TELL, Vol. 5, No. 2, Fall & Winter 2011, pp. 61-96

Transfer of reading attitude from L1 to L2 among Iranian EFL learners with reference to gender and language proficiency

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Received on July 22, 2011
Accepted on November 9, 2011

Abstract

This study aims at investigating the threshold hypothesis in relation to the transfer of reading attitude from L1 to L2 among Iranian EFL learners with reference to gender and language proficiency. To this end, 150 EFL students (74 males and 76 females) who had received formal instruction in English for two to four years with the mean age of 19 participated in the study. They took part in the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency and completed two five-point Likert scale questionnaires: (a) L1 reading attitude questionnaire, as well as its translated version, and (b) L2 reading attitude questionnaire. Data were analyzed using *Independent T-Test*, *Multiple Regression Analyses*, and *Two-Way ANOVA*. The results showed that reading attitudes do transfer from L1 to L2;

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however, the students' L1 and L2 reading attitudes were different. The study also showed that higher L2 proficiency and gender are not statistically significant to play a role in the transfer of reading attitude from L1 to L2. Moreover, the findings indicate that the notion of *Linguistic Threshold* does not affect the transfer of reading attitude from L1 to L2 with reference to gender. The results are interpreted to have implications for syllabus designers and EFL practitioners.

Keywords: transfer of reading attitude, linguistic threshold hypothesis, gender, language proficiency

1. Introduction

The importance of affective factors in L2 acquisition has been recognized since the eighties (Athey, 1985; Alvermann & Guthrie, 1993; Krashen, 1982; Kush & Watkins, 1996; McKenna, Kear, & Ellsworth, 1995; Purkey & Novak, 1984; Yamashita, 2004, 2007). This recognition gave rise to some L2 acquisition theories that specifically state the affective conditions for L2 learning (Krashen, 1982) and humanistic approaches to language teaching that put emphasis on language learners' affect (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In spite of this, affective domain still appears to have received less attention compared to cognitive and linguistic areas. Thus, it is the purpose of this study to explore reading attitude, as an effective factor, in relation to some other variables.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Reading Attitude

There is a plethora of studies which have emphasized measuring students' attitude toward reading (Askov & Fischbach, 1973; Coles & Hall, 2002; Hall & Coles, 1999; Kush & Watkins, 1996; McKenna et al., 1995; Sainsbury & Schagen, 2004; Smith, 1990). Being a complex construct, *'reading attitude'* is one of the affective factors defined differently by different scholars. Some scholars have defined reading attitude as "a system of feelings related to reading which causes learners to approach or avoid a reading situation" (Alexander & Filler, 1976, p.1). Others have defined it as "a state of mind, accompanied by feelings and emotions, which make reading more or less problematic" (Smith, 1990, p. 215). It has also been defined as "a more or less stable set or disposition" of affect or opinion towards reading (Drever, 1952, p. 23). As Logan and Johnston (2009) aptly phrased it, "these reading-specific definitions of attitude assume that the more positive the attitude, the more likely one will engage in reading activities" (p.199). Indeed, higher reading achievement indicates that students have positive attitudes (McKenna et al., 1995) and that they read more frequently (Sainsbury & Schagen, 2004).

Few theoreticians have explained reading attitude in coherent models. Ruddell and Unrau (1994) attempted to make clear that affective conditions such as motivation, attitude, and beliefs play significant roles in the reading process in the instructional context of the classroom. Mathewson (1994) considered reading attitudes as a multidimensional construct. Mathewson defined reading attitude as "(a) prevailing feelings about reading, (b) action readiness for reading, and (c) evaluative beliefs about reading (cited in Yamashita, 2007, p. 84)". Reeves (2002) believes that the *three-component model* on the reading attitude construct is the most accepted among others. These three components fall into three classes: cognitive, affective, and conative (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Mathewson, 1994; McGuire, 1969). The cognitive component, represented by personal and evaluative beliefs, is typically limited to beliefs concerning the

instrumentality of the act to one's goals. As Stokmans (1999) believes, "This instrumentality may be either prospective or retrospective (p. 247)" in that for attending one's goal it may be based on past reinforcement or on perceived suitability (McGuire, 1969). The *affective* component includes feelings or emotions that people have toward the attitude object. It is, usually, operationalized as the evaluation of opinions which reflect the cognitive component (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). The *conative* component is represented by action readiness and behavioral inclinations concerning the attitude object which are not necessarily manifested in overt behavior. Being difficult to be measured in a similar manner in L1 and L2 reading in the EFL context, the conative factor is not included in the present study.

Burak (2004) measured attitude toward reading for pleasure and leisure. He carried out his research on college students and questioned them mainly on what attitudes they tended to have toward reading in general. Burak concluded that a "person's intentions to engage in a behavior are a function of his or her attitudes toward that behavior, as well as his or her subjective norms [cultural values] regarding that behavior" (2004, p. 141). The students' attitudes predicted their intentions to read significantly. According to Day and Bamford (1998), L1 reading attitude is one of the factors which influences L2 reading attitude. They state, "assuming that students are already literate in their first language, one source of attitudes toward second language reading is the attitude that students have toward reading in their native language" (p. 23, quoted in Yamashita, 2004, p. 2). They proposed a model stating that L2 reading attitude is to a considerable extent formulated by four factors: "(a) L1 reading attitudes, (b) previous experiences with learning to read L2s other than English (if any), (c) attitudes toward the L2, its culture, and its people, and (d) the L2 classroom environment (Yamashita, 2007, pp.84-85)." Therefore, it is crystal clear that one of the factors influencing L2 reading attitude is L1 reading attitude.

In his study, Camiciottoli (2001) found the connection between L1 and L2 reading attitudes. He used questionnaires to study EFL learners'

reading attitudes both in L1 and L2. One of the influential factors was found to be the amount of L1 reading which significantly predicted both the frequency and the amount of L2 reading as well as of L2 reading attitude with reference to "age, sex, and experience in the target language culture, self-rating of English ability, and length of previous English study (represented by the willingness to find time for L2 reading)" (Yamashita, 2007, p.86).

