The Effect of Modified Collaborative Strategic Reading on EFL Learners' Reading Anxiety

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Abstract

The present study was an attempt to investigate the effectiveness of reading instructional approach called MCSR- Modified Collaborative Strategic Reading on reducing intermediate EFL learner's reading anxiety. Based on a pretest-posttest design, MCSR was implemented with 64 EFL learners at intermediate level. They received EFL reading instruction according to MCSR over two and a half months. A questionnaire called English as a Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Inventory EFLRAI was group-administered at the pretest and the posttest. Quantitative results indicated that participating students demonstrated significant gains in reducing reading anxiety. This study highlighted our understanding by considering the effectiveness of MCSR program and also it elaborated the effects of using strategies like MCSR in overcoming the big problem of reading anxiety among EFL learners as non-native students. And teachers changed the focus of attention from using traditional methods for teaching the essential skill of reading to modern programs like MCSR in order to remove their students' anxiety and stress in reading.

Keywords: Reading anxiety, reading strategy instruction, cooperative learning.

Introduction

Reading is of paramount importance for Foreign Language (FL) learners (Birjandi & Noroozi, 2008), as it is one of the avenues through which they learn the target language in a setting that Kouroago (1993:169) describes as "input-poor". Research has revealed that explicit teaching of reading strategies promotes learners' reading ability in all language settings including the FL setting (e.g, Khezrlou, 2012; Fan, 2010; Cubukcu, 2008; Philip &Hua, 2006). Concurring with this research emphasis on the teaching of reading strategies, strategic reading is becoming widespread in FL classrooms.

A resent approach to the teaching of reading strategies is Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) that was proposed by Klinger, Vaughn and Schumm(1998). CSR is an instructional sequence that combines cooperative learning and reading comprehension strategies. It creates a context where students collaboratively practice a number of research-based reading comprehension strategies. The underlying assumption beyond CSR is the cooperative work in small groups enabling students to read texts more efficiently and employing comprehension strategies to better comprehend the reading material (Vaughn & Edmonds, 2006). It is also assumed that cooperative small groups trigger the motivation necessary for comprehension to take place. Grabe (2009) stated that CSR is a promising approach in combined strategies instruction as it draws on both reciprocal teaching and cooperative learning.

Modified Collaborative Strategic Reading (MCSR) is a modified version of CSR which was developed by Zoghi, Hazita, and Tg. NorRizan (2006), particularly for adult learners in EFL contexts. This teaching strategy is able to mainly reduce the barriers of reading such as comprehension problems as well as to lead students to be independent constructive reader through working cooperatively. The rational beyond the modification of CSR is to offer appropriate reading strategy with regard to university-level students (Zoghi, et.al, 2006). The shift from an instructor-centered approach to a student-centered approach make MCSR as one of the effective strategies that students become responsible for their reading and employ metacognitive reading strategies over cognitive reading strategies.

The underlying theories of MCSR teaching are interactive, cognitive constructivist, and the social constructivism perspectives. Knowledge and

meaning can only be derived when the reader either interacts with the text alone or constructs its meaning with others. When students interact with texts, they use their prior knowledge, quire information from the context, and combine disparate elements into a new whole before they arrive at their own idea of meaning. Meanwhile, in the process of interacting with others, the learning takes place in a sociocultural environment (Student to student or student to teacher) through dialogue. This is in line with Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory, as stated in Graves, Jule, and Graves (2007), in which learning takes place in an interactive environment. The main point is that without interaction in order to construct meaning and understanding, learning does not take place.

Also, as Horwitz (2000) put it, a number of language learners and teachers across the world have experienced foreign language anxiety; in fact, the potential of anxiety to interfere with learning and performance is one of the most accepted phenomena in psychology and education. The effect of foreign language anxiety has been vastly examined and a general agreement has been reached that foreign language anxiety interferes with the learning process and has a negative effect on reading performance (Aida, 1994; Horwitzet.al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardener, 1991; Philips, 1992).

Theoretical Background to the study

Most studies on either foreign or second language anxiety focuses mainly on speaking activities and students' oral performance. Perhaps reading is always seen as an activity that is less stressful compared with speaking. Many fundamental questions concerning foreign language reading anxiety such as the effect of collaborative learning on reading anxiety and sources of foreign language reading anxiety, the relation between foreign language reading anxiety and foreign language reading performance are still waiting for answers.

A number of studies demonstrate that foreign language reading anxiety negatively influences reading performance (Sellers, 2000; Shi & Liu, 2006), and that it could inhibit comprehension and acquisition of L1 or L2. MacIntyre(1995)emphasizes that when learners feel anxious during a reading task completion, their cognitive performance are decreased, which might lead to negative self-evaluation as well as more self-deprecating cognition which further impairs performance.

Considering these problems caused by reading anxiety, instructors need to employ strategies to reduce reading anxiety and enhance learners' engagement in today's classrooms and facilitate reading comprehension by developing strategic behavior.

