

Full Length Research Paper

Freshmen's anxiety in an intensive listening class: A qualitative study

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Listening skill is an ability to understand a spoken language. It is also one of the important skills that people actively use in their daily lives. For learning English language at the Faculty of Language and Arts (FLA) at Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana (UKSW) Salatiga, Indonesia, there are several listening classes. One of them is Intensive Listening class, which is often considered as one of the most difficult listening classes by freshmen. Freshmen seem to be quite anxious in attending this class, and because of that anxiety, it is hard for them to attend the class comfortably. Even though not all freshmen thought that way, listening is still often considered as a complex skill, even among sophomores or older students. Thus, this research aims to investigate students' sources of anxiety and ways to remedy it. The participants in this study were 2017 students. The population was 80 students of four parallel intensive listening classes and all the students were selected as the respondents. In other words, the whole population was used as the sample of this study. Data were collected through interviews and questionnaires. Findings revealed that 46 out of 80 students admitted that they felt anxious while the remaining 34 students admitted they did not feel anxious during the intensive listening. In this research, the symptoms, levels, and the reasons for being anxious in the intensive listening class are explained.

Key words: listening class, listening skill, intensive listening, anxiety, freshmen.

INTRODUCTION

Listening is one among many important keys to be successful and eloquent in English language. According to Alonso (2013), listening is the skill of understanding spoken language; it is an essential skill that is present in most activities that people carry out throughout their lives. There are three different kinds of listening class in English Language Education (ELE) program in Faculty of Language and Arts (FLA) of Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana (UKSW) Salatiga, Indonesia. They are Extensive Listening, Intensive Listening and Academic Listening.

However, due to the limitation of time and space, this study focused on Intensive Listening class only. The reason is mainly because Intensive Listening course is the second level of listening class in FLA of UKSW, which focuses on many language forms and two types of English, American and British English. Based on an article by Rost (2012), Intensive Listening focuses on students' awareness on language form and that the aim of the class activities is to raise learners' knowledge of the differences in sounds, structures, and the lexical

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choices or diction, all of which could affect the meaning.

Based on a survey conducted to 2014 students, when they were taking Intensive Listening class, 46 students out of 80 students admitted that they felt uncomfortable with the class and they did not have much confidence in taking the course. As nervousness dominated the students in the class, their performance grew worse during the listening test. Half of them admitted that they did not do well in the first test. Looking at these facts, it was certain that there was an urgent need to conduct research in this matter.

One central research question to be addressed is, “Do freshmen experience a certain level of anxiety in Intensive Listening Class?”. The research objective is to find out whether the freshmen had a certain level of anxiety and how that anxiety had impacts them, and how they managed that anxiety in Intensive Listening class.

It had been previously studied that students can feel anxiety related to academic tasks in class, especially with test taking or other specific tasks which are considered hard for them (Dobson, 2012). Hopefully, this study is beneficial for future freshmen who will be taking Intensive Listening course, so that their anxiety level may decrease. It will hopefully be useful to lessen the burden of the lecturers if there are no repeaters for the course. For lecturers of listening, it is also hoped that they can get some advantages in understanding and helping students decrease their anxiety.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Psychological problems in listening class

Listening is often considered to be a difficult skill in order to master English. It is a skill that learners often want to avoid. According to an article of social and behavioral research, “Adult learners face difficulties when listening to the target language” (Nizkodubov et al., 2015). Listening training is a complex part of the English language learning, where the learners should get involved in many processes and do many things at the same time. When they begin to listen, they start to memorize, understand and then initiate to pronounce. “Listening involves a number of components that constitute direct listening process: mechanisms of short-term and long-term memory, probabilistic forecasting and understanding, inner pronunciation and speech segmentation and identification of concepts” (Kovalenko, 2003 in Nizkodubov et al., 2015). It is a very complicated skill that takes so much brain power and thus is considered to be one of the most important skills for adult learners in learning the English language.

