

PORTRAIT OF EFL COLLEGE STUDENTS ON THEIR ANXIETY AND METACOGNITIVE AWARENESS IN LISTENING

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Abstract

This research was conducted to investigate the level of EFL students' metacognitive awareness and listening anxiety, and to analyze the factors affecting the high level of EFL students listening anxiety. This research used a mixed-method design that combined quantitative and qualitative research. This research was conducted in the second-semester Department of English Education University of Islam Malang that involved 40 students from three classes. The data of this study were collected by using a questionnaire that adopted the Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS) by Kim (2000) and Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) by Vandergrift et al, (2006), and using semi-structured interviews with self-constructed questions that have been approved by expert language teaching. The results of this study revealed that the overall participants' mean ($M=3.25$) showed a moderate level of metacognitive awareness, suggesting that the students had mastered this skill prior to the listening instruction. Furthermore, the overall participant mean ($M=3.12$), indicates a high level of listening anxiety. This revealed that students experience high levels of anxiety, fear, and worry while learning listening. Moreover, the students felt anxious when learning listening. Lack of vocabulary, speaker accents, and difficulty understanding what they were listening to throughout listening all parts contributed factors to anxiety. The suggestions are outlined.

Keywords: listening anxiety, metacognitive awareness, EFL listening

INTRODUCTION

Listening is a crucial aspect of effective communication in everyday life, and it is one of the skills associated with learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), including speaking, writing, and reading. However, listening has received the least attention and is regarded as the most difficult to master of the four language skills (Vandergrift, 2007). In terms of listening comprehension, it was discovered that more proficient language learners tend to attain their prior knowledge, which is accompanied by the method selection to determine and comprehend the listening environment (Hidayanti & Umamah, 2018). Students had listening difficulties (Alharbi & Al-Ahdal, 2022). In contrast to written language, spoken language is ephemeral and nonrepetitive, and certain words are not fully understood until the full sentence is provided. Listening can be stressful in this regard. The most often employed language skill is listening, and in daily communication listening typically comes after speaking despite its complexity and anxiety. Thus, listening is a complex, dynamic, and challenging job that requires additional research and attention.

Literal listening is intended to improve students' comprehension of certain sorts of plain English discourses encountered in everyday contexts (Sukumaran, 2015). Students gradually listen to English words, phrases, sentences, short dialogues, and short stories from everyday activities. The students can assume that they only focused onto absorb information. Students paid close

attention to words, asked clarifying questions to ensure that they understand questions and respond to them exactly as they are posed (Glen, 2013). Following that, the researcher took literal listening as the part of investigation in this study where it also supported the class conditions that would be made as an object of study using literal listening in its learning process.

Listening successfully in a second language (L2) necessitates complicated cognitive processes involving various variables (Buck, 1991; Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). The current study adds to previous findings by concentrating on features of listening anxiety and metacognitive awareness. Even though listening research has expanded, there is no clear portrait of EFL college students' anxiety and metacognitive awareness in listening. The concept of metacognition, or thinking about one's thinking (Flavell, 1976; Rahimi & Katal, 2012) has become a vibrant line of research in second language acquisition. Learners' cognitive assessment or metacognitive knowledge of their self-perceptions, comprehension of listening needs, cognitive goals, and task approach and tactics can be characterized as listening metacognition (Vandergrift, Goh, Mareschal, & Tafaghodtari, 2006). Metacognitive awareness can be essential to controlling, monitoring, directing, and regulating listening (Imhof, 2001; Vandergrift et al., 2006).

Vandergrift et al. (2006) identified five categories of metacognitive awareness in their empirical investigation, four talking about how students apply listening strategies and one talking about how they listen. The first category, directed attention, refers to listening practices used by listeners to refocus on the written content after losing awareness or having difficulty understanding. The second aspect, problem-solving, is concerned with how listeners deduce information when it is ambiguous. The third category, planning/evaluation, highlights the ways listeners use to plan for or assess their listening efforts before or after the listening assignment. Mental translation, the fourth factor, refers to a student's capacity to interpret unfamiliar sentences and locate counterparts in their home language. Personal experience, the fifth kind, relates to judgments and expertise about students' listening abilities as well as aspects that impact success or failure, including self-efficacy, anxiety, and confidence (Goh & Hu, 2013; Vandergrift et al., 2006).

