

Foreign Language Reading Anxiety: Korean as a Foreign Language in the United States

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine foreign language reading anxiety among college students who were studying Korean. It utilized three measures; (a) two anxiety scales, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS), (b) a background information questionnaire, and (c) reading performance scores. Results of the study showed that there was a significant discrepancy between foreign language reading anxiety among course levels, individual variables such as gender, course level, experience with Korea, etc. were predictors of foreign language reading anxiety, that reading anxiety and performance are positively correlated, and it reveals the major sources of foreign language reading anxiety among students learning Korean.

Processing language is one of the most involved functions the brain performs. The brain instantaneously orchestrates the delicate interchange of a vast array of cognitive tasks, ranging from the blunt movement of the tongue to the subtlety of navigating grammar. Learning a foreign language requires the utmost intellectual acuity to correctly perform such a precise orchestration of cognitive functions. Thus, learning a foreign language often proves to be a daunting and stress-inducing task. Unfortunately, research has shown that high levels of cognitive anxiety are detrimental to performing complex cognitive tasks (Hardy, Beattie, & Woodman, 2007). Linguists describe the form of cognitive anxiety induced while learning a foreign language as foreign language (FL) anxiety, defined as “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors

related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986, p. 128).

Until recently, most research has been focused on FL anxiety induced by speaking and listening in a classroom setting. Since reading requires no interpersonal interaction, reading’s effect on FL anxiety had been neglected. Additionally, FL reading anxiety is not readily detected, although its effects can be just as detrimental as anxiety induced by speaking and listening. However, in 1999, Saito, Garza, and Horwitz examined the effects of reading on FL anxiety.

The study done by Saito et al. (1999) examined the effects of three different languages and writing systems on FL reading anxiety. Test subjects included native English speakers studying Japanese, French, or Russian. The study was designed to “explore the concept of foreign language reading anxiety as distinct from general FL anxiety and examine the levels of reading anxiety in three target languages, each of which utilizes a different writing system” (Saito et al., 1999, p. 203). The three languages were judiciously chosen to examine “varying degrees of dependability for native speakers of English” (Saito et al., 1999, p. 203). The three hundred and eighty-three participants in the study completed the FLCAS (foreign language classroom anxiety scale), the FLRAS (foreign language reading anxiety scale) and a background questionnaire. Saito et al. hypothesized that Japanese and Russian would cause the highest level of FL reading anxiety, due to the relatively few cognates in English and to their writing systems differing from that of English. As predicted, Japanese language learners experienced the highest levels of FL reading anxiety. However, French language learners experienced the second-highest level of FL reading anxiety, followed by Russian language learners, who experienced the least amount of FL reading anxiety. Surprisingly, French resulted in more FL reading anxiety than was anticipated. Saito et al. gave two possible reasons for this disparity: (a) Those who enroll in French classes are inherently different from those who enroll in Russian classes. (b) Though Russian uses the Cyrillic alphabet, it is “phonetically dependable once learned,” while French is “phonetically complex and divergent from English” (Saito et al., 1999, p. 212).

Zhao, Guo, & Dynia (2013) conducted a similar study, examining the effects of an unfamiliar writing system on FL reading anxiety. Zhao et al. examined the anxiety of native English speakers enrolled in elementary level I and II Chinese classes. Since written Chinese does not constitute an alphabet—rather, syllabic pictographs may represent abstract ideas, physical objects, or even pronunciation—Zhao et al. posited that the complexity of written Chinese would increase FL reading anxiety. Similar to previous studies, Zhao, et al. utilized the FLCAS, the FLRAS and a background questionnaire with their one hundred and fourteen participants. The study did indeed confirm that the level of FL reading anxiety was exacerbated by the use of an unfamiliar writing system, consistent with findings of Saito et al. (1999). While the correlation between learning an unfamiliar writing system and an increase in FL reading anxiety seems readily apparent, the study done by Zhao et al. found a link between cultural content and FL reading anxiety. Text containing a sizable amount of unfamiliar cultural content was correlated with increased FL reading anxiety.

Perhaps the most closely related study to our current research was conducted by Zhang and Kim (2014), which aimed to investigate reading anxiety of Chinese learners of Korean. It also looked at the correlation between reading anxiety and learners' variables. Zhang and Kim utilized the FLRAS and a questionnaire survey for demographic information. Results showed that (1) Chinese learners of Korean feel high reading anxiety while reading Korean text; (2) there are four constructs of reading anxiety for (a) fear of unfamiliar topics and language forms, (b) fear of reading comprehension, (c) fear of negative attitude toward reading in Korean, and (d) fear of unfamiliar culture; and (3) reading anxiety and its constructs were significantly correlated with learners' grades.

