

Listening Anxiety in Iranian EFL learners

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Abstract- Listening anxiety has a detrimental effect on language learners. In the Iranian EFL context listening comprehension remains as one of the most problematic skills for learners. To figure out learners' sources of listening comprehension anxiety and the factors that might reduce listening anxiety, the semi-structured interviews were conducted with fifteen participants. Through qualitative analysis several factors were identified as having influence on Iranian EFL learners' listening anxiety. These factors were divided into three categories, i.e. individual factors (nerves and emotionality, using inappropriate strategies and lack of practice), input factors (lack of time to process, lack of visual support, nature of speech and level of difficulty) and environmental factors (instructors, peers and class environment).

Index Terms- Listening Comprehension, Foreign Language Anxiety, Listening Anxiety, Foreign language learners

I. INTRODUCTION

Listening is considered as the highest frequently used form of language skill and has a fundamental role in normal communication and educational performance. Students need to spend most of their time listening to what their teachers says, such as, presenting lectures, telling directions or asking questions. When students first start learning a new language, they generally have to hear the words of that language very frequently before they are able to recognize and then verbalize those words. Not only is listening skill the basis for improving other skills, it is also the main route through which learners make initial exposure to the target language (Curtain, Pesola, & Savignon, 1988). Through the process of language learning, the role of affective filters (Krashen, 1988) has been acknowledged. Anxiety among the affective variables is recognized as one of the most prominent variable, which influences learners in all process of language learning, whether during input, processing, or performance (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989). It is defined as feeling tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry related to an arousal of the autonomic nervous system (Horwitz, et al., 1986). MacIntyre & Gardner (1994) suggest that anxiety might lead to deficits in learning and performance and interferes with a learner's cognitive competence to gain, process, and produce a foreign language. As Horwitz (2001) noted many advanced and successful FL learners experience high levels of anxiety during learning and using a foreign language. The objective of the present study was to explore the factors that influence foreign language listening anxiety among Iranian EFL learners. This could have a great importance since it would help eliminate the factors that hinder listening comprehension while promoting those that might facilitate it.

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Foreign Language Anxiety

Many scholars have examined anxiety and its association to listening comprehension (Gardner, et al. 1987; Bacon, 1989; Lund, 1991; Kim, 2000). The consensus is that anxiety impedes listening comprehension. The type of anxiety that occurs in a foreign language learning context is identified as foreign language anxiety (FL anxiety), which Horwitz, et al. (1986) defined it as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p. 128). This definition shows that learners might feel a threat to their self-image since they must be engaged in tasks in a new language over which they do not have a suffice command. Findings of the recent studies reviled that anxiety often interfere with the learning process, reduce learning motivation and eventually causes low performance (Elkhafaifi, 2005; Pappamihel, 2002; Sparks & Ganschow, 2007).

Studies into anxiety in language learning have focused on a type of anxiety related specifically to language situations, termed language anxiety. This is seen as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors [...] arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (Horwitz, et al., 1986, p. 128) which does not appear to bear a strong relation to other forms of anxiety (MacIntyre, 1999). Regarding to the study of anxiety in language learning, there seem to have been fundamentally two different approaches, which are labelled as (1) the "anxiety transfer", and (2) the "unique anxiety" approach (Horwitz & Young, 1991; MacIntyre, 1999). These two approaches are based on various conceptualizations of L2-related anxiety. In the first approach it is assumed that the anxiety experienced in an L2 setting is just the transfer of other types of anxiety into the L2 context. It is assumed that an individual who is generally anxious or experiences anxiety in particular context has a predisposition to also be anxious during learning or using a foreign language.

More specifically, anxiety in the L2 domain has been considered either (1) as the manifestation of a general trait of anxiety or (2) as the transfer of some situation-specific anxiety (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991; MacIntyre, 1999). Therefore reasrch adopting this approach either applied measures of trait/state anxiety (e.g., the Manifest Anxiety Scale (MAS), Taylor, 1953; the State/Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), Spielberger et al., 1970; Spielberger, 1983), or sclaes measuring situation-specific anxiety such as test anxiety (Sarason & Ganzer, 1962) and communication apprehension (McCroskey, 1970) in order to measure anxiety in the L2 contexts.

