($R^2 = 0.118$, $p < .001$). Бұл зерттеу шет тілінде оқыту кезінде оқушылардың эмоционалдық жағдайын ескеру қажеттілігін дәлелдейді. Сыныптағы қобалжу деңгейін төмендету оқу нәтижесін жақсартуға мүмкіндік береді.

Влияние иноязычной тревожности на читательскую успеваемость учащихся средней школы

Аннотация

Исследование посвящено изучению воздействия тревожности на уроках иностранного языка на читательскую успеваемость школьников средней школы в Казахстане. В то время как большинство предыдущих исследований сфокусированы на студентах высших учебных заведений и навыках устной речи, данная работа рассматривает влияние тревожности на навыки чтения, область, которая является малоизученной, особенно среди школьников. В рамках исследования был применен количественный подход. В качестве участников были задействованы 90 школьников 7–9 классов частного образовательного центра в городе Алматы. Для оценки уровня тревожности при изучении иностранного языка использовалась шкала FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale). Успеваемость в чтении оценивалась с помощью стандартизованного теста по чтению Cambridge English Preliminary Reading Test. Полученные данные были проанализированы с применением описательной статистики, корреляционного анализа Пирсона и линейной регрессии. Результаты исследования показали, что большинство студентов испытывают умеренный или высокий уровень тревожности при изучении иностранного языка: средний балл по шкале FLCAS составил 98.29. Результаты анализа регрессии подтвердили значимость иноязычной тревожности как значимым фактором, влияющим на успеваемость в обучении ($R^2 = 0.118$, $p < .001$). Исследование показывает важность учета эмоций в образовательном процессе. Уменьшение тревожности в учебной среде может способствовать улучшению успеваемости иностранных языков у школьников, а также создать более благоприятную атмосферу для обучения.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Foreign language anxiety (FLA) represents a well-known condition which negatively affects both second language acquisition and comprehension. According to Horwitz et al. (1986), foreign language anxiety refers to the stress and anxiety students experience when learning foreign languages and it manifests in speaking, listening, writing and reading tasks. Reading anxiety creates specific challenges because it directly affects comprehension and fluency which in turn determines academic achievement. Students who experience reading anxiety when studying a foreign language will face challenges with decoding unfamiliar vocabulary and understanding complex sentence structures and maintaining their motivation. The challenges that may be faced by the learners include low self-esteem, limited exposure to the target language and negative experiences with learning a language.

Reading in foreign languages presents multiple obstacles to learners. Students encounter difficulties with familiar vocabulary and complicated sentence structures and readings containing cultural elements they cannot understand. Academic students encounter specific challenges because their assignments often include complex technical information. Students experience increased anxiety because of formal and thick academic writing in papers and textbooks which leads them to participate less.

Saito et al. (1999) also link it to a fear of misinterpreting or misleading information, which causes people to lose confidence and then disconnect. This is concerning for college students who are supposed to interact critically with sophisticated literature in order to flourish both academically and professionally. Reading causes severe anxiety in students which prevents them from absorbing important information about foreign language reading fluency. The fear

affects their classroom learning as well as their performance on tests, assignments and papers. Their language development suffers because their fear of reading reduces their motivation and confidence to participate in reading activities.

Understanding the origins of reading anxiety in foreign languages is essential for teachers to create effective pedagogical treatments, as reading abilities are essential for both academic achievement and personal growth. Previous research has paid minimal attention to the particular difficulties of reading in a foreign language, despite the fact that FLA has been studied from multiple viewpoints especially from the perspective of advanced learners.

Reading comprehension requires multiple cognitive abilities to learn a language. Students experience multiple obstacles when studying foreign languages that extend past basic vocabulary and grammatical knowledge. The level of anxiety students experience in their foreign language classes plays a major role in determining their language learning achievements. Students experience different types of anxiety which include test-related anxiety and communication apprehension as well as fear about obtaining substandard marks. The understanding of foreign language classroom anxiety by language educators and researchers and legislators enables better development of language education. The specific language abilities such as reading face negative effects from anxiety that students experience in their foreign language classes.

The ability of secondary school children to comprehend written texts is very crucial because they will have to use this in other subjects when they are learning a foreign language. In other subjects, apart from language classes, reading proficiency is crucial for future career choices and academic achievements. However, in the context of language learning, anxiety can be counterproductive and may hinder reading comprehension and perhaps language acquisition as a whole.

This research examines the intricate connection between foreign language classroom anxiety and reading performance of secondary school students. This research will help to identify the problems caused by anxiety and derive specific recommendations for improving the situation in order to create a more encouraging atmosphere for learning.

1.1 Problem Statement

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) receives insufficient research attention regarding receptive skills especially reading. The majority of anxiety research focuses on speaking and productive skills yet students experience emotional challenges during reading tasks which remain understudied (Zhou, 2017). The majority of existing research focuses on university-level learners but younger populations receive minimal attention. Yu (2024) points out in his recent review that there is a lack of research on FLA among students from primary schools to secondary schools and vocational colleges as well as postgraduate students. The need for additional research on school-aged learners becomes evident because reading comprehension anxiety affects academic results.

1.2 Research Questions:

1. What are the levels of FLCA among secondary school students?
2. What are the levels of reading performance among secondary school students?
3. What is the impact of FLCA on the reading performance of secondary school students?

1.3 Aim of the study

This study aims to examine the relationship between foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) and reading performance among secondary school students.

1.4 Hypothesis

Alternative Hypothesis: There is a significant negative correlation between levels of foreign language classroom anxiety and reading performance among secondary school students.

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant correlation between levels of foreign language classroom anxiety and reading performance among secondary school students.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research holds significance because it aims to solve various existing gaps between current literature and practice. The research adds theoretical value to second language acquisition by investigating an understudied topic which examines how anxiety affects reading comprehension. The majority of existing research has concentrated on oral proficiency and speaking-related anxiety but this study expands the discussion to include the receptive skill which serves as a fundamental requirement for academic success. The study provides empirical evidence which helps teachers create classroom activities and assessments and learning environments that meet the emotional requirements of students. The research findings support educational administrators and curriculum developers to enhance their instructional methods and teacher training approaches for students who experience anxiety. The study holds importance for Kazakhstan because the country faces rapid English language instruction growth despite limited knowledge about how student anxiety affects learning results.

1.6 Novelty of the Study

The research contributes to FLCA studies because it examines secondary school students who remain understudied in comparison to university students. Yu (2024) notes that most research about FLA has focused on undergraduate students yet there is limited research about FLA among students in primary schools, secondary schools and vocational colleges and

postgraduate students. The research extends current knowledge by studying younger learners which helps address the existing gap in FLA research for this age group.

The research provides practical recommendations which stem from the actual conditions of Kazakhstani classrooms. The research provides local teachers and educators with practical information to support their students better in their specific teaching environment because most FLCA studies occur in different countries.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety: It refers to the feelings of nervousness, stress, or discomfort that students may experience in a foreign language learning environment. This anxiety often arises from concerns about speaking in front of others, participating in classroom activities, or being evaluated. It is typically linked to fear of making mistakes, receiving negative feedback, or performing poorly on language assessments.

Reading performance: Reading performance refers to the ability of the learner to comprehend, analyze and interpret written texts in a foreign language. It includes skills such as decoding vocabulary, recognizing grammatical structures, extracting meaning, drawing inferences, and critically analyzing texts used in language instruction.

Secondary School Students: The term describes students who attend school from grade 6 through grade 12 and includes students from early adolescence to older teenagers who are at different developmental stages.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

2.1 Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety and Its Core Features

Research on affective factors in language learning has gained attention during recent decades because foreign language classroom anxiety (FLA) stands out as a key area of interest. FLCA was first described by Horwitz et al. (1986) as a particular form of anxiety that occurs in language learning situations. FLCA differs from general anxiety because it specifically affects language communication activities including speaking, listening, reading and writing in the target language. Research shows that FLCA produces negative effects on language performance, participation and overall learner confidence thus requiring attention from language educators and applied linguists.

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety exists as multiple interconnected elements which form a complex phenomenon. FLCA consists of three main components which include test anxiety together with fear of negative evaluation and communication apprehension. The elements produce avoidance behaviors, reduced classroom participation and diminished confidence in language abilities. Research conducted in different educational settings shows that FLCA functions as a psychological barrier which blocks students from achieving their complete linguistic development (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991; Young, 1991).