Due to FL reading anxiety and its many adverse effects on foreign language students' performance, FL reading anxiety merits further study and investigation. In Tsai and Li (2012, p. 87), "test anxiety was found to be related to FL reading anxiety. [This] implies that students perceiving higher degrees of test anxiety may also experience higher FL reading anxiety and vice versa. This result could be anticipated, owing to the nature of anxiety as psychological construct." FL reading anxiety negatively affects students'

performance on tests. This is consistent with Zhao et al.'s (2013) findings that grades and reading anxiety were negatively correlated. Increased reading anxiety was correlated with a decreased final letter grade for class. Thus, solving the FL reading anxiety problem may also be the key to improving the foreign language learning experience.

Variables Affecting Anxiety in FL Reading

Key to understanding possible sources of FL reading anxiety is understanding what variables affect anxiety among students learning a language. This study specifically examines students learning Korean. As in the study completed by Zhao et al. (2013), variables examined in this study are gender, experience with the target language country, and course level.

Gender

Gender as a variable in FL reading anxiety has been examined minimally and results have been inconclusive enough that it is difficult to predict whether or not gender plays a significant role in reading anxiety. Some studies have indicated that female learners experience more anxiety in FL reading (Abu-Rabia, 2004; Bensoussan & Zeidner, 1989), while other studies have found no significant difference in anxiety levels between male and female learners (Aida, 1994; Shi & Liu, 2006).

Previous Exposure to Target Language and Country

Exposure to the target country does prove beneficial to the understanding of culture and customs of the target language and country (Aida, 1994; Huang, 2001). However, studies on reading anxiety and target language country and target language exposure are minimal. Therefore, it cannot be assumed that exposure to the country alone is sufficient in reducing FL reading anxiety. The benefits of the experience were predicated on the purpose of the visit to the target language country. When students travelled to the target language country with the express purpose of mastering the language in an exchange-student program, such as a study abroad or direct

enrollment, like those at the university where the study was conducted, FL reading anxiety significantly decreased. However, if the purpose of visiting the target language country was not related to learning the language (business, sightseeing, visiting friends, missionary work, etc.), it did not effectively reduce the amount of FL reading anxiety (Aida, 1994; Huang, 2001).

Many issues concerning FL reading anxiety for various foreign languages have been discussed. Research by Saito et al. (1999) and Zhao et al. (2013) have been fundamental in establishing precedence for FL reading anxiety and have very clearly outlined possible sources of FL reading anxiety. However, a comprehensive analysis of FL reading anxiety for Korean language learners is lacking and merits further investigation.

Course Level

While course level appears to have varying degrees of influence on reading anxiety, studies related specifically to less commonly taught languages have consistently found that the higher the course level, the more reading anxiety a student will experience (Kitano, 2001; Saito & Samimy, 1996; Samimy & Tabuse 1992). At many institutions, the student population in beginner- and intermediate-level Korean classes consists of younger students who are enticed to study Korean by Korean pop culture, Korean dramas, and Korean friends. Most universities, including the one where this study was conducted, teach reading and writing early on, but the focus is grammar, speaking and listening, while upper-level students are often more serious about reading and may have higher expectations put on them.

Purpose of This Study

The purpose of this study, similar to Zhao et al.'s (2013), is to look at levels of anxiety related to reading in Korean for nonnative-speaking Korean learners. The study also examines the effects of variables such as gender, course level, experience in country, and reading performance. The research questions are:

1. Do nonnative learners of Korean experience similar levels of both FL reading anxiety and FL anxiety?
2. To what extent are gender, course level, and experience with Korea related to FL reading anxiety?
3. To what extent is Korean FL reading anxiety related to FL reading performance?
4. What are the major sources of FL reading anxiety in nonnative learners of Korean?