Unlike the first approach, in the second approach it is assumed that language learning creates a type of anxiety which is

unique. This conceptualization is based on Gardner's hypothesis that "a construct of anxiety which is not general but instead is specific to the language acquisition context is related to second language achievement" (1985, p. 34). In this perspective, anxiety experienced in second language learning domain is viewed as a situation-specific anxiety stimulated by the experience of learning and using a second language. Based on this conceptualization, studies adopting this approach employed those anxiety measures which were created to tap particularly into the anxiety experienced in second or foreign language contexts (e.g., the French Class/Use, English Class/Use Anxiety Scales Gardner, Clément, and associates have applied since the 1970s as parts of the Attitudes and Motivation Test Battery, developed by Gardner, Smythe, & Clément, 1979).

Comparing the two contrasting perspective mentioned earlier, the "unique anxiety" approach seemed to be the more practical one. Research applying the "anxiety transfer" approach shows inconsistent, contradictory results both across and within studies (MacIntyre, 1999). Through these early anxiety research (Scovel, 1978; Young, 1990, 1994), some were the indication of negative relationship between anxiety and L2 performance (e.g., Bartz, 1974 cited in Young, 1994), while other research showed a positive link between the two constructs (e.g., Kleinmann, 1977), and in some other studies no significant relation was found between the two variables (e.g., Westcott, 1973 cited in Young, 1994). Moreover, in some studies interpreting the finding seemed difficult, for example that anxiety was negatively related to one language skill but not to other skill (Swain & Burnaby, 1976; Tucker, Hamayan, & Genesee, 1976), or that anxiety related to one FL positively but negatively to another, and not significantly related to a third FL in the same research (Chastain, 1975).

In short, researches utilizing the "anxiety transfer" approach were not able to offer a vivid understanding of how anxiety was linked to second language learning. One plausible justification for the inconsistency in the findings of these studies is that different researches utilizing the "anxiety transfer" approach applied various measures of anxiety, as mentioned earlier, which itself makes the comparison across research more problematic (Young, 1994). More importantly, none of these measures used in these studies were specifically related to the type of anxiety experience in language learning contexts. In other words, there was no harmony between the anxiety definition or measure and the actual variables which were supposed to be measured (Scovel, 1978; MacIntyre, 1999; Young, 1994).

In contrast, research employing the "unique anxiety" approach using measures of anxiety specified to the L2 domain indicated a consistent negative relationship between L2-related (L2 class, L2 use) anxiety and different scales of L2 performance (Clément, Gardner, & Smythe, 1977, 1980; Gardner, Smythe, Clément, & Glikzman, 1976; Gardner, Smythe, & Lalonde, 1984). Therefore, since the idea that certain situation-specific anxiety or general trait of anxiety transferred from other situation operates in language learning did not receive support in empirical findings, the assumption that a unique type of anxiety might be involved seemed to be a more plausible hypothesis.

FL listening Anxiety

Listening in foreign language contexts is a less thoroughly researched skill in general. Our knowledge is even more limited about the interaction between listening skill and foreign language learning anxiety. As Vogely (1999) asserted, while listening comprehension is one of the most ignored skills, some instructors are even unaware of the effect of listening exercises on provoking undermining anxiety in language learners. Some pioneers researchers have examined the relationship between anxiety and listening comprehension (Bacon, 1989; Gardner, Lalonde, Moorcroft, & Evers, 1987; Lund, 1991). The consensus of those studies is that anxiety could impede listening comprehension.

Research in second or foreign language has shown that anxiety directly debilitates motivation and causes a negative affective response to the foreign language (Gardner et al. 1987). Since then, recognising FL listening comprehension anxiety has been rapidly become a priority in the language classroom. Reviewing the literature related to language learning anxiety initially indicated that foreign language students believed that speaking creates the most anxiety (Young 1990; Phillips 1992). Gradually, through the studies related to speaking anxiety, foreign language listening comprehension anxiety has been emerged as a problematic area for language learners.