Yamashita (2004) investigated the relationship between both L1 and L2 reading attitudes as well as learners' performance in L2 extensive reading. She identified 'Comfort, Anxiety, Value, Self-perception' as the variables for L1 and L2 reading attitudes. The data were extracted through the learners' responses to a questionnaire. The study supported the transfer of L1 reading attitude to L2 reading attitude; however, the linguistic threshold hypothesis did not apply to the transfer of affective domain from L1 to L2. Pedagogically speaking, Yamashita (2004) believed that "the positive feeling towards reading, both in L1 and L2, facilitated learners' performance in extensive reading. Merely thinking that reading was beneficial to oneself did not represent a strong enough motivation (p. 1)."

Yamashita (2007) investigated the transfer of L1 reading attitude to L2 reading attitude among Japanese university-level EFL students, bringing the '*Linguistic Threshold Hypothesis*' into play. The participants took part in a Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) and completed two five-point Likert scale questionnaires: (a) L1 (Japanese) reading attitude questionnaire, as well as its translated version, and (b) L2 (English) reading attitude questionnaire. The study indicated "significant contributions of L1 reading attitudes in explaining L2 reading attitudes" (p. 81). It also demonstrated that L2 proficiency at higher levels did not significantly contribute to the transfer of reading attitudes from L1 to L2; hence, as she aptly phrased it, "the notion of a linguistic threshold does not apply to the transfer of reading attitudes from L1 to L2" (p. 81).

2.2 Linguistic Threshold Hypothesis

Researchers believe that an EFL learner might transfer L1 developed skills to L2, only if a certain minimum threshold level of proficiency is attained in L2 (Cummins, 1979, 1981, 1991; Yamashita, 2002a, 2004, 2007). Cummins (1979) proposed the terms '*Developmental Interdependence Hypothesis'* and '*Threshold Hypothesis*' to clarify the patterns of academic achievement found in bilingual children. Since these two hypotheses focus on "bilingual children who are acquiring cognitive, academic, and linguistic abilities in L1 as well as in L2", linguistic threshold applies to both L1 and L2 abilities (Yamashita, 2007, p. 82). Applying this notion to English Language Learners (ELLs), however, changes the notion of the linguistic threshold hypothesis in that "adult ELLs usually have already acquired a certain (functionally sufficient) level of linguistic ability in L1 before they start learning L2" (Yamashita, 2007, p. 82). Accordingly, in the present study, the threshold level of linguistic competence refers to L2 linguistic ability.

Jiménez, Garcia, and Pearson (1995, 1996) carried out their research on the metacognitive knowledge and strategic reading processes of proficient and less proficient bilingual readers. They concluded that biliterate readers who are proficient (in English and Spanish) showed outstanding strategic abilities when reading in comparison to expert monolingual readers. In fact, many proficient English readers who are biliterate and multi-literate, enjoy a qualitatively unique strategic knowledge and skills toward reading which are brought forth when dealing with different textual materials.

2.3 Reading Attitudes with Reference to Gender

There is a consensus among scholars that supports the issue that girls have a more positive attitude toward reading than boys (Howe, 1993; AbdulRahim, 1996; Jackson, 1999). Herrold, Stanchfield, and Serabian's (1989) study explored the differences between males and females in reading attitudes. They concluded that males were more

interested in five factors or as they put it, '*five regions*'. In their study, significant differences were found between males and females in the following five regions: (a) boys enjoyed TV sports and follow-up reading; (b) the enjoyment of listening to the teacher applied more to boys than girls; (c) boys found reading about jobs and careers more enjoyable than girls did; (d) boys had a penchant for reading stories about people in other countries than girls did; and (e) boys were not eager to read aloud, to have more books at home, or to read books in their free time at home.

Logan and Johnston (2009) investigated the relationship between reading ability, frequency of reading, attitudes, and beliefs toward reading and school with reference to gender. In their study, 117 boys and 115 girls with the mean age of 10 participated and completed: (a) a comprehension test, and (b) a questionnaire. The two tools extracted information about reading frequency, attitude toward reading, attitude toward school, beliefs relating to competency and academic support from peers and teachers. The study concluded that girls' attitude toward reading is more positive than that of boys. As they put it, "overall, girls had better reading comprehension, read more frequently, and had a more positive attitude to reading and school. However, smaller gender differences were found in reading ability than in attitudes and frequency of reading" (p. 199). Hence, it can be concluded tat girls have a more positive attitude toward reading than boys (Nielson, 1978; Smith, 1990; Swalander & Taube, 2007; Unrau and Schlackman, 2006; Worrell, Roth, & Gabelko, 2007). Not only do girls read more frequently than boys (Millard, 1997a, 1997b; Sainsbury, 2004), but also they nurture better reading ability through time in comparison to boys (Logan & Johnston, 2009; Mullis, Martin, Kennedy, & Foy, 2007). Learners' attitudes toward reading have a strong impact on learners' academic success.

The current study also sets out to investigate whether the linguistic threshold hypothesis is applicable to the affective domain of reading. Therefore, it will be attempted to find out how Iranian EFL learners at intermediate and advanced levels of language proficiency perform in

reading comprehension and apply reading attitudes from L1 to L2 with reference to gender.

3. Research Questions

Based on the preceding discussion, the following research questions are put forward to guide this study:

Q1. What differences are observed in L1 and L2 reading attitudes according to gender?
Q2. What is the contribution of L1 reading attitude and L2 proficiency levels (Advanced versus Intermediate) to L2 reading attitude?
Q3. What differences are observed in L2 reading attitude for advanced and intermediate students with reference to gender?

4. Method

4.1 Participants

As many as 150 Iranian EFL learners (74 males and 76 females) with the mean age of 19 participated in this study. They had received formal instruction in English for two to four years. None of the participants had the experience of living in an English-speaking country. The subjects were randomly selected from different classes at Iran Language Institute (ILI), Karaj, Iran. The sample is hoped to be representative of Iranian students who are studying English in different ILI institutes.

