

The Relationship between Shyness and Local/Global Reading Comprehension

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Abstract

Shyness may be defined experientially as excessive self-focus characterized by negative self-evaluation that creates discomfort and/or inhibition in social situations and interferes with pursuing one's interpersonal or professional goals.

In the present study by employing the T-test and ANOVA, results indicated that shyness has effect on local/global reading comprehension. It further indicated that the correlation effect between the shyness and gender was significant .Therefore, males are better than females in local/global reading comprehension test.

Keywords: English as a Foreign Language Learning, shyness, Local/global reading comprehension.

1. Introduction

1.1. What Is Shyness?

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The concept of shyness is described as "an enduring trait characterized by tension, discomfort, and inhibition in the presence of other people" (Wadman, Durkin & Conti-Ramsden, 2008, cited in Tong, Ting & McBride-Chang, 2011, p.30). Shyness has been studied in relation to so many societal factors such as difficulties in socio emotional adjustment(e.g. Chen & Tse, 2008; Coplan & Armer, 2005), peer interaction (e.g. Xu, Farver, Chang, Zhang, & Yu, 2007), and social acceptance and the development of interpersonal relationships in general (e.g. Jones, Briggs, & Smith, 1986)(cited in Tong, Ting & McBride-Chang, 2011).

Shyness is normally looked upon as a hindering attribute in learners, which acts as a setback standing on the way of their normal educational accomplishment, the reason being that shy individuals are regarded as less adept at expressing themselves during social encounters, and are hence more likely to be left out from the mainstream practice of education due to their inclination for leading a solitary life. One thing that is thought to be affected by shy students' passive approach to language learning is their attitudes toward the general learning process. (Salmasi,2012)

Buss, 1980; Leary & Schlenker, 1981; Zimbardo, 1977 Buss (1980), defined shyness as an inhibition of expected social behavior, together with feelings of tension and awkwardness. This line of definitions can be said to regard shyness as a social phenomenon, and a form of social anxiety. Shyness has long been described as a character trait, an attitude, or a state of inhibition (Durmuş, 2007). Leary (1986) proposed that shyness is totally a social phenomenon, and that it should be defined in terms of both social anxiety and inhibition. Leary (1986) thus, defined shyness as an affective-behavioral syndrome characterized by social anxiety and interpersonal inhibition which results from the prospect or presence of others of interpersonal evaluation.

Research suggesting a genetic contribution to the origins of shyness proposes that 15 to 20% of newborns exhibit an inhibited temperament characterized by high reactivity (e.g., excessive crying and vigorous movement of head and limbs) to novel stimulation, along with elevated in utero heart rates. In early childhood, such infants tend to exhibit more behavior defined

operationally as timid or shy (e.g., playing near primary caretaker) and have close relatives who reported more childhood shyness than uninhibited children. An interactions interpretation of shyness suggests that being born with the easily aroused inhibited temperament may lead to social withdrawal in childhood and adolescence from parents, siblings, and peers, and may discourage others from freely interacting with that child, thus promoting a shy response style. Other environmental factors fostering such withdrawal include being teased or bullied, dominating older siblings, family conflict, and overprotective parenting. Finally, the development of shyness in adulthood is usually due to experiences of rejection and self-blame for failure in social domains. (Colleen Sherman, 2010)

The studies of shyness within theoretical frameworks after 1970s have contributed a lot to the understanding of the concept in a more systematic fashion, mainly after the findings pointing out its high prevalence were obtained. Several empirical investigations by researchers (Arkin, Appelman & Burger, 1980; Asendorpf, 1987, 1989; Buss, 1980; Cheek & Buss, 1981; Crozier, 1979; Jones & Russell, 1982; Leary, 1983a, 1983b) have focused on the etiology, measurement, behavioral characteristics, social impact, and treatment alternatives for shyness. In addition, with those research attempts, great advances were achieved toward understanding how and why experience of shyness has made such a large impact on many individuals' lives.

