# Relationship among Iranian EFL Students' Foreign Language Anxiety, Foreign Language Listening Anxiety and Their Listening Comprehension

Samaneh Serraj[1] & Noreen bt. Noordin[1]

[1] Department of Language and Humanities Education, Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia

Correspondence: Nooreen bt. Noordin, Department of Language and Humanities Education, Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 UPM Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia. Tel: 603-8946-8216. Fax: 603-89435386. E-mail: nooyeen@yahoo.com; sama_oct@yahoo.com

## Abstract

Anxiety is an influential factor in a foreign language learning domain and plays a crucial role in language learners' performance. The following study was conducted to explore the possible impact of Foreign Language Anxiety and Foreign Language Listening Anxiety on language learners' listening skill. The researcher was interested to know the correlation that could exist among the three variables: Listening Comprehension, Foreign Language Anxiety and Foreign Language Listening Anxiety. The participants of the study were 210 Iranian EFL students in Iran. The study revealed that there was -.414 correlations between FLLA and listening comprehension and -.214 correlations between FLA and listening comprehension whereas FLA and FLLA enjoyed a .513 correlation. It can be concluded that the relationship between Foreign Language Anxiety and Foreign Language Listening Anxiety of the participants are in accordance with each other. Furthermore the result shows that the impact of FLLA on Iranian students' listening comprehension skill is significantly more problematic. Therefore it is recommended that FL teachers and learners should be more aware of the hindering effect of FLA and FLLA in particular on the process of teaching and learning the listening comprehension.

**Keywords:** foreign language anxiety, foreign language listening anxiety, listening comprehension

## 1. Introduction

The realm of learning a new language can sometimes prove to be a traumatic experience for many English Second Language/ English Foreign Language learners. In fact, many students who are now expressing discontent and have conveyed either implicitly or explicitly are suffering from known as anxiety and identify themselves as anxious language learners. According to Worde (1998), the concept of anxiety is concentrated frequently throughout language learning literature; these studies (Aida, 1994; Bailey, 1983; Crookal and Oxford, 1991; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Horwitz & Young, 1991; MacIntyre, 1995; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1988, 1989, 1991; Young, l992) have examined different perspectives of anxiety, and have consecutively generated varying definitions. These studies have also concentrated on different language outcomes, like the rate of second language acquisition, performance of learners in language classrooms, and performance in language testing. The theoretical range of these studies categorized from purely behavioural to psychodynamic. In the process of second/foreign language learning anxiety can play a crucial role.

According to Worde (1998), almost half of foreign language learners experience certain degree of anxiety. It is also stated that language learning anxiety might cause potential problems for language learners (Kondo & Ling, 2004). Those students who are more anxious in their foreign language learning may not find their study enjoyable (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002), which will be led to a negative impact on their performance. The focus of most of the anxiety research in FL context has been associated with oral production (Kimura, 2008), while the shift has recently been occurred to other receptive skills like listening which is one of the most effective skills for FL learners.

Moreover, when analysing language anxiety in a much broader context of studying not just language anxiety but also on anxiety itself as an independent entity, MacIntyre (1999) observed that language anxiety differs from its

predecessor notion in the sense that it is a form of situation-specific anxiety, and research in the field of language anxiety should employ measures of anxiety that is experienced in special second or foreign language contexts. In fact, it is notable that he believes language anxiety to be "the worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning or using a second language" (p. 27). Similarly, Horwitz et al. (1991) conceptualized foreign language anxiety as a "distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p. 31).

On the other hand, with reagard to listening skill performances of EFL Learners some researcher believe less-focused attention, less affective information processing, immature teaching methodologies, ineffective listening strategies, students' lack of vocabulary, and poorer retrieval prior knowledge are outstanding elements of low performance in L2 listening (Arnold, 2000; Vogely, 1998; Young, 1992). All these reasons can cause tension for FL learners and might make listening comprehension highly anxiety-provoking. Horwitz et al. (1986) stated that anxiety in FL classes can determine students' failure or success and block their academic progress. While most of FL learners report this general anxiety when they attend in FL classes, others believe they become anxious only during participating in particular task, for instance listening (Elkhafafaifi, 2005). Listening comprehension consider as "highly anxiety-provoking if the discourse is incomprehensible" (Young, 1992). Therfore anxiety has recently been a focus of research in the area of listening comprehension since it is a "variable that must be respected in teaching and accounted for in research" (Young, 1999).

FLAS developed by Horwitz et al (1986) has been applied in many studies related to the anxiety in foreign language learning with high reliability (Aida, 1994; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989; worde 1998; Djigunovic, 2006; Tallon, 2009). The scale analyses three sources of anxiety in a language classroom (communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation) as defined by Horwitz et al. (1986). Another scale that has been used in different studies (Kilic, 2007; Kimura, 2008; Golchi 2012) to measure the foreign language listening anxiety was originally developed by kim (2000). For testing the reliability of the instrument he used factor analysis, internal consistency and test-retest. The 0.84 was the reliability of test-retest and 0.93 was the reliability of internal consistency.