Anxiety

Anxiety is characterized as an emotion in term of a

situation like uncertainty or a feeling of danger, and it affects how people will respond in their action or psychologically and it shows on people expressive or motivated behavior (Cloninger, 2014). Anxiety itself is neither a disease nor an illness; it is a result of a certain style of behavior from anticipating an unfavorable outcome. It is a normal adaptive response toward danger that develops in living beings. It is quite similar to animals’ instinct to survive in the wild, where they are much easier to get anxious with loud noise or unfamiliar objects. This is not so different from human beings, since almost all living beings, from the lowest type of fauna to the most intelligent men inherit a tendency to be worried and frightened. However, instead of an instinct to survive in danger the possibility of anxiety in human are most likely to be a fear from a result or consequence of their behavior, and to be shown in their facial expression.

Anxiety happens in every aspect of people’s lives (Shi, 2017). Like other feelings in human being, anxiety is just another personality feature that may be imagined as a constant pattern over time and space that affects behavior, cognition, and desires (Wilt et al., 2011). Thus, it is not something to be over-panic with but still needs to be handled and it could be overcome with a progress that occurs by recognizing, understanding, and changing damaged thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Sometimes, anxiety could be handled by the person who is getting it, or other people who are willing to help. For example, there are also some special cases of anxiety disorder, “research shows that up to one in four adults has an anxiety disorder sometime in their life and that one person in 10 is likely to have had an anxiety disorder in the past year” (Rector et al., 2011). It is one of a thing that obviously could get a professional help like psychologist or therapist.

The founding father of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud (Freud Museum London, 2018) mentioned that there are three phases of anxiety. At the earliest stage, Freud did not consider anxiety to be related to thoughts or ideas. However, he observed that it was closely linked to sexuality, thus he defined anxiety as sexual excitation that has been transformed. In other words, anxiety arises from a transformation of the accumulated tension.

In the second phase, Freud modified his earlier ‘toxic theory’ of anxiety. In this theory, he stated that anxiety was transformed into sexual excitation, and this idea was preserved. Freud added an important modification: in his earlier views, it was assumed that the cause of anxiety was external blocks to sexual release. In the theory of repression, the emphasis has been shifted to the internal ones or, he called it *psychological inhibitions*. Anxiety arises out of libido by the process of repression.

In the third phase of anxiety, Freud made an important distinction between a more primary *automatic anxiety*, triggered by a traumatic situation in which the helpless ego is overwhelmed, and *signal anxiety*, which can be activated in the ego response to situations of danger as a

kind of warning that a *traumatic situation* is imminent, so that defensive measures can be put into place to avoid it. These 'danger situations' tend to gravitate around the threats that arise from the prospect of being helpless and at the mercy of others: threats of losing a loved one, of losing another's love, or of being attacked. Ultimately, Freud claimed, these threats are manifestations of a more fundamental threat, the threat of castration.

The symptoms of anxiety

Anxiety may vary, depending on different types people. Everyone, from children to adults, experience anxiety. Anxiety often comes and goes from time to time; sometimes it lasts for a short time, a while, a moment, a few days, or even years. Some people even get anxiety disorder where anxiety has become severe that it interferes with their daily life and start to lose control of him or herself (Brown et al., 2016). There are many ways to find whether a person becomes anxious or not. Generally, the symptoms will be quite a lot. Some common symptoms of anxiety include; nervousness or being tense, feeling of danger, panic or dread, trembling, rapid heart rate and breathing, an increase of heavy sweating, digestive problem, difficulty on focusing or thinking clearly, and some others.

Knowing the symptoms beforehand could greatly impact how a person will handle his or her anxiety. Thus, being aware with a way a person could think about situations around him or her is extremely important in determining how anxious that person feels (Brosan et al., 2010). Anxiety symptoms could be various, depending on the level of the anxiety that a person could get. The higher the level is the more symptoms will highly occur. Some people could experience anxiety symptoms mentally (for example, overthinking), some others just experience the physical symptoms like stomachache, and most people could experience both at the same time.

The levels of anxiety

"Anxiety has both healthy and harmful aspects depending on its degree and duration as well as on how well the person copes with it" (Videback, 2010). The human body is able to response anxiety in a different type of ways, which develop more several and extreme symptoms as the level of anxiety increases. It is important to take care of the anxiety immediately and to not just ignore it since the anxiety could develop into a disorder and end up interrupting daily activities. There are various levels of anxiety starting from the lowest until the highest level. Based on Peplau's (1952) opinion, the founder of psychiatric nursing, there are 4 levels of anxiety, which are; mild, moderate, severe and panic anxiety and thus each level of anxiety can be experienced differently.