In this respect Krashen (cited in Young, 1992) asserted that, although speaking is reported as the most anxiety-provoking skill, listening comprehension is indeed "highly anxiety provoking if it is incomprehensible" (168).

Scarcella and Oxford (1992) believed that listening anxiety arises in a situation when learners feel that a task they are faced with is either unfamiliar or too difficult for them. This anxiety might be intensified if the learners are under the false assumption that they have to understand each and every word they hear. They inevitably feel anxiety when this theory fails and if they insist on this assumption, anxiety becomes a repetitive feeling. How students perceive their own listening skill can be another source of listening anxiety. A lot of learners presume that for being "good" at a language they must have perfect pronunciation, know massive number of vocabulary, be familiar with extensive grammar knowledge, have overseas experience, and be gifted by natural aptitude for language learning (Horwitz, 1987).

Therefore this type of anxiety that occurs during the listening comprehension process usually originates from a negative "listening self-concept" which is a low self confidence level in the listening skill area (Joiner, 1986). On the other hand as Chastain (1979) mentioned since listening is a complicated skill learners often have the fear of interpreting the message incorrectly. The reason that many students have difficulty in foreign language listening are the lack of confidence and feeling of inadequacies among them (Dunkel, 1991). Therefore foreign language listening anxiety might intervene in learning a language successfully by causing tension of fear in FL listening process. Christenberry (2003) emphasizes the problematic nature of foreign language listening and acknowledges that it is an extremely difficult skill to teach effectively; therefore, is likely to create anxiety. MacIntyre (1995) also highlighted that foreign language learners feel anxious about understanding linguistic structures incorrectly or inferring meaning from situational context because in such activities they might make embarrassing mistakes.

Furthermore Samuels (1984) and Bacon (1992) mentioned that students may experience anxiety while doing listening comprehension tasks due to several factors including the authenticity of the listening, lack of comprehensibility of the listening material and other external environmental variables such as noise and inaudibility.

III. METHOD

Interview as one of the most frequently used method for collecting qualitative data is employed to understand how individuals think of a particular situation or specific issues and express them in their own words (Ary et al., 2010). Creswell (2008) and Kvale (2007) see interview as an effective tool to collect rich and detailed description from the respondents. Basit (2010) believes that the researcher benefits from the interview method by building a rapport with the interviewees, and creating a trustable relationship between the two, which eventually provides more honest and credible responses. Moreover since most of the interviews were conducted via face-to face, the response rate is 100 per cent.

The participants of this study were 15 Iranian English language learners studying at language schools in Isfahan Iran. The reason behind using interview method in this research is to obtain a better insight into the learners' attitudes towards the factors that might influence on their listening comprehension.

In current study the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews which are the most common form of interview in educational research. In this type of interview, unlike the structured one, it is not necessary to ask all participants the same number of question. The focus of this type of interview is on asking the questions that address the objectives of the research (Basit, 2010). Interview is particularly a helpful method for collecting data since through other methods the researchers is not able to come up with what the participants think of a particular phenomenon. Semi-structured interview is a technique that provides an accurate and detailed image of what the individuals think of a certain phenomenon under scrutiny. Creswell (2008) posits that by combining a set of open-ended and close-ended questions in an interview, a researcher can gather applicable information to support the theories and concepts in the literature. Moreover it gives the interviewees an opportunity to expand and elaborate on their personal ideas related to the area under investigation. Semi-structured interview was employed by other researchers in the studies related to anxiety and language skills (e.g., Vogely, 1998; Von Wörde, 2003; Woodrow, 2006; Al-Shboul et.al, 2013).

In current study the interview played a crucial role since it helped the researcher to understand participants' voices on the factors create listening comprehension anxiety in English language classes. The purpose of the interviews was to ask the respondents to expand and elaborate on their responses to the listening anxiety questionnaire. During the interviews, the respondents were asked to elaborate on the responses they had given to the questionnaire items as well as their point of view about the source of their listening anxiety. The interviews that were conducted provided some more specific and detailed information on the learners' listening anxiety. Moreover they

were asked to express their own idea about the factors that might influence on their listening comprehension.