Listening anxiety develops when the students perceive an assignment to be overly difficult or unfamiliar to them. If the listeners have a wrong notion that they need to comprehend every word they hear, this tension will be increased. The EFL students had a high level of anxiousness while listening (Hidayanti & Azami, 2022). The Attentional Control Theory (ACT) (Eysenck, Derakshan, Santos, & Calvo, 2007), According to the study, anxiety affects cognitive processing efficiency because it has a detrimental influence on attentional control, making anxious people more vulnerable to task-irrelevant (threat-related) stimuli or distractions. As a result, it is reasonable to believe that Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) may similarly impact L2 speakers' self-assessment of their language. One of the numerous distinctive and fluctuating affective states that students go through as a response to learning new settings is called FLA, also known as Language Anxiety (LA) (Ellis, 2001). According to Endler and Kocovski (2001), anxiety is a common component of the self in our culture and is the subjective sensation of tension, apprehension, uneasiness, and fear generated by autonomic nervous system activation (Szyszka, 2017).

In addition to taking on the form of "Situation-specific anxieties" (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991; Pastor & Miller, 2019) across the several skill domains characteristic in foreign language programs, namely, anxiety related to foreign language speaking, listening, reading, and writing. FLA is a constant in EFL learning.

Moreover, numerous research studies were conducted on the evaluation of listening anxiety in general and during test conditions (Chang & Read, 2008). However, in the absence of a formal description or explanation, the generic components are unable to explain the unique function of FL listening anxiety in a given setting. Unlike the psychological and situation-specific approaches, the social approach to listening anxiety claims that FL listening anxiety was socially formed since listening input was not limited to one-way listening but rather stemmed from communicative and social events (Kimura, 2011). Following that, this study aims to investigate the level of

metacognitive awareness, the level of listening anxiety, and analysis the factors affecting high level of EFL college students listening anxiety.

METHOD

The study used a mixed-method design that combined quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative research used descriptive quantitative designs to answer the first and second question of research problems. Qualitative research used a study case design to answer the third question of research problems. 68 students from three classes in second semester English Education Department at University of Islam Malang made up the participants. All of the participants in the study's sample who had taken English Listening I the previous semester had been extended an invitation to participate. Because some students did not complete the questionnaire, the study could only use the data of 40 students. Further, the researcher used a convenience sampling technique that include four participants who were invited to take part in interviews as an example of qualitative research. The participants include males and females in the age range of 19 and 20 years old. Their names were written anonymously as P1, P2, P3, and P4.

The first instrument, the researcher adopted the Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS) by Kim (2000) and Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) from Vandergrift et al. (2006). The FLLAS was conducted with 33 items but the researcher measured using 30 items according to the relevance of the study, FLLAS consists of three subparts including 8 items for background knowledge, 6 items for the listening text and strategies, and 16 items for listeners' characteristics. Metacognitive awareness of L2 listening was measured using 21 items from the MALQ (Vandergrift et al., 2006) with five subparts including 5 items for planning and evaluation, 3 items for translation, 3 items for person knowledge, 4 items for directed attention, and 6 items for problem-solving. Although the original version by Vandergrift et al (2006) and Kim (2000) was written in English, the researcher translates it into Indonesian language to make it easier for the students to answer the questions. For answering the questions, the participants choose one option by giving a checklist and there is a 1-5 number for each question which is (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) slightly agree, (4) agree, (5) strongly agree. The second instrument used in this study was a semi-structured interview with self-constructed questions that has been approved by expert language teaching including 5 questions to get a depth-research about the causes of high levels of listening anxiety.

Data were collected through a google forms-created online survey. After the approval of the ethical committee, the survey link was shared with all the students through their Whatsapp accounts. The link was accessible until a sufficient number of participants responded to the survey. Then, continued with the interview sections where the questions were translated into Indonesian language and validated by expert language teaching. Interviews are conducted twice to get valid data. The interview was done on June 28th, 2023 approximately 30 minutes each.

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics using SPSS 26.0 version to see the level of EFL college students' anxiety and metacognitive awareness in listening. Content analysis was applied to analyze the data following the steps proposed by Renz, Carrington, & Badger (2018). The steps in performing content analysis include: (a) preparing the note, (b) reading the transcript repeatedly, (c) taking the note of transcript to take the various information, (d) defining the analysis using themes to represent the relevance issue or ideas, (e) developing schematics code to understandable data, (f) all text coding, (g) concluding the coded data, and (h) describing and integrating the finding.

