



## An Analysis of EFL College Students' Anxieties in Listening and Reading Skills at English Department FBS UNP

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### Abstract

*This study aims to compare the level of foreign language anxiety in listening and reading skills of EFL students in English language education study program and English language literature study program at FBS UNP. This research employed the following questionnaires as the research instruments: Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Questionnaire (FLLAQ) adapted from Marzec-Stawiarska (2013) and Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Questionnaire adopted from Azhari Muhlis (2017). The results of this study indicated that the majority of the English language education program students and English language literature program students of UNP have a high level of foreign language anxiety in listening and reading skills. To accomplish a better learning outcome, it is strongly advised that students become aware of their anxiety and deal with it through a lot of practice, peer-to-peer support, and optimistic thought. Furthermore, teachers can be more innovative in making language skills classes more enjoyable and relaxing for students to accomplish better learning outcomes.*

### Keywords:

Foreign language anxiety,  
Listening anxiety  
Reading anxiety

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## INTRODUCTION

Learning English necessarily involves the mastery of language components as well as language skills. Vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and spelling are examples of language components. The four skills required to master English are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Those abilities must be learned without neglecting one another. Many factors can influence students' performance in learning English when acquiring these four skills. Anxiety is a major issue that can impact a student's ability to learn English. Furthermore, every learner has a particular psychological situation when it comes to learning English. Anxiety is one of the most common factors that contribute to learners' ability to learn English. Students may experience anxiety as a result of emotional and physical stress.

Anxiety is a personal experience that happens when the autonomic nervous system is aroused and causes tension, uncertainty, worry, and concern. (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 125). Anxiety manifests itself in the dread of negative feedback, the

anxiety of making mistakes, and the fear of being judged by others who have a greater level of language mastery. Learners may feel anxious about a variety of components of the process of teaching and learning, such as language complexity, speaking in front of others, the language course, peer behavior, taking examinations, and the speakers of the language they are learning, and so on. As a result, learners who are repeatedly subjected to unfavorable experiences in a foreign language environment may develop foreign language anxiety. Learners of English as a second or foreign language often experience this fear.

When studying a foreign language, many students express their anxiety. They claim to be unable to learn the language due to a mental impediment. One-third of all foreign language learners go through a condition known as language anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 128). It is deemed as one of the most essential aspects in foreign language acquisition. (Zhao, 2011, p. 22). It prevents learners from achieving their objectives (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 125) and it also makes it difficult for foreign language students to perform well in the target language (Hashemi & Abbasi, 2013, p. 640).

Anxiety is a significant factor in the learning of a foreign language and it has been a significant barrier to foreign language acquisition that students have overcome (Wu, 2010, p. 184). Language anxiety is one of the main reasons students perform poorly when speaking English (Lian & Budin, 2014, p. 68). Anxiety can also be defined as a mental discomfort or disquiet caused by wariness of threat or wretchedness (Suleimenova, 2013). Foreign language anxiety is recognized as an effective component in language acquisition (Santoso et al., 2013, p. 2). It indicates that language anxiety has been one of the factors influencing language learning success, either in positive or negative ways. In second language acquisition, affective variables like self-confidence, motivation, and anxiety have a helpful influence. To be more specific, it can be stated that students who are less anxious have a better grasp of language learning. Students are worried about being judged or criticized when they appear in front of the class, they are also worried when they don't have any idea about the material being studied in English, and their level of achievement, and so on, regardless of their preparedness for learning that language. No matter what the reason and the level of students' anxiety are, one thing is certain: anxiety will seriously affect learners' performance.

A lot of prior research has proven that anxiety significantly affects learners' ability to learn a foreign language. The previous study by Adnan, Marlina, & Annisa (2020) discovered that there is a negative correlation between students' listening anxiety and listening comprehension. The result of this study revealed that students' anxiety in listening skills inhibits the listening comprehension process and that students' listening comprehension declines as their anxiety levels rise.