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In a long-term study conducted in the US, Caspi, Elder and Bem (1988) found relationships between shyness in childhood and coping with various developmental tasks in adulthood. In regard to certain correlates of shyness and social inhibition, gender differences are in fact already present in childhood. In a sample survey of 3-6 year-olds, Mayr (1992) found negative correlations between shyness and socio-metric nominations by peers strictly with boys four years

or older. Shy boys received fewer positive nominations, but no more rejection than their non-shy counterparts. On the other hand, shyness did not affect the girls' nominations. In a longitudinal section study by Bowen, Vitaro, Kerr and Pelletier (1995), it turned out that shyness as rated by Kindergarten classmates of the same age likewise was a predictor for internalizing problems in the fifth grade. (Georg Stöckli, 2002)

1.2. Local Reading Comprehension

Local reading comprehension refers to the student's ability to understand a text on a literal level, the ability to understand the sentences of a passage by drawing on local context. So, local questions only required candidates to pick out specific details. They ask candidates to locate specific details for information from the text. Local processing is primarily linguistic, that is, the system which elicits information from the text, e. g. word recognition and syntactic decoding.

1.3. Global Reading Comprehension

Global reading comprehension, on the other hand, calls upon the students' capacities to understand individual words and sentences, but more importantly to focus on the larger process of interpreting and transacting with an entire narrative text. comprehenders" also have the ability to call upon a repertoire of strategies, enabling them to make rich connections with a text, to understand its implications and go beyond its literal meaning. They actively interpret, visualize, engage and connect with the ideas within and across texts, all the while also monitoring their understandings about what they have read. Global processing is primarily cognitive, that is, the system which integrates information in order to interpret the text, e. g. predicting and guessing of meaning on the basis of context or background knowledge.

In "Shyness", Carducci, (1999), draws on more than twenty years of research to penetrate the many myths and mysteries surrounding shyness. In "Shyness", Carducci explains the basic principles of shyness; discusses the psychical, mental, and emotional expressions of shyness; and explores the biological, psychological, and societal roots of this trait. In addition, Dr. Carducci

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traces the manifestations of shyness at different life stages. In an age of instantaneous, on-line electronic interpersonal relationships, he outlines the specific challenges facing shy individuals in contemporary society. "Shyness" is not about transforming shy people into extroverts. Its principal mission is to promote what Dr. Carducci calls "the successfully shy life"-- one of self-awareness, self-acceptance, and self-confidence. Several studies have observed a robust correlation between shyness and reading comprehension but few have attempted to explain why this relationship exists

This study is trying to find out the effect of shyness on the process of learning local/global reading comprehension in EFL learners .On the other hand, learners' gender is another factor which researchers have focused on it. By regarding to these matters, the following hypotheses are suggested:

H1: There is sygnificant relationship between shyness and local/global reading comprehension.

H2: Male learners can get better scores on local/global reading comprehension than female ones.

2. Methodology

2.1. Participants

The subjects of this study were Sixty Iranian EFL students (30males and 30females), who have studied in high school in Arak.

2.2. Instruments

The following instruments were used in this study:

a) a) Language proficiency test (NELSON, series 400 B):

In order to make sure of the homogeneity of both groups in terms of their English language knowledge, Nelson test of proficiency was employed. The time allotted was 45 minutes.

b) A background questionnaire:

In order to elicit subjective information about participants, a background questionnaire was developed by the investigator. It covered issues such as the subjects' age, their parents' socio-educational background and occupation.

C) Test of reading comprehension in English:

The test of reading comprehension in English was from the reading component of the *Cambridge Preparation for the TOEFL Test* (Gear, J, 1993. pp. 416-421). The time allowed was 30 minutes as determined at the piloting stage.

d) Revised cheek and buss shyness scale (RCBS):

Revised Cheek and Buss Shyness Scale (RCBS) is one of the most commonly employed measures of dispositional shyness (Cheek & Briggs, 1990). The original Cheek and Buss Shyness Scale (Cheek & Buss, 1981) contained 9 items. The development of the revised form aimed at improving the psychometric properties of the original scale.

e) Local/global reading comprehension test:

ECEP practice reading test is a Full spate reading comprehension test in the same form and at approximately the same level of difficulty as the reading exercises included in the GCVR paper of Michigan ECPE.

2.3. Procedure

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In the process of carrying out the study, the researchers took the following procedures to achieve the objectives of the current study . So, the whole study was completed in following phases:

Phase 1: In this phase the Nelson Proficiency Test (Series 400B) was administered to 80 male and female students who are students in high school. They answered questions in 30 minutes. Out of this number 60 of students whose scores were above the mean were selected for the purpose of this study.

Phase 2: In order to know some main characteristics of participants, the researchers first have used background questionnaire which was included some questions about age, their parents' socio-educational background and occupation. On the basis of their answers, they divided into two groups that each group was consist of 30 students , half of them were male and other half were female.