FINDING

This first part of this chapter provides descriptive analyses of the FLLAS and MALQ data collected. These analyses are followed by qualitative studies that answered five questions through semi-structured interview sections about the cause of the high level of anxiety in listening.

Level of Metacognitive Awareness in EFL College Students

Means and standard deviations for different types of questions of metacognitive awareness are shown in Table 1. The mean scores for all sections were averaged to allow comparisons among sections.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of the Level of EFL College Students' Metacognitive Awareness

Descriptive Statistics			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Planning and Evaluation	40	3.27	.67
Directed Attention	40	3.13	.68
Person Knowledge	40	3.02	.86
Problem Solving	40	3.42	.70
Translation	40	3.35	.87
Overall	40	3.25	.59

Among the five types of questions, participants leveled the highest on metacognitive awareness were problem-solving ($M= 3.42$), followed by translations ($M= 3.35$), planning and evaluation ($M= 3.27$), and directed attention ($M= 3.12$). Participants leveled the lowest on metacognitive awareness was personal knowledge ($M= 3.02$). Overall participant's mean was ($M=3.25$) which showed a moderate level of metacognitive awareness, this indicates that the students were already good enough in their metacognitive awareness in the listening lesson

This pattern is consistent with the presumed different levels of these five types of questions. Among the four types of participants' listening strategy use and one type of approximately themselves as listeners. The reason why they get problem-solving as the highest level of their metacognitive awareness is that many of those who cope with listening problems by using words they can understand and thus become a guide to understanding the information they hear, in addition to their experience of the topic being presented also help them in solving the problem with non-understanding in the listening lesson.

Participants leveled the highest on the technique that listeners used when the information is not clear to them and leveled the lowest on the expertise approximately participants' listening skills that affect participants' achievement of failure that consists of participants' anxiety, confidence, and self-efficacy.

Level of Listening Anxiety in EFL College Students

This section describes the results of a descriptive study on listening anxiety. To allow comparisons between sections, the mean scores for all sections were averaged.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of the Level of EFL College Students' Listening Anxiety

Descriptive Statistics			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Background Knowledge	40	3.14	.61
Listening Text and Strategies	40	3.17	.60
Listeners' Characteristics	40	3.05	.54
Overall	40	3.12	.54

Table 2. presents participants' rated listening text and strategies ($M=3.17$) as having the highest levels of listening anxiety out of the three categories of questions. The number of times the listening material is repeated throughout a test indicates that the participants have a high level of anxiety. During the listening test, participants displayed worry when a sentence was read only once and fear when someone spoke quickly because they were worried they would not understand everything.

Followed by background knowledge ($M= 3.14$). The participants were likewise unsure regarding their capacity to guess the missing information while listening. They became nervous and confused when they were unable to understand every term heard throughout the listening test. In general, participants expressed anxiety about a lack of background knowledge.

Participants leveled the lowest on listening anxiety were listeners' characteristics ($M= 3.05$). Anxiety levels were displayed in participants' feelings when listening to English at their own pace, indicating that people become anxious when they are unable to listen to English at their own pace. These findings revealed that a lack of confidence, tension, uneasiness, fear, and worry while listening to English language listening texts could all contribute to high levels of anxiety.

Overall participant's mean was ($M=3.12$) which showed a high level of listening anxiety, this indicated that students have high anxiety, fear, and worry during their listening learning.

Factors Affecting High Levels of Listening Anxiety in EFL College Students

Based on interviews with second-semester students who take Listening classes. This interview was conducted using a convenient sampling technique where the participants were also the students who have the highest score in listening anxiety, and the following is the excerpt.

Q1: Do you ever experience anxiety in listening?

According to the student's experience in listening learning, the researcher found that all participants said they have experienced anxiety in the listening learning process.

"Yes, I have experienced anxiety several times" P1.

"I have experienced anxiety in listening" P2.

"Yes, I have" P3.

"Yes, I have experienced anxiety" P4.

Q2: What factors cause you to feel anxiety during listening?

Regarding the factors faced by the students that cause anxiety during the listening learning, three participants namely P1, P2, and P4 said the factor of the lack of vocabulary they have caused them to feel anxiety during the listening time. P1 also adds that the accent used by the speakers also causes anxiety during listening times. And three participants namely P2, P3, and P4 also say that the factor causing them anxiety is not understanding what they are listening in.

"The factor that caused anxiety in listening was the lack of vocabulary and accent that the speaker used" P1.