Interestingly, correlational research related to the effect of anxiety on language learners' performance have produced mixed results. On one side, Alpert and Haber (1960), Chastain (1975) and Kleinmann (1977) concluded that anxiety could have facilitative effect on students' performance. On the other hand, McIntyre and Gardner (1989), Saito and Samimy (1996) found negative relationship between language anxiety and English learners' performance. More specifically Horwitz and Young (1991) and Kim (2000) have determined negative correlation found between foreign language class anxietiy and listening comprehension

The result of the research in this area has not clearly revealed the role of language anxiety as a consequence of poor performance or some language affective filter. Furthermore, although there are many reasons to view anxiety as powerful variables, which may highly anticipate EFL learners' listening comprehension performance, very little attempt has been made to probe this variable as related to listening comprehension achievement of Iranian EFL learners and the issue is still unknown in Iran EFL context, where a large number of individuals are learning English as a foreign language, and this number is increasing day by day. The view of considering anxiety as one of the major factors in listening comprehension which is considered as the "Cinderella skill in second language learning" (Nunan, 1999) can offer significant implications for curriculum designers.

*1.1 Research Questions*

The research attempted to investigate the following research questions:

1.   Is there any significant relationship between Iranian EFL students' FL listening anxiety and their listening comprehension?

2.   Is there any significant relationship between Iranian EFL students' foreign language anxiety and their listening comprehension?

3.   Is there any significant relationship between Iranian EFL students' foreign language anxiety and their foreign language listening anxiety?

## 2. Literature Review

*2.1 Learning Anxiety*

Anxiety is one of the most well documented psychological aspects. The definition on anxiety ranges from a combination of overt behavioural characteristics that can be observed scientifically to introspective feelings that are epistemologically inaccessible (Casado & Dereshiwsky, 2004). Chastain (1988) defines anxiety as a state of

uneasiness and apprehension or fear caused by the anticipation of something threatening. MacIntyre (1999) views anxiety as a feeling of worry and emotional reaction that arises while learning or using a second language. Horwitz et al. (1991) offer a similar definition, arguing that learning anxiety is a mixture of feelings, beliefs, and behaviours related to the uniqueness of the process of foreign language learning.

## 2.2 Type of Anxiety

In general anxiety can be divided into two types: trait anxiety, and state anxiety. Trait anxiety is the tendency of a person to be nervous or feel anxious irrespective of the situation he/she is exposed to (Pappamihiel, 2002). Indeed, such anxiety is a part of a person's character and hence is permanent and difficult, if not impossible, to get rid of. A person who is trait anxious is likely to feel anxious in a variety of situations. When the anxiety becomes a trait one, it might hamper language learning.

The second type of anxiety is referred to as state (situational) anxiety. As the name implies, this type of anxiety arises in a particular situation and hence is not permanent. It is nervousness or tension at a particular moment in response to some outside stimulus (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989). It occurs because learners are exposed to a particular situation or event that is stressful to them. For example, there are some learners who feel anxious if they are called by the teacher to speak in the classroom. The good thing about this type of anxiety is that it diminishes over time as the learners get used to the new environment or feel comfortable with the teacher. As a result, although state anxiety can prevent a learner from showing his/her full potential, it is not as harmful as trait anxiety.

## 2.3 Cause and Effect of Anxiety

Learning anxiety can be attributed to several factors. Young (1991) identified six interrelated potential sources of language anxiety from three points of view: the learner, the teacher, and the instructional practice. He mentioned the reason of language anxiety as (a) personal and interpersonal anxiety, (b) learner beliefs about language learning, (c) instructor beliefs about language teaching, (d) instructor-learner interactions, (e) classroom procedures, and (f) language testing. Other researchers (Horwitz et al., 1986, Pappamihiel, 2002; Casado and Dereshiwsky, 2004) argue that in foreign language learning context, learners may experience anxiety caused by problems related to communication apprehension (e.g., difficulty in understanding the teacher's instruction) negative evaluation (e.g., fear of correction and fear of making mistakes) and a general feeling of anxiety (e.g., fear of failing the class).

Language teaching professionals unanimously argue that the existence of learning anxiety among students can have a negative impact on their performance. Onwuegbuzie et al (1999) believe that language learning anxiety can influence their learning in general and their fluency of speech in particular. Similarly, Kondo and Ling (2004) hold the view that learners who feel anxious may have problems such as reduced word production and difficulty in understanding spoken instructions.

MacIntyre (1998) lists five major effects of anxiety on second/foreign language learning and performance. First, academically, language anxiety is one of the best predictors of language proficiency since high levels of language anxiety are associated with low levels of academic achievement in second/foreign language learning. The second effect is the social effect. Learners with high anxiety level are not interested to take part in interpersonal communication with others. Third, cognitively, anxiety can occur at any stage of language acquisition. Anxiety can become an affective filter that prevents certain information from entering a learner's cognitive processing system. Fourth, anxiety arousal can influence the quality of communication output as the retrieval of information may be interrupted when learners get anxious. Finally, personally, language learning experience could, under some circumstances, become a traumatic experience. This kind of unpleasant experience may dramatically disturb one's self-esteem or self-confidence as a learner (Crookall and Oxford, 1991).