Barnett (1988 as cited in Pani, 2004) maintains that "Reading strategies are the mental operations involved when readers approach a text effectively to make sense of what they read" (p.355). According to Olshavsky (1977) good readers more frequently and effectively apply strategies than poor readers do. Considerable research effort devoted to reading strategy instruction revealed that explicit teaching of reading strategies promotes learners' reading ability in all language setting including the FL setting (e.g., Khezrlou, 2012; Fan, 2010; Cubukcu, 2008; Philip & Hua, 2006). Concurring with this research emphasis on the teaching of reading strategies, strategic reading is becoming a widespread in FL classrooms. As suggested by Singhal (1998), reading strategy instruction improves readers' comprehension of specific texts, especially texts that are less familiar or somewhat challenging to readers.

On the other hand, Saito et al. (1999) were the first scholars who found that foreign language reading anxiety is a distinct concept related to foreign language anxiety in general. They pointed two aspects of foreign language reading that elicit anxiety: 1) Unfamiliar scripts and writing systems, and 2) Unfamiliar culture.

Unfamiliar scripts and writing systems: According to Saito et al., foreign language learners who are more familiar with the scripts of the target language would experience less anxiety while reading. For instance, French language learners learn English with less anxiety compared to those who learn a language which has unfamiliar writing system such as Japanese, Chinese, Korean languages and so on. Thus, learners are more likely to experience reading anxiety when they try to decode the scripts because they would immediately experience difficulty while reading.

Unfamiliar culture: It might not result in immediate anxiety as the earlier one. The learners are able to decode the words and comprehend the sentence. However, at some point of the reading process, the reader would not comprehend the whole text due to the incomplete knowledge of the cultural material underlying the text.

Saito et al. (1999) developed the foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS), which involves 20 five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". Students' self-reports of anxiety, their target language reading perceptions, and their perceptions of the difficulty level of reading in their own language, compared with the target language, are elicited by this scale over various points of reading (Saito et al. 1999, p. 204 cited in Ghonsooly 2010).

In order to overcome the drawbacks of FLRAS, Zoghi (2012) developed the English as a Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Inventory (EFLRAI, in Farsi). The EFLRAI is a survey of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Reading Anxiety of non-English major students in the context of tertiary education. Zoghi (2012) reveals that EFL reading anxiety is a multi-dimensional phenomenon which consists of three related factors: (a) Top-down Reading Anxiety; (b) Bottom-up Reading Anxiety; and (c) Classroom Reading Anxiety. These factors had been produced by the use of qualitative data analysis. Therefore, Zoghi (2012) thought it would be beneficial if he did a factor analysis on the EFLRAI to firmly establish construct validity of the EFLRAI to use among non- English majors in tertiary education and to provide statistical support for his finding.

Modified Collaborative Strategic Reading (MCSR)

To reduce reading anxiety and to lead students to be independent constructive readers through working cooperatively, a modified student-centered version of Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR), namely, Modified Collaborative Strategic Reading (MCSR), was first developed by Zoghi, (2012). The rationale behind the modification of CSR was to offer appropriate reading strategy for university-level students (Zoghi et al, 2006). The shift from a teacher-centered approach to a student-centered one makes MCSR as one of the effective strategies that help students become responsible for their reading and use meta-cognitive reading strategies over cognitive reading strategies. Zoghi (2002) has added a number of effective reading strategies appropriate for university-level students to the original CSR in order to give this technique a certain degree of enrichment in terms of strategies. Zoghi et al (2006) believes that such a modification could validate the application of MCSR in typical EFL reading classes with all types of university-level learners. MCSR uses four

comprehension strategies of its original counterpart, namely, (a) preview strategy, (b) fix-up strategy, (c) get-the-gist strategy, and (d) wrap-up strategy. These strategies are combined with a number of evidence-based strategies in order to make identification of text structure easier (Nuttall, 1996; Zoghi, 2002). More specifically, fix-up strategies use reading strategies of recognizing text organization (Comparison & Causation) and discourse marker identification (Example & Adding Information). Zoghi et al (2010) mentions that MCSR implementation occurs in three stages, which are presentation, practice, and production stages. The followings are taken from their article on "Collaborative Strategic Reading with University EFL Learners":

1. *Presentation Stage*. The instructor introduces a reading strategy of recognizing text organization (comparison & causation) or discourse markers identification (example & adding information) by modeling or think-aloud techniques. Students are then asked to activate their prior knowledge about the topic that they will read.

2**.** *Practice Stage***.** In this stage, students become involved in cooperative learning. The instructor provides practice to students in the following way. First, the instructor has students form small cooperative groups with five members in each. Students are then asked to read their selected reading material (one paragraph or two at a time) while acting their specified roles. In MCSR, the instructor assigns students in each group the following roles:

• Leader: Leads the group by saying what strategy to apply next.

• Monitor: Makes sure everyone participates and only one person talks at a time.

