The Interaction Between Linguistic Competence and Metacognitive Awareness in Reading Comprehension Test Performance of Iranian EFL Learners

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The study investigated the probable interaction between language ability and metacognitive awareness of Iranian EFL learners in reading comprehension test performance. The further concern of the study was to explore the extent that metacognitive awareness and test performance was related. The participants consisted of 487 university students majoring in different academic fields. They took a reading test and answered a questionnaire successively in one session. The findings showed that the students at the high level of reading proficiency had more metacognitive awareness and implemented metacognitive strategies most frequently in taking the test. The findings also revealed a statistically significant interaction between metacognitive awareness and test performance of the participants. The findings provide empirical evidences for the interaction between linguistic and strategic competences as the two major components of communicative language ability, discussed in different frameworks of communicative language ability, including Bachman’s (1990) framework. The findings are of importance because they can help language teachers focus attention on different aspects of communicative competence, particularly linguistic and strategic competences in teaching and test-taking settings. In addition, the findings can help language teachers interpret test scores more carefully to make fair decisions about actual ability of test takers.