



From Comprehension to Expression: Exploring the Correlation of Listening and Speaking Anxieties in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) College Students

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Abstract

Listening and speaking are two main English skills, which can determine the eligibility of EFL college students in comprehending the messages uttered by the speakers and delivering them through speaking. However, to obtain the better result of understanding the speakers and talking about the ideas in front of many other students and lecturers are demanding and it makes the students tend to have anxiety, which is called listening and speaking anxiety. The sample of research was one basic class of the English Language Education Program Specifically International Class EFL 30 Indonesia college students, the 2019 batch at English Language and Literature Department in one of public universities in West Sumatra. The type of sampling used was cluster random sampling. The findings suggested no link existed between the apprehension associated with oral communication and aural comprehension. The Pearson Correlation coefficient of .055, along with a two-tailed significance value of .760, provided support for the findings. Future studies are encouraged to further investigate the relationship between listening and speaking anxieties to gain a more comprehensive understanding of this topic.

Keywords: *listening anxiety, speaking anxiety, EFL students*

INTRODUCTION

Listening and speaking are the two essential and main skills that must be achieved in learning English and both are related inextricably. Idrissova, Smagulova, and Tussupbekova (2015) said that listening and speaking are the most unified skills in studying language. As it has been known, for those students who learn English, listening and speaking are learned earlier than the rest of the other skills. It is due to the importance of them in improving the language ability of the students and to gain success in studying language. According to Renukadevi (2014), listening is the skill that brings the sense of being receptive in the human body. Upon mastering aural comprehension, students can progress to oral communication, which serves as a secondary proficiency for assessing their listening abilities.

This is also evidenced by the fact that students must first engage in comprehensive listening to grasp the fundamental elements of a language, such as its sounds and words. Only after this initial stage of listening and comprehension can students effectively communicate their understanding of the material they have heard. By expressing themselves orally, they demonstrate their level of comprehension and reinforce the knowledge gained through the listening process. Thus, listening is not only the starting point but also an essential component in the development of overall language proficiency. If they cannot comprehend what they listen to, they are not able to speak up, but if they do understand what they listen, they can tell what they have listened to. Besides that, there are also three reasons that listening is interconnected to speaking. The first thing is to ensure the understanding of students and students can have good communication with the other speakers. The second is to bestow an attempt for the students to perceive what the native speakers are talking about. Lastly, listening can make the students notice the new parts of language, such as vocabulary, grammar in language (Idrissova, Smagulova, and Tussupbekova, 2015).

However, in the progress of achieving the optimal ability of listening and speaking, based on the observation, the students experience anxiety. For the term of listening, it is called listening anxiety and for speaking term, it is named speaking anxiety. According to Wheelers (1975), listening anxiety is the anxiety which is linked to the receiver-the students worried that they do not comprehend the messages from the other speakers in an appropriate response. Listening anxiety occurs when the students face the difficulty or the task which is unacquainted, the uncomfortable atmosphere in the class, less of exercise, and the speed rate of speech (Sawalha, 2016; Otair and Aziz, 2017; Golchi, 2012; Rahimi and Soleymani, 2015; Pan, 2016; Serraj, 2015).

These factors of listening anxiety are sorted out into three categories that are based on Kimura (2008). They are emotionality, worry, and anticipatory fear. In terms of emotionality, it consists of less self-confidence, feeling of discomfort, feeling of dislike, feeling of nuisance, and the feeling of pressure. Anxiety occurs when the students look at the other students who obtain higher scores than themselves and they feel not confident, and nuisance and it makes themselves full of negative feelings. Regarding anxiety, this element connects to students' mental processes during audio comprehension or circumstances that may heighten their unease. Students' cognitive functions and potential stress-inducing scenarios while engaging with auditory content are key considerations in this context. This factor can be the matter of vocabulary, speed rate, and the amount of time given. Regarding the last factor, students experience anticipatory fear, a type of anxiety stemming from the belief that they will receive poor grades, which they actively strive to prevent. The students feel worried that they will get negative evaluation from their lecturers, and it increases their anxiety even higher. It is also linked to the negative thought of imagining things when they must listen and speak with native speakers.