4.2 Instrumentation

The Language Proficiency Test: To ascertain the homogeneity of the participants in terms of language proficiency, the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency was utilized. The test was felt to provide a suitable measure for this study because of the relative

simplicity in administering and scoring it. It is a standardized 90-item multiple-choice test which consists of grammar, vocabulary, and reading subsections. For the vocabulary subsection, test takers should choose the best word to fill a blank in a sentence. For the grammar subsection they should identify errors in a sentence. Test takers also had to answer a few questions that followed several everyday passages so that they could be assessed at various levels of reading ability. The reliability (Cronbach's α) of the test was 0.85 (Weigle, 2000).

L1 & L2 reading attitude questionnaires: The English reading attitude questionnaire developed by Yamashita (2007) was used in the present study (see appendix A). This questionnaire comprised three sections. According to Yamashita (2007), "The first section collected demographic information and the second and third sections contained five-point Likert-scale questionnaire items asking about the students' affective reactions toward reading in L1 and in L2, respectively" (p.87). The internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) for the 22-item questionnaire was found to be 0.83. The questionnaire consisted of five components namely *Comfort, Intellectual Value, Practical Value, Anxiety*, and *Linguistic Value.* These five components of reading attitude interact with one another and have an important influence on reading attitude formation (Yamashita, 2007). These components will be further discussed in the procedure section below.

In order to eradicate any possible misunderstanding or confusion based on the cultural differences between Japanese and Persian, the researchers decided to pilot-test the English questionnaire (L2) and its Persian translation (L1) with 30 students at ILI. Prior to the administration, the translated version of the questionnaire was judged by four TEFL professors through emails. As a result, some translated items, as well as English items, which were ambiguous, underwent changes. In the first phase of the pilot study, some students, similar to the subjects of the main sample, were asked to read the items carefully and identify the items with unclear meaning. The results of the pilot study led to some changes in the questionnaire. Then, in the second phase of the pilot study, the questionnaire was administered for the

purpose of estimating its reliability. The reliability index, assessed by Cronbach alpha (*a*) formula, was found to be .94.

4.3 Design

In the present study, in order to see possible differences between L1 and L2 reading attitudes (dependent variables) and between groups at different levels of L2 proficiency with reference to gender (independent variables), a correlational research design was chosen.

4.4 Data Collection Procedure

After obtaining permission from the instructors, the two questionnaires as well as the proficiency test were administered to four intermediate and four advanced classes in ILI. A total of 163 students were instructed to answer the Michigan Test as well as L1 (Persian) and L2 (English) reading attitude questionnaires right after taking the proficiency test in one session. Students were assured that the results would be used solely for research purposes and would be kept confidential and their teachers would not see them. Students rated the items of L1 and L2 reading attitude questionnaires, using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*agree completely*) to 5 (*disagree completely*). From this population, 13 students were eliminated because eight of them had not properly completed their questionnaires and five of them had not answered the proficiency test.

4.5 Data Analysis Procedure

For scoring the 90-item proficiency test a normal distribution was used since, as Brown (1996) has indicated, "the test must provide scores that form a wide distribution so that interpretations of the differences among the students will be as fair as possible" (p. 10). One characteristic of a proficiency test, as a norm-referenced test, is that it should produce “scores which fall into a normal distribution” (Ibid, p.

127), which allows relative interpretations of the test scores in terms of "how each student's performance relates to the performances of all other students" (Ibid, p.126). A second characteristic is its test structure: The test "is relatively long and contains a wide variety of question content types" (Ibid, p. 16). In other words, a proficiency test tends to test overall general language proficiency. Hence, in order to distinguish between intermediate and advanced students based on raw scores, a normal distribution was used.

For scoring the L1 and L2 reading attitude questionnaires, the procedure proposed by Yamashita (2007) was used. First, the items were unscrambled according to the inventory scoring rubric. Then, a score was assigned to each answer which ranged from 1 to 5: *1=completely disagree, 2= disagree to a certain extent, 3= uncertain, 4= agree to a certain extent, 5= completely agree.* Then, the scores for all items were added and an ultimate score was calculated. The range of scores for L1 and L2 reading attitude questionnaires were each from 22 to 110. Items 1, 3, 4, 16, 17, and 18 of both the English and Persian questionnaires were reverse-scored so that they could be added up to the total score one obtains on the whole questionnaires. The more scores one obtains on both English and Persian attitude questionnaires, the more positive attitude one has towards reading.

Next, the unscrambled items were divided into 5 components according to the scoring rubric. The first component (*Comfort*) contained 6 items. The second factor (*Intellectual Value*) included 8 items, the third one (*Practical Value*) contained 9 items, the fourth component (*Anxiety*) included 4 items and the last part (*Linguistic Value*) included 3 items. For items 1 to 6, the higher the score, the more comfort the student feels toward L1 and L2 reading. Concerning items 7 to 11, the higher the score, the more intellectual one seems to be. For items 12 to 15, the higher the score, the more practical value the student feels to consider. Considering items 16 to 19, the higher the score, the less anxious one seems to be. For items 20 to 22, the higher the score, the more linguistic development occurs for the student. Since the number of items in these five parts was different, the averages had to be calculated for the purpose of comparison. The average for each

component of the questionnaires showed whether the students' attitudes in L1 and L2 reading are the same or not. Based on these pieces of information, it could be predicted whether the students scored very high or very low in any of these components for L1 and L2 reading attitude questionnaires.