Method

Participants

The participants of this study were 100 students from first-year to fourth-year Korean classes at a large private university in the United States. The data were collected from 105 students, most of whom were enrolled in Korean courses at the time of survey. However, we discarded the answers from five students who made errors in their test marking. Table 1 provides basic information about the participants. Of the participants, 39% were female and 61% were male. Sixty-three percent of the students were between the ages of 18 and 22, and 37% of the participants were in the age range of 23–30. Of the 100 participants, 19 were enrolled in first-year Korean, 19 in second-year Korean, 38 in third-year Korean, and 24 in fourth-year Korean. The average learning duration of Korean was about 2.8 years. Freshmen made up 11% of the participants, sophomores 26%, juniors 23%, and seniors 39%. Korean was reported to be the second foreign language by 86% of the participants, with Spanish and French indicated most frequently as the first foreign language. Of the participants, 69%, who were mostly third- or fourth-year students, had previously been to Korea to serve a mission for two years for their church; 16% had been to Korea for other purposes such as a foreign exchange student program for a semester, a study abroad for several weeks, or a trip for sightseeing; and 15% had never been to Korea.

Instruments

The instruments used in this study were (a) two anxiety scales, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS); (b) a background information questionnaire; and (c) reading performance scores.

FLCAS. The FLCAS is a self-reported measure of students' anxiety in the foreign language classroom designed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986). The FLCAS has 33 items on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*. The items measure foreign language classroom anxiety based on three sources of anxiety: (a) fear of communication, (b) fear of tests, and (c) fear of negative evaluation. The possible range of the total score was 33 to 165, and the higher the score, the more anxiety students had in the FL classroom. In this study, FLCAS showed an internal consistency coefficient of 0.812 (Cronbach's alpha, $n = 100$). For the purpose of this study, we used the FLCAS to measure English-speaking students' anxiety in the Korean language classroom.

FLRAS. The FLRAS is a self-reported measure eliciting students' anxiety over reading difficulties in the target language, relative difficulty of reading as compared to the difficulty of other language skills, and students' perception of various aspects of reading. The FLRAS contains 20 Likert-scale items scored on a 5-point scale. The possible range of total score is 20 to 100, and the higher score, the more anxiety students had while reading in Korean. In this study, FLRAS showed an internal consistency coefficient of 0.822 (Cronbach's alpha, $n = 100$). For the purpose of this study, we used the FLRAS to measure English-speaking students' anxiety in reading Korean.

Background questionnaire. A background information questionnaire designed for this study elicited participant information on gender; age; current Korean courses; previous Korean courses; year in college; major; travel to Korea, including purpose and length

of stay; length and location of missionary service¹; other foreign languages learned; and most difficult area in reading. For this study, we used the data regarding gender (male, female), course level (first- to fourth-year level), and experience with Korea (study abroad, sightseeing, travel for other purposes, or no such experience), missionary service, and so on. The questionnaire also asked the students what they found to be the most difficult aspects of reading Korean.

Reading performance test. For this study, we developed two reading tests to measure participants' reading ability based on the TOPIK (Test of Proficiency in Korean), since there were no specific reading tests in the university where this study was conducted. One test was designed for first- and second-year Korean students and came from the TOPIK beginner test; the other for third- and fourth-year Korean students came from the TOPIK intermediate. Each test was composed of 10 multiple-choice questions. Each question had three sub points, making the total possible score 30. The mean of students' reading test scores was 18.87, of which first-year students' mean score was 13.26, second-year 17.84, third-year 20.45, and fourth-year 21.63.

Procedures

The survey and the test were conducted during regular class time in the eleventh week of the winter semester. However, this allowed for a survey sample of only approximately 80–90 students. Consequently, 7 participants in the third-year course took the survey in the second week of the summer semester, 5 participants in the fourth-year course took the survey outside of class time, and several students took the survey after just having completed the summer intensive course. Participants were asked to complete questionnaires including FLCAS, FLRAS, and individual background information. Participants also were asked to take a reading comprehension test.

¹ A large percentage of the students at the university where this study was conducted voluntarily spend eighteen months to two years doing missionary service often in a foreign country.

Results

Research question 1: Do American college learners of Korean experience similar levels of FL classroom anxiety and FL reading anxiety?

Participants in this sample had a total score of 332 ($SD = 0.54$) in the FLRAS and a total score of 324 ($SD = 0.45$) in the FLCAS. We converted the total score to the mean score, given that there are different numbers of items in each questionnaire. The average mean score of FLRAS was 3.32 ($SD = 0.54$) and the average mean score of FLCAS was 3.24 ($SD = 0.45$).

To compare the level of FL reading anxiety and FL classroom anxiety among course levels, we conducted a one-way ANOVA and found that there was significant discrepancy between FL reading anxiety and course levels, but little to no discrepancy between course level and FL classroom anxiety (see table five).