Mild anxiety

Mild anxiety or situational anxiety is the most common level of anxiety that could happen to anyone. In this level, people who got to mild anxiety are likely to be open-minded, but stressed. For example, this level of anxiety can be seen as someone is waiting for a job performance. The symptoms will most likely include fidgeting, irritability, sweaty palms and heightened senses. However, mild anxiety could also be motivational; it could help in focusing on seeking for solutions as a person facing challenges. If, for an example, a person got lost, that person could ask for directions and once he/she found a solution the anxiety will decrease quickly.

Moderate anxiety

This type of anxiety is more likely to focus on a stressful situation which happens directly in front of a person and lead to ignoring other things. For an example, a responsible babysitter that suddenly lost a child that he/she should have taken care of. This will lead the babysitter in experiencing faster heartbeat, dry mouth, sweating and stomach pain or nausea, speech may be rapid and high-pitched, and hand and arm movements are likely more exaggerated. The anxiety could most likely to be shown commonly outside too, like biting nails or wringing hands and the person's focus will only be where the child might be. Once the child is spot on the babysitter's sight, the symptoms will gradually settle.

Severe anxiety

In severe anxiety level, the symptoms will increase and develop, for example pounding heartbeat, chest pain, headache, vomiting or diarrhea, trembling, scattered thoughts, erratic behavior and a sense of dread. The severe level of anxiety will likely to take place when a person learned that a loved one has been in an accident or died unexpectedly, or an unexpected loss of employment. At this level, the ability to focus and finding solutions will be denied emotionally and could direct further to more anxieties. Also, any efforts to redirect attention are likely to be unsuccessful.

Panic-level anxiety

Panic-level of anxiety is the most challenging level of anxiety, as it overwhelms your ability to function normally. A person who got into this level of anxiety could experience an inability to move or speak along with a dysfunctional to think rationally and distorted perceptions. For a while, a person who got into this level of anxiety might not be able to identify dangers or understand

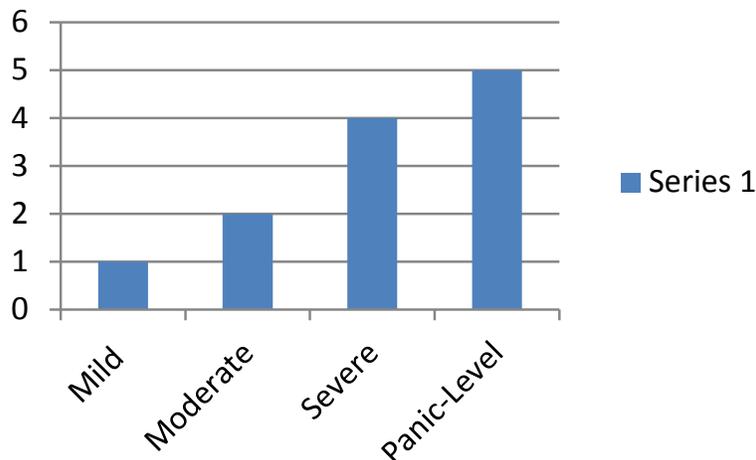


Figure 1. The levels of anxiety.

needs of daily life such as eating or drinking. People who got into this level of anxiety are mostly those who experience an extreme stress and heavy shock, like a victim of a crime or have been through a disaster life. In conclusion, the levels of anxiety is described Figure 1.

The relationship between anxiety and listening class

As mentioned before, listening is a skill that needs to be learned in order to master English or at least to be able to use English appropriately. It is “one of the most fundamental pieces of learning and teaching English” (Yılmaz and Yavuz, 2015). However, listening is a very complicated skill and hard to learn as it involves a lot of learners’ mental process. It is a truly complex psychology procedure that involves perception, attention, cognition and memory at the same time (Hamouda, 2013). Considering the heavy psychological barrier in listening class and the burden of taking lots of information and processing it, learners tend to get nervous in this class. The anxious feeling that learners often get in learning the listening skill is a feeling of being troubled for not being able to do their best or even fail the class.