5. Results

5.1 Research Question 1

What differences are observed in L1 and L2 reading attitudes according to gender? The *first research question* was concerned with the transfer of reading attitudes from L1 to L2 with reference to gender. To investigate this question, an *'Independent T-test'* was run to compare the L1 and L2 reading attitude components based on gender, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Independent T-test for the differences in L1 and L2 reading attitudes with reference to gender

Attitude	Gender	Mean L1	Mean L2	Mean difference	T	p
Comfort	Male	18.96 (2.05)	17.83 (2.95)	1.13	2.71	.007
	Female	19 (2.6)	17.25 (2.95)	1.75	3.84	.001
Intellectual Value	Male	18.35 (6.11)	9.52 (2.7)	8.83	11.35	.001
	Female	20.13 (5.83)	9.8 (2.86)	10.33	13.85	.001
Practical Value	Male	10.81 (4.1)	6.18 (2.21)	4.63	8.47	.001
	Female	11.6 (3.9)	6.05 (2.4)	5.55	10.54	.001
Anxiety	Male	14.43 (3.34)	11.12 (2.93)	3.31	6.39	.001

	Female	14.6 (3.84)	10.65 (3.21)	3.95	6.87	.001
Linguistic Value	Male	5.75 (2.27)	4.41 (1.75)	1.31	4.009	.001
	Female	6 (2.2)	4.22 (1.78)	1.78	5.46	.001
Total	Male	59.7 (9.86)	49.09 (6.28)	10.61	7.8	.001
	Female	61.98 (11.38)	47.98 (7.2)	14	9.06	.001

$p<0.05$

As can be seen, the significant levels of 'T' derived from L1 and L2 reading attitude components are all smaller than .05, hence they are all significant. Therefore, based on these results it can be concluded that:

- The highest mean difference between L1 and L2 reading attitudes is reported for the *'Intellectual'* component, which was T=11.35, p=0.001 for males and T=13.85, p=0.001 for females.
- The lowest mean difference between L1 and L2 reading attitudes is reported for the *'Comfort'* component, which was T=2.71, p=0.007 for males and T=3.84, p=0.001 for females.

5.2 Research Question 2

What is the contribution of L1 reading attitude and L2 proficiency levels to L2 reading attitude? In order to investigate the prediction level of the *'Total'* L2 reading attitude according to L1 reading attitude components and L2 proficiency levels (i.e., advanced versus intermediate), the Multivariate Regression Analysis was used the result of which is displayed in Table 2.

Table 2: Multivariate regression analysis for the prediction level of *'total'* L2 reading attitudes and L1 reading attitude components and L2 proficiency levels

	Attitude	Level	N	R	Sig	R^2	F	B	T	Sig
Total -L2	**Comfort**	Advanced	84	.13	.12	1.69	3.29	-.09	.68	.49
		Intermediate	66	.17	.07	2.89	3.28	.17	1.23	.22
	Intellectual Value	Advanced	84	.16	.07	.49	3.29	-.12	.76	.44
		Intermediate	66	-.12	.15	1.44	3.28	-.24	1.52	.13
	Practical Value	Advanced	84	.34	.04	11.56	3.29	-.54	.2.64	.01
		Intermediate	66	.17	.08	2.89	3.28	.29	1.09	.27
	Anxiety	Advanced	84	.11	.001	1.21	3.29	-.13	.72	.04
		Intermediate	66	.35	.002	12.25	3.28	.34	1.65	.1
	Linguistic Value	Advanced	84	.07	1.24	.49	3.29	.02	.14	.88
		Intermediate	66	.03	.37	.09	3.28	-.14	.66	.5
	Total	Advanced	84	.26	.008	6.76	3.29	.75	1.87	.046
		Intermediate	66	.25	.01	6.25	3.28	.08	.19	.84

$p<0.05$

Based on the above results, it can be concluded that:

Among the advanced group:

- The *'Practical Value'* component of L1 reading attitude has the highest prediction power for forming the *'Total'* L2 reading attitude. The correlation coefficient of .34 (r=.34, p=.04) and the prediction level with the coefficient of determination 11.56 (r^2=11.56) are reported.
- The *'Total'* L1 reading attitude, in the second place, has the highest prediction power for forming the *'Total'* L2 reading attitude. The correlation coefficient of .26 (r=.26, p=.008) and the prediction level with the coefficient of determination 6.76 (r^2=6.76) are reported.
- The *'Anxiety'* component of L1 reading attitude has the lowest prediction power for forming the *'Total'* L2 reading attitude. The correlation coefficient of .11 (r=.11, p=.001) and the prediction level with the coefficient of determination 1.21 (r^2=1.21) are reported.

Among the intermediate group:

Not even a single L1 reading attitude component has the prediction power for forming the *'Total'* L2 reading attitude.

In order to investigate the relationship and the prediction level of *'Comfort'* component of L2 reading attitude with reference to L1 reading attitude components and L2 proficiency levels, the Multivariate Regression Analysis was used, as illustrated in Table 3.

Transfer of reading attitude from L1 to L2

Table 3: Results of multivariate regression analysis for investigating the prediction level of "*comfort"* component of L2 reading attitude according to L1 reading attitude components and L2 proficiency levels

	Attitude	Level	N	R	Sig	R^2	F	B	T	Sig
Comfort-L2	Comfort	Advanced	84	.31	.002	9.61	6.99	.405	3.11	.003
		Intermediate	66	.12	.16	1.44	2.31	.05	.39	.69
	Intellectual Value	Advanced	84	-.15	.05	2.25	6.99	-.34	2.37	.02
		Intermediate	66	-.05	.32	.25	2.31	-.08	.52	.605
	Practical Value	Advanced	84	-.008	.47	.0064	6.99	.12	.65	.513
		Intermediate	66	-.07	.26	.49	2.31	-.108	.38	.69
	Anxiety	Advanced	84	.38	.001	14.44	6.99	.48	2.98	.004
		Intermediate	66	.41	.001	16.81	2.31	.36	1.66	.001
	Linguistic Value	Advanced	84	.107	.16	1.14	6.99	.005	.03	.97
		Intermediate	66	.07	.28	.49	2.31	.05	.25	.79
	Total	Advanced	84	.11	.15	1.21	6.99	-.11	.31	.75
		Intermediate	66	.16	.08	2.56	2.31	.09	.21	.82

$p<0.05$

Based on the results displayed in Table 3, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Among the advanced and intermediate groups, the anxiety component of L1 reading attitude is the only component that has the highest prediction power for forming the *'Comfort'* component of L2 reading attitude. In the advanced group, the correlation coefficient of

.38 (r=.38, p=.001) and the prediction level with the coefficient of determination 14.44 (r^2=14.44) are reported. On the other hand, in the intermediate group, the correlation coefficient of .41 (r=.41, p=.001) and the prediction level with the coefficient of determination 14.44 (r^2=16.81) are reported.