The analysis of FLCA features and effects helps create appropriate teaching methods and classroom support systems. The secondary school level requires special attention to this form of anxiety because students need to handle more advanced texts and language tasks.

2.2 The Psychological Influence of FLCA on Language and Reading Skills

FLCA creates psychological effects that influence both cognitive and linguistic abilities of learners including their reading skills. Horwitz et al. (1986) showed that excessive anxiety creates obstacles for learners to process and produce language effectively which results in poor comprehension and vocabulary retention and fluency problems. Anxiety produces mental barriers which absorb mental resources thus reducing the ability of students to focus and remember information needed for text comprehension. Students experience reading difficulties when performing tasks that need inference-making and contextual guessing and background knowledge application because of this emotional stress which hinders their target language reading development.

MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) built on this by stating that anxiety restricts the attention span of learners which leads to an excessive preoccupation with errors or potential mistakes instead of meaningful engagement with the reading material. Zhang (2019) showed that FLCA has a negative relationship with reading comprehension scores which indicates that anxious learners tend to stay away from difficult texts or read at a surface level to prevent feelings of failure. The fear of incorrect interpretation of information prevents students from taking risks which is vital for successful foreign language reading. FLCA affects speaking and writing abilities but also impacts receptive skills such as reading which demonstrates the necessity for classroom anxiety-reducing strategies to support complete language skill development.

2.3 The Role of FLCA in Secondary School Reading

The reading performance of secondary school students depends heavily on Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) because they need to handle demanding academic requirements while reading challenging unfamiliar texts. Saito et al. (1999) show that students with intense FLCA face difficulties when performing basic reading tasks including vocabulary

decoding and sentence structure interpretation. The problems become more severe in secondary school because students need to understand complex grammar, specialized vocabulary and cultural references in their reading materials. Anxious students experience reading fluency problems that interfere with their ability to understand the content effectively.

The study by Dewaele and Al-Saraj (2015) shows that reading difficulties caused by anxiety negatively affect comprehension and academic achievement. The high demands of foreign language reading create stress and reduce confidence which negatively affects reading performance in standardized tests. The result is shallow reading habits and students tend to avoid challenging texts while showing less interest in essential materials needed for language development. FLCA restricts reading proficiency while simultaneously producing lower academic results which demonstrates why classroom anxiety needs attention to enhance both language learning and secondary school academic success.

2.4 Theoretical Perspectives on Reading Anxiety

Several theories exist to explain how Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) and other anxiety types impact reading performance in foreign languages. Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis explains how emotional factors including anxiety, motivation and self-confidence create a mental block that prevents language input from being processed. The filter becomes "raised" when learners experience high levels of anxiety while reading which prevents effective processing and comprehension of the target language. Students exposed to rich linguistic input will not be able to internalize and understand it in this state which results in poorer reading outcomes.

In addition to Krashen's view, the Processing Efficiency Theory (PET) by Eysenck and Calvo (1992) states that anxiety uses up cognitive resources, particularly working memory, that

are needed for complex tasks such as foreign language reading. When students are anxious, they use some of their attention to worry-related thoughts, which leaves less mental resources available for decoding text, interpreting meaning, and constructing coherence.

The Cognitive Load Theory (CLT) developed by Sweller (1988) states that the mental effort needed to handle anxiety results in higher overall cognitive load which reduces the available resources for fundamental reading processes including inference making and prior knowledge integration. This theory demonstrates that FLCA affects emotional states and simultaneously disrupts essential cognitive mechanisms required for successful foreign language reading.

The Anxiety and Language Learning Model developed by MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) provides additional details about how anxiety affects language abilities. FLCA occurs at multiple points during language processing which include input processing and output. Reading anxiety disrupts student engagement with texts at the input stage and restricts working memory capacity during processing and prevents students from using reading strategies effectively at the output stage.

The L2 Motivational Self System developed by Dörnyei (2005) focuses on how self-perceptions influence language learning anxiety. According to Dörnyei, students who do not believe in their reading abilities will develop a fixed mindset that they cannot improve their reading skills. Reading-related anxiety grows stronger because of negative self-concept which leads students to avoid reading activities. Theoretical perspectives demonstrate how emotional and cognitive elements together with motivational factors create foreign language reading anxiety. These perspectives establish a solid basis to understand how FLCA impacts reading performance in secondary school students while guiding the creation of suitable interventions.

2.5 Empirical Evidence Linking FLCA and Reading Performance

Research evidence shows that Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) negatively affects reading abilities of students. Saito et al. (1999) found that students with high FLCA experienced reading comprehension difficulties which caused them to read slowly while translating word-for-word thus preventing them from drawing conclusions or making inferences. Zhang (2019) investigated the relationship between FLCA and reading-related anxiety in a large-scale study of Chinese EFL learners. The results showed that students who were anxious scored poorly on standardized reading tests and used ineffective reading techniques. In addition, students who are worried often avoid reading extensively, which hinders their ability to expand their vocabulary and comprehend material in general.

Peng-wei (2018) conducted a correlational study which demonstrated that FLRA levels directly correlate with reduced reading achievement in foreign language learning environments. The research shows that anxiety creates obstacles for reading processes including decoding and fluency and comprehension which results in poor reading task performance. The study demonstrates that teaching FLRA in language classrooms remains crucial because it leads to better reading results and enhanced language abilities among students.

Hassani and Rajab (2014) support this view by showing that both first language literacy skills and second language proficiency are important factors that affect Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA). The study indicates that students who have poor literacy skills in their first language or low proficiency in the target language are more likely to experience higher anxiety levels which affect their reading skills in the foreign language.

Hwang and Bae (2022) studied Korean secondary school students and discovered that students with high FLCA scores made more reading comprehension errors when they needed to

interpret or make inferences. The research findings demonstrate that FLCA and FLRA consist of multiple factors which depend on language ability and prior knowledge to impact foreign language reading achievement.

Song (2018) then showed how FLCA impacts both basic processes and more complex abilities. His research suggested a dual-route model in which reading anxiety disrupts both the direct decoding and meaning-making routes.

The research conducted by Dewaele and Al-Saraj (2015) followed L2 learners through multiple years to monitor their reading development. Students who faced intense FLCA demonstrated poor reading comprehension abilities while their literacy skills developed at a slower rate. The study indicates that FLCA produces enduring effects which build up throughout time to create ongoing academic challenges.

Eye-tracking research has provided significant knowledge about how anxiety influences reading-related behaviors. The eye-tracking study conducted by Woodrow (2006) demonstrated that students with anxiety maintained longer eye fixations and performed more word regressions which showed their difficulty in processing reading material efficiently. The results support the Processing Efficiency Theory because anxiety creates working memory disruptions that lead to reading fluency problems.

2.6 Long-Term Effects of FLCA on Reading Habits and Proficiency

Multiple research studies have investigated the connection between FLCA and reading achievement. The research by Sparks et al. (2000) investigated whether students experience language learning difficulties because of anxiety or natural differences in linguistic ability. The research indicated that students with lower linguistic ability tend to experience more anxiety but the connection between reading difficulties and anxiety remains multifaceted. The research

showed that reading difficulties emerge when students experience anxiety while dealing with unfamiliar vocabulary and complex sentence structures and cultural differences in their reading material. The researchers demonstrated that emotional aspects of language learning need attention because anxiety produces avoidance behaviors which progressively decrease language proficiency throughout time.

Research has been conducted to determine the effects of FLCA on reading comprehension together with academic achievement. Zhao et al. (2013) studied American students who learned Chinese as a foreign language and discovered that FLRA negatively affected their reading abilities thus showing that logographic language learning anxiety affects students beyond Indo-European language learners. Saito et al. (1999) identified Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) as a distinct concept from Foreign Language Reading Anxiety (FLRA) which shows that students develop separate anxiety types based on the language skill they use. The distinction matters because reading anxiety produces different triggers than speaking or listening anxiety which stem from vocabulary recognition problems and unfamiliar text structures.

The research by Limeranto and Subekti (2021) with Indonesian theology students provides additional proof that Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) negatively affects reading performance. The research revealed that students who experienced higher levels of FLCA performed worse in reading assignments than their less anxious classmates in all academic fields. The study by Mardianti et al. (2021) examined English for Specific Purposes (ESP) learners to verify that Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) produces negative effects on reading comprehension skills. The research indicates that students with high anxiety levels face difficulties when processing specialized or technical texts found in ESP courses thus

demonstrating broad impact of anxiety on reading success among different learner groups and learning environments.