Listening skill is highly neglected in schools, from primary to senior high school; listening skill is rarely introduced by teachers, as teachers often think that the student will be able to learn to listen as they start to speak English (Persulesy, 1988 in Hamouda, 2013). Due to the limited knowledge of listening skill, the students could become anxious and nervous just for attending the class as they do not know how to plan their learning. Therefore, what stays in their mind continuously is the thought of not being able to pass a listening test right before they even begin the test. It is likely to be a mindset that will mostly come to the learners’ mind, making them could really unable to pass the test. It influences their performances during the listening class

and makes it hard to concentrate as people are hard to focus when they are nervous and worried.

In listening class, usually the students are expected to give more attention than in any other classes because the students have to do many things at the same time from listening to writing and speculating. However, the feeling of being conscious about these things disrupts the focus of the students. Thinking process can be insolvent with higher anxiety (Lili, 2015). Moreover, after some sequences of difficult state, the students could lose all of their interests in listening and could start giving up. It also seems that “higher anxiety is easy to distract attention, and interferes with the normal process of listening comprehension” (Lili, 2015). Thus, it could prevent the students from obtaining graspable inputs and could make them become inferior in listening.

Anxiety in intensive listening class

Intensive Listening is the second level of listening class at English Language Education Program of Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana (UKSW), where the level of the difficulty is quite high. Compared to the previous class, which is the Extensive Listening class, quite many of freshmen did poorly in Intensive Listening class. As the level of listening class rises up, the anxiety level of the freshmen also gets higher. It is believed that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) listeners would likely to worry about misunderstanding or non-understanding, and they also fear for their embarrassing outcomes (MacIntyre, 1995 in Golchi, 2012). Based on a personal experience of a freshman of 2014 class year, there were quite lot students of that year found the Intensive Listening class as a little uncomfortable class.

The thoughts of the freshmen will be to at least pass the class instead of desiring a perfect score. “During listening process, different factors may cause uneasiness

and tension for language learners and result in poor listening" (Golchi, 2012). The students could not find any desires with the class and thus just think for getting over with it and ended up doing it inadequately. This is not good because, listening skill is one of the important skills in teaching and learning English and thus it needs to be completed and understand.

In summary, anxiety could happen everywhere and to everyone as there are various ways and reasons that trigger it. Thus, it happens in every part of people's life. Anxiety could be mild to a panic level of anxiety, but it not a disease or incurable. There will always be ways to cure or lessen it. Freshmen in UKSW's English education program that learn EFL are likely to suffer a high level of anxiety in listening class. Especially for Intensive Listening class, freshmen found that the level of difficulty from Intensive Listening class became higher compared to Extensive Listening class and thought that it was harder to pass this course.

Based on some students' testimonies, due to an uncontrollable feeling of nervousness and overwhelming worries about not being able to exceed the Intensive Listening class, they came to think that the class was unpleasant and could begin to think negatively about listening class. However, listening skill was one of the important cores in learning EFL and it is better to be able to use and master the skill appropriately. The students' anxiety nightmare should be handled properly from both teacher and students.

METHODOLOGY

The context of the study

The research was conducted at the English Language Education Study Program, in Faculty of Language and Arts (FLA) at Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana (UKSW) on English language education program, focusing on Intensive Listening classes. The research took freshmen during Trimester III of 2017/2018 Academic Year, which was the last trimester before they start their second year. The research was held from May until July 2018, since it was the period when the students were taking the Intensive Listening class. Thus, the research was conducted in Trimester III of 2017/2018 Academic Year when Intensive Listening class was offered to the freshmen.

Intensive Listening class was considered as a quite difficult class for new students, as they were still new to the English Education Program courses and were not or familiar yet with this course. In fact, the students have probably heard about the listening course even though they are not familiar with it. In high school, English listening topic often did not occur regularly. In my high school, the students only did listening practice three times and it was only on their third by the end of first semester. Not all schools can provide good materials for the English listening subject matter. The materials were not really that difficult. However, considering the rareness of English listening topics could make the students become startled, confused or even restless. Without exception, this matter could happen to the freshmen of FLA in UKSW. Thus, in order to prevent a possibility of failures or aversion toward Intensive Listening course from future freshmen, it was necessary to conduct research regarding the influence of freshmen's anxiety level on their Intensive Listening scores.

