

The Effect of Emotions on Undergraduate Students' English Reading Proficiency at the SBBUSBA

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ABSTRACT

In English as a Second Language (ESL) setting, undergraduate students' academic success is significantly influenced by their English reading proficiency. In addition to their language skills, students' comprehension of academic literature is influenced by emotional elements. This study examines the effects of two primary emotional variables on English reading performance: anxiety, which is a negative emotion, and confidence, which is a good emotion. It specifically looks at how these feelings affect students' usage of expeditious and careful reading. While worry can lower comprehension and impede reading performance, positive emotions like confidence can increase students' interest, speed, and accuracy in reading assignments. The purpose of the study was to look at the connection between undergraduate students at SBBU University's confidence, anxiety, and English reading proficiency. The Preliminary English Test (PET) was used to gather data from 150 undergraduate students utilizing a quantitative research approach. The results showed that whereas anxiety had a detrimental impact on students' reading comprehension and strategy utilization, confidence had a favorable impact on both quick and careful reading performance. In order to increase students' reading performance, the study emphasizes the significance of lowering fear and boosting confidence in English language classrooms.

Keywords: English reading performance; Emotion; confidence; anxiety; expeditious reading; careful reading

INTRODUCTION

Rojas-Torres (2021) claims that reading performance is a skill that implies the capacity to understand, use, and reflect on what one reads to meet the objectives and acquire knowledge. These include the skills to decode which helps children in reading and to understand, unleash and relate what they read. There are three main perspectives of reading performance, i.e. bottom-up view, top-down view, and the interactive view of reading (Ansari, 2015). The bottom-up view mostly dwells on the linguistic knowledge of the readers to derive information by inference of morphemes, words and sentences out of a passage (Nuttall, 1996). The opponents of the strategy, however, state that the disintegration of language can also result in the inability to read comprehensively (Goodman, 1986) and slowness of the processing of each component of a piece of writing can influence the retention of meaning (Nunan, 1991), thus, adversely affecting the ability of the brain to process text in the real-world (Ahmed, 2012). This source can provide information on what should be used to measure language skills, and give a thorough method of measuring the language performance of students (Celce-Murcia, 1991).

Emotions in English Reading

Emotions have an impact on pupils' academic achievement as well as their English language acquisition. Two significant emotional variables that impact English reading performance are confidence and anxiety. Students that are confident are better able to comprehend and use reading strategies, as well as actively participate in reading assignments (Perry, 2002). On the other hand, anxiety has a detrimental impact on reading comprehension, focus, and performance (Chang, 2008). As a result, these feelings are crucial for thorough and quick reading assignments. The significance of both cognitive and emotional development in learning English is emphasized by the Malaysian Ministry of Education. Additionally, studies demonstrate a substantial correlation between emotional intelligence and English language proficiency (Pekrun & Goetz, 2002). This suggests that emotional growth is just as vital as verbal proficiency. Additionally, there is a strong correlation between students' emotions and their academic success when learning English. While negative emotions like fear lower learning performance, positive emotions like confidence increase engagement (Wan, Z., Abdullah, H., & Rahman, S, 2023). However, little is known about the precise effects of anxiety and confidence on English reading ability. According to studies, learning English might be hampered by unclear instruction and unfavorable feelings like anxiousness (Mansur., 2023). Positive feelings, such as confidence, on the other hand, facilitate ESL learning (Chin, 2022). As a result, this study focuses on anxiety and confidence and how these affect students' ability to read in English quickly and carefully.

Research Problem

Undergraduate students' English reading proficiency is a crucial component of their academic success, especially in situations when English is being used as a second language (ESL). Many students struggle with reading comprehension and strategy use, despite the fact that university students must understand academic books, classroom directions, and exam materials in English. Students' academic performance and participation in learning activities may suffer as a result of these difficulties. According to earlier research, emotional elements are crucial for both language acquisition and academic success. Among these, anxiety and confidence are thought to have a big impact on how well pupils read in English. While students with high anxiety may find it difficult to focus, comprehend texts, and successfully complete reading assignments, individuals with more confidence may engage more actively in reading activities and exhibit stronger comprehension skills. Students, who are obliged to read quickly and carefully, when both speed and comprehension are necessary, may be especially affected by anxiety. The association between confidence, anxiety, and English reading performance among college students in ESL situations has not received much attention, despite the fact that many studies have looked at emotions in English language learning. Additionally, the impact of these emotional elements on quick and meticulous reading performance has not received much consideration. In order to better understand the role of emotions in English language learning and academic achievement, this study intends to investigate the effects of confidence and anxiety on undergraduate students' English reading ability.