• Fix-up Pro: Uses fix-up cards to remind the group of the steps to follow when trying to figure out a difficult word or concept. The fix-up pro monitors the group's reading comprehension in order to identify when they have breakdowns in understanding, and uses fix-up strategies in repairing meaning that is lost. The fix-up strategies are: (a) reread the sentence and look for key ideas to help you figure out the unknown word; (b) reread the sentence before and after the difficult word looking for clues; (c) look for a prefix or suffix in the unknown word; (d) break the unknown word and look for smaller words; (e) identify the text structure; and (f) identify the connective words.

• Encourager: Watches the group and gives feedback. Looks for behaviors to praise.

• Reader: Has the responsibility of reading the passage to his or her group.

In this stage, students get involved in the processes of (a) summarizing the main idea of each individual paragraph that has been read, and (b) generating questions about the same paragraph. The practice stage is implemented more than once, namely, every one or two paragraphs.

3. *Production Stage*. The instructor performs a variety of activities to ensure that students have identified the most important ideas of the entire material. In this stage, the instructor asks students to do the following activities within their groups once the whole text is read:

• Interviewing with each other on the reading material;

• Retelling what s/he has read and;

• Performing pro-con debates about the topic.

Finally, the instructor asks students to perform postproduction activities in order to enhance student engagement and to also consolidate important concepts learned from the material. These activities are designed in the following manner:

• Number Heads Together (Kagan, 1994): Students in each group number off from 1-4 or 1-5 (depending upon how many students are in each group). The instructor asks a review question. Students in each group then put their heads together to discuss the question and make sure that everyone in the group knows the answer. Then the instructor randomly selects a number from a group to answer.

• Send-A-Problem (Kagan, 1994): Each group selects the best question it has generated and passes that question to a different group to answer.

The underlying theories of MCSR teaching are interactive, cognitive, constructivist, and the social constructivism perspectives. Knowledge and meaning can only be derived when the reader either interacts with the text alone or constructs its meaning with others.

Empirical Background to the Study

Vygotsky's Social Development theory (1962) promotes learning contexts in which students play an active role in learning. According to Vygotsky (1962), humans use tools that develop from a culture, such as speech and writing, to mediate their social environments (Vygotsky, 1962, cited in

Learning Theories Knowledge base, 2011). As Harmer (2007) states, pair and group work can enhance the amount of student talking time.

Most studies have shown that foreign language anxiety has a negative influence on the learning process and performance (e.g., Hurwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989, 1991b; Philips, 1992; Young, 1991). Some studies demonstrate that foreign language reading anxiety negatively influence reading performance (e.g., Sellers2000; Shi & Liu, 2006), and thus inhibiting the comprehension and acquisition of the second language. MacIntyre (1995) emphasizes that, when reading, if learners feel anxious, their performance is diminished, which might lead to negative self- evaluation and more self-deprecating cognition which further can impair their performance.

The effects of CSR on reading comprehension for students with learning disabilities, including secondary students with learning disabilities, have been examined in a series of intervention studies by Vaughn, Klingner, and their colleagues. Most intervention studies demonstrated that CSR was associated with improved reading comprehension for students with learning disabilities. The first study using CSR was conducted with 26 seventh- and eighth-graders with learning disabilities who used English as a second language. In this study, students learned to use modified reciprocal teaching methods in cooperative learning groups (i.e., brainstorm, predict, clarify words and phrases, highlight the main idea, summarize the main idea(s) and important detail, and ask and answer questions). CSR was effective in improving reading comprehension of most of students with learning disabilities (Klingner & Vaughn, 1996). CSR has also been combined with other approaches to address the range of skills needed for reading competence in middle school and high school. In a study of 60 sixth-grade middle school students with varied reading levels in inclusive classrooms, a multicomponent reading intervention was used to address to the range of reading needs (Bryant et al., 2000). CSR was used in conjunction with two other research-based strategies: Word Identification (Lenz, Schumaker, Deshler, & Beals, 1984), and Partner Reading (Mathes, Fuchs, Fuchs, Henley, & Sanders, 1994). The results revealed that students with learning disabilities significantly improved their word identification and fluency, but not reading comprehension.

The effectiveness of CSR with elementary students with learning disabilities has also been supported. Klingner, Vaughn, and Schumm (1998)

implemented CSR with fourth graders with a wide range of reading levels. Students in the CSR group significantly outperformed those in the control group on comprehension. In a subsequent study, fifth-grade students were taught to apply CSR by trained classroom teachers during English as a Second Language (ESL) science classes (Klingner & Vaughn, 2000). Students significantly increased their vocabulary from pre- to post-testing. Furthermore, students in CSR groups spent greater amounts of time engaged in academic-related strategic discussion and assisted one another while using CSR. CSR has also been implemented in conjunction with other research-based reading strategies (writing process approach, classwide peer tutoring, making words) for elementary students with learning disabilities (Klingner, Vaughn, Hughes, Schumm, & Elbaum, 1998). In this study, trained teachers implemented CSR with their students. The results also confirmed that use of CSR has resulted in improvement in reading for elementary students with learning disabilities.