Participants

In Trimester III of 2017/2018, freshmen of English Language Education program took Intensive Listening class. There were four classes of Intensive Listening classes; each class consisted of 30-35 students. All the students from four classes were given questionnaires and asked to fill in the questionnaires. The consent form for the participants and the questionnaire questions can be seen at the Appendix 1 and 2. From 80 student participants who filled in the questionnaires. From the answers in the questionnaires, there are two big themes drawn: presence and absence of anxiety. For the presence of anxiety, there are four reasons derived: *fear of being left behind*, *difficult materials*, *lack of knowledge*, and *stress in the classroom*. While the reasons for the absence of anxiety are as follows: comfortable feelings in the classroom, normal class condition, and excitement for being in the class.

Among the 46 students who claimed that they experienced anxiety, two students answered reason 1 (fear of being left behind), and one student who gave the more confusing answers was interviewed. Seven students mentioned reason 2 (difficult materials), and two were interviewed. Three students answered reason 3 (lack of knowledge), two were interviewed. Thirty four students answered reason 4 (stress in the classroom), and no one was interviewed from the 34 students. Altogether, there were five students selected for the interview. The selection was based on the reasons of anxiety, and students with the most unclear, confusing answers were called for an interview. The topic of this study was about anxiety that influences freshmen's performance in Intensive Listening class. If the participants had been taken from senior students who had taken the course long time ago, they might have already forgotten about their feelings and at the moments they took the class.

Questionnaires were distributed to all the population, the four classes of Intensive Listening course. As previously mentioned above, 2 students answered reason 1 (fear of being left behind), and one student who gave the more confusing answers was interviewed. Seven students mentioned reason 2 (difficult materials), and two were interviewed. Three students answered reason 3 (lack of knowledge), two were interviewed. Thirty four students answered reason 4 (stress in the classroom), and no one was interviewed from the 34 students, because their answers were already clear. Those participants were considered enough to elicit sufficient amount of data. Questionnaires were also distributed to all students taking Intensive Listening class.

In accumulating the data for the study, questionnaires and interview session were prepared. Questionnaires were given to all four classes of Intensive Listening course. Each class consisted of 15 to 20 students, thus there were around 80 students who received the questionnaires. It was necessary to collect all opinions from freshmen to obtain sufficient amount of data for the study.

Data collection instruments

The research used two instruments for data collection, questionnaire protocol and interview protocol. The questionnaire protocol was a set of open-ended and close-ended questions paper combined, where the participants were asked to fill in with their most honest answers and gave some reasons for their response to the questionnaires. The interview protocol was a session where interviewer asked some questions regarding the interviewees' feelings or emotions toward Intensive Listening class.