2.7 Emotional and Motivational Factors Shaping FLCA

The development and reading context effects of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) heavily depend on emotional and motivational variables. Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) established that foreign language classroom anxiety exists alongside positive emotions which include enjoyment and curiosity and interest. The research findings showed that performance limitations from anxiety can be counteracted by positive affect which drives learners to continue working on demanding reading assignments. Teachers should use supportive feedback and meaningful reading materials and enjoyable learning activities to create classroom environments which reduce the negative effects of FLCA.

The level of foreign language anxiety that students experience depends on their individual emotional competencies. The research by Shao et al. (2013) revealed that students who possessed stronger emotional intelligence abilities to understand and control their emotions showed lower reading anxiety while achieving better reading comprehension. Students who excel at stress regulation and task reappraisal as manageable challenges instead of threats demonstrate better resistance to negative effects of FLCA. The integration of emotional intelligence training and self-regulation strategies into foreign language instruction becomes essential to develop coping abilities of students when reading foreign language materials. FLCA exists as a dynamic trait which transforms based on learner experiences and their perceived success in language learning. Kruk (2018) studied classroom students through longitudinal research to find that their language learning anxiety changed dramatically during the learning process. The first encounter with challenging or unknown reading content tends to

increase anxiety but students become less anxious after mastering new vocabulary and grammar. The research indicates that teachers should maintain ongoing support while tailoring reading materials to student proficiency growth to stop anxiety from lasting long enough to damage motivation and performance.

The research conducted by Li (2022) confirms that Foreign Language Reading Anxiety (FLRA) develops from different emotional and motivational elements. The research by Li (2022) combined multiple studies to reveal that reading anxiety in foreign languages stems from fear of mistakes, low self-confidence, negative learning experiences and perception of reading difficulty of students in the target language. Students experience increased anxiety when reading texts that contain complex language structures and unfamiliar words and writing systems that differ substantially from the Latin alphabet. Reading tasks create significant emotional challenges for students who learn foreign languages.

Research into FLCA origins shows that first language abilities of learners play a crucial role in its development. The research conducted by Sparks et al. (2000) analyzed whether reading anxiety in a second language results from basic language skill deficiencies or general anxiety tendencies. The research indicates that students with weaker native language abilities especially in vocabulary understanding and phonological processing and decoding skills tend to develop FLCA. The research demonstrates that early literacy development has a direct relationship with success in second language reading.

The research by Chow et al. (2017) analyzed the connection between various forms of language-related anxiety. The research on Chinese university students learning English revealed that listening anxiety strongly correlated with reading comprehension problems. Students who experienced higher anxiety during listening activities demonstrated greater difficulty with

reading comprehension. The results show that improving auditory processing abilities and listening comprehension skills may help decrease reading-related anxiety.

2.8 Cognitive and Neuropsychological Perspectives on FLCA

The study of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) through cognitive and neuropsychological perspectives has shown how it affects written content processing of learners. Li et al. (2024) used event-related potential (ERP) techniques to study the neural processes of foreign language reading and discovered that students with high FLCA levels showed delayed and weaker brain responses during word and sentence decoding. The research indicates that anxiety interferes with automatic language processing which results in more cognitive effort for reading tasks and decreased efficiency. The physiological data demonstrates that FLCA disrupts both reading behaviors and the fundamental neural processes required for comprehension.

The research conducted by Chan et al. (2024) analyzed Chinese students who demonstrated risk factors for English reading challenges. Students with high FLCA levels achieved lower accuracy scores and needed extended periods to finish English word reading tests. The research outcomes support the theory that FLCA creates obstacles for both fast and precise reading performance. Neurocognitive research reveals that FLCA creates a physical blockage which damages fundamental mental operations needed for successful foreign language reading.

Reading success requires students to possess both decoding skills and active control of comprehension processes through metacognitive techniques. Ghaith (2020) studied how metacognitive techniques act as mediators between FLCA and reading comprehension outcomes. Students who regularly check their comprehension, develop reading plans and employ repair

strategies experience fewer negative effects from reading anxiety. Strategic readers demonstrate improved abilities to handle the mental disruptions caused by anxiety.

Dang (2024) also examined the relationship between FLCA and reading methods. He found that surface methods sometimes correlated with higher anxiety levels, but deep-processing strategies decreased anxiety. This implies that one of the factors that determine the effect of FLCA is the type of strategies used.

Learning strategies serve two functions in the development and management of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA). Abubakar (2020) states that particular learning strategies either increase anxiety levels or decrease them. The use of ineffective or inappropriate strategies such as excessive translation, rote memorization without understanding and limited vocabulary dependence leads to confusion and frustration which increases reading task anxiety. The implementation of effective reading strategies including context-based guessing, graphic organizers, metacognitive planning and monitoring techniques builds learner confidence while reducing anxiety because these methods make reading tasks more achievable and purposeful. The development of appropriate flexible reading strategies for students remains essential because it improves reading proficiency while reducing Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety in educational settings.

2.9 Effective Teaching Approaches for Reducing Reading Anxiety

The methods teachers use in their classrooms determine how much Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) students experience when reading. The research by Liao and Wang (2018) shows that teaching reading comprehension strategies directly to students leads to better self-confidence and reduced anxiety. Teachers who explicitly teach reading strategies to students including text skimming, scanning, meaning inference and summarization provide students with

tools that reduce reading anxiety and make reading more achievable. The structured approach helps students develop control and competence which decreases their anxiety when reading foreign language materials.

The establishment of positive and supportive teacher-student communication stands as a crucial element which helps reduce foreign language anxiety. According to Limeranto and Subekti (2021) students experience decreased foreign language anxiety when teachers maintain clear and encouraging and responsive communication. The communication approach provides students with reassurance while minimizing their fear of failure and creates an environment that accepts mistakes as essential learning steps. Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) stated that language learning involves both anxiety and enjoyment which effective teaching methods can redirect toward more positive emotional experiences thus decreasing anxiety levels.

The role of peer interaction stands as an essential factor in this context. According to Chow et al. (2017) students who work together with their classmates experience decreased FLCA because they receive mutual support and can solve problems together and feel less judged. The peer-assisted activities establish an environment that reduces stress because students feel comfortable when they face challenging reading assignments.

The COVID-19 pandemic created external factors that affected student anxiety levels. According to Nurul et al. (2022) pandemic-related stress increased reading anxiety among students in remote learning situations. The findings demonstrate why teachers need to adjust their teaching methods to address student emotional requirements particularly when dealing with crisis situations to sustain effective anxiety-reducing approaches. The research demonstrates that teaching methods which address emotional needs and provide social support are essential for reducing reading anxiety in foreign language classrooms.

Gok et al. (2021) examined the impact of an online flipped classroom on FLCA. The study revealed that students who followed a flipped classroom model by reading materials beforehand and participating in discussions during class demonstrated reduced FLRA while achieving better reading assessment results. Students who review reading materials independently before class seem to experience reduced real-time comprehension stress which leads to better learning outcomes.

Alshehri (2025) investigated how digital reading platforms affect FLCA. The researcher discovered that EFL learners encountered fragmented texts with hyperlinked structures and sensory overload in online reading environments which increased their cognitive load and resulted in higher FLCA. The study revealed that anxiety levels negatively affected digital reading comprehension which indicates that technology-based learning environments might unintentionally create emotional barriers. The research shows that FLCA severity and its effects strongly depend on environmental and situational factors. Educational interventions need to be developed with specific attention to their context.

2.10 Situational and Learner-Specific Factors Influencing FLCA

The experiences of FLRA are significantly influenced by demographic factors, such as exposure to English, academic major, and language competency. A study conducted at the University of Jeddah by Alqahtani (2020) found that students with poor English proficiency performed better on the FLCA but had difficulty understanding what they read. A study conducted in 2024 found that FLCA scores and TEM-4 standardized English exam results of Chinese English majors were negatively correlated, indicating that anxiety remains a significant barrier for students at that level.

The Dang (2022) study also found that FLCA is affected by topic knowledge. The study found that students who thought they knew the reading themes reported less fear and better understanding. The cognitive load is probably lower when students are familiar with the topic, so they can focus more on creating meaning rather than dealing with language or cultural references.

The study by Nurasih and Wahyudi (2022) found a negative correlation between reading anxiety and English comprehension scores for younger pupils while also examining demographic aspects among junior high school students. The results suggest that early FLCA interventions could have substantial long-term advantages.