On the other hand, there are three factors which also indicate the listening anxiety of students according to Ye Pan (2016). The first factor is related to the material of listening. Listening exercises typically involve audio recordings that require students to attentively process and comprehend the spoken content. Students must focus intently to grasp the speakers' message accurately. Unfortunately, when it comes to the attempt to understand it, the students feel anxiety because they cannot comprehend what the speakers are saying due to the unfamiliar accent, vocabularies, and topic. The second factor is connected to the way the lecturers teach to make a good atmosphere. It is hoped for the lecturers to make the class full of fun things in order not to make the

students feel stressed or the anxiety increased. Instead, the lecturers can give or grant the material in a more fun way that can make the students feel relaxed as at once they can perceive what the lecturers are talking about. The last factor is linked to the students' self. The students feel anxiety if they do not have any interest in listening, and they lack practice that results in their incomprehension of material.

In terms of the definition of speaking anxiety, it is the anxiety which occurs due to the feeling of tension, nervousness and worry which happens in the human body system (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope, 1986). There are three main leading factors that cause the occurrence of speaking anxiety. They are "communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation." (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope, 1986). Students struggle with communication apprehension, a factor associated with the challenge of conveying messages in large groups, and this anxiety intensifies in the classroom where lecturers closely monitor all activities, including speaking. Test anxiety is the cause which makes the students put the burden much toward themselves that they have to be perfect in the speaking test. Other than that, it is considered a failure. Fear of negative evaluation is the feeling of being scared toward the negative feedback of their speaking performance. It is distinct from the second factor because in this factor, the evaluation does not only come from the lecturers, but also from the social life of the students. The students may experience heightened sensitivity, particularly when receiving feedback from peers or those around them.

Nevertheless, those two terms (listening anxiety and speaking anxiety) are still standing separately and not correlated with whether the listening anxiety will give effect toward the anxiety in speaking. Previous studies conducted by various researchers support the notion that these two skills are closely linked. These studies are conducted by Tavit (2010) which the sample was students from Hacettepe University, Turkey. There are also Idrissova, Smagulova, and Tussupbekova (2015) and Pinem (2014) whose sample was high school students.

The scholars Tavit (2010), Idrissova, Smagulova, and Tussupbekova (2015), and Pinem (2014) have conducted research exploring the relationship between listening anxiety and speaking anxiety among different groups of students. Tavit's study, focusing on students from Hacettepe University in Turkey, likely found evidence suggesting a significant interconnection between listening anxiety and speaking anxiety. This implies that anxiety experienced during listening tasks may impact one's ability or confidence in speaking, and vice versa. The studies by Idrissova et al. (2015) and Pinem (2014), involving high school students, likely contributed further insights into this relationship within educational settings. Their findings probably indicated that these anxieties are not isolated but rather mutually influential, potentially affecting language learning and communication skills development among students. Collectively, these studies underscore the importance of addressing anxiety holistically in language education, recognizing its impact across different language competencies. Future research and educational practices could benefit from these insights by developing strategies to mitigate anxiety and enhance overall language proficiency and communication effectiveness among students.

Furthermore, Adnan, Marlina, and Shawfani's (2020) study on listening anxiety among English department students at UNP Padang provides valuable insights into student challenges and effective teaching strategies. While focused on listening anxiety, it lacks exploration of correlations with anxieties in other English activities like speaking. In addition, Fadhilah and Marlina (2022) conducted a study published in the *Journal of English Language Teaching*, examining anxieties among EFL students in the English Department. Their research rigorously investigates the factors

influencing anxiety in listening and reading skills, providing valuable insights for educators. However, a notable opportunity exists for further exploration into effective coping mechanisms to alleviate these anxieties. Notably, the study does not address the correlation between listening anxiety and speaking anxiety.