Data collection procedures

At first, all of the students were given questionnaires to fill out. The

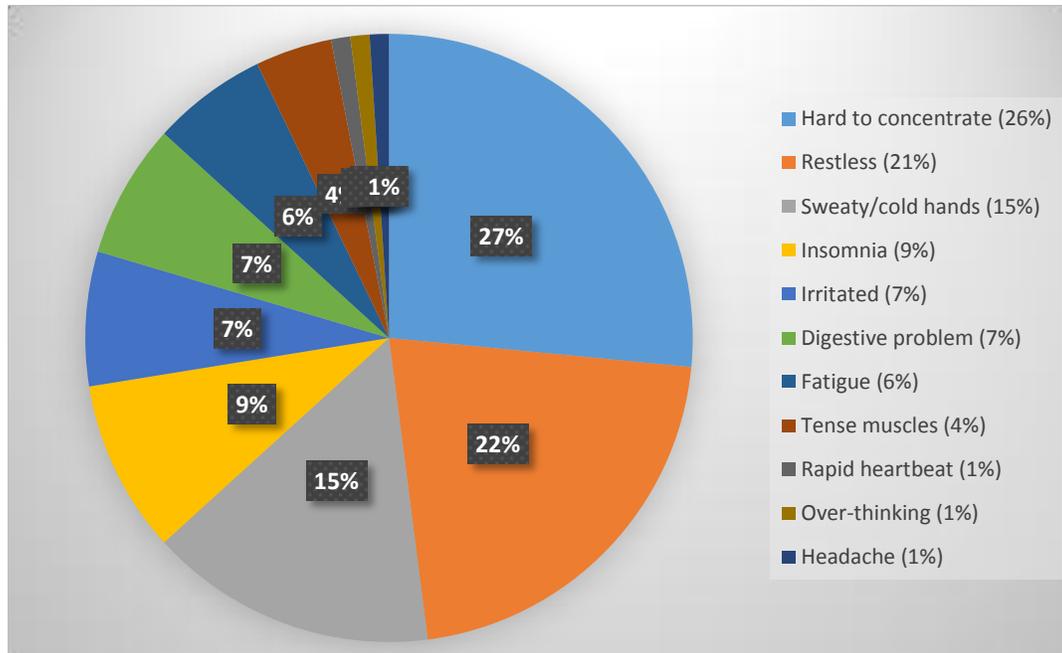


Figure 2. The symptoms of anxiety.

questionnaires were given in the middle of the semester, that is, between May and July 2018, when the students were taking the Intensive Listening class. In the middle of their semester, it was expected that they have already taken at least their first test, since with their first test was estimated that they have an enhancement of anxiety. After that, one student from each class was taken for the interview session. The interviewees were conducted on at the end of July 2018, taken from the participants that have already answered the questionnaires, considering how they answered and whether there were interesting and unique answers. Out of 80 students who filled in the questionnaires, 46 students admitted they felt nervous, and the other 34 did not feel anxiety at all. Five students were selected for an interview. It is thus clear that the selection of the five participants to be interviewed was based on the unclear answers that they gave in the questionnaires. They were further questioned about answers which were not satisfying or clear yet.

Data analysis procedures

First, all of the interview data were transcribed and coded, which was to mark the purposes of classification or identification. Students' similar answers were classified into one group. After that, themes were drawn. It was to find similar ideas from the entire interview data. The same thing was done to the questionnaire answers. First, the data was transcribed and there was coding and themes drawing. Finally, after the themes were analyzed, conclusions were drawn.

FINDINGS

The findings of both the questionnaires and interviews showed that the freshmen could feel anxious due to difficult materials, lack of knowledge, and stress, which

eventually led to their lack of confidence in learning the listening skill. Furthermore, the students also had multiple symptoms of anxiety that could hinder them with their performances in the Intensive Listening class. The percentages of the students' various symptoms of anxiety were described in Figure 2.

On the other side, there were freshmen who admitted the other way felt that the class was comfortable, normal, and exciting. These students tended to be more relaxed or positive toward the class with a sufficient amount of confidence which led them to those feelings. For the students who admitted they did not feel anxious, the class was probably easier for them compared to the students that felt anxious. However, it was much more difficult for the ones who admitted since it is more like a mental weight for them which made them uncomfortable, and it is not good for the development of the students' English learning process. If it is hard for the students to feel comfortable with learning, at some point, the students could detest the class and found it to be obscure to learn.

DISCUSSION

Based on the questionnaire results, which were conducted in four classes of Intensive Listening class, 46 out of 80 students admitted that they felt anxious and 34 students admitted they do not feel anxious during the Intensive Listening class' session. The detailed reasons are described subsequently.

The types of anxiety experienced by the participants

The sample was 80 students altogether, which constituted the whole population as well. Thirty four students claimed that they did not experience anxiety. From forty six students who answered that they were feeling anxious in Intensive Listening class, it was found from the questionnaire results that the students experienced multiple symptoms, levels, and reasons caused by anxiety. There were multiple answers to the symptoms of their anxiety. Each student had at least one or two answers. Summed up from the questionnaires, 40 students (50% of the whole population) stated that they experienced moderate anxiety, while the other six (7.5% only of the whole population) severe anxiety. In the meantime, from the five students interviewed, it was found that three of them experienced severe anxiety, while the other two moderate anxiety. The detailed symptoms are described in Figure 2 in a form of a pie chart.

