

Strategies to Overcome Foreign Language Reading Anxiety among Globalized EFL Learners

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Abstract

Perhaps, one of the most well-articulated hurdles daunting globalized EFL learners' academic literacy dynamics can be attributed to foreign language reading anxiety. Under the massive expansion of foreign language reading anxiety, EFL learners commonly experience a higher level of perturbation while attempting to comprehend the contents forming in their specific reading texts due to the inevitable complexities presented during this process. This current small-scale library study aimed to exhaustively investigate particular effective strategies to overcome foreign language reading anxiety among globalized EFL learners to provide some illuminations for ELT experts, practitioners, and educators to devise more sophisticated reading strategies that can potentially alleviate foreign language reading anxiety. There were three main themes inferred in this present small-scale qualitative study namely: (1) The internalization of more comprehensible reading materials, (2) the promotion of more enjoyable reading circumstances, and (3) the inducement of more relevant reading strategies. For the future betterment of worldwide L2 reading enterprises, second language teachers are strongly commissioned to identify particular situations provoking excessive foreign language reading anxiety among EFL teachers in order to progressively design more authentic and meaningful reading activities.

Keywords: Foreign language reading anxiety, Globalized EFL learners, Library study

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1. Introduction

Given the importance of reading in EFL learning contexts nowadays, it is irrefutable to be stated here that the full mastery of reading skills can potentially transform language learners into more broad-minded academicians. Mohammadpur and Ghafournia (2015) avow that keen L2 readers can highly transfigure into more knowledgeable knowledge discoverers due to their advanced reading skills development. Further, laudable L2 reading skills can extensively give broader access to EFL learners to be more familiar with the target language competencies as well as cross-cultural understanding aiming to be fostered. This may happen due to the inseparable reading activities they constantly deal with through their academic lives. This argumentation is akin to the theory of Torudom and Taylor (2017) averring that by continually coping with L2 reading dynamics, EFL learners will not merely elevate their target language skills to the utmost levels but also obtain more robust enlightenment concerning the target language culture forming in their texts. Due to the aforementioned L2 reading complexities, one of the probable debilitating factors hindering a higher level of advancement of reading competencies can be attributed to anxiety. Yassin and Razak (2018) acknowledge that as EFL learners precede through their ongoing reading enterprises, they may highly encounter a wide variety of setbacks triggering anxiety excessively. With this conception in mind, EFL learners are more inclined to ingrain a higher level of foreign language reading anxiety when they encounter taxing reading passages. One of these prompting impetuses pertains to Joo and Damron (2015) stating that challenging reading texts can easily promote adverse reading situations where they experience a higher degree of stress, frustration, and unmotivated feelings to continue reading. EFL learners are also more liable to infuse a higher level of foreign language reading anxiety when it comes to the negative feelings of making mistakes, limited vocabulary knowledge mastery, and extraneous reading topics. In compliance with these three aforesaid causes, Muhlis (2017) unfold that a considerable number of highly anxious L2 readers forthrightly confessed three major factors influencing them to not continue reading namely feeling afraid of making unintended mistakes, restricted vocabulary, and unfamiliar reading texts. Given these abovementioned arguments, a burgeoning proliferation of foreign language reading anxiety cannot be overlooked since EFL learners will gradually lose their interest in reading concurrently diminishing their curiosity, cognitive capabilities, and resilient characters. These debilitating factors are meaningfully associated with Alsowat (2016) conceptualizing that excessive foreign language reading anxiety should be alleviated at the onset of L2 reading venture to continually preserve EFL learners' academic curiosity, improve cognitive skills, and instill persistent behaviors.