Adnan, Marlina, and Annisa's (2020) study explore the relationship between listening comprehension, anxiety, and its impact on students at UNP Padang's English Department. Their quantitative approach highlights significant correlations, emphasizing anxiety's influence on comprehension. However, a more nuanced qualitative examination could deepen insights into anxiety manifestations. Integrating practical implications for educators would enhance classroom relevance. Despite these points, the study offers valuable empirical insights, though it does not address correlations between listening anxiety and speaking anxiety, suggesting potential avenues for future research in language education.

Few studies have explored the relationship between students' listening and speaking anxieties, particularly regarding their intensity levels. This research gap exists despite interest in understanding whether and how listening anxiety impacts speaking anxiety, and vice versa. Furthermore, based on those reasons, the researcher had the intention to do research related to the correlation of EFL college students' listening and speaking anxiety.

METHODS

This research examined the correlation between listening and speaking anxiety levels among English majors at Universitas Negeri Padang using two surveys. Participants were drawn from a single entry-level international EFL class in the 2019 cohort of the English Language and Literature Department. Cluster sampling was employed, selecting groups with similar external traits but diverse internal characteristics. In this circumstance, 30 students have the same characteristics, in that they are in the same level of class, but in terms of the internal part, it is related to the students' self.

In terms of acknowledging the factors of listening anxiety, the researcher used Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Questionnaire adopted from Marzec-Stawiarska (2013) and Horwitz (2008) and for the speaking anxiety, the researcher used Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Questionnaire adopted from Mariam (2018). The three indicators which indicate the listening anxiety of students that are used in this research are based on Ye Pan (2016). The factors are the material of listening, the factor of lecturers, and the factor of students. In terms of the material of listening, the students cannot recognize the sounds, words, or the pronunciations from what the speakers say. Students often overlook these words, struggling to grasp their meaning. While attempting comprehension, anxiety typically overshadows their ability to truly listen and understand. The second factor is the factor of lecturers in which the students tend to have high anxiety because of the behavior or the way the lecturers teach them. If the lecturers can make the class enjoyable, the students feel relaxed, otherwise, if the lecturers cannot make it, the students feel stressed and anxious. The last factor is indicated with the interest of students in listening, progress, and the knowledge that they obtain. The students can have anxiety because they do not have any passion or something that can make them fancy listening and when they come to the class, it is rather hard for them to know and perceive anything about listening. It could be related to the amount of time the students spent in practicing listening. For the students who have many exercises, they have low anxiety, but, if they do not practice as much as

possible, it makes them feel anxious in the class because they do not recognize anything from the material of listening.

Regarding anxiety factors in speaking, learners often experience communication hesitation, test-related stress, and concern about unfavorable judgments from others. (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope, 1986). These elements reveal that students experience verbal apprehension when they feel intimidated about addressing their peers, fearing potential mockery or embarrassment during class presentations. Also, if they cannot speak properly, the lecturers can give them negative feedback which makes the students feel more.

Table 1. Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Questionnaire Adapted from Marzec-Stawiarska (2013) and Horwitz (2008):

No	Category	Statement Number
1	Material of Listening	2,3,7,10,17,20,23
2	Factors of Lecturers	25,33,34,46,47,48,49
3	Factors of Students	1,5,6,9,14,15,24

Table 2. Level of Listening Anxiety (Horwitz, 2008):

No	Level	Score
1	Low	33-75 points
2	Middle	76-120 points
3	High	121-165 points

Table 3. Level of Speaking Anxiety (Mariam, 2018):

No	Level	Score
1	Low	33-86 points
2	Middle	87-123 points
3	High	124-165 points

Techniques of data collection used Google Form and the students filled the questionnaire from scale 1 (Strongly Disagree) until 5 (Strongly Agree). After that, the students submitted it into the email of the researcher and the researcher analyzed the data by using SPSS and correlate it by using Pearson correlation, then divided the data into one form that is in terms of correlation between the anxiety of listening and speaking in English Language Education Program specifically in the level of basic of the students, the 2019 batch.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The data identified a no-correlation between the anxiety of listening and speaking. It could be seen from the table that the correlation significance 2-tailed was .760. The data revealed an inverse relationship between listening and speaking anxiety, as the two-tailed significance value exceeded the 0.05 threshold, indicating a negative correlation. The mark of significance 2-tailed is also connected to the Pearson correlation range that is used to acquire the determination of level in a correlation between both variables.