## 2.4 Foreign Language Listening Anxiety

Listening as the most frequently used skill plays an important role in foreign language learning (Vogely, 1998) since through this channel learner is able to comprehend the information. The importance of listening comprehension for achieving success in language learning has been emphasized by both instructors and students (Ferris & Tagg, 1996; Ferris, 1998).

However, as Scarcella and Oxford (1992) and vogely (1999) stated anxiety can be highly provoked in listening comprehension context. MacIntyre (1995) explained the reason for such an anxiety is that learners often worry about misunderstanding what they listen to and the fear of being embarrassed by interpreting the message wrongly (Chastain, 1979).

Gonen (2009) mentioned that the authenticity of the listening text, incomprehensibility of the listening material

and other external environmental factors such as noise and inaudibility can create anxiety among L2 learners. However Dunkel (1991) believes that those students who do not have the confidence might experience anxiety more. In a study done by Vogely (1998), students reported the cause of their anxiety on being more concentrated on the nature of speed, level of difficulty, ambiguity, lack of visual support and lack of repetition. Kim (2000) in her study analysed foreign language anxiety scale and concluded that lack of confidence and being worried over listening are the main reasons of anxiety in L2 learners. Moderate negative correlation between listening anxiety and listening proficiency was another finding of her study. In another study conducted by Chang (2008) English learners' listening anxiety was higher than their speaking anxiety and this anxiety was more significant in testing situation rather than class environment.

Results from the study on relationship between listening anxiety and gender by Campbel (1999), Elkhafaifi (2005) and Ko (2010) showed that male and females are not significantly different in this respect. With regard to the relationship between level of listening anxiety and listening comprehension skills is the same for both group who worked with or without agents. In addition, findings on the relationship between listening strategy and listening anxiety Gonen (2009) and listening strategy and general anxiety Sioson (2011) and Lu and Liu (2011) indicated that by increasing the anxiety, FL listening strategy use reduces.

The relationship between listening anxiety and gender studied by Campbel (1999), Elkhafaifi (2005) and Ko (2010). The results show that male and females are not significantly different in this respect. Regarding the relationship between level of listening proficiency and listening anxiety, the result of the study conducted by Elkhafaifi (2005), Mills, Pajares & Herron (2006) and Wang (2010) reveals that the level of listening anxiety is not constant in different level of listening proficiency. More recently Kimura (2011) found that L2 listening anxiety was related to L2 proficiency and it is only specific in L2 contexts.

As Elkhafaifi (2005) mentioned FL anxiety and FL listening Anxiety might seem to be independent construct, both cause negative affect on the students' performance. He observed that in FL classes some students experienced anxiety in general whereas others reported being anxious while participating in particular task such as speaking, reading , writing or listening. Therefore in this study the relationship between FL anxiety as a situation-specific and FL listening anxiety as a skill-specific type of anxiety and their impact on the listening comprehension of Iranian language learners are explored.

## 3. Method

### 3.1 Participants

The data required for the study were collected in private language institutes in Isfahan, a city located in the centre of Iran. There are general language proficiency courses in different levels. Students meet three times per week, that is six hours per week, and receive 60 hours of instruction per term. The other courses taught in these institutes include TOEFL and IELTS preparation courses, chat courses, as well as other languages such as French, German, Spanish, and Italian. It is worth mentioning that the students in these institutes are both male and female students from different age groups and different proficiency levels, which make it possible for the researcher to meet the objectives of the study. 210 students in 10 upper- intermediate and advanced classes studying at these centres took part in this study that aimed at evaluating and assessing their level of anxiety, as well as their language learning anxiety and see how these forms of anxiety could affect the overall performance of the students in their listening performance. The students' age ranged from 19 to 38 years old and they were in total 142 female and 68 male students who took part in this research. The students were from different racial background but they were all Iranian citizens who were all first speakers of Farsi and who were all studying English as a foreign language at the centre. It is also worth mentioning that they had all completed seven years of studying English at school using the National Syllabus that many find a very ineffective form of teaching and learning English. They had registered at the language centre for different intrinsic and extrinsic reasons, but they were mostly interested to study English and apply for immigration to countries such as Canada, Australia and the United States.

### 3.2 Instruments

The research consisted of three phases, and therefore three instruments respectively were used to collect data in this study. Language classroom anxiety was measured by the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLACS) developed by Horwitz et al. (1986), which consisted of 33 items which investigate the degree of anxiety that learners experience in foreign language classrooms (see appendix A). The respondents had to answer the questions by indicating degree of agreement or disagreement with the items of the questionnaire on a 5-point scale, in which out of 33 questions 8 items were related to communication anxiety and 9 items to fear of negative evaluation and 5 items to test anxiety. Finally, as for the remaining 11 items, they were put in a category labelled

anxiety of English classes. The only modification that will be made to the questionnaire is that the words "language" and "foreign language" that were used in some of the items were substituted with "English" for better comprehension on the part of the participants.