Hence, the aim of this study was to furnish learners with reading strategies that may help them to make sense of what they read both inside and outside the language classroom. It was hoped that this would help students with the achievement of an underlying aim in most reading programs, that is, the promotion of strategic readers. In particular, the current study sought to examine the effect of employing the Modified form of CSR, namely, MCSR (Zoghi, Hazita, & TG Nor Rizan, 2006) technique, on reducing the reading anxiety of intermediate EFL learners. MCSR is taught meta-cognitively by the principles of planning, self-monitoring, and evaluating (Abidinnd Riswanto, 2012), which is supported by Elkaumy (2004) who defines meta-cognitive strategies in three ways: planning, self-monitoring and evaluating or think about thinking. Planning is having reading purpose in mind to read the text in order to be more selective and focus the desired information; self-monitoring is regulating the reading process and using the strategy at the right time; and evaluating is controlling whether the purpose is reached or not. The cognitive reading strategies in MCSR are in the form of previewing, fixing up, getting the gist, and wrapping up.

Based on the objectives of the study, the research question formulated for this research was as follows:

1. Does the MCSR technique have any significant effect on reducing the EFL learners' reading anxiety?

Method

Participants

Two female EFL classes in Jahad Daneshgahi Institute participated in the data collection. These two intermediate classes were assigned to two groups, that is, the experimental group and the control group. The participants in the experimental group were 35 females (within the age range of 17-24), and the participants in the control group were 29 females (within the age range of 19-27). Two experienced teachers completed the instruction procedure in the experimental and control groups.

Instrumentation

In order to achieve the goals of the study, two test instruments were used by the researcher: (1) Nelson English Language Test for homogenizing the students' general English, and (2) EFLRAI as a pretest, and a posttest of reading anxiety.

As mentioned above, one of the research instruments of the study was a questionnaire called the EFLRAI. This instrument is consisted of 20 items which are rated on a 4- point Likert format, with 1 (totally disagree) to 4 (totally agree). The EFLRAI has three sections: (i) TRA (Top-down Reading Anxiety, items 1–5; (ii) BRA (Bottom-up Reading Anxiety, items 6–15; and (iii) CRA (Classroom Reading Anxiety, items 16–20). For example, one of the questions of the EFLRAI is as follows:

1. I do not feel at ease when the title of the text is unfamiliar to me.

(1) totally disagree (2) somewhat disagree (3) somewhat agree (4) totally agree

Since the focus of study is on reading anxiety and EFLRAI is an instrument to investigate reading anxiety and its value, so the researcher used it as the pre and the posttest. EFLRAI as a pretest was conducted one session before the onset of the treatment and EFLRAI as a posttest conducted two sessions after the treatment. An eight-week time interval between pretest and posttest was considered long enough to control for the memory factor that was assumed to affect the treatment among the learners. The EFLRAI has been reported as

having acceptable validity and reliability, its estimated reliability was found to be .79.And its validity had been expert- judged. (Appendix A shows Farsi Version of EFL Reading Anxiety Inventory (EFLRAI)).

In order to homogenize the learners' general English level, Nelson English Language Test was conducted by the institute. This test contains 50 Multiple-choice items. The test takers need to answer at least 30 questions correctly to get the pass mark. It is argued that all the items in the tests have been carefully pretested, and can be used for the purposes of proficiency, diagnosis, and measuring students' progress (Fowler & Coe, 1976).

Procedure

Initially, the researcher administered a sample of Nelson English Language Test in order to investigate the learners' general English level before conducting EFLRAI. The results showed that students were homogeneous regarding general English level. Then, the researcher also used a questionnaire called EFLRAI as the pretest and posttest.

The MCSR implementation occurred in two phases. First, the researcher tried to clarify the practice by getting the participants familiar with the required MCSR strategies and skills in one session before the onset of the study. The researcher/instructor introduced and elaborated the entire MCSR and its comprehension strategies to the learners in order to explain the overall picture. Then, she introduced MCSR's stages to the participants and provided explicit instruction on how to use each strategy through modeling and think-aloud techniques which were used as the essential elements of the research which enable the students to successfully use the strategies during the research process.

Once the researcher made sure that the participants had enough knowledge to use the strategies of MCSR, eight instructional sessions were conducted. Each session lasted one hour and a half. The students met twice a week and were taught on the basis of MCSR during the course. All the students in the experimental group were classified into seven groups, each comprised of five individuals, so that they could work collaboratively. Each of the learners in group was assigned a duty from number 1 to 5 as follows (Zoghi, 2012, p.73):

• Leader: Guides the group by telling them which strategy to use next.