Research by Fauziyah (2015) conducted in SMK Negeri 3 Kota Tangerang revealed that there is a negative correlation between language anxiety and reading comprehension, with most students with higher anxiety having poorer English reading comprehension and students with less anxiety having higher English reading comprehension.

The study by Marlina et al. (2021) showed that EFL students' listening self-efficacy and their listening anxiety show a positive correlation. However, the

correlation is low, indicating that as a learner's level of listening anxiety rises, so does his or her listening self-efficacy level, but only moderate. To put it another way, it is not considerably higher, and vice versa. Moreover, the finding of the study by Hutapea et al. (2020) showed that there was no correlation between listening motivation and listening anxiety. This indicated that if learners had a high level of listening anxiety, it was conceivable for the learners to have a high or low level of motivation. Students who experience high anxiety in listening skills do not rule out their listening motivation. It is possible that when they have a high level of anxiety in listening skills, they have high listening motivation as well. Alternatively, students may have low or high listening motivation when they have low listening anxiety.

Almost the majority of these researches concentrated on the causes of anxiety and its effects on specific language skills. The researcher found that not so many studies have examined the EFL students' anxiety levels in every aspect of language learning (listening, speaking, reading, or writing). Thus, in this study, the researcher will examine EFL college students' anxiety level listening and reading skills at the English Department at UNP.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This study employs a quantitative research design to find out the EFL College students' anxiety level of the first-year English department students at UNP and to find out what are the factors causing EFL college students' anxiety in listening and reading skills.

### **Population**

#### a. Population

The populations of this research were the first-year students of English Department at UNP. There were four regular classes of English Language Education Program and three classes of English Language Literature Program.

#### a. Sample

The sample was taken using a simple random sampling technique. The researcher randomly took 38 students from English Language Education Study Program and 35 students from English Language Literature Program 2021 UNP to ensure that all populations were represented equally in this study.

### **Instrumentation**

#### a. Questionnaire

The questionnaires used in this research are Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Questionnaire (FLLAQ) adapted from Marzec-Stawiarska (2013). and FL reading anxiety questionnaire adopted from Muhlis (2017). After getting the student's foreign language anxiety score, the researcher will categorize the students' anxiety level based on the category level by Cheng (2004).

**Table 1** The Percentage of Students' Anxiety Questionnaire

No	Percentage	Category Level
1	65% - 100%	High
2	50% - 64%	Moderate
3	0% - 49%	Low

**Validity**

Validity is an important factor to consider while constructing and evaluating a research instrument. The questionnaires have been evaluated by English Department professors and lecturers at Universitas Negeri Padang as experts on this topic.

**Reliability**

Reliability is the level of consistency displayed by an instrument or technique (Best & Kahn, 2006). It means that whatever is being measured will always be consistent. The reliability of the questionnaire was examined using Cronbach' Alpha through SPSS version 25.0.

**Table 2** Reliability range

Cronbach's Alpha Score	Level of reliability
0.0-0.20	Not reliable
0.21-0.40	Low
0.41-0.60	Moderate
0.61-0.80	High
0.81-1.00	Very high

**Table 3** Reliability Statistics of Foreign Language Anxiety Instruments

Instruments	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
FL Listening Anxiety Questionnaire	0.917	21
FL Reading Anxiety Questionnaire	0.922	26

After calculating the reliability score with SPSS 25.0, it was found that the reliability score for FL Listening Anxiety Questionnaire is 0.917 and the reliability score for FL Reading Anxiety Questionnaire is 0.922 which indicates that all the instruments are highly reliable.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

**Research Finding**

*Finding 1*

- a. The level of EFL college student foreign language anxiety
  - 1. Percentage of FL listening anxiety level of English Language Education Study Program and English Language Literature Program students at UNP

Figure 1. The percentage in FL listening anxiety level of English Language Education Study

Figure 2. The percentage of FL listening anxiety level of English Language Literature Study Program