For this purpose, an interview protocol was designed which comprised questions the participants were asked (see Appendix D). It contains instructions for the interview process and the questions to be asked (Creswell, 2008). To prepare interview questions, a group of questions related to the present study were selected based on Vogely (1998) and Von Worde (2003).

The arrangement of the questions was based on "funnel-shaped interview" (Kvale, 2007). In this approach the interviewees first reply to some general questions and gradually move forwards the more detailed ones. The interview respondents were asked to describe the factors that they believe might contribute to their listening anxiety. Sample interview coding is provided in appendix B.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data were gathered through the interviews with language learners in order to obtain the factors that create listening anxiety. The following is a thorough description of the main results of the data as the factor mentioned by language learners that have influence on listening anxiety.

Nerves and Emotionality

One of the main factors the participants of the study highlighted as having an effect on their degree of listening anxiety are nerves and emotionality. Most of the respondents (12 out of 15) mentioned that that they do not feel confident in their listening skills. They are afraid that they might not have adequate knowledge about the topic. The majority of participants noted that their thoughts are jumbled and feel confused while they are listening to important information. They confessed that they get upset and uncomfortable when they are not certain if they have understood the information properly. Five interview respondents mentioned that they have fear of listening to public speech in English. Moreover such fear will be negatively evaluated when they are listening to or imagining themselves listening to a lecture.

To support such findings, Vogely (1998) explained the existence of such factor in learners' negative previous experiences or from the belief that they do not possess the prerequisites which is essential to be a competent language learner.

Nerves and emotionality seems to be basically related to the cognitive perceptions of the activity for L2 listeners. The participants perceive difficulties in coping with the information regarding interpersonal and social contexts, which creates negative emotion and nervousness. As MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) argued this feeling might also interfere with processing the language input effectively. Consequently such nervousness may decrease the listeners' ability to concentrate on the linguistic input in order to encode and interpret the information.

Finding the factor of emotionality and nerves affecting listening anxiety is in harmony with that of Kimura (2008) who found out that emotionality reflected in lack of confidence and other emotional reactions such as discomfort, dislike and annoyance in engaging listening comprehension tasks.

Inappropriate Strategies

Another significant factor that was identified as having an influence on the learners' foreign language anxiety is the lack of appropriate strategies. In this regard, several clues indicating the usage of inappropriate strategies were raised by the interviewees of the study.

Most of the participants consider comprehension as understanding and translating every words rather than comprehending the message. Such assumption leads learners to feel anxious when they miss the other parts, while they try to translate one part of input. In most of listening classes in Iran, language learners especially in lower levels are required to transcribe the listening materials as an exercise. This type of task encourage them to perceive listening comprehension as word for word decoding which might be a source of anxiety and frustration in the whole process of listening comprehension.

Some participants are concerned about missing the key words or misunderstanding the content. They assume that they might hear the "wrong" information. The highest load of concern related to the situation when learners are not familiar with the topic. They tend to feel surrendered when they realize that the topic is unknown for them and they lose their concentration to listen effectively. In line with the findings of the study with respect to the effect of inappropriate strategies on increasing listening anxiety Sioson (2011) stated that being aware of listening strategies give learners specific skills to handle and manage their learning, which might reduce their anxiety.

Traditionally in most of English language classes in Iran listening is combined with other activities and merely is looked as a separate skill needs to be taught. As Mendelsohn (1984) mentioned, developing listening comprehension through "osmosis" is not adequate. For being successful listeners, learners must be taught to strategically engage in listening process. According to Sioson (2011) when learners apply more metacognitive strategies, their level of communication apprehension, fear, and anxiety will be decreased. This might be due to the fact that metacognitive strategies are linked with goal setting and monitoring of learning process, which might reduce the anxiety level in learners. Therefore, Lack of strategies or inappropriate strategies in listening comprehension process as affective constraints can considerably increase one's degree of listening anxiety.