- Monitor: Ensures each member takes part and only one person talks at a time.
- Fix-up Pro: Uses *fix-up* cards when he monitors breakdowns in the group's reading comprehension to remind the group of the steps to follow to repair meaning that is lost. The fix-up strategies are: (a) reread the sentence and look for key ideas to help figure out the unknown word; (b) reread the sentence before and after the difficult word looking for clues; (c) look for a prefix or suffix in the unknown word; (d) Break the unknown word and look for smaller words; (e) Identify the text structure; and (f) identify the connective words.
- Encourager: Watches the group, gives feedback and praises whenever appropriate behavior arises.
- Reader: Reads the passage to his or her group.

The duty of fix-up Pro is somehow more difficult than the duty of the other individuals in the group. Fix-up Pro has the burdensome duty of compensating for breakdowns that occurs during communication, and the reader should be a fluent person with good pronunciation and accurate accent. The encourager acts like a teacher and gives smart feedbacks during reading to lead the group to higher levels of comprehension. The leader should really be like a leader and lead the group to direct and short ways of understanding and finally, the monitor makes sure that everybody in the group respects her duties and does her responsibility.

Two sessions after the completion of the treatment to the experimental group, EFLRAI posttest was administered to the learners in the experimental group and control group. The aim of the posttest was to see the effect of the treatment on the learners and to compare the results with those of the control group**.**

Design

To investigate the research questions, a quasi-experimental design was employed. The variables of the study were MCSR as an instructional strategy for reading and reading anxiety. There were two groups of experiential and control. The participants were selected based on non-probability sampling and convenience sampling.

Results

In this part, the results of the data analysis are presented. The primary aim of the present study was to examine the effect of the Modified Collaborative Strategic Reading (MCSR) technique on reducing reading anxiety of intermediate EFL students. The data were processed in response to the following research hypothesis: **H1:** The MCSR technique has a significant effect on EFL learners' reading anxiety.

To ensure the homogeneity of the groups in this research, the data obtained from the proficiency test was analyzed through an independent T-test. Through the statistic of *t*-test as shown in Table 1, it was made evident that before the treatment there was no significant difference between the groups in terms of their English language proficiency(62)=.55, *p*= .57.

Table 1
Results of Independent-Samples Tests for English Language Proficiency Scores

Source	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Proficiency Test	.55	62	.57	.38	.68

p≤.05

Descriptive Statistics: EFLRAI Scores

First, the results of the descriptive statistics are reported and then the inferential statistics employed to test the hypothesis are presented. The means and standard deviations for the EFLRAI pretest and posttest scores for both groups are reported in Table 2. The experimental group's EFLRAI mean score (*M*= 53.43, *SD*= 9.80) was almost similar to the control group's EFLRAI mean score (*M*= 53.03, *SD*= 9.67) at pretest.

Table 2
Sample Sizes, Means, and Standard Deviations for EFLRAI Pretest and Posttest Scores

	Pretest	Posttest

Group	n	M	SD	M	SD
Experimental Group	35	53.43	9.80	44.69	8.61
Control Group	29	53.03	9.67	51.45	8.05

Note. *M*= Mean; *SD*= Standard Deviation

However, as shown in Table 2, the experimental group's EFLRAI mean score (*M*= 44.69, *SD*= 8.61) at the posttest was lower than the control group's (*M*= 51.45, *SD*= 8.05). Although the descriptive findings from the posttest suggested that there were group differences in the posttest mean scores of the EFLRAI, it was necessary for the data to be further examined through inferential statistics, as well.

Inferential Statistics: EFLRAI Scores

To explore the effect of the MCSR on EFL learners' reading anxiety in this study, a statistical procedure known as Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was considered appropriate. As suggested by Tabachnick and Fidell (2001), to increase the strength of the quasi-experimental studies in which the participants cannot be randomly assigned to experimental and control groups, ANCOVA can be used. In fact, ANCOVA reduces the effects of initial group differences statistically by making compensating adjustments to the posttest means of the two groups. Prior to the inferential data analysis, assumption testing was carried out for the use of ANCOVA, that is, normality of distribution, linearity, and homogeneity of regression slopes were checked. Normality was checked both graphically and statistically. The graphical representation of normal distribution of EFLRAI scores both at the pretest and posttest showed almost no serious violation of normality assumption (Figure 1 and Figure 2).
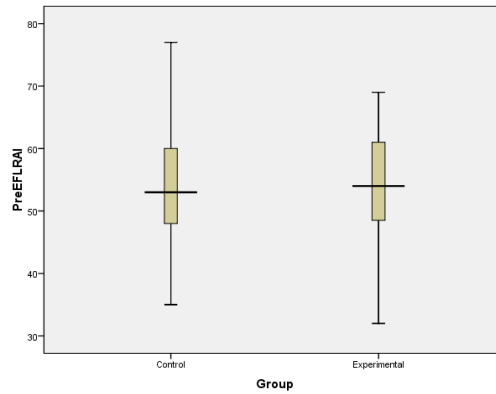
Figure 1. Graphical Representation of Normal Distribution of EFLRAI Pretest Scores
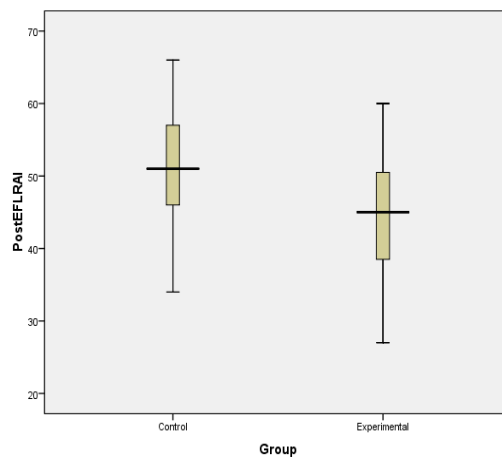