In order to investigate the prediction level of *'Comfort'* component of L2 reading attitude according to the L1 reading attitude components and L2 proficiency levels, the Multivariate Regression Analysis was used again, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Results of multivariate regression analysis for investigating the prediction level of "*intellectual value"* component of L2 reading attitude according to L1 reading attitude components and L2 proficiency levels

	Attitude	Level	N	R	Sig	R^2	F	B	T	Sig
Intellectual Value	Comfort	Advanced	84	-.16	.07	2.56	3.13	-.33	2.19	.03
		Intermediate	66	.3	.006	9	3.67	.29	1.97	.05
	Intellectual Value	Advanced	84	.19	.04	3.61	3.13	-1.2	2.19	.004
		Intermediate	66	-.004	.48	.0016	3.67	-.12	.72	.47
	Practical Value	Advanced	84	-.03	.36	.09	3.13	-.51	2.47	.16
		Intermediate	66	.11	.17	1.21	3.67	.13	.47	.63
	Anxiety	Advanced	84	-.35	.01	12.25	3.13	.5	3.45	.008
		Intermediate	66	.06	.29	.36	3.67	.02	.11	.91
	Linguistic Value	Advanced	84	-.12	.05	1.44	3.13	.03	.18	.05
		Intermediate	66	-.04	.37	.16	3.67	.22	1.01	.316
	Total	Advanced	84	.15	.03	2.25	3.13	.48	2.7	.008
		Intermediate	66	.14	.12	1.96	3.67	.21	.46	.64

$p<0.05$

Based on these results, it can be concluded that:

Among the advanced group:

- The *'Anxiety'* component of L1 reading attitude has the highest prediction power for forming the *'Intellectual Value'* component of L2 reading attitude. The correlation coefficient of -.35 (r=-.35, p=.01) and the prediction level with the coefficient of determination 12.25 (r^2=12.25) are reported.
- The *'Intellectual Value'* component of L1 reading attitude, in the second place, has the highest prediction power for forming the *'Intellectual Value'* component of L2 reading attitude. The correlation coefficient of .26 (r=.26, p=.008) and the prediction level with the coefficient of determination 6.76 (r^2=6.76) are reported.
- The *'Comfort'* component of L1 reading attitude, in the third place, has the highest prediction power for forming the *'Intellectual Value'* component of L2 reading attitude. The correlation coefficient of .16 (r=.16, p=.04) and the prediction level with the coefficient of determination 2.56 (r^2=2.56) are reported.
- The *'Total'* L1 reading attitude, in the fourth place, has the lowest prediction power for forming the *'Intellectual Value'* component of L2 reading attitude. The correlation coefficient of .15 (r=.15, p=.03) and the prediction level with the coefficient of determination 2.25 (r^2=2.25) are reported.
- The *'Linguistic Value'* component of L1 reading attitude, in the fifth place, has the highest prediction power for forming the *'Intellectual Value'* component of L2 reading attitude. The correlation coefficient of .12 (r=.12, p=.05) and the prediction level with the coefficient of determination 1.44 (r^2=1.44) are reported.

Among the intermediate group:

The *'Comfort'* component of L1 reading attitude is the only component among the others that has the highest prediction power for forming the *'Intellectual Value'* component of L2 reading attitude. The correlation coefficient of .3 (r=.3, p=.006) and the prediction level with the coefficient of determination 9 (r^2=9) are reported.

In order to investigate the prediction level of *'Practical Value'* component of L2 reading attitude according to the L1 reading attitude components and L2 proficiency levels (i.e., advanced and intermediate), the Multivariate Regression Analysis was used, as illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5: Results of multivariate regression analysis for investigating the prediction level of the "*practical value"* component of L2 reading attitude according to the L1 reading attitude components and L2 proficiency levels

	Attitude	Level	N	R	Sig	R^2	F	B	T	Sig
Practical Value	Comfort	Advanced	84	.06	.27	..36	2.23	-.07	.49	.62
		Intermediate	66	-.13	.13	1.69	2.66	.001	.009	.99
	Intellectual Value	Advanced	84	.07	.26	.49	2.23	-.18	.65	.51
		Intermediate	66	-.11	.18	1.21	2.66	.09	.59	.551
	Practical Value	Advanced	84	.34	.002	11.56	2.66	-.72	2.6	.01
		Intermediate	66	.06	.29	.36	2.23	.27	1.22	.22
	Anxiety	Advanced	84	-.07	.23	.49	2.23	-.34	1.77	.08
		Intermediate	66	.08	.26	.64	2.66	.34	1.6	.11
	Linguistic Value	Advanced	84	.16	.07	2.56	2.23	-.02	.15	.88
		Intermediate	66	.06	.3	.36	2.66	.03	.17	.85
	Total	Advanced	84	.11	.15	1.21	2.23	-.67	1.53	.12
		Intermediate	66	.15	.1	2.25	2.66	-.47	1.08	.28

p<0.05

Based on the outcome of Table 5, it can be concluded that:

Among the advanced group:

The *'Practical Value'* component of L1 reading attitude is the only component among the others that has the highest prediction power for forming the *'Practical Value'* component of L2 reading attitude. The correlation coefficient of .34 (r=.34, p=.002) and the prediction level with the coefficient of determination 11.56 (r^2=11.56) are reported.

Among the Intermediate group:

Not even a single L1 reading attitude component has the prediction power for forming the *'Practical Value'* component of L2 reading attitude.