The Scheffe post-hoc analysis was conducted after having applied a one-way ANOVA to compare FL reading anxiety among course-year groups. Significant differences were found between first-year students and second-, third-, and fourth-year-level students, indicating that first-year students felt higher reading anxiety than second-, third-, and fourth-year-level students.

To examine whether the level of FL reading anxiety was similar to FL classroom anxiety, we carried out a Pearson Product-Moment correlation between FL reading anxiety and FL classroom anxiety. The correlation was strong ($r(100) = .699$, $p = 0.01$). Students who experienced more FL classroom anxiety tended to have a higher level of FL reading anxiety. The results indicated that students had a very similar level of FL reading anxiety with FL classroom anxiety. FLRAS and FLCAS correlated very strongly in first- and fourth-year students as compared to other course-level students.

Research Question 2: To what extent are individual variables (gender, course level, learning experience of other languages, experience with Korea, etc.) related to FL reading anxiety?

A multiple regression was conducted with gender, course level, college year, age, missionary service in Korea, experience with learning other languages, experience with Korea, reading

performance, and FLCAS as independent variables and the FL reading anxiety score as the dependent variable. The results revealed that course level ($\beta = .35, p < 0.05$), experience with learning other languages ($\beta = -.15, p < 0.05$), and FL classroom anxiety ($\beta = .66, p < 0.05$) were significant predictors of FL reading anxiety. FLCAS was the biggest predictor of FLRAS, along with course level, indicating that the more anxiety students feel in the classroom and the higher the course level they are in, the more reading anxiety they have. However, experience with learning other languages was a predictor, indicating that students with experience with learning other languages tend to have less reading anxiety. Specifically, course level and experience with learning other languages were the predictors for first- and second-year Korean learners' reading anxiety ($\beta = .29, p < 0.05$; $\beta = -.23, p < 0.05$, respectively). Gender ($\beta = .09, p > 0.05$) was not a significant predictor for reading anxiety of Korean learners.

Research Question 3: To what extent is FL reading anxiety related to FL reading performance?

As two different reading tests were used for first- and second-year and third- and fourth-year students, respectively, we ran Pearson Product-Moment correlation analyses between FL reading anxiety and FL reading performance for the four course levels. We found a medium positive correlation ($r = .368, p > .01$) between FLRAS and the reading comprehension scores of students. But FLRAS only showed positive correlation with the scores of second-year course students ($r = .482, p < .05$) although no correlation was found with other groups of students. These results indicated that the more reading anxiety students had, the better reading performance they showed on the test.

Research Question 4: What are the major sources of FL reading anxiety among English-speaking learners of Korean?

The mean score of all items in the FLRAS were calculated, and 15 out of 20 items were found to have a mean score greater than 3.0. Point 3.0 was assigned neutral in the scale of anxiety, a point above 3.0 would indicate that students agreed with the items related to feelings of anxiousness. The items with the highest mean scores (above 4) were item 11 (I am worried about all the new symbols I have to learn in order to read Korean, $M = 4.51$), item 10 (By the time I get past the funny letters and symbols in Korean, it's hard to

remember what you're reading about, $M = 4.2$), item 16 (I would be happy to learn to speak Korean rather than having to learn to read as well, $M = 4.12$), item 15 (The hardest part of learning Korean is learning to read, $M = 4.09$), and item 19 (Korean culture and ideas seem very foreign to me, $M = 4.03$) in that order. And the item with the least mean score was item 14 (Once I get used to it, reading Korean is not so difficult). Overall, English-speaking learners of Korean felt anxious when reading Korean texts.

To examine the factors that influence learners' anxiety while reading, we conducted a factor analysis. Before starting, we testified the reliability of each FLRAS item and deleted 5 items with low reliability. The final internal consistency coefficient of 15 items was 0.894 ($0.7 \leq \alpha \leq 0.9$) and the mean score of 15 items was 3.555. As a result of the factor analysis, three groups of factors were found to explain the reading anxiety of English-speaking Korean learners in this study, as show in Table 10.

The probability of Factor 1, consisting of five items (items 11, 10, 16, 15, and 19), was 41%. Factor 2, with five items (items 6, 1, 7, 17, and 8) had a probability of 14%, and Factor 3, with five items (items 2, 3, 5, 4, and 9) had an 8% probability. The cumulative explanation was 63.8%, which was very high.