To benefit most from L2 reading activities with a minimum disturbance from foreign language reading anxiety, globalized EFL learners are strongly encouraged to employ a vast range of reading strategies applicable and compatible with their specific reading contexts. By doing so, they will be more capable of experiencing more meaningful reading enterprises

since they proceed with the specifically-given information for a better purpose and utilize their reading time more efficiently. This contention can be juxtaposed to a critical stance of Sari (2017) contending that a continual internalization of sophisticated L2 reading strategies is highly essential for worldwide EFL learners to enable them to fully comprehend a wide array of information forming in their particular texts and make use of the provided reading periods more effectively. Another decisive advantageous value of becoming more strategic L2 readers is learners can overcome various reading obstructions simultaneously transfiguring them into more judicious decision-makers, effective problem-solvers, and conscientious planners during this challenging process. These merits are closely interlinked with Barzegar and Hadidi (2016) asserting that manifold innovative L2 reading strategies can highly solidify EFL learners' cognitive, affective, and emotional aspects truly manifested in the invention of prudent reading decisions, efficient reading solutions, and in-depth reading planning.

However, EFL learners will have wider opportunities to manipulate all the aboveexplicated reading strategies when they profoundly ponder on the potential circumstances prompting them to ingrain a higher level of foreign language reading anxiety. After successfully carrying out this proactive reading action, learners can effortlessly comprehend the targeted reading texts since they can incorporate more efficient strategies suitable to their particular reading situations. Genç (2016) pinpoints that EFL learners' intellectual empowerment can be guaranteed when they can deploy varied meaning-making reading strategies harmonious with their reading environments. For such a reason, L2 reading facilitators are highly advocated to devise more appropriate reading strategies usable in their learners' reading contexts. By embodying this action, more holistic reading rewards can be fully reaped by learners due to the significant improvement of their reading skills. This contention is fairly supported by Suryanto (2017) advising EFL teachers to provide more continuous support for learners in uncovering more contextual reading strategies in dailybased reading situations to progressively advance their reading competencies to the utmost potential. In a similar vein, an enjoyable, fun, and stress-free reading atmosphere is indispensably paramount to be actualized in various L2 reading vicinities. Given the fact that L2 reading enterprises are not solely about cognitive processing but also about affective dynamics underwent by EFL learners, it is highly suggested for L2 reading instructors to establish more robust reading enjoyment within learners to foster their motivation to continue their reading processes. This suggestive advice is congruent with Yamashita (2015) who believes that EFL learners' reading skills are malleable as long as they are sustainably exposed to pleasurable reading surroundings in which they can potentially transfigure into more life-long readers.

Another critical determinant for the inducement of these positive reading outcomes is also tightly interwoven with the specific foreign language anxiety levels inculcated by EFL learners. Highly confident EFL learners are more willing to make use of various reading

strategies and persistently challenged to deal with a vast array of reading impediments. In converse, highly-anxious EFL learners solely rely on general reading strategies, lack knowledge regarding the implementations of these chosen strategies, and avoid meeting adverse reading situations for they do not believe in their L2 reading competencies. This reading behaviors disparity is in correlation to the previous finding of Liao and Wang (2018) mentioning that L2 readers possessing scant development of foreign language reading anxiety are more skillful in utilizing a vast array of reading strategies accordingly, and bravely tackle any potential reading impediments amid the ongoing reading journeys compared to highly-anxious L2 readers who are more prone to harness inefficient reading strategies resulting in avoidance reading behaviors as well as negative impressions toward their reading competencies.

While engaging in L2 reading enterprises, EFL learners are strongly recommended to set up more mutual interactions with their texts to gradually lessen their foreign language reading anxiety. Through interactive reading interactions, learners are capable of planning, predicting, monitoring, and evaluating the whole pivotal components in their reading texts. After having been successful in releasing these well-organized reading strategies, learners will attain more fruitful reading outcomes and gratifying reading achievements. Similar arguments are also unearthed in Lu and Liu (2015) critically denoting that a vast majority of Chinese university EFL learners are fully capable of comprehending some essential information forming in their targeted reading texts through planning, predicting, monitoring, and evaluating strategies, which at the same time, leading them closer to reap more fruitful reading outcomes and satisfying reading achievements. All these aforementioned strategies and laudable L2 reading attitudes have an intertwining relationship with global reading instructions along with problem-solving strategies incorporated by reading instructors. Through the integration of these two above-mentioned strategies, EFL learners will begin to get more obvious enlightenment regarding the reading texts they are dealing with eventually resulting in the dramatic improvement of reading skills and significant diminution of foreign language reading anxiety. Ghaith (2020) likewise notes that global L2 reading instructions and problem-solving strategies are two major literacy elements that need to be vested in varied reading vicinities to transform EFL learners into more competent readers possessing a minimum level of foreign language reading anxiety.