Figure 2. Graphical Representation of Normal Distribution of EFLRAI Posttest Scores

In addition, the result of the Kolomogrov-Smirnov statistic indicated a non-significant result, $p = .20$, suggesting no violation of normality assumption (Table 3).

Table 3
Result of Normality Test for EFLRAI Scores

	Group	Kolmogorov-Smirnov		
		Statistic	df	Sig.
PreEFLRAI	Control	.110	29	.200

	Experimental	.094	35	.200
PostEFLRAI	Control	.093	29	.200
	Experimental	.086	35	.200

Also, as is shown in Figure 3 below, there was a linear relationship between the dependent variable and the covariates for all the groups. Thus, it became clear that the assumption of a linear relationship was not violated for this sample data.
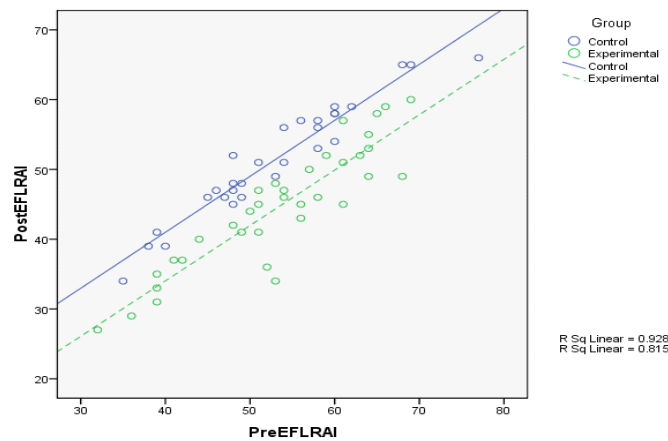

Figure 3. Graphical Representation of Linearity

Finally, the homogeneity of regression slopes, which is related to the relationship between the covariate and the dependent variable for each of the groups, was checked. To this end, the interaction effect between the independent variable (the treatment) and the covariate (the EFLRAI pretest scores) was statistically assessed. Table 4 below shows that there was no statistically significant interaction effect between the treatment (group) and the covariate (EFLRAI pretest) as the p value was greater than .05, $p= .92$. Therefore, this added support to the assumption of the homogeneity of the regression slopes.

Table 4
Tests of Between-Subject Effects

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	4467.907	3	1489.302	149.405	.000
Intercept	62.276	1	62.276	6.247	.015
Group	21.878	1	21.878	2.195	.144
PreEFLRAI	3701.466	1	3701.466	371.327	.000
Group * PreEFLRAI	.101	1	.101	.010	.920
Error	598.093	60	9.968		
Total	150990.000	64			
Corrected Total	5066.000	63			

$p \leq .05$

As was mentioned earlier, ANCOVA was used to explore the effect of the MCSR on the EFL learners' reading anxiety. The independent variable was the instructional technique of MCSR along with the traditional one, and the dependable variable was the EFLRAI posttest scores. The participants' EFLRAI pretest scores were considered as the covariate in this analysis. First, the Levene's test of equality of variances was examined. The results showed that the variances were equal as its p value was greater than .05.

Table 5
Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances

F	df1	df2	Sig.
5.434	1	62	.073

As is shown in Table 6 below, there was a significant difference in the EFLRAI posttest scores of the experimental group (M=44.69, SD=8.61) and the control group (M= 51.45, SD= 8.05), F (1, 61) = 80.96, p= .00. Also, the partial eta squared value (.57) shows that 57% of the variance in the EFLRAI posttest scores (i.e. reduction in scores) is attributable to the independent variable (MCSR). There was also a strong relationship between the EFLRAI pretest and posttest scores as indicated by a partial eta squared value of .86 (Table 6). This shows the influence of the covariate on the dependable variable

(EFLRAI posttest scores). In other words, 86% of the variance in the dependable variable is explained by the covariate.