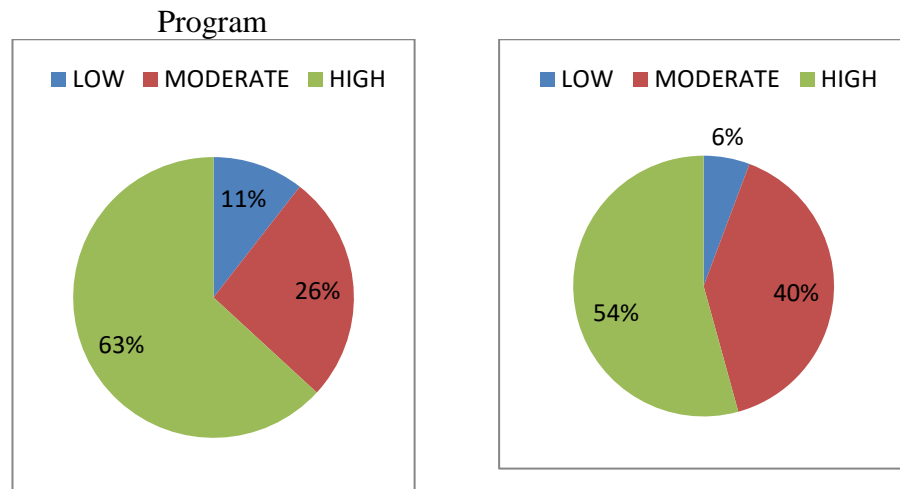


Figure 1 is the percentage of FL listening anxiety levels of English Language Education Study Program students. As we can see from the chart, 11% of students are on the level low, the other 26% of students are on the moderate level, and 63% of students have a high level of anxiety in listening skills. It can be stated that the students' anxiety in listening skills is overall at a high level. Figure 2 is the percentage of students' anxiety in listening skills in English Language Literature Study Program. On listening skills, 6% of English language literature program students have a low level of foreign language anxiety in listening skills, 40% have a moderate level, and 54% have a high level of anxiety. It can be stated that the foreign language listening anxiety of English language literature students is generally high.

2. Percentage of FL reading anxiety level of English language education study program and English Language Literature Program students at UNP

Figure 3. The percentage of FL reading anxiety level of English Language Education Study Program

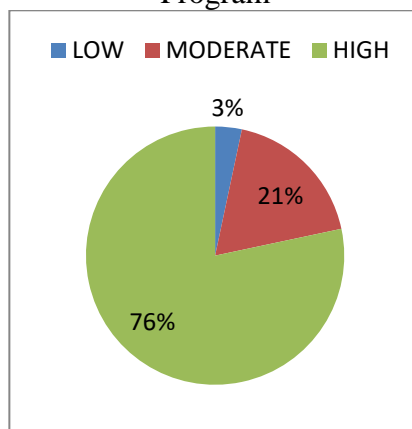
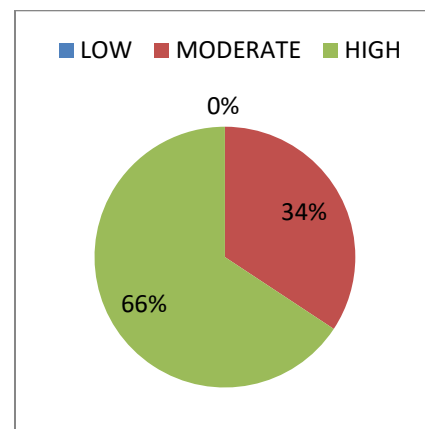


Figure 4. The percentage of FL reading anxiety level of English Language Literature Study Program



The graphic indicates that the level of English as foreign language anxiety can be distinguished into three-level: low, moderate, and high. Based on the graph above, it can be inferred that most learners struggle with FLA in their listening and reading abilities. The following is a more detailed explanation of the percentage of students' anxiety in English reading skills.