Goals of the Research

1. To investigate how confidence affects undergraduate students' English reading performance in both quick and thorough reading assignments.
2. The purpose of this study was to see how anxiety affected undergraduate students' English reading performance in both expeditious and meticulous reading tasks.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Rojas-Torres (2021), reading performance is a skill that denotes the ability to comprehend, apply, and consider what one reads in order to achieve goals and gain information. These include the ability to decode, which aids with children's reading comprehension, unleashing, and relating of what they read.

According to Ansari (2015), there are three primary viewpoints on reading performance: the interactive view, the top-down view, and the bottom-up view. In order to extract information from a passage by inferring morphemes, words, and sentences, the bottom-up approach primarily relies on the readers' linguistic understanding (Nuttall, 1996). However, the strategy's detractors claim that the breakdown of language can negatively impact the brain's capacity to process text in the real world (Ahmed, 2012; Go, 2010). It can also lead to the incapacity to read comprehensively (Goodman, 1986) and slow processing of each piece of writing can affect the retention of meaning (Nunan, 1991). This source can offer guidance on how to assess language proficiency and a comprehensive approach to gauging pupils' language proficiency (Celce-Murcia, 1991). Contextual influences are of more importance in the top-down process of reading than linguistic form. This side views things as reading with the previous knowledge which is being utilized in the current situation to derive meaning. Khalifa (2009) differentiates two context applications; facilitating the decoding when it is insufficient and enriching the propositional identity provided by a text that is decoded. It has been argued that top-down method is adequate in reading. According to Grellet (1981), reading is nothing but a continuous guessing activity thus suggesting that the input of a reader happens to outshine the textual reading material. This claim implies that peak-down method allows the readers to make inferences on texts by relying on prior knowledge (Aebersold, 1997). This prior knowledge is also known as the schema which can be defined as a type of informal, private and unarticulated theory of the nature of events, objects or situations to which we are exposed (Rumelhart, 1977). The obvious benefit of top-down processing amongst reading is that readers perform better and with confidence. Similar to bottom-up approach, bottom-up approach has its demerits. As an illustration, when readers are required to conduct the analysis of a text, they can make unexpected interpretations and fail to understand the terms and linguistic patterns of the text. Besides, such a policy may also introduce the time pressure on the readers who may be tasked to focus on the linguistic elements of the text. Therefore, the necessity to use only top-down processing when reading a text might threaten the acquisition of the level of competence in English. As a result, a new strategy has been born that will combine the strengths of the bottom-up and top-down techniques although reducing their weaknesses accordingly.

Expeditious and Careful Reading

There are various ways to understand reading performance, especially when it comes to quick and deliberate reading. Expeditious reading, which is frequently utilized in skimming or scanning tasks, is the act of reading swiftly in order to understand the primary idea or content of a text. On the other hand, careful reading entails patient, precise, and thorough comprehension of a text, when students concentrate on comprehending information at a deeper level. In academic settings, these two reading styles work well together since students frequently need to alternate between rapid comprehension and in-depth analysis based on the demands of the job. Effective academic achievement in ESL learning situations depends on striking a balance between different reading styles.

Emotion in English Reading Learning

Students' educational experiences and academic achievement are greatly influenced by their emotions. Emotional aspects affect students' motivation, focus, and participation in class activities when learning English. According to achievement emotion theory, feelings encountered during educational activities have a direct impact on cognitive functions and academic results (Pekrun & Goetz, 2002). While negative emotions might obstruct successful performance, positive emotions typically increase learning engagement. Therefore, increasing language learning outcomes requires an awareness of emotional impacts.

Confidence in English Reading

One of the most important positive emotions in language learning is confidence. It shows how confident pupils are in their capacity to finish reading assignments. Students who are more self-assured are more

likely to participate actively in reading activities, use suitable reading techniques, and successfully understand texts. Additionally, confidence lessens reluctance and motivates students to participate in both quick and thorough reading assignments. Because of this, self-assured students typically do better academically in English reading assignments.

Anxiety in English Reading

One of the most prevalent unpleasant feelings that afflict language learners is anxiety. It describes emotions of anxiety, trepidation, or fear during learning a language, especially when it comes to reading comprehension exercises. Excessive anxiety can make it difficult to focus, impair comprehension, and have a detrimental impact on reading performance. Anxious learners may have trouble with both rapid comprehension when reading quickly and in-depth comprehension when reading carefully. As a result, anxiety is thought to be a significant obstacle to proficient English reading in ESL settings.