Factor 1 includes fear of new words, scripts, and culture as well as students' preference for speaking rather than reading. Factor 2 is composed of fear of unknown grammar, words, and contents as well as lack of confidence in pronunciation when reading in public. Factor 3 shows severe anxiety and confusion of reading in Korean. This result is similar to the answers we collected from the survey. During the individual background information survey we asked about the most difficult parts in reading by having the students check one or two of five given items, as listed below with the number of responses in parentheses: deciphering the letters (3), understanding the meaning of the words (69), understanding the grammar (46), getting the pronunciation correct (9), and understanding the cultural concepts of the text (21).

Discussion

The results of this study shed light on previous assumptions related to anxiety and second language learning. Specifically, the results of this work show that (a) student level is an indicator of Korean language reading anxiety, (b) individual student variables play a significant role in reading anxiety, (c) reading anxiety does correlate with reading performance, and (d) three groups of factors related to reading anxiety predict the majority of triggers for student anxiety. Students who are learning Korean show high levels of anxiety related to reading in particular. While we found that students in various levels of Korean language learning felt overall classroom anxiety, we also discovered that student levels and individual student variables played a significant role in reading anxiety. Reading anxiety can also indicate how well a student may do on reading performance tests.

Our first finding answers the question, Do English-speaking learners of Korean experience similar levels of FL reading anxiety and FL anxiety? Our work resonates with the findings of Saito et al. (1999) and Zhao et al. (2013), who found that students learning Chinese and students learning Japanese, respectively, experienced similar levels of foreign language anxiety and foreign language reading anxiety. Our findings indicate that students in all levels of Korean language study felt a similar level of classroom anxiety. However, we found that the course level of the student played a significant role in his or her level of reading anxiety. First-year students felt significantly more anxious about reading in Korean than did second-, third-, and fourth-year students. We echo Zhao et al. in the assumption that a familiar and easily decodable writing system such as that of French or Spanish may be a factor in English-speaking students' feeling less anxious about foreign language reading, while an unfamiliar writing system may cause anxiety. Our findings seem to support that assumption that a first-year student may find the Korean writing system foreign and unfamiliar and experience a large amount of anxiety. Second-, third-, and fourth-year students, who indicated feeling less anxiety over reading, may have grown more accustomed to and familiar with the simple and logical phonetic writing system, no longer experiencing the same level of reading

anxiety as upper level students studying Chinese and Japanese, who are expected to memorize large numbers of non-phonetic characters.

Our second finding answers the question, to what extent are learners' variables (gender, course level, and experience with Korea) related to FL reading anxiety? As expected, we found that individual learner variables played a role in reading anxiety. Those students who were in higher-level Korean classes experienced less reading anxiety than students in lower levels. We also found that students who had experience with learning other foreign languages or who had spent time in Korea had less reading anxiety. Finally, the gender of the student did not play a significant role in reading anxiety. These results concur with the findings of Zhao et al. (2013).

Our third finding answers the question, to what extent is FL reading anxiety related to FL reading performance? While we expected our results to be similar to Zhao et al.'s (2013), our study produced different findings, with the results varying across levels. Zhao et al. found that foreign language reading anxiety was negatively related to foreign language reading performance for elementary level I and intermediate level II students. Zhao et al. also found no correlation between reading anxiety and performance for elementary level II students. Our results showed a positive correlation with the scores of second-year students. The results indicated that the more reading anxiety a second-year student had, the better reading performance they had on the test. We found no correlation for reading anxiety and reading performance for any other level of students. This finding seems to oppose theories put forth by previous researchers (Brantmeier, 2005; McIntyre & Gardner, 1991; Mills, Pajares, & Herron, 2006; and Spielberger, 1996) that postulate that when students are familiar with and comfortable with a simple task, anxiety does not play a role in the performance of that task. The fact that our higher-anxiety, second-year students performed better on the reading test leaves us with an anomaly. It may be possible that the structure of the Korean language program at the university where the study was conducted heavily influenced this outcome. The first two years of the Korean program are taught by a native-English-speaking professor and a part-time native-Korean-speaking teaching assistant. The focus of the Korean 101 and 102 classes is to get the students "hooked" on learning Korean. They are encouraged to speak freely in

a fun, comfortable, interactive way. They learn grammar and to read and write, but the focus is on conversational Korean. By the second year, a native-Korean-speaking professor teaches the class and the classroom intentionally becomes a more serious and rigorous environment. The presence of a native Korean-speaking professor mixed with rigorous reading and writing exams may make students feel some anxiety; however, anxiety does not necessarily indicate poor preparation. In the case of second-year students, anxiety added to their success on the test just as adrenaline may add to the speed of an athlete in an important competition.