Research has demonstrated multiple negative effects of FLCA yet recent studies have proposed methods to reduce student anxiety. Ferrer (2023) developed the Reading English Anxiety Reduction Strategy (REARS) curriculum to help bilingual students who experience reading difficulties. The quasi-experimental study conducted by Ferrer (2023) demonstrated that students who received REARS showed both reduced FLCA scores and better reading comprehension and fluency results.

Mardianti et al. (2021) investigated how technological interventions, such as digital reading platforms and AI-assisted language learning tools, affect FLCA. The study revealed that students who employed interactive reading applications with glossaries and pronunciation aids experienced decreased anxiety levels. The digital resources give students instant help with comprehension difficulties which minimizes the typical frustration and uncertainty students face when reading in a foreign language.

Dang (2022) used a mixed-methods study to investigate experiences of students with anxiety-reduction techniques in order to determine the best outcomes. It was recommended

that interventions target both the cognitive and emotional domains. These results together suggest that organized, pedagogically integrated treatments could enhance language learning experiences and reduce the negative effects of reading anxiety.

2.11 Foreign Language Anxiety in the Kazakhstani Context

Duisembekova and Kurban (2022) conducted one of the most extensive attempts to measure FLCA in Kazakhstan. The authors used the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) to assess 314 university students and discovered that moderate anxiety levels remained consistent throughout the sample. The study revealed that cultural cohesion together with teacher-student trust and student interest in native speakers directly affected the reported anxiety levels. The research does not directly study secondary school students but establishes a theoretical foundation for understanding language anxiety experiences of Kazakh university students in educational settings.

Suleimenova (2013) investigated the occurrence and consequences of speaking anxiety in Kazakhstani foreign language classrooms in another important study. The results of her study indicated that communicative apprehension is widespread because many Kazakhstani schools continue to use grammar-translation-oriented methods. The absence of communicative competence development creates anxiety among students who must perform or speak in English which results in decreased interest in the language including its written component.

The majority of FLCA research in Kazakhstan has focused on speaking anxiety, but several recent studies have highlighted its broader academic implications, including reading comprehension. Akhmetova et al. (2022) investigated the effects of classroom climate and student engagement on reading comprehension skills using validated EFL reading assessments for 906 students in grades 6 and 8. The results showed that students with higher classroom

anxiety performed less effectively on reading comprehension tasks. Although the link was weak, it was consistent across cohorts, indicating that anxiety is one of many factors that hinder reading success.

The research conducted by Akhmetova et al. (2021) highlighted the importance of motivation and language background in the development of reading skills among secondary school students. The authors noted that students with good first language literacy and supportive learning environment performed better in reading in English. However, anxiety, which is often associated with poor instructional quality or lack of differentiated instruction, was found to decrease reading motivation and fluency.

Kadyrbayeva (2022) examines a similar case in the thesis which shows how EFL learners in Kazakhstan managed their speaking anxiety through their own coping strategies. Students mentioned that their anxiety often spread from oral performance to silent reading tasks especially when reading under timed or assessed conditions. Students experienced panic when they encountered comprehension breakdowns which caused them to completely avoid reading tasks.

The transition to online education because of COVID-19 introduced additional obstacles for students learning languages. Seidikenova and Malshy (2022) investigated the effects of digital platforms on student anxiety levels. The research study involving 131 students showed that reading anxiety increased substantially because students lacked immediate teacher feedback and experienced low interactivity and insufficient peer support when reading digital texts independently. The authors distinguished between two types of anxiety which they labeled as situational and trait-based while situational anxiety appeared more frequently in online learning environments. The authors also discussed the “affective filter hypothesis” (Krashen, 1982) which states that anxiety acts as a filter that prevents linguistic input from entering long-term memory.

Reading, which demands sustained attention and memory retrieval, is particularly susceptible to such interference in high-anxiety settings.

Foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) produces multiple emotional and physical symptoms which create negative learning experiences for students especially during reading activities. Students experience physical stress symptoms including tense muscles and headaches and rapid heartbeats when they perform reading tasks that demand deep thinking such as making inferences or understanding abstract ideas. The physical reactions create obstacles for students to concentrate on their reading material which results in poor performance on reading comprehension tasks (Kadyrbayeva, 2022; Seidikenova & Malshy, 2022). The observed pattern confirms psychological theories which demonstrate that student anxiety diminishes their mental resources by decreasing their attention span and working memory and their capacity to recall learned material (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994).

Student anxiety management depends heavily on their motivational levels. Students who demonstrate internal motivation through genuine interest in their topics or language skill development show lower anxiety levels. Students who perform better in reading comprehension tests tend to be those who demonstrate internal motivation. Students who lack strong motivation tend to avoid reading activities because they come from environments that do not support them. The lack of regular encouragement and limited English exposure outside class leads students to connect reading with stress and failure which decreases their interest and performance levels (Akhmetova et al., 2021).

Several teaching strategies have been recommended to help students overcome the negative effects of FLCA. One helpful approach is to involve students in collaborative reading tasks, where they can work with peers to understand the text together. Breaking longer reading

passages into smaller, more manageable parts can also reduce the pressure learners feel. Using real-world materials such as newspaper articles, short stories, or dialogues from movies makes reading more enjoyable and less intimidating. Teachers who regularly praise student effort and create a low-pressure classroom environment can also help build the confidence of learners. The approaches simultaneously decrease student anxiety while developing positive reading attitudes in English classroom settings. Reading tasks become more accessible and enjoyable when students experience safety and support in their learning environment (Suleimenova, 2013; Kadyrbayeva, 2022).

Seidikenova and Malshy (2022) demonstrate that online interventions succeed when they include timed reading exercises with live chat support and step-by-step reading guides and student reflection journals. The tools enable students to control their emotional reactions while developing stronger reading self-assurance.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The research used a quantitative method to study the connection between foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) and reading performance in secondary school students. A quantitative method was selected because it enables the measurement of variables through numbers to analyze statistical connections between student anxiety scores and reading test results (Creswell, 2014). The study employed correlational analysis because it focused on identifying the strength and direction of the relationship between FLCA and reading proficiency (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012).

3.2 Participants

The research took place at a private educational center located in Almaty, Kazakhstan. The research involved 90 students from grades 7 to 9 who were between 12 to 15 years old. The research used purposive sampling to select students who were learning English as a foreign language and met the grade and proficiency requirements for the Cambridge English Preliminary Reading Test. The non-probability sampling method was appropriate for this study because it needed participants who matched the research objectives (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). The ethical approval was obtained before data collection began. The Google Forms platform served as the platform to obtain informed consent from participants and their parents or legal guardians. The study participants received information about the research objectives, the voluntary nature of participation and their freedom to exit the study at any time without facing any negative effects. The study required no mandatory participation and all responses remained completely confidential and anonymous.

3.3 Research Instruments

The data collection process used two standardized instruments which included the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and the Cambridge English Preliminary Reading Test. The FLCAS instrument developed by Horwitz et al. (1986) measured student anxiety levels during foreign language learning. The instrument contains 33 statements which participants rate from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree") on a 5-point Likert scale. The FLCAS scoring system uses total points to measure foreign language anxiety where higher scores indicate greater anxiety levels. The scale has demonstrated high internal consistency, with reported Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.93 to 0.95 in previous studies (Horwitz, 1986; Aida, 1994), indicating excellent reliability.

The Cambridge English Preliminary Reading Test served as the assessment tool to evaluate reading proficiency. The instrument was selected because it holds international recognition and demonstrates validity and reliability in measuring English language reading proficiency. The test administration and scoring process followed the established procedures from the Cambridge English testing guidelines.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

The data collection process took place online through Google Forms to provide easy access for students and researchers. Google Form link was distributed to students after informed consent was provided.

Students received an information sheet about the aim of the study, confidentiality procedures and participant rights when they entered the form. Students needed to give electronic consent before they could continue with the assessment. Students began the form by answering

the FLCAS questionnaire through which they selected the most appropriate response for each item regarding their feelings and experiences in foreign language classes.

Students moved directly to the Cambridge English Preliminary Reading Test after finishing the FLCAS. The order of tasks prevented reading anxiety from affecting self-reported anxiety levels of students. The test displayed a simple interface while offering detailed instructions to users. The system recorded all responses automatically before exporting them into spreadsheet format for accurate data management purposes.

3.5 Data Analysis

The JASP software processed all collected data through its free and open-source statistical package which provides easy-to-use and transparent statistical procedures. No missing responses were detected during data screening before analysis as the Google Form items were mandatory.