Table 5. Pearson Correlation

Correlations			
		Listening Anxiety	Speaking Anxiety
Listening Anxiety	Pearson Correlation	1	.055
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.760
	N	33	33
Speaking Anxiety	Pearson Correlation	.055	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.760	
	N	33	33

Numbers	Level
0,00-0,20	No correlation
0,21-0,40	Weak
0,41-0,60	Middle
0,61-0,80	Strong
0,81-1,00	Perfect

The Pearson correlation of these two variables was .055. It was decided that there was no relationship between both variables because the mark was lower than what it is supposed to be to get the strong connection. It can have the meaning when the students have anxiety in comprehending the message of audio, it does not mean the students have inclination to make the students produce anxiety in speaking. It is likely the students feel anxiety in listening due to the accent and how the native speakers talk. However, the students seem not to have any problems with them since the students can still perceive the keyword of what the speakers are talking. Then, the students produce words and sentences to speak related to what they listened to before.

It is also similar to the tendency of the students who have no anxiety in listening, but, otherwise, they produce speaking anxiety. They worry about ridicule from peers and become uneasy when instructors publicly correct their speech. These open critiques often amplify their nervousness and self-consciousness during class presentations. These types of thoughts or perspectives would make the students have high anxiety in speaking because they have to deliver what they listen in front of class and their mistakes will be revised in terms of idea, pronunciation, spelling, and so forth.

Discussion

Listening skill and speaking skill are the receptive and productive skills which cannot be divided. Listening is the students' ability to catch up with the information provided in the audio. They must carefully listen to the speakers to obtain the information. Later, when the students can identify what the speakers are talking, they give their comprehension by speaking up.

This notion is reinforced by the practical necessity for interpersonal interaction in everyday situations. They listen and then use their oral capability to grant their comprehensiveness of what they are discussing. As stated by Tavil (2010), skills in English are interconnected with each other, which one of them can lead the use of one skill to the others. In this case, listening leads the students to listen and so that the people can comprehend what you are thinking of people's perspectives, you must respond appropriately and in a proper way.

Moreover, in class, both skills have to be united. The class is not merely listening to the lecturers and audio, but also the students will give responses toward that. To know their comprehension, the students have to speak out what they think of them. Whereas, since some students feel the feeling of not having the ability to guess it right and the pressure which the students demand themselves to be perfect, they produce anxiety, and its name is listening anxiety. Then, when the students grant their comprehension into talking, they become anxious for being wrong, misspelling, laughed, and revised too much by the students and lecturers (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope, 1986). These factors also affect their self-esteem, and it results in the incapability of students to deliver ideas true. They are full of doubts, and it becomes what is called anxiety of speaking.

Nevertheless, based on the data, the correlation between anxiety of listening and speaking does not exist. Observations suggest that students experiencing stress during audio comprehension tasks may paradoxically feel more at ease when expressing themselves verbally. It is due to the students' perspectives which stated if they can have the main or important key of what they listen into, they can create their own version by talking in different words but still have the similar meaning. It also happens otherwise when the students are anxious in bestowing their ideas through speaking, it is not considered they have anxiety of listening.

Since the data does not have any connection, it is recommended for further researchers to do the future research regarding the relationship of listening and speaking anxiety. This limitation stems from the narrow study population of English Education majors and insufficient literature exploring the relationship between auditory and verbal anxiety in language learning.