Again, a wide range of corresponding L2 reading strategies has to be accorded with EFL learners' reading preferences, interests, needs, and proficiency unless those above-explained reading strategies are improbable to work accordingly. Thus, it can be phrased here that L2 reading instructors' specific reading strategies will determine the entire reading trajectories undergone by learners. This perspective sits well with the theory of Barzegar and Hadidi (2016) positing that the designated L2 reading strategies chosen by reading instructors can either act as either major driving forces benefiting EFL learners' reading skills development or stumbling blocks hindering them from enhancing their literacy skills into the utmost levels.

In agreement with all previously-mentioned delineations, five prior EFL reading studies were conducted apart from the fact that these studies have not touched upon foreign language reading anxiety. The first study was conducted by Bria and Mbato (2019) uncovering that a great number of Indonesian university EFL learners had progressively transformed into more confident and competent L2 readers after making use of varied metacognitive reading strategies. In another identical study, Diasti and Mbato (2020) strongly suggested L2 reading instructors to inculcating more robust self-efficacy within EFL learners, improve learners' reading interest in the target language, and corroborate learners' positive emotions in reading to fully escalate their target language reading competencies into more advanced levels. Hamanda and Takaki (2021) highly advocated Japanese EFL teachers provoke more positively-sound L2 reading classroom learning climates in the presence of diverse learners to increase their motivation in reading and degrade their foreign language reading anxiety gradually. Wijaya (2021) truly advised Indonesian university EFL teachers to infuse a higher degree of self-efficacy within learners at the commencement of L2 reading enterprises to progressively transform them into more optimistic, motivated, and confident readers. In the last study, Wijaya (2022) favored the further incorporation of extensive reading activities in diverse-wide ranging Indonesian EFL classroom settings to propel all academicians to become more life-long L2 readers in a stepwise manner. Due to the dearth of investigation toward strategies to overcome foreign language reading anxiety among globalized EFL learners, this psychological construct deserved more exhaustive investigation to provide some illuminations for ELT stakeholders, educationalists, experts, practitioners, and policymakers to begin noting the critical importance of diminishing this debilitating psychological factor at the onset of L2 reading enterprises. Abiding by this research objectivity, one particular research problem was formulated to be answered namely: What are the potential factors prompting foreign language reading anxiety among globalized EFL learners?

2. Method

This present small-scale qualitative study was conducted in the support of a document analysis method to generate some renewable perspectives from the selected literature. The researcher conscientiously chose 30 previous foreign language reading anxiety studies overviewing strategies to overcome foreign language reading among globalized EFL learners. The researcher selected 30 prior foreign language reading anxiety studies by referring to the contextual and relevant research findings influential for the gradual diminution of foreign language reading anxiety generally undergone by worldwide EFL learners. The major criterion utilized to achieve this research objectivity was the chosen previous studies ranged between 2015 until 2021 in order to yield more impactful research results applicable in nowadays L2 reading learning enterprises. Methodologically speaking, there were two main underlying premises of why the researcher stipulated these 30 articles. First, since there were still plenty globalized EFL teachers emphasizing on the quantities of

reading texts rather than qualities of reading strategies integrated in diverse-wide ranging L2 reading classroom circumstances. By exhaustively overviewing these previously obtained research results, it is expectantly hoped that worldwide EFL teachers begin to make a clear discernment toward the debilitating impacts yielded by this psychological construct to invent more appropriate reading strategies, activities, and texts for their learners. Second, the potential research results from this document analysis study were more likely to give some enlightening perspectives in the field of modern L2 reading dynamics in which globalized ELT experts, practitioners, educators, and curriculum developers are encouraged to not eradicate foreign language reading anxiety, yet diminish this affective construct in a low development to promote more psychologically-sound reading classroom atmosphere for heterogeneous EFL learners. In a data analysis stage, the researcher subsumed all relevant 30 research results into some big themes to generate more reliable research results. Chiefly, there were three main themes yielded by the researcher after conducting in-depth data analysis procedures namely: (1) The internalization of more comprehensible reading materials, (2) the promotion of more enjoyable reading circumstances, and (3) the inducement of more relevant reading strategies. Specifically speaking, the researcher clustered all these three aforementioned themes by anchoring on the most-appeared research results generated by the prior studies. Thus, the researcher also conducted an open-coding analysis to avoid unintended research bias and produce more robust research findings for worldwide readers.