The next phase of the research was the administration of the second instrument which was the Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS), developed by Kim (2000). The instrument consists of 33 five-point scale items (see appendix B). Finally, the last phase of the research was the administration of the third element which was the instrument for evaluating students' listening comprehension being the listening Test adopted from IELTS practice tests plus by Jackman, and Macdowel (2001). IELTS is a standard test of English language proficiency and one of the most internationally prestigious tests of English which has gained a lot of reputation recently. It is a proven test of English all over the world. It is a valid test which measures English language learners' proficiency level in English. It is accepted worldwide and its validity has been approved frequently. Over 1.4 million candidates sit for the test each year to be able to start their journey to international education and employment. IELTS is recognized by more than 6000 institutions in more than 135 countries worldwide (IELTS Handbook, 2011).

The listening part consists of 40 items categorized into 4 parts. This sample was assigned to measure learners' level of listening comprehension. The Cronbach's Alpha value is used to test the reliability of the items measuring the effects of anxiety on listening performance. The reliability test results for FLLA and FLA test were .792 and .781 respectively. It indicates that the Cronbach's Alpha values for the measuring items of the variables are above 0.70 which means these variables have inter-item consistency.

### 3.3 Method of Data Analysis

Having collected the required data, the researcher embarked on the process of data analysis. In order to answer the first research question, a questionnaire on the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLACS) developed by Horwitz et al. (1986) and listening comprehension IELTS test adopted from IELTS practice tests plus by Jackman, and Macdowel (2001) were used. Since the question sought the relationship between two variables, Pearson product moment correlation (Pearson $r$) was used to discover the relationship, if any, between the two variables. This choice was supported by Ary et al. (2009) who confirms that correlation to be a very useful statistical technique to determine the direction and strength of relationship between two variables in a single group of subjects.

In order to answer the second question the Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS) adopted from Kim (2000) and Listening comprehension IELTS test adopted from IELTS practice tests plus by Jackman, and Macdowel (2001) was used since the question was seeking for the relationship between two variables, also Pearson product moment correlation (Pearson $r$) was utilized to discover the possible relationship between the two variables.

Lastly, in order to answer the third question the Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS) adopted from Kim (2000) and the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLACS) developed by Horwitz et al. (1986) were used since the question was seeking for the relationship between two variables, also Pearson product moment correlation (Pearson $r$) proved to be the optimum option to discover the possible relationship, between the two variables.

### 4. Results

### 4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents means and standard deviation of the listening comprehension test and FLCA and FLLA questionnaires. As it is shown, the total scores of listening comprehension test ranged from 1 to 28 with a mean of 13.67 (SD = 6.194). The Standard Deviation of FLCA and FLLA are .583 and .683 respectively and it is ranged from 2 to 4 for both FLCA and FLLA scores.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for students' listening and anxiety tests

|  | N | Mean | Median | Std.Deviation | Minimum | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Listening | 210 | 13.67 | 13.00 | 6.194 | 1 | 28 |
| FLA | 210 | 2.63 | 3.00 | .583 | 2 | 4 |
| FLLA | 210 | 3.00 | 3.00 | .643 | 2 | 4 |

For the anxiety questionnaires the students with averages less than 3 should be considered not very anxious, while students with averages between 3 and 3.99 are fairly anxious. Students with average 4 and above are probably highly anxious. As it is shown in Table 2 the majority of the respondents (73.3%) reported they were not very anxious in the foreign language classroom. This is while, 16.67 percent of individuals reported they were slightly anxious and the remaining 10 percent of students are highly anxious. In foreign language listening situation 63.33 percent of students reported they were not very anxious while 13.33 percent reported they were slightly anxious and finally 23.33 percent of students reported to be highly anxious that is almost twice higher than their anxiety in foreign language classroom.

Table 2. Students' anxiety percentage

| Anxiety Level | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| FLA | 16.67% | 73.33% | 10% |
| FLLA | 13.33% | 63.33% | 23.33% |

To answer the first research question dealing with the relationship between Iranian EFL students' FL listening anxiety and their listening test performance Pearson correlation analysis was used. Table 3 shows the correlation matrix of the FL listening anxiety and listening test performance.

Table 3. Relationship between FL listening anxiety and listening test

| | Mean | SD | N | r | sig (2-tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| FLLA | 3.00 | .643 | 210 | | |
| | | | | -.414** | .011 |
| Listening | 13.67 | 6.194 | 210 | | |

As table 3 shows, a significant negative correlation was found between listening anxiety and listening comprehension with $r = -.414$ and $p < .05$. This means that as learners' foreign language listening anxiety decreases, their listening comprehension performance increases, and vice versaIn order to answer the second research question related to the relationship between Iranian EFL students' foreign language anxiety and their listening comprehension, Pearson correlation analysis was applied.