Relationship between Confidence, Anxiety and English Reading Performance

Emotional elements like fear and confidence have been linked to reading performance in earlier studies. While worry tends to impair comprehension and lower academic performance, confidence has a positive impact on students' capacity to comprehend texts and employ reading strategies. In ESL courses, where students frequently struggle to comprehend and process English texts, these emotional variables are especially crucial. However, little study has explicitly looked at how anxiety and confidence affect college students' ability to read quickly and carefully.

Research Gap

The link between confidence, anxiety, and English reading ability in both speedy and attentive reading situations has been the subject of little research, despite the fact that earlier studies have examined emotions in language learning. Fewer studies have specifically looked at how these emotional elements affect undergraduate students of Social Sciences and Business Administration reading performance in ESL settings like Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University. Furthermore, rather than using data from standardized tests, the majority of earlier studies relied on broad assessments of reading proficiency.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used a quantitative research methodology to investigate the impact of affective factors anxiety and confidence on undergraduate students of Social Sciences and Business Administration reading performance English reading ability. 180 individuals were chosen from Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University using a stratified sampling procedure. Adapted reading tasks from the First Certificate in English (FCE) and Preliminary English Test (PET), which evaluated quick and attentive reading skills, were used to gather data. Mann-Whitney U tests and other descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used in the analysis of the data using SPSS (Version 25). The study links students' reading outcomes to emotional characteristics like fear and confidence by interpreting reading performance within an affective-cognitive framework. This includes reliability analysis, normalcy testing, and Mann-Whitney U tests. In order to visually evaluate the distribution of students' reading performance ratings across the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Faculty of Business Administration, histograms were also looked at the study links students' reading outcomes to emotional characteristics like anxiety and confidence by interpreting reading performance within an affective-cognitive framework.

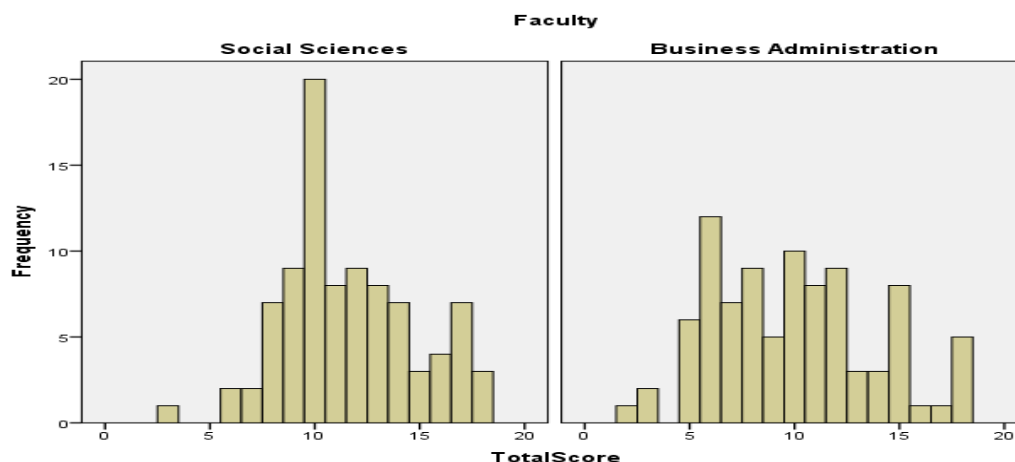


Figure 1: Distribution of Performance Scores for the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Faculty of Business Administration

In Figure 1 and 2 the scores for the Social Sciences sample of brain on the variable Performance have a reasonable normal curve with a bell shape (see histogram for Social Sciences), where the majority of scores are near the centre and the numbers are smaller for the lower and higher score ends (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007; Pallant, 2010). In comparison, the scores of Business Administration participants seem to be positively skewed with a high proportion of scores falling towards the bottom of the scale. To further check if the distributions of performance scores for both faculties were normal or skewed, the Kolmogorov - Smirnov and Shapiro - Wilk tests were used. These tests determine whether there is a significant difference between the distribution of the observed data and a normal distribution and are especially appropriate for continuous, interval level variables. The results displayed statistically significant results of both groups: Social Sciences: Kolmogorov-Smirnov $p = .000$; Shapiro-Wilk $p = .000$; Business Administration: Kolmogorov-Smirnov $p = .000$; Shapiro-Wilk $p = .000$.

These results indicate the performance scores for students in both faculties do not conform to the normal distribution. Accordingly, due to both graphical evidence which is histogram and statistical which is the result, the assumption of normality has been violated.