3. Findings and Discussion

This part attempted to decipher particular strategies worldwide EFL teachers can utilize to gradually lessen foreign language reading anxiety among learners. There were three specific themes discovered in this current small-scale library study namely: (1)The internalization of more comprehensible reading materials, (2) the promotion of more enjoyable reading circumstances, and (3) the inducement of more relevant reading strategies. For the exhaustive data delineations, the researcher provided particular findings directly linked with the major investigation conducted in this study. All comprehensive explications can be discerned in the following lines.

Table 3.1. The Internalization of More Comprehensible Reading Materials

Theme 1	Authors
	Al Faruq (2019); Al-Shboul et al., (2013); Al-Sohbani
	(2018); Ismail (2015); Kulsum et al., (2018); Muhlis
Reading Materials	(2017); Sari (2017); Torudom and Taylor (2017).

3.1. The Internalization of More Comprehensible Reading Materials

As can be observed in the first theme, second language teachers need to internalize more comprehensible reading materials to effectively mitigate worldwide EFL learners' foreign language reading anxiety. Through understandable reading texts, learners will be more capable of elevating their self-confidence in the targeted reading activities since they have infused a higher level of interest in the specifically-given reading topics. Al Faruq (2019) confirmed that in the actual presence of apprehensible reading materials, EFL learners can potentially transfigure into more confident L2 readers since they are motivated to explore plenty of texts independently. In the same vein, it has been an emerging need for second language teachers to provide their learners with adequate intensive training regarding how to become more strategic, interactive, and innovative L2 readers. Through these ways, EFL learners will have broader opportunities to decrease their foreign language reading anxiety levels and improve their reading comprehension skills. This argument is strongly approved by Al-Sohbani (2018) highlighting that becoming more well-organized readers and judicious decision-makers were two indispensable characteristics that should be preserved in EFL learners' mindsets to transfigure into less anxious L2 readers.

After corroborating EFL learners' profound understanding of L2 reading complexities, it is also becoming progressively important for second language teachers to design more authentic, interesting, and suitable reading texts fitly corresponding with learners' existing reading proficiency. In light of this way, EFL learners will be more highly-desirous of expanding their vocabulary knowledge, grammatical understanding, and reading skills positively impactful for the significant elevation of reading confidence. These positive reading behaviors are closely correlated with the finding of Ismail (2015) asserting that the majority of university EFL learners have successfully escalated their self-confidence as well as prerequisite reading skills after being introduced to appropriate reading materials. Furthermore, EFL learners' incapability of stipulating the best reading texts appropriately harmonious with their existent reading competencies is also akin to the designated reading activities incorporated by their teachers. Normally, learners will be able to fully experience a pleasant reading atmosphere when they have been more accustomed to a wide variety of reading materials, activities, and strategies. Hence, second language teachers are highly responsible for integrating all these three paramount elements in their daily-based reading classroom contexts. Anchored on this conception, Sari (2017) averred that a vast range of reading dynamics, texts, and approaches can act as a good means to lead EFL learners to undergo positively-sound second language reading exposure influential for the proliferation of their reading skills.

Table 3.2. The Promotion of More Enjoyable Reading Circumstances

Theme 2	Authors
	Ahmad et al., (2013); Bensalem (2020); Ghaith (2020);
Enjoyable Reading	Mardianti et al., (2021); Miao and Vibulphol (2021);
Circumstances	Mohammadpur and Ghafournia (2015); Razak et al.,
	(2019); Sabti et al., (2016); Tien (2017); Zhou (2017).