The study describes sample characteristics through FLCAS and reading test results by calculating means, standard deviations (SD), minimum, and maximum scores. The descriptive measures showed the main tendencies and spread of anxiety and reading ability scores in the study participants.

The Pearson correlation coefficient was used to study the connection between FLCA and reading performance. The test was suitable for determining the linear relationship between two continuous variables (Field, 2018). The statistical significance of the correlation was determined by setting $p < 0.05$.

The study used simple linear regression to determine if FLCA scores could effectively predict reading test results of students. The FLCAS total score functioned as the independent variable while the reading test score operated as the dependent variable. The research evaluated

how variations in foreign language anxiety levels explained reading achievement differences.

The results included correlation coefficients together with regression coefficients and significance levels which JASP produced with appropriate statistical values.

CHAPTER 4

Results

4.1 Descriptive statistics

4.1.1 Overview of dataset

The research used data from 90 participants who took both the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and the reading comprehension assessment. The dataset was fully intact, with no missing entries for the key variables under investigation. The research used a sample size of 90 to achieve sufficient statistical power for correlational and regression analyses as well as to study trends, relationships, and variability in the data.

4.1.2 Demographic Information

Table 1

Demographic Information of Participants (N = 90)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Grade Level	Grade 7	27	30.0%
	Grade 8	31	34.4%
	Grade 9	32	35.6%
Age	13 years old	30	33.3%
	14 years old	28	31.1%
	15 years old	32	35.6%
Gender	Male	42	46.7%
	Female	48	53.3%

The sample consisted of 27 students (30.0%) from Grade 7, 31 students (34.4%) from Grade 8, and 32 students (35.6%) from Grade 9. The distribution of students across secondary school levels was almost even, which means that the results reflect a range of developmental stages relevant to EFL learning.

The age distribution showed that 30 students (33.3%) were 13 years old, 28 students (31.1%) were 14, and 32 students (35.6%) were 15. The selected grade levels correspond to the age range of 13–15 years which is a common age for early adolescence when classroom anxiety tends to have its greatest impact.

The research sample consisted of 42 male students who made up 46.7% of the total while 48 female students comprised 53.3% of the total participants. The gender distribution in the sample allows the results to be applicable to both male and female students.

4.1.3 Foreign language classroom anxiety scores

The FLCAS consists of 33 items which participants rate from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) on a Likert scale. The total scores range from 33 to 165 with higher scores showing higher levels of foreign language classroom anxiety. The FLCA scores of participants in this study spanned from 50 to 142 which indicates different levels of anxiety experience among the sample.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for FLCA

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
FLCA Total Score	90	54	138	98.29	18.59

The theoretical midpoint of the scale at 99 indicates that the mean FLCA score of 98.29 shows that participants experience moderate to high levels of anxiety. The results show that more than half of the participants experienced higher anxiety levels than 99 when participating in English-language classroom activities.

4.1.4 Reading comprehension scores

The Cambridge English Preliminary Reading Test (PET) served as the assessment tool to evaluate reading abilities of participants. A standardised set of reading comprehension questions was used to determine scores, which ranged from 0 to 5.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Reading Scores

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Reading Score	90	0	5	2.10	1.59

The mean score of 2.10 shows that students got more than two questions right out of five. This result shows that the participants have a moderate level of reading proficiency. The relatively high standard deviation (1.59) indicates that there is a lot of variation in reading skills within the group.

4.2 Score Distributions and Visual Analysis

4.2.1 FLCA Score Distribution Analysis

The distribution of foreign language anxiety levels among participants became clearer through a frequency analysis. The FLCA scores spanned between 54 and 138 points with the majority of scores concentrated between 90 and 120 points.

Table 4*FLCA Score Range Frequency Distribution*

FLCA Score Range	Frequency	Percentage
50–60	3	3.3%
61–70	3	3.3%
71–80	11	12.2%
81–90	13	14.4%
91–100	16	17.8%
101–110	15	16,7%
111–120	19	21.1%
121–130	8	8.9%
131–142	2	2.2%
Total	90	100%

Three students in the sample reported FLCA scores below 60 which made up 3.3% of the total participants. The majority of participants (64,5%) scored between 91 and 130 on the FLCA which indicates that most students experienced moderate to high anxiety. The FLCA scores showed that severe classroom anxiety levels occurred in only 2.2% of students who scored above 130.

Figure 1*FLCA Score Distribution Histogram*

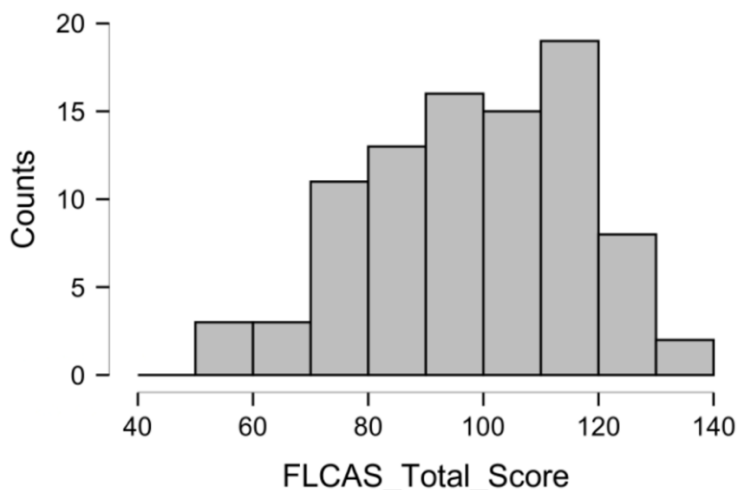


Figure 1 provides an illustration of this tendency. The distribution shows a normal shape with a small right skew. FLCA scores follow a normal distribution pattern which demonstrates instrument reliability and shows that anxiety exists as a variable trait among this student population. The limited number of students who scored at the lowest or highest ends of the scale indicates that most participants felt a moderate degree of apprehension or discomfort in their English language classrooms.

The anxiety levels are often related to common fears such as negative evaluation, communication apprehension, and test-related stress, all of which are assessed in the FLCAS.

4.2.2 Reading Performance Score Distribution Analysis

The reading comprehension scores follow a skewed distribution pattern which mainly appears at the lower end of the scoring range. The scoring key established a range from 0 to 5 which represented the number of correct standardized reading comprehension questions.

Table 5

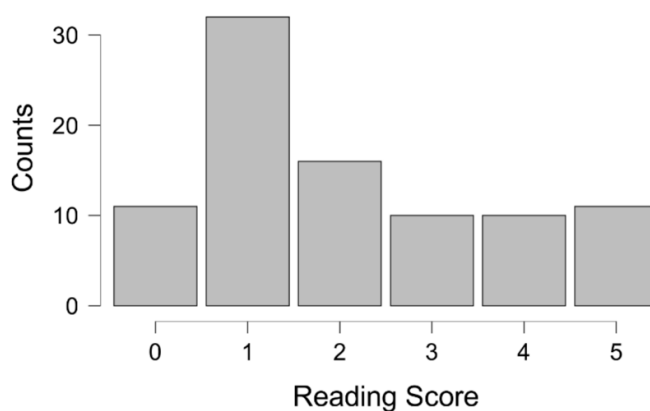
Frequency Distribution of Reading Test Scores

Reading Score	Frequency (Number of Students)	Percentage
0	11	12,2%
1	32	35,6%
2	16	17,7%
3	10	11,1%
4	10	11,1%
5	11	12,2%
Total	90	100%

The results indicate that more than half of the students scored 2 or lower, which indicates that they had significant difficulties in processing and comprehending written English materials. On the other hand, only 11 students (12,2%) scored the highest possible score, which may indicate that they had more language exposure or personal motivation.

Figure 2

Reading Score Distribution Histogram



The distribution of reading scores among students confirms the observed pattern of poor reading performance. The histogram demonstrates that students received the highest number of scores at 1 out of 5 while scores between 0 and 2 made up more than half of all results. The results indicate that many participants had trouble understanding written English texts because they faced vocabulary challenges and reading strategy difficulties and anxiety during processing.

The distribution shows a strong skew because only a few students reached the top score of 5 while most students scored lower. The observed pattern indicates that some students have better reading abilities because of their exposure to more languages or personal drive but most students face challenges when reading in a foreign language.

4.3 Correlation Analysis

4.3.1 Purpose and Approach

The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) was used to analyze the connection between foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) and reading comprehension performance. The Pearson correlation is a statistical method used to determine the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two continuous variables. The independent variable in this study was the total FLCA score and the dependent variable was the reading test score.