Phase 3: In this part, the researchers have administrated General reading comprehension test in order to determine the learners reading ability.

Phase 4: In order to measuring the learners' shyness level, Revised cheek and buss shyness scale used by researchers.

Phase 5: After distinguishing Learners' shyness level, they should have given local/global reading comprehension.

3. Results and discussions

Independent samples 't' test was employed in order to analyze the collected data. As one looks at the Table 1 given below, it can be seen that there is meaningful relationship between shyness

and local/global reading comprehension for female learners because zero number isn't between high and low level.

Table1:T-Test for Female Test Value =15

| One-Sample Statistics | | | | |
|-----------------------|----|-------|----------------|-----------------|
| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
| Value | 30 | 20.60 | 3.549 | .648 |

| One-Sample Test | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|----|-----------------|-----------------|---|-------|
| | Test Value = 15 | | | | | |
| | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Value | 8.643 | 29 | .000 | 5.600 | 4.27 | 6.93 |

$$H_0: \mu = 15$$

$$H_1: \mu \neq 15$$

$$|t| = 8.643$$

$$\text{Sig}=.000<.05$$

As it is clear in table 2, there is meaningful relationship between shyness and local/global reading comprehension for male learners because zero number isn't between high and low level. So, first hypothesis was accepted which related to relationship between shyness and local/global reading comprehension.

Table2: T-Test for Male Test Value =15

| One-Sample Statistics | | | | |
|-----------------------|----|-------|----------------|-----------------|
| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
| Value | 30 | 21.43 | 3.839 | .701 |

| One-Sample Test | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|----|-----------------|-----------------|---|-------|
| | Test Value = 15 | | | | | |
| | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Value | 9.179 | 29 | .000 | 6.433 | 5.00 | 7.87 |

$$H_0: \mu = 15$$

$$H_1: \mu \neq 15$$

$$|t| = 9.179$$

$$\text{Sig} = .000 < .05$$

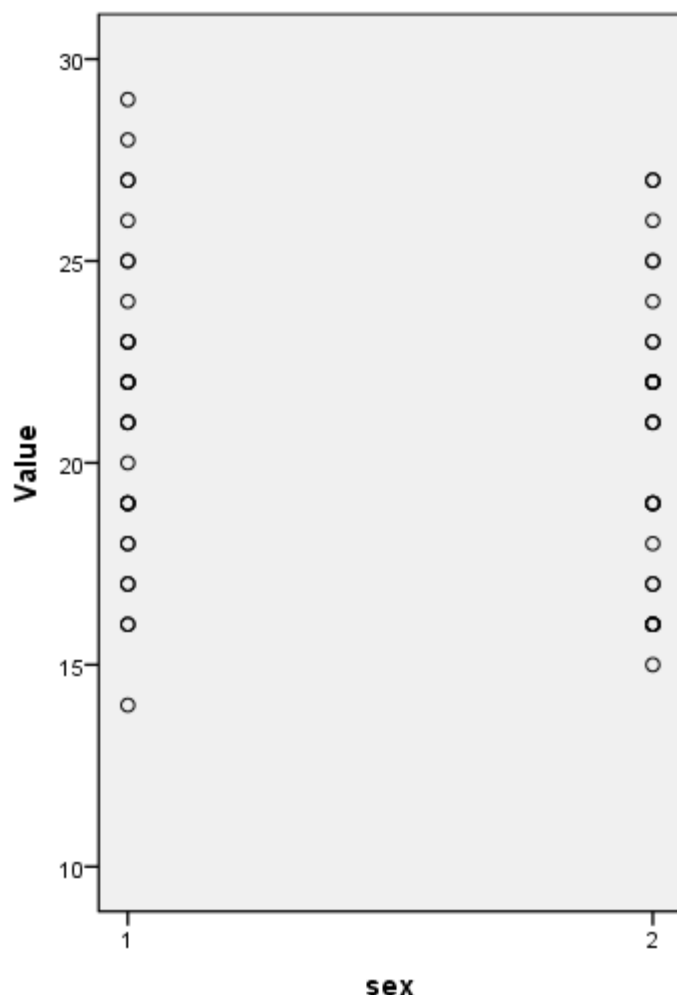


Figure1:Local/global reading comprehension scores of male and female student
Sex:1=male 2=female

Generally speaking, the test was administrated for test value=20, because $\text{sig} = .037 < .05$, second hypothesis was accepted again .As its shown in table 3, $|t1| = 9.179$ which is for male, while $|t2| = 8.643$ which belongs to female .As result indicated, $|t1| > |t2|$ So ,male can get better score than female in local/global reading comprehension test.

Tabl3: T-Test

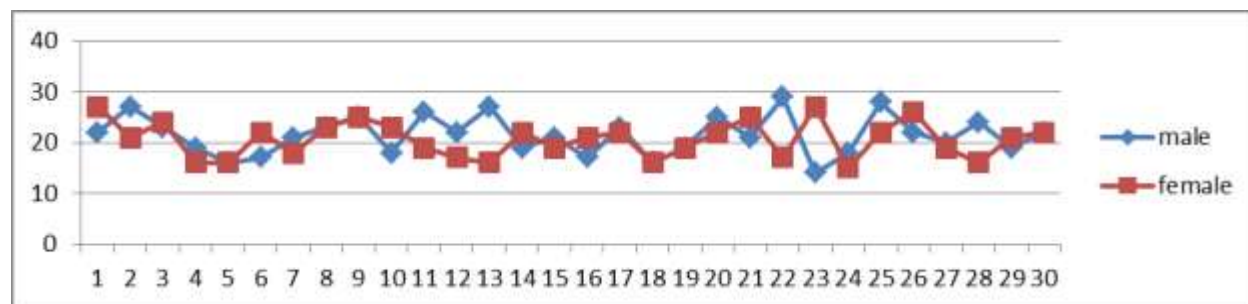
One-Sample Statistics

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|-------|----|-------|----------------|-----------------|
| Value | 60 | 21.02 | 3.689 | .476 |

| One-Sample Test | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|----|-----------------|-----------------|---|-------|
| | Test Value = 20 | | | | | |
| | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Value | 2.135 | 59 | .037 | 1.017 | .06 | 1.97 |

As indicated in figure2, male could get better score in local/global reading comprehension test.

Figure2: Local/global reading comprehension scores of male and female.



4. Conclusions and implications

A common observation in virtually all shyness research is that the consequences of shyness are deeply troubling. Shy individuals don't take advantage of social situations, date less, are less expressive verbally and nonverbally, and experience more loneliness than do non-shy people. Shy men have been found to marry and have children later, have less stable marriages, delay establishing careers, and exhibit lower levels of career achievement than their non-shy peers. Shy people have been found to use alcohol in an effort to relax socially, which may lead to impaired social performance and substance abuse. A perceived inability to socialize by shy individuals, along with a pessimistic outlook for social interactions, becomes an excuse for anticipated failure

and a self-handicapping strategy (e.g., "I can't do it because I am shy."). Henderson, Zimbardo, Carducci, 1999)

Numerous terms have been used to refer to the experience of apprehension and anxiety in social situations, including dating anxiety, speech anxiety, social anxiety, shyness, embarrassment, social phobia, shame, social inhibition, reticence, communication apprehension, introversion, stage-fright, and audience anxiety (Crozier, 2000; Leary & Kowalski, 1993; Van Dam-Baggen & Kraaimaat, 1999). Although these terms are not synonymous with one another, feeling of discomfort in social occasions and the accompanying anxiety resulting from the presence of interpersonal evaluation is the common experience of all (Buss, 1980; Schlenker & Leary, 1982). This study focused on shyness and loneliness levels of elementary students (Gökhan BAŞ, 2010)

According to the findings of the research, there were meaningful relationship between shyness and local/global reading comprehension. The shyness levels of male students were found out to be higher than female students in studies carried out by Ashe & McCutcheson (2001), Yıldırım (2006) and Durmuş (2007). These findings in these studies correlate with the result of the current study. So the first hypothesis was accepted by regarding to table 1 and table 2.

On the other hand, local/global reading comprehension score of male students were observed to be higher than female student's. As it is clear in table 3 and figure 3, males were better than females in local/global reading comprehension test. In this regard second hypothesis was accepted again.

In this study, the relationship between shyness and local/global reading comprehension of intermediate students was held. More research is needed in order to generalize the findings of this research to other settings. This research cannot be generalized to other level of educational organizations. Since shyness is universal concept, cross-cultural studies may also be considered as future work. Further studies can be made in order to find out the relationship amongst shyness, speaking, listening, writing and other concepts like learning vocabulary, grammar. Furthermore, research on samples less homogeneous in age, educational level, and ethnicity would be useful for assessing the generalizability of the findings in the research.

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