3.2 The Promotion of More Enjoyable Reading Circumstances

Enjoyment should be one of the key ingredients for every second language teacher attempting to promote more holistic reading activities in the presence of diverse-wide ranging learners. Generally speaking, worldwide EFL learners frequently experience an excessive level of foreign language reading anxiety when they constantly deal with lower reading comprehension skills, unfamiliar reading contents, and unpredictable reading impediments. Thus, it will be more effective for second language teachers to bring about more fun, enjoyable, and supportive reading vicinities where they are capable of developing their reading competencies to the utmost levels. This assertion is markedly substantiated by Bensalem (2020) who strongly advises globalized EFL teachers to promote more positivelysound reading climates amid internal and external reading hurdles constantly experienced by learners to foster their reading comprehension skills more optimally. However, favorable L2 reading circumstances cannot stand alone since EFL learners can potentially encounter stress, boredom, and frustrating reading situations in the long run. In line with these possible breakdowns, second language teachers need to nourish their learners' reading empowerment by integrating metacognitive, problem-solving, and global reading strategies in which every learner has identical opportunities to become high-quality L2 readers in the light of longterm reading trajectories they have to undergo. Ghaith (2020) mentioned that it is optimally apprehensible for every second language educator in this modern age to start optimizing their learners' reading, affective, and interpretative skills in the support of problem-solving, metacognitive, and global reading strategies to help them see an exhilarating side of reading processes.

Further, EFL learners who still inhabit a higher degree of foreign language reading anxiety levels should also obtain more exhaustive attention from second language teachers. Two salient obstructions emerged from this unintended psychological phenomenon namely modest reading competencies and lack of expansive vocabulary mastery. To better minimize these two above-mentioned setbacks, second language teachers have to transfigure into more supportive reading facilitators amid arduous obstacles faced by their learners. Becoming more supportive here denotes their potent willingness to embed more mutual collaborative networking with learners in terms of devising a wide array of effective reading strategies and amplifying their reading endeavors. By doing so, EFL learners will progressively become more competent L2 readers. This premise accorded with the study of Miao and Vibulphol

(2021) pointing out that worldwide second language teachers need to impart more intensive reading supports cognitively, affectively, and collaboratively to their learners to transform them into more proficient L2 readers. Concerning this aforementioned point, second language teachers are concurrently commissioned to become more faithful reading counterparts for their learners in various reading conditions to strongly raise their exhaustive awareness that they are not struggling alone in confronting a vast array of unpleasant reading obstructions. Instead, they will bravely take account of all the taxing reading challenges into their everyday basis rewarding for their self-confidence and personalized reading strategies. This argument is compatible with the finding of Mohammadpour and Ghafournia (2015) believing that globalized EFL learners are inclined to become highly-confident L2 readers, brilliant decision-makers, and conscientious reading planners only if they are accompanied by facilitative reading instructors.

Table 3.3: The Inducement of More Relevant Reading Strategies

Theme 3	Authors
The Inducement of More	Aghajani and Gholamrezapour (2019); Badara et al.,
Relevant Reading	(2019); Ghonsooly and Loghmani (2012); Hamanda and
Strategies	Takaki (2021); Isler and Yildrim (2017); Lien (2016); Lu
	and Liu (2015); Marashi and Rahmati (2017); Mawardah
	et al., (2019); Trisnayanti et al., (2020); Tsai and Lee
	(2018); Valizadeh (2021);

3.3 The Inducement of More Relevant Reading Strategies

Appropriate reading strategies can highly promote a significant degree of benefits toward the striking advancement of EFL learners' holistic reading proficiency development. One of those suitable reading strategies can be discovered in critical thinking. It is undeniably to be proclaimed that most critical L2 readers will have a greater tendency to fully understand the targeted information forming in their reading texts, better regulate their reading processes, and infuse a higher level of reading commitment. To make all these laudable reading characters happen in varied L2 reading classroom settings, second language teachers need to introduce the nature, utilities, and strategies of utilizing critical thinking skills at the commencement of particular reading activities to elevate their learners' reading competencies to more advanced levels. This suggestive advice is in conjunction with Aghajani and Gholamrezapour (2019) remarking that EFL learners' further reading readiness is heavily determined by an extent to which critical thinking skills implementation exists where they can effortlessly gain in-depth insights from reading texts, greatly exert more potent reading activities control, and committedly establish a higher degree of reading commitment. Similarly, it is worth accentuating here that EFL learners frequently experience constant foreign language reading anxiety when it arrives at specifically-reading strategies utilization. It can be plausibly stated that highly anxious L2 readers are more prone to