Figure 3 is the percentage of FL reading anxiety levels in English Language Education Study Program. Based on the chart above, only 3% of students have low levels of anxiety, the other 21% are on a moderate level, and 76% of students have a high level of foreign language anxiety in reading skills. It can be inferred that the students' foreign language anxiety in reading skills is overall at a high level. Figure 4 is the percentage of FL reading anxiety levels in English Language Literature Study Program. For reading skills, none of the English language and literature students have a low levels of anxiety in reading skills, 34% of students have moderate levels of anxiety in reading skills, and the remaining 66 percent have a high level of foreign language anxiety in reading skills, implying that the students' anxiety in reading skills is generally high. To sum up everything that has been stated so far, it can be stated that the majority of students in English language literature program experience a high level of anxiety in reading skills.

*Finding 2*

- a. The factor causing foreign language listening anxiety

**Table 4** The factor causing foreign language listening anxiety in English language education program

	N	MIN	MAX	SUM	MEAN
Listening material	38	14	32	912	3.43
Lecturer's factor	38	15	31	882	3.32
Students' factor	38	13	33	906	3.41

**Table 5** The factor causing foreign language listening anxiety in English language literature program

	N	MIN	MAX	SUM	MEAN
Listening material	35	11	34	865	3.53
Lecturer's factor	35	12	31	791	3.23
Students' factor	35	11	34	828	3.38

Based on the table above, students' anxiety in listening skills is influenced by three factors. There are listening material, lecturer's factor, and

students' factor. It can be concluded that the factor that most influence English language education program students' foreign language anxiety is listening material with a total score of 912 and a mean score of 3.43, followed by students' factor with a mean score of 3.41, and lecturer's factor with a mean score of 3.32.

While in English language literature program, the most influential factor is listening material with a mean score of 3.53, followed by the students' factor with a mean score of 3.38, and the lecturer's factor with a mean score of 3.23.

b. The Factor Causing Foreign Language Reading Anxiety

**Table 6 The factor causing foreign language reading anxiety in English language education program**

		N	MIN	MAX	SUM	MEAN
Text features	Unknown vocabulary	38	12	25	726	3.82
	Unfamiliar topic	38	11	25	737	3.88
	Unfamiliar culture	38	8	24	656	3.45
Personal factors	Fear of making errors	38	10	23	674	3.55
	Worry about reading effect	38	15	30	790	3.46

**Table 7 The factors causing foreign language reading anxiety in English language literature program**

		N	MIN	MAX	SUM	MEAN
Text features	Unknown vocabulary	35	14	25	656	3.75
	Unfamiliar topic	35	15	24	660	3.77
	Unfamiliar culture	35	5	25	550	3.14
Personal factors	Fear of making errors	35	12	22	603	3.45
	Worry about the reading effect	35	13	28	697	3.32

Referring to the table above, there are two major aspects that influence students' anxiety in reading skills. There are unknown vocabulary,

unfamiliar topic, and unfamiliar culture, which is included in the aspect of text features. Then, fear of making errors and worry about the reading effect which is included in the aspect of personal factors. Table 6 is the factors that influence foreign language anxiety in reading skills in English language education study program. Based on the table, the total score for reading anxiety caused by unknown vocabulary is 726 with a mean score of 3.82. While for factors caused by unfamiliar topics, the total score is 737 with a mean score of 3.88. Then, the total score for unfamiliar culture is 656 with a mean score of 3.45. The total score for FL reading anxiety caused by fear of making errors is 674 with a mean score of 3.55 whereas the score for the factor caused by concern about the reading effect is 790 with a mean score of 3.46.

It can be concluded that in English language education program, under the aspect of text features, unfamiliar topic and unknown vocabulary is the components that has the greatest impact on students' anxiety in reading skills. While in the aspect of personal factors, the factor that most influences student foreign language anxiety in reading skills is caused by the dread of making mistakes with a mean score of 3.55. Students who are anxious as a result of this factor become quite concerned anytime they come across unfamiliar vocabulary, and they like reading a book or text in English when they grasp what it means.