Table 4. Relationship between FL anxiety and listening test

| | Mean | SD | N | r | sig (2-tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| FLA | 2.63 | .583 | 210 | | |
| | | | | -.214** | .048 |
| Listening | 13.67 | 6.194 | 210 | | |

Table 4 depicts that a negative correlation ($r = -.214$) and $p < .05$ exists between foreign language anxiety and their listening comprehension score of the participants of the study. It means that by increasing the amount of FL anxiety, the students' success in listening comprehension task is reduced.

Finally the result of Pearson correlation analysis done to answer the third research question on the relationship between FLLA and FLA is represented in table 5 demonstrates that between two independent variables of the study, there is a positive correlation ($r = .513$ and $p < .05$).

Table 5. Relationship between FLA and FLLA

| | Mean | SD | N | r | sig (2-tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| FLA | 2.63 | .583 | 210 | | |
| | | | | .513** | .004 |
| FLLA | 3 | .643 | 210 | | |

This is indicative of the fact that these two variables are positively correlated and that learners' foreign language

class anxiety increases as their foreign language listening anxiety rises

## 5. Conclusion and Implications

The result of the study shows that students' foreign language listening anxiety and their listening comprehension are negatively correlated. The finding is congruent with the findings found in previous studies conducted by Aneiro (1989); Aida (1994); Cheng et al. (1999); Horwitz et al. (1986); MacIntyre & Gardner (1991); Kim (2000); Zhou (2003); Chen (2004); Elkhafaifi (2005); Mills, Pajares & Herron (2006); Chang (2010), Wang (2010); Kimura (2011) and Golchi (2012).

Another finding of the study reveals that the foreign language anxiety and listening comprehension of Iranain EFL learners have a negative correlation. The result supports the findings from previous studies which investigated the correlation between foreign language class anxiety and learners' listening performance (Baily, 1983; Aida, 1994; Cheng et al., 1999; Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991; Phillips, 1992; Saito et al., 1999; Sellers, 2000; Sadighi, et al., 2009 and Atasheneh & Izadi 2012).

In addition the study illustrate that Foreign Language Anxiety and Foreign Language listening Anxiety have negative correlation with supply listening performance so that they create negative burden for the performance of Iranian EFL learners. The result of this investigation was in accordance with the study that has conducted by Kim (2000) and in contrast with the finding of Legac (2007). However the reason behind the modest correlation between both type of anxiety and listening comprehension is due to a psychological construct of the variables. Therefore the repetition of this moderate negative correlation in many studies is a solid proof of the reverse effect of anxiety on listening comprehension (Baily 1983, p. 86).

On the other hand the researcher concluded Foreign Language Anxiety and Foreign Language Listening Anxiety are in accordance with one another. It can be inferred that the negative impact of these two types of situation-specific anxiety on listening comprehension can be a reason of low listening performance in Iranian language learners.

These findings were in line with Horwitz et al.'s (1986) model of FLA bridges the two approaches (i.e., "anxiety transfer", "unique anxiety"). She conceptualizes L2-related anxiety as a distinct type of anxiety expressed in response to the unique experience of learning and using a language other than one's mother tongue (L1), distinguishing it from a general trait of anxiety, which may show up in a large variety of circumstances, as well as other, more general forms of anxiety.

As the study has confirmed a negative relationship between two types of anxiety and listening performance, EFL instructor should pay due attention to the existence and the influential effect of anxiety in the language learning. First, by detecting the potential sources of anxiety and presenting some strategies it would be possible to reduce the degree of FLLA among FL learners and create a low-anxiety environment. For instance teachers can encourage their students to only be concentrated on the main idea of the recorded materials rather than following every word. This technique is helpful for lower level students. While the level of students' anxiety gradually is decreased and they learn how to cope with situation, they would be more competent to elicit the details in conversation in higher levels without being anxious.

Second, traditional listening teaching model which is merely restricted in playing a recorded material without offering some information must be changed into more vital and productive method. Third, teachers should be aware that although using only English in class room can provide an authentic environment for students, it can be a cause for provoking anxiety among students. Therefore it is recommended that teachers shift into the mother tongue whenever they sense the necessity to avoid creating further blockage. Fourth as for listening comprehension test itself, test developers are recommended to design less anxiety-provoking tests by sorting the items from simple to the most challenging. Since if the initial items create anxiety, it would be difficult for the testees to overcome their stress and take control to answer the other items.

Finally, students also should be aware of their drawbacks as foreign language learners and confront their anxiety that can be emerged in this kind of context. They need to equip themselves by coming up with applicable strategies to reduce their anxiety so as to elevate their listening ability and foreign language learning in general.

The result of this study might be beneficial for foreign language instructors to increase their knowledge about the substantial role of students' anxiety on their listening performance. For further studies in this area it is recommended to find out more specifically the causes of anxiety among foreign language learners and provide interventions to reduce the negative effect of anxiety on the performance of language learners.