repeatedly apply similar reading strategies when encountering distinctive reading hurdles leading them to frustrating and anxiety-provoking reading situations. On the contrary, sophisticated L2 readers are more committed to making use of divergent reading strategies; even they encounter similar reading hindrances. From these huge characteristics, it is extremely pivotal for second language teachers to arm learners with plenty of reading strategies on a daily reading basis to enhance their self-confidence useful for attaining more gratifying L2 reading outcomes. These above-explained contentions are in agreement with the finding of Ghonsooly and Loghmani (2012) postulating that since there was an enormous difference between proficient and highly-anxious L2 readers in terms of reading strategies use, it will be more fruitful for second language teachers to familiarize EFL learners with a vast range of efficient L2 reading strategies at the onset of reading activities to transfigure them into more confident readers attaining satisfying reading outcomes.

It should be forthrightly confessed that all around the globe, there are still an overwhelming majority of EFL learners losing their reading pathways, motivation, and objectivities due to the tremendous escalation of foreign language reading anxiety. Therefore, to prevent these similar L2 reading breakdowns, it is fundamental for second language teachers to address more specific and suitable reading instructions for the betterment of reading strategies implementations. Through these ways, EFL learners can potentially showcase more impressive reading performances indicated with a stable harmony between their cognitive and affective growth. This action is positively interlocked with the finding of Hamada and Takaki (2021) repudiating that apprehensible, situational-specific, and compatible L2 reading instructions must be vested by second language teachers aiming to introduce richer reading strategies as well as improve learners' reading performances. In a similar vein, Lu and Liu (2015) strongly prompted worldwide second language teachers to downgrade EFL learners' uncontrolled foreign language reading anxiety by continuously mobilizing a vast variety of meaningful reading instructions, strategies, and activities where learners can foster their targeted reading performances along with achievements in corresponding purposes. Trisnayanti et al., (2020) frankly acknowledged that independent L2 reading practices conducted during formal and informal reading situations can act as a positive springboard for EFL learners to become more lifelong, curious information discoverers, and high-quality readers.

4. Conclusion

In overall, the obtained results in this study had contributed to our additional understanding of the efficient strategies to progressively alleviate worldwide EFL learners' foreign language reading anxiety. Specifically speaking, three major rewarding strategies can be internalized to actualize this positive L2 reading outcome to occur in future events namely the further utilization of more comprehensible reading materials, the promotion of more pleasurable reading vicinities, and the integration of compatible reading strategies. Through

these aforesaid means, globalized EFL learners are more likely to transform into more proficient, skillful, and strategic L2 readers due to the holistic reading rewards they have fully obtained. In converse, there were two certain inescapable shortcomings that needed to be pondered on in this present small-scale library study. First, since the researcher solely reviewed 30 worldwide literature delving into strategies to mitigate foreign language reading anxiety, it will be worth doing for future researchers to involve a larger sample of journal articles dealing with this identical topic to produce more generalizable research results. Second, future researchers are also strongly advocated to tap into other specific domains causing foreign language reading anxiety among worldwide EFL learners such as internal, external, psychological, and emotional factors in order to assist second language teachers in constantly cultivating learners' reading proficiency development into the utmost levels. Irrespective of these above-explained limitations, this current small-scale library study had provided an international perspective concerning the potential efficient strategies globalized second language teachers can internalize in the prospective reading enterprises by creating more anxiety-free, pleasurable, and meaningful reading classroom circumstances in which EFL learners' literacy competencies can flourish more prolifically.

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Appendix (Lists of Articles)

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