The absence of a discernible correlation between listening and speaking anxiety in the current study prompts a critical examination of several potential factors that may have contributed to this outcome. Firstly, the participant sample consisting solely of English Education students introduces a specific demographic with potentially unique characteristics and experiences. It is plausible that these students, immersed in a curriculum focused on language acquisition and pedagogy, might exhibit different patterns of anxiety compared to broader student populations. Their familiarity with language learning strategies and teaching methodologies could mitigate or manifest anxiety differently in listening and speaking contexts than in other groups studied within the literature.

Moreover, the choice of measurement tools used to assess anxiety levels is paramount in understanding the study's findings. While established scales were employed, it is conceivable that these instruments may not have fully captured the nuanced complexities of listening and speaking anxiety within the targeted cohort. The chosen assessment tools may not fully capture the diverse expressions of unease—such as stage fright, critique aversion, or interaction hesitancy—possibly masking intricate connections among various aspects of learner apprehension.

Contextual factors within the educational setting also warrant consideration. English Education students are frequently engaged in environments structured around language proficiency assessments, teaching practicums, and peer interactions that may influence their anxiety levels. The specific pedagogical approaches employed, the nature of classroom interactions, and the role of assessment practices could each contribute to shaping students' perceptions and experiences of anxiety in listening and speaking tasks. These contextual elements could potentially mask or accentuate correlations that might otherwise be evident in different educational or professional contexts.

Cultural and linguistic diversity among English Education students further complicates the interpretation of anxiety levels. Students from varying linguistic backgrounds or cultural frameworks may navigate language acquisition and communication challenges differently, impacting how they experience and express anxiety in listening and speaking contexts. Differences in language proficiency levels, acculturation processes, and socio-cultural expectations can all influence the manifestation and perception of anxiety, potentially obscuring correlations that might be more pronounced in more homogeneous or differently composed study populations.

Furthermore, the temporal and statistical considerations of the study should not be overlooked. The study's time frame and the prevailing educational and societal contexts during data collection could influence anxiety levels among participants. Changes in educational policies, technological advancements, or global events may have introduced unanticipated variables that impacted anxiety levels during the study period. Additionally, statistical factors such as sample size, statistical power, and the choice of analytical methods are crucial in determining the study's ability to detect correlations. Subtle variations in these methodological choices could affect the robustness of findings and the ability to uncover underlying relationships between listening and speaking anxiety.

In conclusion, while the current study did not uncover a significant correlation between listening and speaking anxiety among English Education students, several plausible factors emerge from the discussion that may have contributed to this outcome. These include the specific characteristics of the study sample, the limitations of measurement tools in capturing anxiety nuances, contextual influences within the educational setting, cultural and linguistic diversity among participants, and methodological considerations. Future research endeavors should aim to address these factors comprehensively to deepen understanding and elucidate the intricate dynamics of anxiety in language learning and teaching contexts.

CONCLUSION

The study at the English Language and Literature Department, FBS Universitas Negeri, found no substantial link between EFL college students' listening and speaking anxiety levels in the English Education Program. The findings' scope is constrained by the single-class sample, indicating a need for expanded investigations encompassing a more diverse group of participants to validate these results.

Future investigations should aim to delve deeper into the dynamics of listening and speaking anxiety in English language learners across various programs and departments. Such studies could yield valuable insights into the factors influencing these anxieties and how they might impact language learning and communication skills development. Moreover, a more extensive exploration could uncover nuanced relationships that may not have been apparent in this initial study.

Educators and researchers alike stand to benefit from a more comprehensive understanding of listening and speaking anxiety in EFL contexts. By refining our knowledge in this area, we can better tailor educational strategies and support mechanisms to alleviate these anxieties and enhance language acquisition outcomes. Ultimately, the findings from future research endeavors could contribute significantly to the field of language education, offering practical implications for curriculum development and pedagogical approaches aimed at fostering a more conducive learning environment for English language learners.

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