Table 6
Result of ANCOVA Statistic

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Observed Power
Corrected Model	4467.806	2	2233.903	2.278E2	.000	.882	1.000
Intercept	63.498	1	63.498	6.475	.013	.096	.707
PreEFLRAI	3742.521	1	3742.521	3.816E2	.000	.862	1.000
Group	793.927	1	793.927	80.960	.000	.570	1.000
Error	598.194	61	9.806				
Total	150990.000	64					
Corrected Total	5066.000	63					

$p \leq .05$

In general, the results obtained seem to be supportive of the research hypothesis formulated, that is, **H1**: The MCSR technique has a significant effect on EFL learners' reading anxiety.

Discussion

In this study, we provided the reading program of MCSR to the participating intermediate EFL learners in order to investigate the effect of this program in reducing learners' reading anxiety the posttest as compared to the pretest. The quantitative evaluation demonstrated that there was a significant difference in the EFLRAI posttest scores of the experimental group (M=44.69, SD=8.61) and the control group (M= 51.45, SD= 8.05), F (1, 61) = 80.96, $p=$ .00. Also, the partial eta squared value (.57) showed that 57% of the variance in the EFLRAI posttest scores (i.e. reduction in scores) was attributable to the independent variable (MCSR). Also there was a significant difference in the EFLRAI pretest scores and posttest scores.

The advantage of the present study over Zogi's study in 2012 was the inclusion of a control group in addition to the experimental group with

appropriate instructional frequency and duration and also a strong research design. Using a control group is "the first, vital step that needs to be taken in order to provide a more comprehensive picture of MCSR and its effectiveness" (Zoghi, 2012, p.84).

There are various elements that have made the generalizability of this piece of study open to question with whose help the results can be easily digested. One such limitation of this study is the inclusion of the participants both teachers and learners in only one sex i.e. females, but not in both sexes. The participants' level of proficiency was another limitation to the current study. The findings regarding one particular level of proficiency cannot be generalized to the other levels containing beginners, pre-intermediate, and advanced levels. So, the study calls for further research to examine the effect of different levels on the effectiveness of MCSR which might result in different findings from the one reported in the present research.

However, it is also suggestible to pursue studies that cover and examine the extent of teachers' awareness of their use of different strategies in reading comprehension and using various tasks in relation with learners' age, sex and level of performance. It is recommended that in the future researchers try to examine the stability of findings over a long period (e.g., multiple years of academic performance) and in different subjects in ESP classes. A research realm based on reading comprehension including the ability to expand meaningful comparison among curricula would be broad and holistic. Not only in reading anxiety, but other factors related to reading also would be more generable to investigate how teachers apply techniques like MCSR to reduce learners' reading anxiety.

To sum up the results, the program seems to be influential in decreasing reading anxiety since it creates opportunities for learners to shift attention from traditional approaches to reading to modern strategies like MCSR in the context of collaborative learning instruction. If further research conducted more than eight sessions during one semester or extra semesters in the form of longitudinal study, the researcher would have enough opportunity and time to gather and collect more data to estimate higher reliability of the findings, and consequently would predict more informative measures of the data for

intermediate level students in order to reveal more facts in the subsequent research studies.

Reading comprehension and techniques to decrease or perhaps remove the anxiety integrated with reading is a growing, complex field of research which needs to be explored more, especially in second language acquisition and language achievement in EFL settings. With the help of further research, then we can continue to surface ways to help teachers to be aware of the usefulness of strategies like MCSR and learners attitudes regarding the so-called program.

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Appendix A

پرسشنامه اضطراب خواندن و درک مطلب زبان انگلیسی

(ذوقی و همکاران©۲۰۱۴)

این پرسشنامه به منظور سنجش توانایی خواندن و درک مطلب زبان انگلیسی شما **نمی باشد.** در حقیقت، پاسخ های صحیحتان در این پرسشنامه به ما کمک خواهد کرد تا بتوانیم عواملی که باعث ایجاد اضطراب به هنگام خواندن و درک مطلب زبان انگلیسی می شود را شناسایی کرده و در کلاسهای آتی آماده تر باشیم. مطمئنا همکاری هر یک از شما تاثیر فراوانی در این زمینه خواهد داشت. پیشاپیش از حسن توجه و همکاریتان قدردانی میگردد.................................. ....میگردد... میگردد..............................

....

....

☐مونث☐سن: ....: جنسیت: مذکر

توانایی فعلی در زبان انگلیسی:

☐عالی   ☐خوب☐   ☐متوسط   ☐ضعیف

....

....

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دستور العمل: تمامی جمله های زیر به چگونگی احساس شما نسبت به خواندن و درک مطلب زبان انگلیسی مربوط میشود. لطفا همه آنها را به دقت خوانده و سپس فقط یک گزینه مناسب را که نشان میدهد شما (۱)*کا ملا مخالف*، (۲) *تاحدیمخالف*، (۳) *تاحدیموافق*، و (۴)*کاملا موافق* هستید را علامت بزنید. ....نمایید.....................................

در کلاس زبان انگلیسی، علت اضطرابتان به هنگام خواندن و درک مطلب چیست؟

مضطرب و ناراحت میشوم وقتی که:

۱. عنوان متن برایم نا آشنا باشد.