Our fourth finding answers the question, what are the major sources of FL reading anxiety among English-speaking learners of Korean? On the foreign language classroom anxiety scale, five items had a 41% probability of explaining reading anxiety. The biggest factor that we found to influence reading anxiety concurs with previous work on the topic, in that students are worried about the new symbols they have to learn in order to read Korean (Item 10, *By the time I get past the funny letters and symbols in Korean it's hard to remember what you are reading about*). This finding was also apparent in students learning both Chinese and Japanese (Saito et al., 1999; Zhao et al., 2013). The second factor that influenced reading anxiety was that once the students learned the symbols and could pronounce the letters and sounds and words in any given passage, they had a hard time remembering what the words or sentences meant (Item 11, *I am worried about all the new symbols I have to learn in order to learn Korean*). Many of the students indicated that they would be happy to learn only speaking and listening skills (Item 16, *I would be happy to just learn to speak Korean rather than having to learn to read as well*) and that reading was the hardest part of learning Korean (Item 15, *The hardest part of learning Korean is learning to read*). Students also felt that a lack of understanding about Korean culture and ideas impeded their reading comprehension (Item 19, *Korean culture and ideas feel very foreign to me*). The item with the lowest mean score asked whether reading in Korean was difficult once a person got used to it.

One may expect these findings, considering the differences between English and Korean writing systems. However, students indicated that they were less worried about the new symbols than

understanding the vocabulary words. Understanding the nature of the Korean writing system may help a layperson understand why Korean script did not cause significant anxiety for students. The Korean writing system is actually a phonetic system with a set number of letters that correspond to various phonemes. Korean letters are grouped into square, syllabic blocks, and the syllabic blocks are combined to form words. For the beginner these syllabic blocks may resemble a Chinese character or images from an ideographic system, however the system is phonetic. Korean has 24 letters and, unlike those of English, the letters are not completely arbitrary. For example, the consonants are symbols that represent the place and manner of articulation in the mouth and throat, thus making memorization of the symbols easier than it might be in a language, such as English, whose symbols are arbitrary.

Nonetheless, as was also found by Saito et al. (1999) and Zhao et al. (2013), the unfamiliar writing system and symbols along with new vocabulary caused a significant amount of stress among native English speakers in all three languages—Japanese, Chinese, and Korean.

Pedagogical Implications

It is important for teachers to understand that reading in Korean is an anxiety-producing component of the classroom. In fact, with closer examination of our own efforts at teaching reading, we may find that the teaching of reading in Korean may be secondary or even tertiary in importance to other skills we teach, such as speaking, listening, writing, culture, and the like. For university teachers of Korean, an elementary look at reading techniques may help them to help their students reduce reading-induced anxiety. Goodman (2005) introduced a set of strategies called “Read around the text” in which the teacher has students (a) look at the pictures in the text and discuss what ideas are being presented, (b) look at the captions and read and discuss them, (c) look at the maps, charts, and graphs and discuss what information they present, (d) look at the titles and headings and discuss what the reading may be about, (e) read the first and last lines of each paragraph for more information, and finally, (f) ask questions about the text so students have a reason to read (p.14).

Other ideas to reduce reading anxiety presented by Goodman (2005) are KIM vocabulary strategies. These strategies include (a) recording the key word in a selected passage (K), (b) writing down important information about the key word including a user-friendly definition (I), (c) drawing what the key word means, and linking it to an unusual connection to create a memory device (M), and (d) writing the key word in a context-rich sentence for application.

Another strategy that may be helpful is the two-column notes method (see Santa, Havens, & Maycumber, 1988), which requires students to take notes in two columns. One column holds new vocabulary words and the other holds their definitions (in English or Korean). This would help address student concerns about forgetting the meaning of a word once they finally figure out the letters that make it up. We have found success in our own experience in teaching reading by using books that are familiar to the students in their native language. Although many educators feel that age-appropriate material is key to reading success, our students have found great success in and are enthusiastic about reading books in Korean that are deeply familiar and important to them, such as *Where the Wild Things Are*, and *Goodnight Moon*. The students already know the story lines, and in many cases they know the stories word for word. They get excited about seeing these long-time favorites written in Korean and are often able to quickly and easily decipher the text and the meaning of the words. This strategy, along with previously mentioned strategies, supports the notion set forth by Huang (2001) that high motivation for reading is likely to decrease foreign language reading anxiety.