The assumptions required for Pearson's correlation were satisfied in this study. First, FLCA scores and reading comprehension scores were continuous variables, which meets the level of measurement requirement. The scatter plot revealed a general linear relationship between the two variables, which supports the assumption of linearity. The reading scores were slightly skewed but the sample size of 90 participants was large enough for the Central Limit Theorem to apply, which allowed the use of parametric tests. The scatter plot showed no fanning or curved patterns, which confirms that the assumption of equal variance was also met.

The correlation analysis results show the actual relationship between anxiety levels of students and their reading proficiency in EFL learning.

4.3.2 Results of the Pearson Correlation

Table 6

Pearson Correlation Between FLCA and Reading Score

Variables	r	p-value
FLCA & Reading	-0.344	0.0009

Note. Pearson's correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The analysis reveals a moderate negative relationship between reading comprehension test results and FLCA scores. The negative value of the correlation coefficient demonstrates that reading comprehension scores decrease when anxiety levels increase. The p-value of less than 0.01 indicates that the result reaches statistical significance at the 1% level. The null hypothesis that "there is no significant correlation between levels of foreign language classroom anxiety and reading performance among secondary school students" can be rejected.

4.4 Regression Analysis

4.4.1 Purpose of Regression Analysis

The results of correlation analysis show the existence and direction of relationships but do not enable forecasting one variable from another. A simple linear regression analysis was conducted. Reading comprehension score served as the dependent variable in this study. The independent variable was the total FLCA score.

The research aimed to determine if reading performance variations could be statistically explained by classroom anxiety levels to establish predictive causality beyond association. The following is the form of the regression equation:

$$Y = B_0 + B_1X + \varepsilon$$

Where Y represents the anticipated reading score. B_0 represents the intercept value which equals the reading score when FLCA equals 0. B_1 represents the regression coefficient or slope. X represents the FLCA score. The error term is ε .

4.4.2 Regression Output and Interpretation

Table 7

Regression Model Summary for FLCA Predicting Reading Performance

Statistic	Value
R ²	0.118
F (1, 88)	11.78
p-value	< .001
Intercept (B_0)	5.37
FLCA Coefficient (B_1)	-0.029

Note. The model is statistically significant ($p < .001$), indicating that FLCA significantly predicts reading performance scores.

The model demonstrates several interpretations. The R² value of 0.118 shows that FLCA scores explain 11.8% of reading score variance. The effect size remains significant in behavioral research because academic outcomes result from multiple variables. The p-value (<.001)

confirms that the overall model is statistically significant. The negative coefficient for FLCA (-0.029) indicates that reading scores decrease by 0.029 points with each point increase in anxiety when other variables remain unchanged.

This finding is crucial. It indicates that classroom anxiety is not only correlated with but also a statistically significant predictor of reading difficulties in EFL contexts. Although anxiety does not explain all of the reading outcomes, it does exert a measurable negative influence.

4.5 Discussion

4.5.1 Summary of Findings

The study produced multiple important results from a sample of 90 secondary school students who took both an anxiety questionnaire and a reading comprehension test.

The research data revealed that students generally feel moderate to high levels of foreign language classroom anxiety. Students demonstrated substantial discomfort through their FLCA scores which averaged 98.29 points on a 33 to 165 scale during English language instruction. The wide range of scores from 54 to 138 demonstrates that students experience anxiety to different degrees because their emotional responses and learning contexts vary. The distribution followed a bell-curve pattern with a slight right skew which showed that most students experienced anxiety levels above the theoretical midpoint of 99.

The research data indicated that reading comprehension scores averaged at a moderate level. The mean score of 2.10 out of 5 indicates that students struggled to comprehend written English texts. The reading scores followed a left-skewed distribution because more than half of students received scores between 2 and below while only 12,2% reached the maximum score of 5. The results show that reading continues to be a difficult skill for these EFL learners because

they lack authentic reading materials and have insufficient vocabulary knowledge and reading strategy practice.

The results showed a statistically significant moderate negative correlation between FLCA and reading performance ($r = -0.344$, $p = 0.0009$). This finding suggests that higher anxiety levels are related to lower performance in reading comprehension. The strength of the correlation suggests a meaningful relationship that warrants pedagogical attention, but it also suggests that other factors beyond anxiety are involved in determining reading outcomes.

The analysis of simple linear regression showed that FLCA proved to be a statistically significant predictor of reading scores. The model explained approximately 11.8% of the variance in reading comprehension outcomes ($R^2 = 0.118$), with each additional point in FLCA associated with a 0.029-point decrease in reading performance. Although this is a moderate predictive power, it confirms that emotional factors such as anxiety can substantially influence academic success in foreign language contexts.

4.5.2 Interpretation in Relation to Previous Research

4.5.2.1 Anxiety as a Barrier to Reading Performance

Research in applied linguistics and educational psychology has consistently demonstrated that foreign language anxiety creates a negative impact on reading performance. Multiple researchers have shown that academic anxiety disrupts mental processing while making students lose focus and forget information. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) demonstrated that language learning anxiety functions as a performance barrier because it diminishes working memory capacity which results in ineffective input processing. Reading comprehension requires students to decode text while making inferences and integrating context which makes it highly vulnerable to cognitive overload from anxiety.

The results of this study are in line with the results of previous studies. Saito et al. (1999) found that students with higher anxiety levels took more time on reading tasks and were more likely to misinterpret the meaning of the text. Additionally, Sellers (2000) found that high anxiety students had lower recall of text details than low anxiety students. This study not only supports the previous findings but also generalizes them to a Kazakhstani secondary school population, thus increasing the geographical scope of language anxiety research.

4.5.2.2 Affective Filter and Language Input

The results confirm the Affective Filter Hypothesis proposed by Krashen (1982) which states that emotional factors such as anxiety motivation and self-confidence either support or hinder language learning. The model indicates that high anxiety creates a higher affective filter which blocks the effective internalization of comprehensible input by learners. Students who experience high anxiety levels tend to have reduced ability to deeply engage with text material and show decreased confidence in meaning interpretation while experiencing increased distraction and mental blocking.

The moderate to strong levels of FLCA reported in the study may have acted as a “filtering mechanism” which reduced the effectiveness of language input during reading tasks. This could explain the limited performance in reading comprehension, especially among students with the highest anxiety scores. The affective filter model is particularly relevant in test-like settings, where pressure, time constraints, and fear of failure may be amplified, thus increasing anxiety and diminishing performance.

4.5.3 Theoretical Implications

4.5.3.1 FLCA as a Multidimensional Construct

This research strengthens FLCA as a complex phenomenon which impacts both productive skills such as speaking and receptive skills such as reading. Research on language anxiety during its early stages concentrated primarily on oral communication because this form of second language use remains the most visible and socially loaded. The current research indicates that anxiety creates obstacles for students when they perform reading comprehension tasks independently. The findings support Dewaele and MacIntyre's (2014) proposal that FLCA exists in multiple forms which depend on learning context and task type and individual learner characteristics.

Language anxiety needs to be reevaluated because it exists as a common emotional state which affects multiple aspects of language learning beyond classroom speaking situations. A student demonstrates normal classroom behavior through calmness and cooperation yet experiences intense anxiety when reading texts because they worry about incorrect interpretations and poor test results. These hidden forms of anxiety remain challenging for educators to detect yet they produce the same level of impact on student learning achievements.

4.5.3.2 Cognitive-Affective Framework in Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

The research results validate a comprehensive cognitive-affective model of second language acquisition because emotional factors interact with cognitive processes to determine learning results. Cognitive theories in SLA often emphasize the importance of input, output, and information processing. The study findings indicate that anxiety functions as an emotional interference which blocks the utilization of available cognitive resources including vocabulary and grammar knowledge. The findings require researchers to incorporate affective variables into cognitive models of reading comprehension in SLA.

The attention control theory (Eysenck et al., 2007) suggests that anxiety reduces cognitive efficiency by shifting attentional resources away from task-relevant stimuli and towards threat-related concerns. In this study, students with high anxiety may focus more on their fear of failure than on decoding a text or making inferences. This interpretation is consistent with the observed negative correlation between anxiety and reading performance and provides a psychological explanation for the predictive value of FLCA in the regression analysis.