Subsequently, for English language and literature students, the mean score for reading anxiety caused by unknown vocabulary is 3.75 and the mean score for unfamiliar topics is 3.77. While for reading anxiety caused by unfamiliar culture is 3.14. Moreover, the mean score for fear of making mistakes and concern about the reading effect is 3.45 and 3.32 respectively. It can be concluded that the factor that most influences foreign language anxiety in reading skills in the aspect of text features is caused by unfamiliar topics with a mean score of 3.77. While in the aspect of personal factors, students were anxious because they worried that they would make mistakes with a mean score of 3.45. If a text's topic does not captivate the learner's interest, it is nearly hard for the student to read for pleasure, making it difficult for the student to become a good reader. To put it another way, reading topics that are relevant to the reader's interests will result in a positive response to the reading activity. Short stories appeal to students with this anxiety because they use simple language and the topics are common.

### ***Discussion***

This research was carried out to ascertain the level of anxiety experienced by EFL college students at FBS UNP in listening and reading skills. Through the questionnaires that have been distributed to students of English language education study program and English language literature study program 2021 UNP, the result is revealed. Based on the results of these questionnaires, it was found that both students from English language education study program and English language literature study program of UNP have a high level of foreign language anxiety in listening and



reading skills. There is no substantial difference in the percentage of students who are anxious about listening and reading skills between English language education study program and English language literature study program. Similarly, Liu & Yuan (2021) discovered that learners indicated high levels of listening anxiety in their study of classroom anxiety and listening anxiety alteration and its effects on Chinese students. Furthermore, the study conducted by Liu & Yuan (2021) and Serraj & bt. Noordin (2013) found that listening anxiety greatly affect listening comprehension and both variables have a negative correlation.

The result of this study also indicated that both students in the English language education program and the English literature program at UNP were most anxious about their reading skills. It can be seen from the graph, that the percentage of students who have a high level of FL reading anxiety for the English language education program is 76% while for the English language and literature program is 66%.

There are a number of components that affect foreign language anxiety in listening skills. However, the factors that most influence students' listening anxiety come from listening material. This applies equally to English language education study program and English language literature study program. Previous research by Adnan et al. (2020) stated that learners may experience anxiety as a result of listening materials such as the speaker in the audio speaking too quickly for the students to understand. Furthermore, it appears that comprehending listening materials expressed in an accent to which they are not accustomed is a daunting problem for students (Serraj, 2015).

Subsequently, there are two major aspects that contribute o students' anxiety in reading skills. Under the aspect of text features, the most significant factor influencing English language education program students' reading anxiety is unknown vocabulary and unfamiliar topics. While for English language and literature students, the most influential factor is unfamiliar topics. Furthermore, in the aspect of personal factors, students reading anxiety is mostly caused by fear of making errors, both in English language education program students and English language literature students. These findings are in line with the previous research by Muhlis (2017). Furthermore, Tsai & Lee (2018) who conducted a research to examine the factors contributing to foreign language anxiety in reading skills in EFL students in Taiwan discovered that unknown vocabulary, unfamiliar topics, extensive and intricate text structures, and the fear of making mistakes have all been cited as main factors of FL reading anxiety. It indicated that students are concerned whenever they encounter unfamiliar vocabulary, and they do not enjoy reading texts about topics they are unfamiliar with. Gonen (2007) also supports the idea that an uninteresting topic in a reading text might cause anxiety in reading skills.

## **CONCLUSION**

Referring to the data presented in the preceding chapter's findings and discussion section, it can be inferred that the majority of English language education study program students and English language literature study program students at UNP have a high level of foreign language anxiety in listening and reading skills. The findings of the study also revealed that reading skills were a major concern for

students in both English language education program and English language literature program.

Furthermore, English teachers must consider these potential anxiety factors when instructing their learners, as anxiety can obstruct students' understanding of learning English as a foreign language. Further research is needed with a variety of students group in different scenarios to better comprehend the problem of English as a foreign language anxiety because the intensity and source of anxiety can vary depending on the contexts. Furthermore, more research on ways for overcoming foreign language anxiety is required for future studies to support teachers and students in their pursuit of foreign language proficiency.

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