Lack of Time to Process

Lack of time to process was another factor that was highlighted by the participants of the study as having an impact on their level of listening anxiety.

The traditional approach to listening comprehension practice which input is presented only once or twice was one of the sources of frustration among participants of the study. Such feeling was considerably more significant in a testing context while the students must interpret the question first and come up with, or choose, the correct answer. As Vogely (1998) explained this anxiety can be related to the "two strikes and you're out" approach to listening comprehension activities.

Some participants reported being anxious only because they are under test condition instead of listening activities where they do not have opportunity to replay the input as much as they need. Similarly in a condition where a question is read aloud and they

are not able to rewind it, they also feel anxious. Such nervousness may be due to fact that they require processing the linguistic elements and remembering input simultaneously, which seems to be a demanding task for untrained listener.

The finding is in line with Chang et al.'s (1993) and Teng's (1998) results that repeated input enhances the learners' comprehension and reduces their anxiety. While as Vogely (1998) asserted in listening tasks, learners are faced with spontaneous and instantaneous input, therefore the opportunity for processing the information is transitory. Hence the nature of listening process by itself can elevate anxiety in listeners.

Nature of speech

Another important factors causing listening anxiety among the participants of the study is the nature of speech. The majority of the participants (11 out of 15) in this study complained about the speed of input. They believe that their anxiety alleviate if the input is presented in a lower speed rate. The finding is in line with the point of view of Derwing & Munro (2001) and Jensen & Vinther (2003) which believe that some specific aspects of the listening task, such as speech rate can influence performance in listening tasks. In a qualitative study conducted by Vogely (1998) almost one-third of the participants in her study reported the nature of speech as a source of anxiety.

It is inferred that for many learners who experience anxiety in listening tasks normal speed seems to be fast, and they are not able to catch up with strings of words that strike their ears, and therefore they feel anxious. Another factor related to the nature of speech that causes listening anxiety in the participants of the study is facing with the inputs that are presented in accents which they are not familiar with them. Understanding the listening materials that are pronounced in the accent which they are not exposed with it frequently seems to be a hard task for them. It is an indication that authenticity genuinely has an impact listening anxiety. Learners are accustomed to a type of mother ease used by their instructors in EFL context. Therefore, comprehending the authentic materials with normal speech rate and different pronunciation constitute a difficult task which contributes to learners' level of anxiety.

Level of Difficulty

Through the interview with participants it is revealed that students generally feel anxious when they find the level of listening materials difficult. The participants associated the level of difficulty of listening input mainly to the use of unfamiliar vocabulary or complicated syntax, the use of unfamiliar idioms and expressions and facing with the texts with unfamiliar topics.

It seems that in these situations students are not able to cope with the difficulties listening imposes and they cannot tolerate ambiguities in listening comprehension process. Therefore they lose their concentration which may elevate their anxiety. This conforms Vogely's argue (1998) that the difficulty in listening comprehension is to some extent due to the structural component of the input. Some listeners may believe that comprehension exclusively resides within those vocabularies and structures that they are not familiar with. Therefore they require great amounts of vocabularies and grammatical knowledge. These listeners have difficulty in comprehending the text and they are engaged in unlocking the meaning of these structures

instead of inferring the meaning from the context. They are likely to miss key words integral to the understanding of the input. This would lead them to experience nervousness and anxiety during listening comprehension activities.

To decrease anxiety over new vocabulary, a list of new vocabulary with phonetic symbols can be presented by teachers before listening tasks to familiarize listeners with the new vocabulary. Although vocabulary list recently is falling out of favour among FL instructors, it seems to be a beneficial method for initial exposure to new vocabularies (Schmitt and Schmitt, 1995). However as Lund (1990) mentioned the issue of text difficulty that is the nature of authentic texts itself can have an impact on listeners' comprehension.