4.5.4 Pedagogical Implications

4.5.4.1 Building Emotionally Supportive Learning Environments

The research results demonstrate that emotional support plays a vital role in EFL classrooms particularly when students perform reading tasks. Teachers need to evaluate how classroom environment and feedback approaches together with instructional methods either reduce or increase student anxiety levels. Students can develop genuine text engagement by reducing performance pressure through low-stakes practice opportunities which helps them build confidence.

Teachers should establish classroom procedures which demonstrate that errors are natural to learning and mistakes play an essential role in education. Group reading activities, partner work, and reflective reading journals can create a sense of psychological safety while promoting comprehension and interaction with the text. Such environments reduce the affective filter described by Krashen (1982) and support more effective input processing.

4.5.4.2 Adapting Assessment Practices

Standardized testing in this study ensured data reliability yet the results challenge the suitability of standardized tests for classrooms with significant FLCA. Reading scores may not accurately represent actual reading ability of students because anxiety produces measurable

negative effects on these scores. Teachers together with curriculum developers should develop alternative assessment approaches which include performance-based evaluations and formative quizzes and open-book tasks and comprehension projects that minimize testing pressure.

Teachers should also consider using oral reading assessments or comprehension interviews for students who experience test anxiety. These alternative formats offer more detailed insights into reading ability while giving students more control over their demonstration of understanding.

4.5.4.3 Differentiation and Emotional Profiling

The need for differentiation extends beyond skill levels because it must also consider emotional profiles of students. Students who demonstrate solid vocabulary and grammar skills but experience anxiety need specific emotional regulation techniques and personalized reading assignments. Students who demonstrate weak skills but minimal anxiety levels will gain more from instruction that focuses on skill development and vocabulary enhancement. Teachers can determine student emotional readiness for tasks through informal surveys and check-in conversations and classroom observation which helps them adjust their instruction.

Language classrooms that implement social-emotional learning principles enable students to develop emotional resilience and self-regulation abilities which help them handle FLCA. The implementation of mindfulness activities together with growth mindset training and cooperative learning structures creates an inclusive environment that promotes emotional balance in learning.

4.5.5 Contributions to the Field

The research contributes to existing studies on the impact of anxiety on language acquisition. The majority of previous research has concentrated on speaking or writing, however this study shows how anxiety impacts receptive skills, particularly reading. The study confirms FLCA as a significant predictor of reading outcomes in Kazakhstani EFL students which

supports the integration of affective variables into EFL curriculum planning and assessment design and teacher training.

4.5.6 Limitations of the Study

The research provides important findings yet several constraints need to be recognized. The study used a cross-sectional design which measured student performance and anxiety at one specific moment. Anxiety exists as a dynamic construct which shows variations throughout the school year and during different topics and classroom tasks and in response to life events. A longitudinal research design would provide essential insight into the development of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) across time and its reaction to particular instructional approaches.

The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) stands as a widely used instrument in second language acquisition (SLA) research yet it depends only on student self-assessment which creates certain limitations. Students might inaccurately report their anxiety levels because they lack self-awareness or misunderstand questionnaire items or want to show a positive image. Future research should use additional data sources including teacher evaluations and semi-structured interviews and objective physiological measures such as heart rate monitoring or eye-tracking during reading tasks to improve data reliability.

The study has a limited participant sample because it only included secondary school students from one private educational center in Almaty. The research findings about foreign language anxiety and reading performance in this specific context do not apply to other regions of Kazakhstan or public schools or students from various economic backgrounds. The study focused on early adolescent students between Grades 7 to 9 which limits the generalizability of findings to younger primary school students and older high school and tertiary education

students. Research should expand to include participants from various backgrounds and geographic locations to establish whether anxiety levels and reading performance follow similar patterns across different educational settings and age groups.

4.5.7 Recommendations

Future research should expand upon findings of the current study by investigating the impact of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) on reading comprehension in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning environment. Research should use longitudinal designs to monitor the development of student anxiety levels and reading performance throughout time. The process of learning a new language remains active while anxiety levels also change dynamically. Researchers can gain better insights into FLCA and reading comprehension patterns by conducting multiple measurements of students throughout an academic term or year. The design enables researchers to study cause-effect relationships which cross-sectional data cannot determine.

Future research needs to investigate intervention studies which aim to decrease anxiety levels while assessing their effects on reading performance. The implementation of mindfulness-based strategies and test anxiety workshops and classroom-based cognitive-behavioral programs should be tracked through pre- and post-test comparisons of both anxiety and comprehension. Such interventions would be particularly beneficial in Kazakhstan because traditional education systems often fail to meet the emotional requirements of students.

Qualitative research methods including semi-structured interviews, focus groups and learner diaries would provide essential information about student experiences. The patterns and correlations from quantitative data need qualitative data to reveal student perceptions of reading anxiety and classroom factors that either worsen or reduce it and their emotional responses to

language learning difficulties. Such insights could inform teacher training programs and curriculum development in a more context-sensitive way.

Future research should extend its examination to other language abilities including listening, writing and speaking to determine if FLCA functions differently across various modalities. A multi-skill approach would enable educators to develop complete support systems for students who learn second languages.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

The research investigated the connection between Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) and reading comprehension abilities of secondary school students in Almaty, Kazakhstan. The research used a quantitative design alongside two standardized instruments: The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) to evaluate student anxiety levels and the Cambridge English Preliminary Reading Test to measure reading comprehension. The research included 90 students from grades 7 through 10 at secondary school. The research investigation included three main questions: (1) What are the levels of FLCA among secondary school students? (2) What are the levels of reading performance among secondary school students? (3) What is the impact of FLCA on the reading performance of secondary school students?

The analysis revealed several key insights. First, students showed moderate to high levels of anxiety, with many students scoring above the theoretical midpoint of the FLCAS. Second, the average reading performance was relatively low, with more than half of the students scoring 2 or below out of 5. Third, a statistically significant moderate negative correlation was found between FLCA and reading scores ($r = -0.344$, $p = 0.0009$), which means that higher anxiety levels were associated with lower reading performance. Finally, regression analysis showed that FLCA was a significant predictor of reading comprehension outcomes, accounting for 11.8% of the variance in test scores.

The research provides experimental evidence that supports basic SLA theories including Affective Filter Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982) and Cognitive-Affective Model (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). The research shows that emotional factors, particularly anxiety, play a

fundamental role in determining academic achievement in language learning. Reading performance suffers most from emotional stress because this complex skill needs students to combine linguistic understanding with background information and mental concentration. The study has numerous implications which are quite extensive. Theoretically, the study suggests that emotional constructs should be integrated into cognitive models of language learning. Pedagogically, it suggests that teaching should be emotionally responsive to reduce anxiety and support reading development of students. Teachers are encouraged to implement strategies that normalize mistakes, lower the stakes of classroom activities, and foster a supportive classroom environment. Furthermore, assessment practices should be diversified to ensure that they do not unfairly penalize anxious learners.

The study provides a solid basis for future research although it has some limitations including the lack of demographic information and the use of self-report measures. It highlights the need for longitudinal, intervention-based, and qualitative studies that can provide more detailed information on the mechanisms and consequences of FLCA across different language skills and learner populations.

In conclusion, the study results demonstrate that reading in a foreign language requires both intellectual and emotional engagement. Language educators together with researchers and policymakers need to create classrooms which provide emotional safety for students to read and reflect while growing without fear. The approach to classroom anxiety relief goes beyond psychological health benefits because it enables students to reach their complete academic and communicative abilities.

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Appendix A

Форма информированного согласия для родителей/опекунов несовершеннолетних

КЛЮЧЕВАЯ ИНФОРМАЦИЯ:

- Вашему ребенку предлагается принять участие в исследовании, посвященном влиянию тревожности при изучении иностранного языка (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety, FLCA) на успеваемость в чтении. Как и во всех исследованиях, участие является добровольным.
- Цель этого исследования – изучить, как тревожность влияет на понимание прочитанного среди учащихся средних классов, изучающих английский язык как иностранный.
- Примерно 90-100 человек примут участие в данном исследовании. Результаты будут использованы в магистерской диссертации.
- Если вы дадите согласие на участие вашего ребенка в этом исследовании, он/она примет участие в одном сеансе сбора данных. Дополнительных сеансов не будет.
- Во время сеанса ваш ребенок заполнит анкету Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), а затем выполнит тест на понимание прочитанного Cambridge English Preliminary Reading Test.
- Исследование несет минимальные риски. Некоторые учащиеся могут испытывать легкий эмоциональный дискомфорт при ответах на вопросы, связанные с тревожностью.
- Ваш ребенок не получит непосредственной выгоды от участия, но его/ее участие поможет исследованию, которое может способствовать разработке стратегий для снижения тревожности при изучении иностранного языка и улучшению методики преподавания чтения.