Teachers may also want to be aware that in 2002, Mokhtari and Reichard developed a new system called Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory (MARSİ) that allows readers to perform routine self-assessments while reading. This system aims to improve reading ability through increasing cognitive awareness. Although MARSİ is designed to improve cognitive awareness for students while reading in their native language, this system could be adapted to help improve cognitive awareness for foreign language learners. MARSİ focuses on three factors to improve cognitive awareness related to reading: (a) global reading strategies, (b) problem-solving strategies, and (c) support reading strategies.

Teachers can promote students' cognitive awareness by "informing students about effective problem-solving strategies and discussing cognitive and motivational characteristics of thinking" (Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002, p. 250). Increasing cognitive awareness provides readers with two benefits: (a) students can account for their own progress and (b) it enhances student self-image and motivation.

More importantly, this introspective model could prove to lessen anxiety and improve reading comprehension for FL readers. This process transforms reading from a mundane and meaningless exercise in deciphering symbols to the deliberate process of learning. The process of increasing cognitive awareness "promotes positive self-perceptions, affect, and motivation among students" (Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002, p. 250).

Conclusion

Results of the study showed that there was a significant discrepancy between foreign language reading anxiety among course levels and individual variables such as gender, course level, and experience with in the target language country. The study also found that reading anxiety and performance are negatively correlated. It reveals the major sources of foreign language reading anxiety among students learning Korean, such as learning new symbols and remembering the meaning of words once the symbols are learned. In addition, the study shows that students felt so uncomfortable reading in Korean that many of them would prefer to learn to speak and listen, but not read. They also felt that lack of cultural knowledge played a significant role in their reading difficulties.

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Table 1
Summary of Participant Characteristics

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Female	39	39%
Male	61	61%
Age		
18–22	63	63%
23–30	37	37%
Course level		
First-year	19	19%
Second-year	19	19%
Third-year	38	38%
Fourth-year	24	24%
Year in college		
Freshman	11	11%
Sophomore	26	26%
Junior	23	23%
Senior	39	39%
Graduate student	1	1%
Have been to Korea		

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Yes	74	74%
No	26	26%
Returned missionary		
Yes	69	69%
No	31	31%
Studied other foreign languages		
Yes	86	86%
No	15	15%

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics of the FLCAS

FLCAS	M	SD	Range
Total	3.24	0.45	1.88–4.09
First-year	3.04	0.58	1.88–3.94
Second-year	3.26	0.36	2.64–3.79
Third-year	3.31	0.42	2.09–4.09
Fourth-year	3.28	0.42	2.30–4.03

Note. $N = 100$. FLCAS = Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, see Horwitz et al. (1986).

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics of the FLRAS

FLRAS	M	SD	Range
Total	3.32	0.54	1.65–4.70
First-year	2.85	0.73	1.65–4.20
Second-year	3.36	0.43	2.70–4.35
Third-year	3.43	0.38	2.90–4.70
Fourth-year	3.48	0.50	2.25–4.60

Note. $N = 100$. FLRAS = Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale, see Saito et al. (1999).

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics of the Reading Test Scores

Reading test	M	SD	Range
Total	18.87	6.34	6.00–30.00
First-year	13.26	4.28	6.00–24.00
Second-year	17.84	6.20	9.00–30.00
Third-year	20.45	5.70	6.00–30.00
Fourth-year	21.63	6.13	9.00–30.00

Table 5

Comparison of Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Level

FLRAS	<i>SS</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Intergroup	5.213	3	1.738	6.931	.000*
Intragroup	24.069	96	.251		
Total	29.282	99			

Note. FLRAS = Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale, see Saito et al. (1999). * $p < .05$

Table 6

Comparison of Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Among Course Level Groups

Dependent variables	(I) Course	(J) Course	Mean gain			95% CI	
			I-J	SE	p	LB	UB
FLRAS	100	200	-.50789*	0.162	0.025 *	-0.970	-0.046
		300	-.57500*	0.141	0.001 *	-0.975	-0.175
		400	-.62445*	0.154	0.002*	-1.062	-0.187

Note. FLRAS = Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale, see Saito et al. (1999). * $p < .05$

Table 7
Correlation between FLRAS and FLCAS

FLRAS	FLCAS	
	R	<i>p</i>
Total	.699**	.000
First-year	.844**	.000
Second-year	.517*	.023
Third-year	.461**	.004
Fourth-year	.843**	.000

Note. FLCAS = Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, see Horwitz et al. (1986). FLRAS = Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale, see Saito et al. (1999). * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 8
The Correlation Between Reading Anxiety and Reading Performance