In order to investigate the prediction level of *'Anxiety'* component of L2 reading attitude according to the L1 reading attitude components and L2 proficiency levels, the Multivariate Regression Analysis was used, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Results of multivariate regression analysis for investigating the prediction level of the "*anxiety"* component of L2 reading attitude according to the L1 reading attitude components and L2 proficiency

	Attitude	Level	N	R	Sig	R^2	F	B	T	Sig
Anxiety	Comfort	Advanced	84	.1	.16	1	6.72	.08	.61	.54
		Intermediate	66	.02	.41	.04	2.05	.002	.01	.99
	Intellectual Value	Advanced	84	.13	.1	1.69	6.72	.13	.87	.38
		Intermediate	66	-.12	.16	1.44	2.05	-.2	1.18	.24
	Practical	Advanced	84	.04	.33	.16	6.72	-.03	.18	.85

Value	Intermediate	66	-.05	.33	.25	2.05	.12	.43	.66
Anxiety	Advanced	84	.2	.06	4	2.05	.16	.46	.74
	Intermediate	66	.54	.001	29.16	6.72	.77	.001	4.72
Linguistic Value	Advanced	84	-.009	.46	.008	6.72	.2	1.49	.13
	Intermediate	66	-.09	.23	.81	2.05	-.24	1.03	.3
Total	Advanced	84	.23	.01	5.29	6.72	-.42	1.14	.25
	Intermediate	66	-.06	.31	.36	2.05	.14	.31	.75

$p<0.05$

Based on the results presented in Table 6, it can be concluded that:

Among the advanced group:

Not even a single L1 reading attitude component has the prediction power for forming the *'Anxiety'* component of L2 reading attitude.

Among the intermediate group:

The *'Anxiety'* component of L1 reading attitude is the only component among the others that has the highest prediction power for forming the *'Anxiety'* component of L2 reading attitude. The correlation coefficient of .54 (r=.54, p=.001) and the prediction level with the coefficient of determination 29.16 (r^2=29.16) are reported.

In order to investigate the prediction level of *'Linguistic Value'* component of L2 reading attitude according to the L1 reading attitude components and L2 proficiency levels, the Multivariate Regression Analysis was used, as illustrated in Table 7.

Table 7: Results of multivariate regression analysis for investigating the prediction level of the "*linguistic value"* component of L2 reading attitude according to the L1 reading attitude components and L2 proficiency levels

	Attitude	Level	N	R	Sig	R^2	F	B	T	Sig
Linguistic Value	**Comfort**	Advanced	84	-.6	.02	36	4.53	-.65	3.27	.002
		Intermediate	66	.03	.39	.09	3.19	-.02	.18	.85
	Intellectual Value	Advanced	84	.22	.01	4.84	4.53	.03	.23	.81
		Intermediate	66	-.1	.2	1	3.19	-.19	1.12	.26
	Practical Value	Advanced	84	-.4	.03	16	4.53	-1.11	2.84	.006
		Intermediate	66	.06	.3	36	3.19	-.21	.73	.46
	Anxiety	Advanced	84	-.1	.05	1	4.53	-.02	.14	.05
		Intermediate	66	.1	.2	1	3.19	-.04	.19	.85
	Linguistic Value	Advanced	84	.25	.009	6.25	4.53	.47	2.75	.007
		Intermediate	66	.27	.01	7.29	3.19	.16	.7	.48
	Total	Advanced	84	.13	.01	1.69	4.53	-.33	3.27	.02
		Intermediate	66	.18	.06	3.24	3.19	.33	.7	.47

$p<0.05$

Based on the results displayed in Table 7, it can be concluded that:

Among the advanced group:

- The *'Anxiety'* component of L1 reading attitude has the highest prediction power for forming the *'Intellectual Value'* component of L2 reading attitude. The correlation coefficient of -.35 (r=-.35, p=.01) and the prediction level with the coefficient of determination 12.25 (r^2=12.25) are reported.
- The *'Intellectual Value'* component of L1 reading attitude, in the second place, has the highest prediction power for forming the *'Intellectual Value'* component of L2 reading attitude. The correlation coefficient of .26 (r=.26, p=.008) and the prediction level with the coefficient of determination 6.76 (r^2=6.76) are reported.

- The *'Comfort'* component of L1 reading attitude, in the third place, has the highest prediction power for forming the *'Intellectual Value'* component of L2 reading attitude. The correlation coefficient of .16 (r=.16, p=.04) and the prediction level with the coefficient of determination 2.56 (r^2=2.56) are reported.
- The *'Total'* L1 reading attitude, in the fourth place, has the lowest prediction power for forming the *'Intellectual Value'* component of L2 reading attitude. The correlation coefficient of .15 (r=.15, p=.03) and the prediction level with the coefficient of determination 2.25 (r^2=2.25) are reported.
- The *'Linguistic Value'* component of L1 reading attitude, in the fifth place, has the highest prediction power for forming the *'Intellectual Value'* component of L2 reading attitude. The correlation coefficient of .12 (r=.12, p=.05) and the prediction level with the coefficient of determination 1.44 (r^2=1.44) are reported.

Among the intermediate group:

The *'Comfort'* component of L1 reading attitude is the only component among the others that has the highest prediction power for forming the *'Intellectual Value'* component of L2 reading attitude. The correlation coefficient of .3 (r=.3, *p*=.006) and the prediction level with the coefficient of determination 9 (r^2=9) are reported.