ПОДРОБНАЯ ИНФОРМАЦИЯ ОБ ИССЛЕДОВАНИИ:

Вашему ребенку предлагается принять участие в исследовании, посвященном влиянию тревожности при изучении иностранного языка на успеваемость в чтении у учеников средних классов. Это исследование проводится в Алматы, Казахстан. Исследование возглавляет Дильнур Жуман, магистрантка Факультета Образования и Гуманитарных Наук Университета SDU, под руководством научного руководителя Сауле Тулеповой.

Ваш ребенок был выбран для участия в исследовании, так как он/она является учеником средней школы и изучает иностранный язык.

Пожалуйста, внимательно ознакомьтесь с данной формой согласия и задайте любые вопросы перед тем, как дать разрешение на участие вашего ребенка в исследовании.

1. ПРОЦЕДУРА ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ:

Если вы дадите разрешение на участие вашего ребенка в этом исследовании, ему/ей предстоит:

- Заполнить анкету FLCAS, которая измеряет уровень тревожности при изучении английского языка (около 10 минут).
- Пройти стандартизированный тест на понимание прочитанного (Cambridge English Preliminary Reading Test), чтобы оценить уровень чтения (около 15 минут).

КОНФИДЕНЦИАЛЬНОСТЬ:

Результаты исследования будут храниться в строгой конфиденциальности. В любых отчетах, опубликованных по результатам исследования, не будет содержаться личная информация участников.

Все данные исследования будут храниться на защищенном паролем компьютере и будут доступны только исследователю. Все записи исследования, содержащие личные данные (включая утвержденные IRB-документы, записи, расшифровки и формы согласия), будут уничтожены (путем шредирования или удаления) через 3 года после завершения исследования.

ДОБРОВОЛЬНОЕ УЧАСТИЕ:

Участие в данном исследовании является добровольным и требует вашего информированного согласия. Ваше решение о том, будет ли ваш ребенок участвовать в исследовании или нет, не повлияет на его/ее учебу или отношения с университетом SDU. Если вы дадите согласие на участие вашего ребенка, он/она может пропустить любой вопрос в анкете или в любой момент отказаться от участия в исследовании без каких-либо последствий.

КОНТАКТЫ ДЛЯ ОБРАТНОЙ СВЯЗИ:

Исследование проводит Дильнур Жуман. Если у вас есть вопросы, пожалуйста, свяжитесь с исследователем по адресу 231323011@sdu.edu.kz.

Если у вас есть дополнительные вопросы или опасения по поводу исследования, вы также можете связаться с научным руководителем Сауле Тулеповой, Факультет Образования и Гуманитарных Наук, Университет SDU по адресу saule.tulepova@sdu.edu.kz.

Этот проект был рассмотрен Институциональным Комитетом по Этике Исследований (IREC) Университета SDU. Если у вас есть жалобы или сомнения относительно исследования или если вы считаете, что ваши права (или права вашего ребенка) были нарушены, пожалуйста, свяжитесь с администратором IREC по адресу....

ЗАЯВЛЕНИЕ О СОГЛАСИИ:

Я старше 18 лет. Я прочитал(а) и понял(а) представленную информацию. Я даю согласие на участие моего ребенка в данном исследовании.

Подпись: _____ Дата: _____

Подпись исследователя: _____ Дата: _____

Пожалуйста, сохраните копию этого документа для ваших записей.

Appendix B

Шкала измерения языковой тревожности при изучении иностранного языка (FLCAS)

1. Я не уверен в себе, когда говорю на уроке английского.
2. Я не боюсь делать ошибки на английском.
3. Я боюсь, когда знаю, что меня спросят.
4. Я боюсь, когда я не понимаю, что учитель говорит на уроке.
5. Я не переживаю вообще, если будет больше уроков английского языка.
6. На уроках английского я думаю о вещах, далеких от содержания урока.
7. Я думаю, что мои одноклассники знают английский язык лучше меня.
8. Я обычно спокоен во время тестов.
9. Я начинаю паниковать, если должен говорить без подготовки.
10. Я переживаю по поводу моих неудач на уроках английского.
11. Я не понимаю, почему некоторые люди расстраиваются из-за английского.
12. На уроках я так нервничаю, что забываю то, что знаю.
13. Я смущаюсь добровольно отвечать на вопросы.
14. Я не нервничаю, когда разговариваю с носителем языка.
15. Я расстраиваюсь, когда не понимаю что преподаватель исправляет.
16. Даже если я хорошо подготовлюсь к уроку, я волнуюсь.
17. Я часто не хочу ходить на уроки английского языка.
18. Я уверен, когда я говорю на уроках английского языка.
19. Я боюсь, что учитель будет исправлять каждую мою ошибку.
20. Мое сердце начинает сильно биться, когда меня спрашивают.
21. Чем больше я готовлюсь к тесту, тем больше у меня сомнений в том, что я справлюсь.
22. Я не чувствую давления при подготовке к уроку.
23. Мне всегда кажется, что мои одноклассники говорят на английском лучше меня.
24. Я стесняюсь говорить на английском пред другими студентами.
25. Уроки английского проходят быстро, и я волнуюсь, что отстою.
26. На уроках английского я чувствую большее напряжение, чем на других занятиях.
27. Я начинаю нервничать, когда говорю на уроках английского.
28. Перед занятиями я спокоен.
29. Я нервничаю, когда понимаю не все, что говорит преподаватель.
30. Большое количество правил, которое я должен выучить, приводит меня в замешательство.
31. Я боюсь, что студенты будут смеяться над моим английским.
32. Мне легко с носителями языка.
33. Я нервничаю, когда преподаватель задает вопросы, к которым я не готов

Appendix C

Cambridge English Preliminary Reading Test

Different Colours can affect us in many different ways; that's according to Verity Allen. In her new series 'Colour me Healthy', Verity looks at the ways that colours can influence how hard we work and the choices we make. They can even change our emotions and even influence how healthy we are.

'Have you ever noticed how people always use the same colours for the same things?' says Verity. 'Our toothpaste is always white or blue or maybe red. It's never green. Why not? For some reason we think that blue and white is clean, while we think of green products as being a bit disgusting. It's the same for businesses. We respect a company which writes its name in blue or black, but we don't respect one that uses pink or orange. People who design new products can use these ideas to influence what we buy.'

During this four-part series, Verity studies eight different colours, two colours in each programme. She meets people who work in all aspects of the colour industry, from people who design food packets, to people who name the colours of lipsticks. Some of the people she meets clearly have very little scientific knowledge to support their ideas, such as the American 'Colour Doctor' who believes that serious diseases can be cured by the use of coloured lights. However, she also interviews real scientists who are studying the effects of green and red lights on mice, with some surprising results.

Overall, it's an interesting show, and anyone who watches it will probably find out something new. But because Verity is goes out of her way to be polite to everyone she meets on the series, it's up to the viewers to make their own decisions about how much they should believe.

1. What is the writer doing in this text?
 - a. giving information about how colours influence us
 - b. reporting what happens in a new television series
 - c. giving information about a television presenter
 - d. giving his opinion of a recent television show

2. Which of the following shows the probable content of the four shows?
 - a. Part 1 – Health; Part 2 – Products and Industry; Part 3 – Emotions; Part 4 – Decisions
 - b. Part 1 – Blue and Black; Part 2 – Red and Orange; Part 3 – White and Grey; Part 4 – Green and Yellow
 - c. Part 1 – Meeting Designers; Part 2 – Meeting People who Name Colours; Part 3 – Meeting Doctors; Part 4 – Meeting Scientists
 - d. Part 1 – Cleaning Products; Part 2 – Make-up; Part 3 – Clothes; Part 4 – Food

3. According to Verity, why is a knowledge of colour important?
 - a. It can help you to choose the best products.
 - b. It can give you new ideas.
 - c. It can help you to change people's minds.
 - d. It can help you to sell products.

4. Who does the writer respect least?
 - a. Verity Allen
 - b. The people who name lipsticks
 - c. The 'Colour Doctor'
 - d. The scientists who work with mice

5. Which of the following would make a good title for the text?
 - a. Enjoy it, but don't believe everything.
 - b. Another great show from Verity Allen! Five Stars!
 - c. Don't miss this if you work in Business!
 - d. Watch this programme! It will make you healthy!