**References**

Aida, Y. (1994). Examination of Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's construct of foreign language anxiety: The case of students of Japanese. *Modern Language Journal, 78*, 155-168.

Alpert. R., & Haber, R. (1960). Anxiety in academic achievement situations. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 61*(2), 207-215.

Aneiro, S. (1989). The influence of receiver apprehension in foreign language learners on listening comprehension among Puerto Rican college students. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. New York University, USA.

Arnold, J. (2000). Seeing through listening comprehension exam anxiety. *TESOL Quarterly, 34*, 777-786.

Ary, D., Jacobs, L., Razavich, A., & Sorensen, C. K. (2009*). Introduction to research in education* (8th ed.). Fort Worth, TX: Holt, Rinehart.

Atasheneh, N., & Izadi, A. (2012). The role of teachers in reducing/increasing listening comprehension test anxiety: A case of Iranian EFL learners. *English Language Teaching, 5*(3), 178-187.

Bailey, K. M. (1983). Competitiveness and anxiety in adult second language learning: Looking at and through the diary studies. In H. W. Seliger, & M. H. Long (Eds.), *Classroom oriented research in second language acquisition*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

British Council. (2011). IDP: IELTS Australia and University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations 2011 IELTS Handbook.

Casado, M. A., & Dereshiswsky, M. I. (2004). Effect of educational strategies on anxiety in the second language. *College Student Journal, 38*(1), 23-35.

Campbell, C. M. (1999). Language anxiety in men and women: Dealing with gender differences in the language classroom. In Dolly, J. Young (Ed.), *Affect in foreign language and second language learning: A practical guide to creating a low anxiety classroom atmosphere* (pp. 191-215). Boston: McGraw-Hill College.

Chang, C. A. (2008). Sources of listening anxiety in learning English as a foreign language. *Perceptual and Motor Skills, 106*, 21-34. http://dx.doi.org/10.2466/pms.106.1.21-34

Chang, C. A. (2010). Second-language listening anxiety before and after a 1-yr. intervention in extensive listening compared with standard foreign language instruction. *Perceptual and Motor Skills, 110*(2), 355-365. http://dx.doi.org/10.2466/pms.110.2.355-365

Chastain, K. (1975). Affective and ability factors in second language acquisition. *Language Learning, 25*, 153-61.

Chastain, K. D. (1979). Testing listening comprehension Tests. *TESOL Quarterly, 13*, 81-88. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3585978

Chastain, K. (1988). *Developing second-language skills: Theory and practice* (3rd ed.). New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Chen, Xiuling. (2004). English listening comprehension and anxiety. *Computer-Assisted Foreign Language Education*, *96*, 65-72.

Cheng, Y., E. K. Horwitz, & D. L. Schallert. (1999). Language Anxiety: Differentiating Writing and Speaking Components. *Language Learning, 49*, 41-446.

Crookall, D., & Oxford, R. (1991). Dealing with anxiety: Some practical activities for language learners and teacher trainees. In E. K. Horwitz, & D. J. Young (Eds.), *Language anxiety: From theory and research to classroom implications* (pp. 141-150). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Dunkel, P. (1991). Listening in the native and the second/foreign language: Toward an integration of research and practice. *TESOL Quarterly, 25*, 431-457. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3586979

Elkhafaifi, H. (2005). Listening comprehension and anxiety in the Arabic language classroom. *The Modern Language Journal, 9*, 206-220. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2005.00275.x

Ferris, D. (1998). Students' views of academic aural/oral skills: A comparative needs analysis. *TESOL Quarterly*, *32*, 289-318.

Ferris, D., & Tagg, T. (1996). Academic listening/speaking tasks for ESL students: Problems, suggestions, and implications. *TESOL Quarterly*, *30*, 297-320.

Djigunovic, J. M. (2006). Language anxiety and language processing. In S. H. FosterCohen, M. M. Krajnovic, & J. M. Djigunovic (Eds.), *EUROSLA Yearbook, 6*, 191-212.

Golchi, M. M. (2012). Listening anxiety and its relationship with listening strategy use and listening comprehension among Iranian IELTS learners. *International Journal of English Linguistics, 2*(4), 115-128. http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v2n4p115

Gonen, M. (2009). The relationship between FL listening anxiety and foreign language listening strategies: the case of Turkish EFL learners. *Proceedings of the 5th WSEAS/IASME International Conference on Educational Technologies (EDUTE' 09).*

Gregersen, T., & Horwitz, E. (2002). Language learning and perfectionism: Anxious and non-anxious language learner's reactions to their own oral performance. *The Modern Language Journal, 86*(iv)*,* 562-570.

Horwitz, E. K. & Young, D. (Eds.). (1991). *Language anxiety: From theory and research to classroom implications*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Horwitz, M. B., Horwitz, E. K., & Cope, J. (1991). Foreign language classroom anxiety. In E. K. Horwitz, & D. J. Young (Eds.), *Language anxiety: From theory and research to classroom implications* (pp. 27-39). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal, 70*, 125-132.