Environment

Another factor interview respondents emphasised as contributing to their level of listening anxiety is the environment and classroom atmosphere. The respondents believe that the classroom atmosphere can either elevate or decrease their anxiety. Language learners feel less anxious in an environment which is friendly enough so that they feel comfortable and relaxed. However, creating such an atmosphere is primarily the teacher's responsibility that needs to be very deliberate in making a classroom an inviting place with the minimum stress. It goes without saying that a vibrant, stress-free learning situation can make a classroom less threatening for the students and a more effective and encouraging environment, which can lead to optimized educational achievements.

Respondents reported that noisy and crowded classes, distractors, the quality of audio materials and temperature of the class influence their level of anxiety and interfered with listening comprehension. In a stress-free environment, learners are able to build a better rapport with each other and with the instructor. In regard with a low-anxiety environment, Oxford and Shearin (1994) mentioned that the environment of listening classroom should be positive and nonthreatening. He suggested that in order to reduce anxiety before or during listening activities, using some strategies including deep breathing, listening to some relaxing music and positive affirmation can be effective. Young (1991) also emphasizes the need of creating a learner-centered, low-anxiety classroom environment.

Peers

Another important factor that was identified as having an influence on the learners' degree of listening anxiety is the role of the interlocutor. In this regard, several features of the peers were raised by the interviewees of the study. The gender of the peer was shown to have an impact on the level of the participants' listening anxiety. During the interviews, of the seven respondents, three argued that they feel more comfortable with a person of the same sex in listening classes since they can interact more comfortably and understand each other better. However, two of the individuals, express having less listening anxiety with the opposite sex.

This can be explained by the fact that the presence of an interlocutor from an opposite gender for some learners is beneficial since it pushes them to be more careful with comprehending the input one makes while for some other

individuals the existence of opposite sex can be distractive and elevate their listening anxiety.

Another factor related to the effect of peers on the participants' level of listening anxiety was the risk of making errors in listening comprehension in front of other classmates. The participants in Jamshidnejad's (2010) study also reported that they are over-concerned about making mistakes and being negatively evaluated by other classmates. In the context where the study was carried out, keeping one's face has a great value for the individuals. The fear of making mistakes enhances the chance of losing one's face which is anxiety-provoking.

Being competitive with peers was another factor affecting the level of anxiety among some of the participants. Some believed that their classmates increase their level of anxiety if they are performing better than them in the listening comprehension tasks. Indeed, these learners try to adjust the level of their understanding with the peers, and strive to be better than them.

The finding is in line with what Bailey's (1983) concluded through analysing the diaries of 11 learners that competitiveness can cause anxiety in learners. He found that learners have the tendency to outperform their peers to gain positive feedback from their instructor regarding their performance and competence. For other learners if they find themselves deficient in getting benefit out of such competitive setting, this negative cognitions might make serious blockage in their listening progress which leads to heightened awareness of their incapability and consequently to reticence when are required to perform their competence in listening comprehension.

Instructors

The role of language instructor is another factor influencing the level of listening anxiety according to the interview respondents in this study. The respondents unanimously declare the fact that their instructor is a key figure that can make them feel more comfortable in doing listening tasks and decrease the level of their listening anxiety.

According to many participants one of the most stressful aspect of the listening class, directly is related to the instructors themselves. Participants believe that it is difficult to meet their teacher's expectation to comprehend difficult listening tasks. This is in line with Vogely (1998) that reported, students experience listening comprehension anxiety when teachers have unrealistic expectation and are critical when students do not respond correctly.

As Arnold (2000) suggested, FL instructors are advised not to use only those type of listening production methods that rely on correct answers that can distract learner's attention and increase the levels of anxiety. Instead of expecting only correct answers FL instructors should encourage learners to take risks and consider it as an essential learning process. This can help learners to reduce the anxiety over "losing face" which is a common concern in FL classrooms (Yan and Horwitz, 2008). Moreover, FL teachers by providing learners with encouragement and comfort can help them to build up confidence (Atasheneh and Izadi, 2012).