FLRAS	Reading performance	
	R	<i>p</i>
Total	.699**	.000
First-year	.844**	.000
Second-year	.517*	.023
Third-year	.461**	.004
Fourth-year	.843**	.000

Note. FLRAS = Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale, see Saito et al. (1999). * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 9

Items with mean score greater than 3.0

Course level (no. of items)	Items with mean score greater than 3.0
Total (15 items)	11 (4.51), 10 (4.2), 16 (4.12), 15 (4.09), 19 (4.03), 6 (3.57), 7 (3.56), 8 (3.55), 20 (3.48), 17 (3.44), 3 (3.41), 9 (3.24), 5 (3.1), 1 (3.06), 18 (3.05)
100 (12 items)	11 (3.58), 19 (3.37), 20 (3.37), 10 (3.32), 15 (3.26), 7 (3.21), 5 (3.11), 6 (3.11), 16 (3.11), 17 (3.11), 3 (3), 8 (3)
200 (14 items)	11 (4.84), 10 (4.68), 15 (4.53), 19 (4.32), 16 (4.26), 3 (3.58), 6 (3.47), 18 (3.37), 20 (3.37), 9 (3.32), 7 (3.26), 8 (3.26), 1 (3.16), 17 (3.11)
300 (15 items)	11 (4.79), 16 (4.39), 10 (4.29), 19 (4.24), 15 (4.16), 7 (3.79), 6 (3.76), 20 (3.71), 8 (3.68), 17 (3.66), 3 (3.5), 9 (3.45), 5 (3.21), 1 (3.08), 18 (3.08)
400 (16 items)	11 (4.54), 10 (4.38), 16 (4.38), 15 (4.29), 8 (4), 19 (4), 6 (3.71), 7 (3.71), 17 (3.63), 9 (3.5), 3 (3.46), 1 (3.38), 18 (3.38), 20 (3.29), 5 (3.21), 2 (3.08)

Table 10

Three Groups of Factors Explaining Foreign Language Reading Anxiety; Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial eigenvalues			Extraction sums of squared loading		
	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %
1	6.151	41.010	41.010	6.151	41.010	41.010
2	2.166	14.437	55.446	2.166	14.437	55.446
3	1.254	8.363	63.810	1.254	8.363	63.810

APPENDIX

Percentage of Students Selecting Each Alternative on the FLRAS

Directions: Statements 1 through 20 refer to how you feel about reading Korean. For each statement, please indicate whether you (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) disagree, or (5) strongly disagree by circling the appropriate number on the line following each statement. Please give your first reaction to each statement and circle an answer for every statement.

	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	I get upset when I'm not sure whether I understand what I am reading in Korean.				
	6	31	24	29	10
2	When reading Korean, I often understand the words but still can't quite understand what the author is saying.				
	11	40	22	22	5
3	When I'm reading Korean, I get so confused I can't remember what I'm reading.				
	5	17	30	28	20
4	I feel intimidated whenever I see a whole page of Korean in front of me.				
	12	37	22	22	7
5	I am nervous when I am reading a passage in Korean when I am not familiar with the topic.				

	7	30	22	28	13
6	I get upset whenever I encounter unknown grammar when reading Korean.				
	6	12	19	45	18
7	When reading Korean, I get nervous and confused when I don't understand every word.				
	0	24	18	36	22
8	It bothers me to encounter words I can't pronounce while reading Korean.				
	7	24	13	22	34
9	I usually end up translating word by word when I'm reading Korean.				
	9	25	20	28	18
10	By the time I get past the funny letters and symbols in Korean, it's hard to remember what I'm reading about.				
	4	6	10	29	51
11	I am worried about all the new symbols I have to learn in order to read Korean.				
	3	3	6	19	67
12	I enjoy reading Korean.				
	32	42	19	5	2
13	I feel confident when I am reading in Korean.				
	13	40	32	12	3
14	Once you get used to it, reading Korean is not so difficult.				
	33	46	16	4	1

15	The hardest part of learning Korean is learning to read.	3	8	13	29	47
16	I would be happy to learn to speak Korean rather than having to learn to read as well.	8	4	11	22	55
17	I don't mind reading to myself, but I feel very uncomfortable when I have to read Korean aloud.	8	18	18	34	22
18	I am satisfied with the level of reading ability in Korean that I have achieved so far.	12	26	20	29	13
19	Korean culture and ideas seem very foreign to me.	2	9	16	30	43
20	You have to know so much about Korean history and culture in order to read Korean.	5	18	24	30	23