Jack man, V., & Macdowel, C. (2001). *Cambridge Practice Tests for IELTS 1*. Longman.

Kim, Joo-Hae. (2000). Foreign language listening anxiety: A study of Korean students learning English (Unpublished dissertation). University of Texas, Austin, TX.

Kimura, H. (2008). Foreign language listening anxiety: Its dimensionality and group differences. *JALT Journal, 30*, 173-196.

Kimura, H. (2011). *A self-presentational perspective on foreign language listening anxiety*. Retrieved from http://gradworks.umi.com/34/77/3477769.html

Kleinmann, H. H. (1977). Avoidance behavior in adult second language acquisition. *Language Learning, 27*(1), 93-107.

Kilic, M. (2007). The sources and relations of foreign language listening anxiety with respect to text type and learner variables: A case study at Gaziantep University. A master thesis. Retrieved from http://www.belgeler.com/blg/1g7d

Ko, Y. A. (2010). The effects of pedagogical agents on listening anxiety and listening comprehension in English as a foreign Language context. Doctoral Dissertation. Utah State University.

Kondo, D. S., & Ying-Ling, Y. (2004). Strategies for coping with language anxiety: The case of students of English in Japan. *ELT Journal, 58*, 258-265.

Legac, V. (2007). Foreign-language anxiety and listening skill in Croatian monolingual and bilingual students of EFL. In J. Horváth, & M. Nikolov (Eds.), *UPRT 2007: Empirical studies in English applied linguistics* (pp. 217-243).

Lu, Z., & Liu, M. (2011). Foreign language anxiety and strategy use: A study with Chinese undergraduate EFL learners. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 2*, 1298-1305. http://dx.doi.org/10.4304/jltr.2.6.1298-1305

MacIntyre, P. D., & Gardner, R. C. (1988). The measurement of anxiety and applications to second language learning: An annotated bibliography. (Research Bulletin No. 672). London, Ontario: University of Western Ontario.

MacIntyre, P. D., & Gardner, R. C. (1989). Anxiety and second language learning: Toward a theoretical understanding. *Language Learning, 39*, 251-275.

MacIntyre, P. D., & R. C. Gardner. (1991). Language anxiety: Its relation to other anxieties and to processing in native and second languages. *Language Learning, 41*, 513-534.

MacIntyre, P. D. (1995). How does anxiety affect second language leaning? A reply to Sparks and Ganschow. *Modern Language Journal, 79,* 90-99.

MacIntyre, P. D. (1999). Language anxiety: A review of the research for language teachers. *Affect in foreign*

*language and second language learning: A practical guide to creating a low-anxiety classroom atmosphere*, 24-45.

Mills, N., Pajares, F., & Herron, C. (2006). A reevaluation of the role of anxiety: Self-efficacy, anxiety, and their relation to reading and listening proficiency. *Foreign Language Annals, 39*, 276-295.

Nunan, D. (1999). *Second Language Teaching & Learning*. Heinle & Heinle Publishers, 7625 Empire Dr., Florence, KY 41042-2978.

Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (1999) Statistics anxiety among African-American graduate students: An affective filter? *Journal of Black Psychology, 25*, 189-209.

Pappamihiel, N. E. (2002). English as a second language students and English language anxiety: Issues in the mainstream classroom. *Proquest Education Journal, 36*(3), 327-355.

Phillips, E. (1992). The effects of language anxiety on students' oral test performance and attitudes. *The Modern Language Journal, 76*, 14-26.

Sadighi, F., Sahragard, R., & Jafari, S. M. (2009). Listening Comprehension and Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety among Iranian EFL learners. *Iranian EFL Journal, 3*(7), 137-152.

Saito, Y., Horwitz, E. K., & Garza T. J. (1999). Foreign language reading anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal, 83,* 202-218.

Saito, Y., & Samimy, K. K. (1996). Foreign language anxiety and language performance: A study of learner anxiety in beginning, intermediate, and advanced-level college students of Japanese. *Foreign Language Annals, 29*(2)*,* 239-252.

Scarcella, R., & Oxford, R. (1992). *The Tapestry of Language Learning: The Individual in the Communicative Classroom.* Heinle & Heinle, Boston, MA.

Sellers, V. D. (2000). Anxiety and reading comprehension in Spanish as a foreign language. *Foreign Language Annals, 33*(5), 512-520.

Sioson, C. I. (2011). Language learning strategies, beliefs, and anxiety in academic speaking task. *Philippine ESL Journal, 7*, 3-27.

Tallon, M. (2009). Foreign language anxiety and heritage students of Spanish: A quantitative study. *Foreign Language Annals, 42*(1), 112-137. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.2009.01011.x

Wörde, R. A. (1998). An investigation of students' perceptions of foreign language anxiety (Doctoral dissertation, George Mason University, 1998). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, *59-03A*, 0717.