(۱) کاملا مخا لفم   (۲) تا حدی مخالفم   (۳) تا حدی موافقم   (۴) کاملا موافقم

۲ . مطالب مطرح شده در متن از لحاظ فرهنگی برایم نا مفهوم باشد.

(۱) کاملا مخا لفم   (۲) تا حدی مخالفم   (۳) تا حدی موافقم   (۴) کاملا موافقم

۳ .راجع به موضوعات مطرح شده در متن دانش قبلی نداشته باشم.

(۱) کاملا مخا لفم   (۲) تا حدی مخالفم   (۳) تا حدی موافقم   (۴) کاملا موافقم

۴ . مفهوم کلی جمله را درک نکنم اگرچه دستور زبان و لغا ت آن برایم آشنا باشد.

(۱) کاملا مخا لفم   (۲) تا حدی مخالفم   (۳) تا حدی موافقم   (۴) کاملا موافقم

۵ . نتوانم موضوع اصلی پاراگراف را تشخیص دهم.

(۱) کاملا مخا لفم   (۲) تا حدی مخالفم   (۳) تا حدی موافقم   (۴) کاملا موافقم

۶ . حس کنم لغت نا آشنا را قبلا دیده ام ولی اکنون معنای آن را نمی دانم.

(۱) کاملا مخا لفم   (۲) تا حدی مخالفم   (۳) تا حدی موافقم   (۴) کاملا موافقم

۷ . معنی لغتی را که می دانم در جمله معنی درستی نمی دهد.

(۱) کاملا مخا لفم   (۲) تا حدی مخالفم   (۳) تا حدی موافقم   (۴) کاملا موافقم

۸ . لغاتی را بخوانم که اصطلاح بوده و تعبیر خاصی دارد.

(۱) کاملا مخا لفم   (۲) تا حدی مخالفم   (۳) تا حدی موافقم   (۴) کاملا موافقم

۹ . لغت نا آشنا از لحاظ تلفظ سخت باشد.

(۱) کاملا مخا لفم   (۲) تا حدی مخالفم   (۳) تا حدی موافقم   (۴) کاملا موافقم

۱۰ . جمله ای را که خوانده ام طولانی بوده و دارای ساختار دستوری پیچیده ای باشد.

(۱) کاملا مخا لفم   (۲) تا حدی مخالفم   (۳) تا حدی موافقم   (۴) کاملا موافقم

۱۱ . جمله از لحاظ دستوری برایم نا آشنا باشد.

(۱) کاملا مخا لفم   (۲) تا حدی مخالفم   (۳) تا حدی موافقم   (۴) کاملا موافقم

۱۲ . افعال مجهول در جمله بکار رفته باشند.

(۱) کاملا مخا لفم   (۲) تا حدی مخالفم   (۳) تا حدی موافقم   (۴) کاملا موافقم

۱۳ . زمان افعال در جملات برایم مشخص نباشد.

(۱) کاملا مخا لفم   (۲) تا حدی مخالفم   (۳) تا حدی موافقم   (۴) کاملا موافقم

۱۴ . نتوانم برخی از اجزاء جمله همچون صفت، قید، یا کلمات ربطی را تشخیص دهم.

(۱) کاملا مخا لفم   (۲) تا حدی مخالفم   (۳) تا حدی موافقم   (۴) کاملا موافقم

۱۵ . آنچه از دستور زبان انگلیسی می دانم با دستور زبان بکار رفته در متن همخوانی نداشته باشد.

(۱) کاملا مخا لفم   (۲) تا حدی مخالفم   (۳) تا حدی موافقم   (۴) کاملا موافقم

۱۶ . معلم زبان از من بخواهد که در کلاس روخوانی متن کنم.

(۱) کاملا مخالفم   (۲) تا حدی مخالفم   (۳) تا حدی موافقم   (۴) کاملا موافقم

۱۷ . معلم زبان از من بخواهد که در کلاس ترجمه متن را انجام دهم.

(۱) کاملا مخالفم   (۲) تا حدی مخالفم   (۳) تا حدی موافقم   (۴) کاملا موافقم

۱۷ . معلم زبان از من سوالات مربوط به درک مطلب بپرسد.

(۱) کاملا مخالفم   (۲) تا حدی مخالفم   (۳) تا حدی موافقم   (۴) کاملا موافقم

۱۹ . معلم زبان غلط های تلفظی و نیز ترجمه ای مرا تصحیح کند.

(۱) کاملا مخالفم   (۲) تا حدی مخالفم   (۳) تا حدی موافقم   (۴) کاملا موافقم

۲۰ . در کلاس زبان از فارسی کمتر استفاده شود و اغلب به زبان انگلیسی تدریس شود.

(۱) کاملا مخالفم   (۲) تا حدی مخالفم   (۳) تا حدی موافقم   (۴) کاملا موافقم

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با تشکر فراوان

Biodata

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