"The lack of vocabulary I am good at, so I am confused as to what the speaker means was the factor that caused anxiety in listening" P2.

"The factor that caused anxiety in listening when I didn't understand what I was listening to" P3.

"When I didn't understand what was spoken of by the speaker and when I lacked vocabulary. It caused me anxiety in listening sections" P4.

Q3: Are environmental factors like friends, a noisy atmosphere, or the place/class also an excuse for your anxiety increases when learning in listening?

Based on the interview, the factors that made the level of anxiety in listening got higher were their friends and the atmosphere in the classroom. All participants said that their friends who disturbed them while listening and the noisy class atmosphere were also factors that increased their

anxiety level while listening. P3 added that these factors greatly influence the high level of anxiety in students because they still experience difficulties during learning listening.

"Sometimes my friends who whisper words while I listen disturb me. Besides that, a noisy classroom atmosphere also heightened my anxiety because I was afraid I would not be able to listen well" P1.

"Yes, the friend factor, the atmosphere of a full class can influence my anxiety, because at this time I still feel difficult when listening." P2.

"Yes, factors such as a screwing and noisy friend disturb me in listening, as well as if the class is crowded or noisy" P3.

"Yes, all the factors affecting my anxiety in listening continue" P4.

Q4: What did you feel when your listening anxiety came in? Are you having trouble concentrating? Are you experiencing cold sweats? Or, is there something else?

Regarding the students' feelings when their listening anxiety comes, all participants said that difficulty in concentration becomes a major factor for them when anxiety comes in during listening in progress.

"When my anxiety comes, I feel troubled while concentrating" P1.

"My concentration decreases when I'm anxious" P2.

"Trouble concentrating when I am anxious" P3.

"When I am experiencing anxiety while listening, I lost my concentration" P4.

Q5. How did you cope with anxiety during listening learning?

According to the students' way to cope with their anxiety during the listening learning, three participants namely P1, P2, and P4 said by refocusing on listening material to overcome anxiety when listening. P4 added that she also repeated the listening material several times to overcome the anxiety that comes during listening.

"I overcome anxiety by refocusing on the material." P1

"I try to be quiet, listen carefully, and focus on what I hear." P2

"Letting my body and mind relax for a while until my anxiety slowly disappears" P3.

In contrast to P3 which says by letting the body and mind calm down for a while to refocus on listening materials while his anxiety comes.

"By refocusing on the material and repeating the listening material several times" P4.

In conclusion, the metacognitive awareness of the student EFL college students at a moderate level indicated that students are good enough to know what strategies they should use during the learning process. Contrary to the EFL college student's level of anxiety in listening, students were at a high level so their anxieties in the listening time induce fear and stress during learning. The factors affecting the high level of anxiety in listening were the lack of vocabulary, the accent of the speaker, the lack of knowledge of information by the speaker, and the noisy surroundings and disruptive friends making it difficult to concentrate. They are a major cause of anxiety levels in the listening study

DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the research, it shows that problem-solving was the cause of the high levels of EFL college students on their metacognitive awareness. Problem-solving in metacognitive awareness were the techniques or ways the students deal with problems when they cannot hear what the speaker is saying or when listeners are not getting the information right. It was supported by the findings of Maftoon and Alamdari (2020) that efficient learners employ metacognitive awareness

such as problem-solving and monitoring more frequently. It refers to strategies for inferring the meaning of words from context and determining whether one's understanding of the passage is valid in comparison to one's prior knowledge or experience. According to Lau (2016), there were also metacognitive awareness differences between high-proficiency listeners and low-proficiency listeners in their knowledge of listening problems and the use of problem-solving. It is also true that, due to the unique nature of listening as an activity or process, students must absorb, understand and respond to the information they are listening to at the same time.

It was found out that listening text and strategies cause high levels of EFL college students' anxiety in listening. Listening text and strategies were focused on during the listening test, a listening passage was read only once and demonstrated stress when someone spoke English quickly because they were anxious that they would not comprehend everything. The students were very easy to experience anxiety when listening sections began, they were usually easily distracted with surrounding circumstances or could be focused on only one or two things. Listening that provides the text, this allows students to do two things at the same time they are reading and listening. Which caused their anxiety to rise to a high level, so it results in failure in the listening process. It was supported by the findings of Wheelless (1975) that misinterpretation, inadequate processing, and/or inability to emotionally adjust to other individual messages were assumed to be the reason for listening anxiety. Graham (2006) found that the same factors that cause listening anxiety were also identified as reasons for failure such as perceived task difficulty, delivery speed, missing or mishearing crucial words, not understanding everything, and the speakers' accents.