Vogely, A. J. (1998). Listening comprehension anxiety: Students' reported sources and solutions. *Foreign Language Annals, 31*, 67-80.

Vogely, A. J. (1999). Addressing listening comprehension anxiety. In D. J. Young (Ed.), *Affect in foreign language and second language learning. A practical guide to creating a low-anxiety atmosphere*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Young, D. J. (1992). Language anxiety from the foreign language specialist's perspective: Interactive with Krashen, Omaggio Hadley, Terrell, and Rubin. *Foreign Language Annuals, 25,* 157-172.

Young, D. J. (1999). A perspective on foreign language learning: From body to mind to emotions. In D. J. Young (Ed.), *Affect in foreign language and second language learning: A practical guide to creating a low-anxiety classroom atmosphere* (pp. 13-23). Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Wang, S. (2010). An experimental study of Chinese English major students' listening anxiety of classroom learning activity at the university level. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 1*, 562-568. http://dx.doi.org/10.4304/jltr.1.5.562-568

Zhou, Dandan. (2003). Listening anxiety and affective strategies the in second language classroom. *Foreign Language Teaching Abroad*, *3*, 56-58.

**Appendix A**

**The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLACS) developed by Horwitz et al. (1986)**

Dear Student,

Below is a list of statements dealing with your anxiety in the classroom.. For each statement, please indicate whether you (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (4) Agree, or (5) Strongly Agree. Please read each statement carefully, give your first reaction to each statement, and mark an answer for every statement.

Name:

Level:

Gender:

| 1 | I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | I don't worry about making mistakes in English classes. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3 | I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in English class | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4 | It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5 | It wouldn't bother me at all to take more English classes. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | During English class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7 | I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8 | I am usually at ease during tests in my English class. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9 | I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10 | I worry about the consequences of failing my English class. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11 | I don't understand why people get so upset over English class. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12 | In English class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13 | It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English class. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14 | I would not be nervous speaking English with native speakers. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15 | I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16 | Even if I am well prepared or English class, I feel anxious about it. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17 | I often feel like not going to my English class. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18 | I feel confident when I speak in my English class. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19 | I am afraid that my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20 | I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on in my English class. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21 | The more I study for an English test the more confused I get. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22 | I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for English class. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23 | I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24 | I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25 | English class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26 | I feel more tense and nervous in my English class than in my other classes. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 27 | I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English class. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 28 | When I'm on my way to English class, I feel very sure and relaxed. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 29 | I get nervous when I don't understand every word the English teacher says. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 30 | I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak English. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 31 | I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 32 | I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of English. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 33 | I get nervous when the English teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**Appendix B**

**A Questionnaire on Foreign Language Listening Anxiety (FLLAS) developed by Kim (2000)**

**Name:**            **Level:**                    **Gender:**

Below is a list of statements dealing with your Foreign Language Listening Anxiety. For each statement, please indicate whether you strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), No idea (3), agree (4) or strongly agree (5). Please read each statement carefully, give your first reaction to each statement, and mark an answer for every statement.

| 34 | I get stuck with one or two unfamiliar words. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 35 | I get nervous if listening test passages are read just once. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 36 | It is difficult to understand people with English pronunciation that is different from mine. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 37 | I worry that I might not be able to understand when people talk too fast. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 38 | I am nervous when I'm not familiar with the topic. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 39 | It is easy to make guesses about the parts I missed. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 40 | I worry that I might have missed important information while I was distracted. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 41 | I am worried when I cannot see the lips or facial expressions of the person. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 42 | I get nervous and confused when I don't understand every word in listening test situations. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 43 | It is difficult to differentiate words. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 44 | I feel uncomfortable listening without a chance to read the transcript of the speech. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 45 | I have difficulty in understanding oral instructions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 46 | It is difficult to concentrate on and hear a speaker I do not know well. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 47 | I feel confident in my listening skills. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 48 | I often get so confused that I cannot remember what I have heard. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 49 | I fear I might have an inadequate knowledge about the topic. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 50 | My thoughts become jumbled and confused in listening for important information. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 51 | I get worried when I have little time to think about what I have heard. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 52 | I often end up translating word by word without understanding what I'm listening to. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 53 | I would rather not listen to people talking in English. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 54 | I get worried when I cannot listen at the pace I'm comfortable with. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 55 | I tend to think that other people understand the content well enough. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 56 | I get upset when I'm not sure whether I have understood well. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 57 | I am worried I might not understand when the person lowers their voice while speaking in English. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 58 | I have no fear of listening to public speeches in English. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 59 | I am nervous when listening to English over the phone or when imagining myself listening over the phone. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 60 | I feel tense when listening to, or imagining myself listening to, a lecture. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 61 | I have difficulty when the environment around me is noisy. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 62 | Listening to new information makes me uneasy. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 63 | I get annoyed when I come across new words. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 64 | English stress and intonation patterns are familiar to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 65 | It often happens that I do not understand what English speakers say. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 66 | The thought that I may be missing key words frightens me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |