

CHAPTER 5- DISCUSSION

In this chapter the main research findings will be summarized and discussed.

As stated at the end of Chapter 4 the findings of the present study are threefold.

1. There is a weak and negative relationship between foreign language anxiety level and the students' reading achievements ($r = - 0.254, p < 0.01$).
2. The relationship between the students' writing achievements and their foreign language anxiety level is negative and very weak ($r = - 0.117, p < 0.01$).
3. There is a positive and statistically significant relationship between students' writing achievement and their reading achievement ($r = 0.38, p < 0.01$).

Although it is weak, the negative relationship reported in the first finding means that the higher the foreign language anxiety level, the lower the student's reading achievement, which seems to be logical since the foreign language anxiety measure was employed to investigate the achievement (Yung-nan Chiang, 2006). Most likely, there are many reasons behind Arab students' language anxiety. The first one is that the students' fear of being negatively evaluated by their teachers or laughed at by other peers because of their weak performance in the English reading task inside the classroom and hence practicing reading outside the classroom will be a bit difficult for them which may result in their poor achievement. The second reason may be students' social environment. Co-education which normally starts at the University level and which is different from the students' culture outside the classroom in the Sultanate of Oman definitely has great effect on their level achievement. It is not an easy job for the student to stand in the presence of the girls and do

a reading task inside the classroom. A third reason may be due to the students' weakness in their mother-tongue.

The relationship between language anxiety level and the students' reading achievements is, however, weak. That means the impact of foreign language anxiety on test performance is not very strong, i.e. other variables than anxiety have a stronger predictive value.

Finally, the relationship referred to in the first finding is statistically not significant; in other words, in this case, the null hypothesis has to be accepted: there is no significant relationship between language anxiety and the reading achievement of University students studying English as a foreign language.

Regarding the second finding, the negative relationship between the foreign language anxiety level and students writing achievement may also be due to the aforementioned reasons which were discussed in the first finding. Moreover, the negative relationship in this finding could also be due to the fact that writing is a productive communication skill and thus more challenging as it requires a combination of complex skills so may-be it is more likely to be affected by the students' anxiety level than the other receptive skills. However, the second hypothesis which says that there is a significant relationship between foreign language anxiety and the writing achievement is rejected since the current Omani findings do not support it statistically.

In relation to the third finding, the positive and statistically significant relationship between the reading and writing achievements among the students means that the higher their reading achievement, the higher their writing achievement. Though correlation does not imply causation, it is indeed the case that good readers are also better writers. This

finding was expected since the beneficial effect of reading on writing is well documented (Cox et al., 1990).

There is a negative relationship between language anxiety and students' reading achievement, on the one hand, and their writing achievement, on the other. This means that foreign language anxiety negatively affects language skills regardless of whether the skill is a productive communicative skill like writing or a receptive skill like reading. However, the effect of the foreign language anxiety on the EFL students' reading and writing achievement is very weak in this study (See Chapter 4: Table 4.7).

The negative correlation between foreign language anxiety and the students' writing and reading achievement is consistent with the findings of a number of different studies conducted in different settings with different populations. Yung-nan Chiang (2006) concludes that researchers employing language anxiety measures to investigate language achievement have convincingly shown that negative relationships between language anxiety and achievement hold across different instructional levels and with different target languages. It should be noticed that Yung-nan has mentioned the negative relationship at any rate, whether it is very weak, weak, moderate or significant.

In the first study using the FLCAS, Horwitz (1986) found a moderate but significant negative correlation between foreign language anxiety and the grades that American university students of Spanish and French (N= 225) expected in their first semester language class as well as their actual final grades.

Another study, using a modified version of FLCAS, Aida (1994) found a negative but significant correlation between foreign language anxiety and final grades among American second-year learners of Japanese (N= 96, $r = -.38$, $p < .01$), and a significant

main effect for anxiety, with the low anxiety group receiving significantly higher grades than the high anxiety group.

Also, Kim (2000) found significant negative relationships between FLCAS scores and final grades of Korean college EFL learners (N= 253) in both reading and conversation classes.

The difference between the present study and studies conducted by Horwitz, Aida, and Kim can be understood by saying that students may feel less anxious in learning a commonly taught language like English than in learning other languages that are not so familiar like Japanese.