Based on the result, the students have experienced anxiety during listening learning. The factor of lack of vocabulary, speakers' accents, and not understanding what they were listening to also caused anxiety during listening sections. Coupled with noisy environmental factors and mischievous friends made it was difficult to concentrate and made a high level of anxiety in listening. The lack of vocabulary became the first mentioned by the students about the factor of high anxiety in listening. According to Bekleyen (2007), word knowledge was affected by listening anxiety. Bekleyen (2009) showed that less frequent practicing and not using any listening strategies impacted students' listening anxiety, and practicing due to the learned new vocabulary was helping a lot in listening learning. According to Hamouda (2013), students also need to know the informal vocabulary and slang and use shortened forms to make their anxiety in listening low. Speakers' accents became the second factor that affected the high level of students listening anxiety. It was supported by Hamouda (2013), Who found that unfamiliar accents and pronunciations were some linguistic factors that make listening difficult. As a result, the speaker accents became a factor that the high of level listening anxiety. Furthermore, being confused about what they listen to in the audio is the third factor that caused the high level of listening anxiety. Goh (2000) found that the students stated they hear a few words seeming familiar, and made it difficult to understand the meaning or what the speakers' said. According to Vogely (1998), those who believe they must hear and comprehend every word develop low self-esteem and have high levels of listening anxiety.

The last factors mentioned by the students were the noisy environmental factors and mischievous friends. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) discovered that some foreign language students in a classroom had a unique sophisticated form of anxiety known as the situation-specific approach. These factors also caused difficulty in concentrating. Bingol, Mart, Celik, and Yildiz (2014) found that the shortest pause can cause listeners to lose concentration. Hamouda (2013) also mentioned that students must pay attention while listening. Students who cannot concentrate will be missing the word and misunderstand the information while listening times. In addition, refocusing on listening material to overcome anxiety when listening, repeating the listening material several times to overcome the anxiety that comes during listening, and letting the body and mind calm down for a while to refocus on listening materials while their anxiety comes.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This research conducted the portrait of EFL college students on their anxiety and metacognitive awareness in listening. This research investigated the level of metacognitive awareness and listening anxiety, and analyzed the cause of the high level of anxiety of the second-semester English Education Department University of Islam Malang. This study used a mixed-method research design that consisted of descriptive quantitative and semi-structured interviews.

The result of this study showed that the high level of metacognitive awareness of EFL college students in listening was problem-solving ($M= 3.42$), that followed by translations ($M= 3.35$), planning and evaluation ($M= 3.27$), and directed attention ($M= 3.12$). The lowest metacognitive awareness was personal knowledge ($M= 3.02$). The overall participant mean was ($M=3.25$), indicating a moderate level of metacognitive awareness, indicating that the students were already proficient in metacognitive awareness in the listening lesson.

Furthermore, the high level of anxiety of EFL college students in listening was listening text and strategies ($M= 3.17$). Followed by background knowledge ($M= 3.14$). The lowest level of listening anxiety was listeners' characteristics ($M= 3.05$). The overall participant mean was ($M=3.12$), indicating a high level of listening anxiety. This revealed that students experience high levels of anxiety, fear, and worry while learning listening sections.

Moreover, during listening learning, the students experienced anxiousness. Anxiety was also created by a lack of vocabulary, speakers' accents, and not understanding what they were listening to during listening sections. The combination of a noisy classroom and mischievous friends made it difficult to concentrate and increased the level of anxiety in listening. These factors also caused difficulty in concentrating. The students have their way to face the problem by refocusing on the listening material to overcome anxiety when listening, repeating the listening material several times to overcome the anxiety that comes during listening, and letting the body and mind calm down for a while to refocus on listening materials while their anxiety comes.

It is suggested that the lecturer should be more attention to students' metacognitive awareness in listening and attract students to know about it, and the lecture should motivate and aware the students and create a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom to make students enjoy the listening section in the classroom. The classroom management, facilities, and students' abilities have become the main point of students' anxiety in listening. Future researchers are suggested to use think-aloud protocol, and classroom observations as their research methodology to get more valid data. Moreover, the result of the student's level of listening anxiety showed in high level, the researcher expected to the students can lower their level of anxiety by learning more vocabulary and often practicing listening to such audio podcasts or songs to increase their level of confidence in listening learning.

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