5.3 Research Question 3

What differences are observed in L2 reading attitude for advanced and intermediate students with reference to gender? To investigate this question, a two-way ANOVA was run to compare the L2 reading attitude components of these two groups based on gender, as shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Two-way ANOVA for investigating for the differences in L2 reading attitude according to learner groups and gender

Attitude	Gender	Level	Mean L2	F	P
Comfort	Male	Advanced	17.64 (2.5)	.205	.652
		Intermediate	18.13 (3.2)		
	Female	Advanced	16.79 (3.07)		
		Intermediate	17.72 (2.78)		
Intellectual Value	Male	Advanced	9.66 (2.42)	.157	.693
		Intermediate	9.31 (3.11)		
	Female	Advanced	10.15 (2.36)		
		Intermediate	9.43 (3.3)		
Practical Value	Male	Advanced	6.11 (1.79)	.44	.507
		Intermediate	6.31 (2.77)		
	Female	Advanced	6.20 (2.83)		
		Intermediate	5.89 (1.88)		
Anxiety	Male	Advanced	12.04 (3.06)	.122	.727
		Intermediate	9.68 (2.03)		
	Female	Advanced	11.64 (3.35)		
		Intermediate	9.62 (2.73)		
Linguistic Value	Male	Advanced	5.02 (1.88)	.453	.502
		Intermediate	3.48 (.94)		
	Female	Advanced	4.79 (2.23)		
		Intermediate	3.62 (.79)		
Total	Male	Advanced	50.48 (5.8)	.015	.903
		Intermediate	46.93 (6.36)		
	Female	Advanced	49.58 (7.51)		
		Intermediate	46.29 (6.53)		

$p<0.05$

As displayed in Table 8, the 'F' significant levels computed the effects of gender and proficiency levels (i.e., the independent variables) on L2 reading attitude (i.e., the dependent variable) which are all greater than .05. Therefore, statistically speaking, the 'F' levels are not significant. Hence, it can be concluded that both of the two independent variables (i.e., gender and proficiency levels) together had no effect on L2 reading attitude.

6. Discussion

The results of the current study contribute to the understanding of the relationship between L1 and L2 reading attitudes with reference to gender and language proficiency. The findings pointed to the transfer from L1 to L2 reading attitudes, the role that L2 proficiency (Intermediate and Advanced levels) and gender may play in the transfer of reading attitude, as well as the differential effect of L2 proficiency and gender on the five variables of reading attitude.

The results of this study can be compared and contrasted with those of other researches.

For instance, the findings of the present study are not in congruity with the qualitative studies conducted by Jiménez et al. (1995, 1996) in which they concluded that L2 proficiency
influenced L1 and L2 reading attitudes. Advanced L2 students considered L2 reading as the same activity in L1; on the other hand, low-level L2 readers viewed reading as "an almost complete mystery" (Jiménez, 1997, p. 235, cited in Yamashita, 2007, p. 85). In these studies, L2 proficiency, bilingualism, and biliteracy were the variables for L2 reading attitude. The findings of the present study, however, revealed that L2 proficiency alone or together with gender generally had no effect on L2 reading attitude and the EFL learners continued to have the distinctive attitudes between L1 and L2 reading at intermediate and advanced levels of L2 proficiency with reference to gender.

In this study, the highest mean difference between L1 and L2 reading attitudes with reference to gender was reported for the *'Intellectual'* component and the lowest mean difference was reported for the *'Comfort'* component. Hence, the *'Comfort'* component of reading attitude is the most difficult to be transferred among the other reading attitude components. Therefore, L2 *'Comfort'* makes the least contribution among the five variables. Yamashita (2007), also, found the same result on the *'Comfort'* component of reading attitude. On the other hand, learners' intellectual view toward reading, which reflects "students' beliefs concerning the intellectual benefits that they might get from reading" (Yamashita, 2007, p. 89), is the easiest to be

transferred from L1 to L2 may be because the learners' very first goal is to make meaning out of L2 texts through using their L1 background information.

The results of this study are in congruity with the studies conducted by Yamashita (2004, 2007). She discovered that L2 proficiency had no significant effect on L2 reading attitude and the EFL learners maintained the distinctive attitudes between L1 and L2 reading at low, intermediate, and advanced levels of L2 proficiency. Similarly, in the current study L2 proficiency and gender both individually and together had no significant effect on L2 reading attitude. However, in both Yamashita's (2004, 2007) and this study, L1 reading attitude contributes effectively to the formation of L2 reading attitude.

Furthermore, in the current study, both females and males had more positive feelings toward *comfort* and *anxiety* in L1 than in L2. Probably, this difference originated from the fact that adult EFL learners had a weak command of L2 proficiency in comparison to L1 proficiency because they were literate in L1. Hence, they not only felt less anxious but also they were more comfortable toward L1. Another possible reason for L2 readers having more difficulty to abandon their anxiety is possibly because they were largely limited to the EFL class environment. This difference would be caused by the greater degree of difficulty that both males and females would usually feel when reading in their L2 than reading in their L1 because of their weaker L2 language ability. Another possible cause could be pedagogically induced, i.e., L2 reading is largely restricted to class work. Consequently, the males' and females' less comfortable and more anxious attitude in L2 reading might have been emerged in EFL classes. This result is in congruity with Yamashita's (2007) study concerning the learner's more positive feelings while reading in L1 than in L2.

Moreover, L1 reading attitude contributed significantly to form L2 reading attitude. This fact implies that L1 reading attitude transferred to L2 with different levels of negative and positive feelings toward the two languages. For instance, the learners who felt less comfortable and

more anxious toward L1 reading were also more susceptible to being more anxious toward L2 reading. This study is in line with previous studies which demonstrated the contribution of L1 reading attitude to L2 (Jiménez, 1997; Jiménez et al., 1995, 1996; Kamhi-Stein, 2003; Yamashita, 2004, 2007).

Besides, the results of the present study confirmed previous studies concerning L1 reading attitude in that females had a more positive attitude toward reading than males (Askov & Fischbach, 1973; Coles & Hall, 2002; Hall & Coles, 1999; Kush & Watkins, 1996; Logan & Johnston, 2009; McKenna et al., 1995; Sainsbury & Schagen, 2004; Smith, 1990); however, the results for L2 reading attitude, although trivial, revealed that females, compared to males, had a less positive attitude.

However, findings of the present study are not in perfect congruity with Yamashita's (2007) study in which she found that both L2 *comfort* and *linguistic value* in the advanced group are significantly different from intermediate and low groups because of the advanced proficiency level of L2 readers. In other words, the advanced learners could more easily transfer their comfortable feelings from L1 to L2 reading and they could put more emphasis on the content as well as the language structure (*linguistic value*) compared to the lower groups. Accordingly, in this study considering the *linguistic value* component of reading attitude, both males and females transferred the content as well as the language structure more easily in comparison to the intermediate-level learners. However, considering the *comfort* component of reading attitude, both males and females at the intermediate level felt more comfortable in comparison to the advanced-level learners. Generally speaking, when gender and proficiency levels were put into account to predict L2 reading attitude components together, the results, though trivial, showed that advanced level L2 learners had a more positive attitude in comparison to their intermediate counterparts. Despite this difference, it can be concluded that the influence of gender and proficiency levels together were much *weaker* to contribute to the transfer of L1 reading attitude to L2 reading attitude as the level of EFL learners promoted. Thus, the present study is in agreement with the

previous studies done by Yamashita (2004, 2007) that adult EFL learners nurture distinctive attitudes toward reading in L1 and L2 with reference to different levels of L2 proficiency and gender.

In summary, the present study discovered both similarities and differences in L1 and L2 transfer between cognitive and affective areas of reading with reference to gender. Both aspects of reading do transfer from L1 to L2 with reference to gender. Therefore, what both male and female EFL learners have learned and acquired in their L1 reading becomes an important criterion based on which L2 literacy develops. On the other hand, proficiency level and gender do not play an important role in L1 reading attitude transfer to L2 affective domain. Thus, the concept of linguistic threshold, which has prevailed the literature review in transfer of cognitive strategies from L1 to L2, may not apply to the affective domain of reading with reference to gender.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study found evidence which supports the transfer of affective domain of L1 and L2. This finding supports Day and Bamford's (1998) model that L1 reading attitude is one of the factors influencing the formation L2 reading attitudes. Hence, the transfer of reading from L1 to L2 occurs both for the strategies as well as the abilities that L2 learners utilize (Davis & Bistodeau, 1993; Day & Bamford, 1998; Sarig, 1987; Stevenson, Schoonen, & de Glopper, 2003; Taillefer & Pugh, 1998; Yamashita, 2002b; Zwaan & Brown, 1996), and for the positive or negative attitude that they exercise (Jiménez et al., 1995, 1996; Kamhi-Stein, 2003; Reeves, 2002; Saito et al., 1999; Yamashita, 2004, 2007). Such findings will help deepen the researchers' insight into to the advancement of research. The results of the current study showed that reading attitudes do transfer from L1 to L2; however, the students' L1 and L2 reading attitudes were different. The study also showed that the influence of L2 proficiency and gender are much weaker to contribute L1 to L2 reading attitude at higher levels of L2 proficiency. Moreover, as distinct from transfer of reading

abilities and strategies, the notion of *'Linguistic Threshold'* does not affect the transfer of reading attitudes from L1 to L2 with reference to gender.

The central implication of the present study concerns the way in which teachers view reading attitudes both in L1 and L2. It has been repeatedly shown that reading attitude influences how L2 readers read (Coles & Hall, 2002; Hall & Coles, 1999; Jiménez, 1997; Jiménez, 1997; Jiménez et al., 1995, 1996; Kamhi-Stein, 2003; Millard, 1997a, 1997b). The learners whose attitude toward reading in L1 is positive are likely to feel positively when approaching L2 texts even though they are not very successful L2 readers. Hence, such learners might feel more comfortable and less anxious when reading in L2. Consequently, they are motivated enough to improve their L2 reading in the future. Teachers should prepare reading materials for EFL learners at their appropriate level of proficiency and they should nurture good reading habits through encouraging learners to read both L1 and L2 texts not only for exams or assignments but also for getting information through constantly involving themselves in reading texts.

Moreover, teachers should compensate for the females' less positive attitudes in L2 through activities which encourage them to look upon reading more positively. Hence, respecting learners' interests is important in this process, and teachers should build a well-structured bridge between L1 and L2 in order to help EFL learners develop positive attitudes. At the same time, teachers should reflect upon the learners' interests and needs in order to make them feel less anxious in the reading process. However, reflective teachers should not totally ignore the possible influence of learners' L2 linguistic development upon L2 affective domain.

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Appendix (A)

Kindly read the following statements and check one square for each item according to your own experience in learning English. The numbers in this questionnaire mean: **1 → disagree completely, 2 → disagree to a certain extent, 3 → uncertain, 4 → agree to a certain extent, 5 → agree completely**

1. Reading English is troublesome.

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. I feel relaxed when I read English.

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. Reading English is dull.

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4. I feel bored when I read English

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. I feel motivated and encouraged when I read English.

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

6. Reading English is enjoyable.

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

7. I can become more sophisticated if I read English.

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

8. I can get plenty of information if I read English.

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

9. I can acquire broad knowledge if I read English.

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

10. I get to know about new ways of thinking if I read English.

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

11. I get to know about different values if I read English.

1	2	3	4	5

Transfer of reading attitude from L1 to L2

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

12. Reading English is useful for my future career.

1 2 3 4 5

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

13. Reading English is useful to get a good grade in class.

1 2 3 4 5

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

14. Reading English is useful to get credit among other students in class.

1 2 3 4 5

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

15. Reading English is useful to get a job.

1 2 3 4 5

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

16. I feel anxious if I don't know all the words in an English text.

1 2 3 4 5

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

17. I sometimes feel anxious that I may not understand what I am reading.

1 2 3 4 5

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

18. I feel anxious when I'm not sure whether I understood the book content.

1 2 3 4 5

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

19. I don't mind even if I cannot understand the book content entirely.

1 2 3 4 5

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

20. I can increase my vocabulary if I read English.

1 2 3 4 5

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

21. I can develop reading ability if I read English.

1 2 3 4 5

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

22. I can improve my awareness toward the English language if I read English.

1 2 3 4 5

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