Table 1: Difference between FSS and FBA Students on Perf_Car, and Perf_Exp

Variable	FSS Mean Rank	FBA Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney U	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Careful Reading Performance (Carf_Perf)	120.20	60.14	1317.50	-7.970	.000
Expeditious Reading Performance (Exp_Perf)	113.06	67.19	1952.50	-6.636	.000

The two faculties' overall English reading ability differed statistically significantly, according to inferential statistical analysis utilizing the Mann-Whitney U Test. When it came to both thorough and quick reading

assignments, students from the Faculty of Social Sciences did better than those from the Faculty of Business Administration. The results imply that, in comparison to students from non-language academic backgrounds, students enrolled in language-related fields may have greater exposure to English reading habits, vocabulary knowledge, and comprehension skills.

The affective roles of Anxiety and confidence in English reading can also be used to understand the results from an emotional standpoint. Higher-scoring students, especially those from the Faculty of Social Sciences, might show more assurance when completing reading assignments. Reading engagement, strategic reading behavior, and comprehension skills are all significantly impacted by confidence. In general, self-assured students are more inclined to actively engage in reading exercises and use suitable reading techniques when taking exams. Students with lower reading scores, on the other hand, could feel more anxious, particularly during timed reading exercises that call for quick reading. Anxiety can impair focus, comprehension, and reading fluency, making it difficult for children to efficiently digest English texts.

The impact of reading anxiety may be most evident in the reduced performance in expeditious reading. Under pressure to read fast, students may become distracted, misinterpret crucial information, and neglect to use efficient skimming and scanning techniques. However, students may feel more secure when given enough time to comprehend texts thoroughly and critically, as seen by their comparatively greater performance in careful reading. Thus, the results imply that emotional elements like anxiety and confidence are strongly related to English reading proficiency in ESL learning environments. The modified PET and FCE reading tests were found to be very reliable tools for assessing English reading proficiency, according to the reliability study. The 20 reading items had great internal consistency, as demonstrated by the Cronbach's Alpha rating ($\alpha = .932$). This indicates that the same underlying construct of English reading performance was successfully tested by the test items.

Overall, the study shows that emotional variables like anxiety and confidence have an impact on undergraduate students' English reading ability in addition to cognitive reading skills. While anxiety may impair students' performance, especially when it comes to quick reading activities, positive emotional states may promote reading comprehension and engagement. Therefore, ESL teachers should concentrate on creating emotionally supportive classroom environments that lower anxiety and boost students' confidence in English reading activities in addition to honing their students' reading methods.

DISCUSSION

According to the study's findings, college students performed poorly on both quick and careful reading tasks in English. Students struggled more with rapid reading techniques including skimming and scanning, as seen by their substantially superior performance in attentive reading compared to expeditious reading. These results corroborate (Grabe, 2009) Cognitive Processing Theory of Reading, which highlights the need for several cognitive and strategic processes in order to read well. Additionally, the survey discovered that students in the Faculty of Social Sciences had higher reading scores than those in the Faculty of Business Administration.

More exposure to English-language reading materials and language-focused academic activities could be the cause of this. From an emotional standpoint, the results imply that while anxiety may have a detrimental impact on focus and reading performance, especially during quick reading assignments, confidence may have a favorable impact on students' reading engagement and comprehension. These results are consistent with earlier research emphasizing the significance of emotions in language acquisition (Pekrun & Goetz, 2002; Wan et al., 2023).

Overall, the study shows that both cognitive and emotional elements have an impact on English reading proficiency. As a result, supportive learning settings that lower anxiety and boost students' confidence in their ability to read English texts should be promoted in ESL courses.

CONCLUSION

The current study used customized PET and FCE reading tests to assess undergraduate students' English reading skills in both expeditious and cautious reading. The results showed that children performed poorly in English reading comprehension overall, with cautious reading outperforming hurried reading. Significant discrepancies between students from the Faculty of Business Administration and the Faculty of Social Sciences were also found in the study.

The results also imply that pupils' English reading performance may be impacted by emotional factors like anxiety and confidence. While anxiety may have a detrimental effect on students' focus and performance, especially in activities involving rapid reading, confidence seems to promote reading comprehension and engagement. Overall, the study emphasizes how crucial emotional and cognitive elements are to the development of English reading. In order to assist students feel less anxious and more confident when engaging in English reading activities, English language instructors should concentrate on developing supportive classroom environments in addition to strengthening reading skills.

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