Lack of Practice

One more influential factor worth noting is the amount of listening practice learners have in language classrooms. Most of the interview respondents attribute their listening anxiety to their lack of listening practice in language classroom, which is resultant from the lack of exposure to the authentic listening materials and instruction.

Previous research (Vogley, 1998 and graham, 2006) acknowledges lack of practice as a contributing factor to difficulties in listening comprehension for language learners. Several respondents stated that they are not guided in being prepared for listening tasks and enough attention is not paid in teaching listening comprehension skill. As Lee and Vanpatten (1995) suggested providing structured input exercise consists of steps to guide and focus learners' attention is beneficial for the learners. These type of activities decrease listening anxiety since the listeners are provided with reason and direction (Vogely, 1998).

V. CONCLUSION

Findings of the study revealed factors that influence listening anxiety. The factors that were identified as having influence on listening anxiety are divided into three categories, i.e. individual factors, input factors and environmental factors as illustrated in the figure above. The individual factors include factors that refer to the individuals' characteristics and situation of learners and include nerves and emotionality, using inappropriate strategies and lack of practice. The environmental factors, on the other hand, include factors that exist in the classroom atmosphere and influence the learners' level of listening anxiety. These include instructors, peers and class environment. Input factors refer to characteristic of listening input including lack of time to process, lack of visual support, nature of speech and level of difficulty. It was shown that these factors have impact on learners' listening anxiety. Finally, when a higher level of listening anxiety is observed among language learners, students tend to have lower performance in listening tasks.

Appendix A

Listening Comprehension Anxiety and Factors Affecting it

- To what extent do you feel anxious and stressed while you are doing listening comprehension activities?
- Can you give me some examples of the situations in which you are most anxious/least anxious in listening comprehension tasks?
- In your opinion, why do some students experience anxiety in doing listening tasks? What factors do you think are at work?
- What is the role of the teacher in this issue? What can your teacher do to make students less anxious in listening tasks?
- How about the topic you are listening to? What kind of topics are you more comfortable to listen to?
- Who/What do you usually prefer to listen to?
- In which environment you feel less anxious for doing listening tasks?
- What makes listening tasks difficult for you?
- In which situations you are less anxious and perform better listening comprehension?

Appendix B

Sample Interview Coding

The codes are mentioned in parentheses.

"I get a lot of stress when I know I have to answer the follow up questions right away after listening to a text and my teacher doesn't give me enough time to me think about what I heard."(Lack of time to process)

"I always feel more comfortable with those listening materials which have British pronunciation. I guess it is more understandable for me...listening to the other accent make me confused cause sometimes the same word I already know sounds completely different. "(Nature of speech)

"I know, I am familiar with a lot of spoken vocabulary, but when they are mixed together in long sentences, then I can't easily separate the vocabulary from each other and I lose track of listening. "(Level of difficulty)

"Imagining myself listening over the phone to English make me anxious and I feel I am not able to understand what is said and then I cannot answer to it properly, I guess it is really difficult."(Lack of visual support)

"The most important factor to increase my anxiety is my teacher. Some teacher just wants to see you making mistakes and I feel silly when she says you should have listened more carefully."(Instructor)

" Most of the time my classmates refer to me to check the answer of listening comprehension question with me. It makes me feel good about myself and I try to be prepared and alert for the tasks." (Peers)

"I believe in our classes most of attention is into teaching grammar and listening is not that much practiced. That's why I feel uncomfortable and anxious encountering listening exercises."(Lack of practice)

"If the room is too hot I get nervous and sweaty I guess I don't want to think about how hot it is when I am already try to listen to something and understand it, and it makes me uncomfortable."(Environment)

"Most of the time when my teacher is talking I have this feeling that I hear the wrong thing and think she is talking about something different and I don't get her right properly."(Inappropriate strategies)

"I don't think my listening level is as high as other skills. Normally I get lower scores and by default when I am doing a listening task I do not expect to perform very well. I have no confidence in doing well in listening, sometimes I feel very bad when I realize the input meant nothing to me but a string of unrecognizable sounds."(Nerves and emotionality)

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