It can be highlighted again that based on the students' responses to the questionnaires and interview, most of the students felt anxious at the level of Moderate Anxiety. Cited below are the quotations from the questionnaires and interview results of the students about their feelings in Intensive Listening class:

Excerpt 1:

The class is fun and a little bit challenging. We got short breaks in the class and interesting material to learn sometimes. (Student S' statement; translated by the researchers)

Excerpt 2:

The class is fun. In Intensive Listening class, we could improve our listening ability by listening to real English material. (Student A.P's statement; translated by the researchers)

Even though some of the symptoms previously above can also occur in the level of Severe Anxiety, the students' anxiety was not in that state. These students' anxiety tends to come and go, and they did not lose the ability to focus or to find solutions. It means that although it was different, each of them had their own way to somehow pass their anxiety state in the Intensive Listening class. This is in line with Spielberg's opinion, "A situation that is objectively stressful is likely to be perceived as threatening by most people, but whether or not such circumstances are interpreted as threatening by a particular person will depend upon that person's subjective idiosyncratic appraisal of the situation" (Spielberger, 1972).

Reasons for students' anxiety

There were lots of answers coming from the freshmen. In general, 57.5% students (46 students) admitted that they

felt anxious answered that they felt left behind from their other friends, they thought the listening materials are too difficult, they lacked knowledge and that the class was stressful.

Fear of being left behind

In the questionnaire results, there are two students (2.5%) who admitted that they felt left behind. These students felt uncomfortable because they thought that their friends were smarter and quicker in learning than them. When that kind of thought came through them, they started to think that they would not be able to do well in the class. Thus, it made them less confident when attending the class. Below are the quotations of the students about their anxiety:

Excerpt 3:

At first, I felt nervous because my listening skill is not good yet and I realize that there are many of my classmates who are smarter than I am thus it made me feel unconfident. I felt inadequate. (Student L.R's statement; translated by the researchers)

Excerpt 4:

I felt nervous when my classmates were able to absorb the materials faster than I did. (Student T. A's statement; translated by the researchers)

These students admitted that they did not feel confident during a session in the Intensive Listening class. They became nervous and thought that compared to them, their friends were much better. "When students have low self-confidence and self-esteem, high anxiety and inhibition, their level of motivation is destroyed" (Dişlen, 2013). Thus, they start to become unsure of their own ability. They have set in their mind that they were lower than their friends and it seems that this made them uncomfortable in the class. Spielberg also mentions something about this, "A-Trait scores are strongly disposed to experience elevations in A-State in situations that pose threats to self-esteem, and, especially, in interpersonal relationships in which personal adequacy is evaluated" (Spielberger, 1972).

Difficult materials

According to the questionnaire results in Intensive Listening classes, there were seven students (8.75%) who thought that the materials provided were quite difficult, for example predicting materials, listening to audios or watching movies. There were some students who also admitted that they quite often got worried or over-thinking about what material would be provided. They also got worried whether or not they would find difficulties. Some even needed to compare with the

previous Listening class first (Extensive Listening) before organizing the appropriate technique that they had to use in the Intensive Listening class. Even though they did not really specify it but it seems that starting from the materials, the class situation and the whole teaching and learning process from Intensive Listening were more different and harder compared to Extensive Listening. Hence, even in the end when taking a test, they were still unsure whether they could do well or not because those worries were still with them. Below are the quotations of the students about their anxiety from the questionnaire and interview:

Excerpt 5:

I often found difficulties in predicting materials for the Intensive Listening class which sometimes made me anxious. (Student G's questionnaire statement; translated by the researchers)

Excerpt 6:

There were also some difficulties. It felt hard sometimes when the lectures give us some work or exercise, and also the materials, I felt troubled when I got a difficult material which looks unfamiliar for someone like me who is new to Intensive Listening. (Student N's interview statement; translated by the researchers)

It is a normal thing to be surprised at first but it is not good if the students continually feel this way throughout the class. The materials were probably not that difficult, it is just that the students were still new with the materials and not accustomed to the phase of the class. Also, since it is a listening class the learners were probably having more difficulties with listening itself because it was still a foreign language for them. It was mentioned before in psychological problems in listening class that *learners especially adult found many difficulties when listening to the target language (Nizkodubov et al., 2015)*. These freshmen have also confessed that they often found listening difficult because they were not used to native speakers' speeches or they were still unfamiliar with the topics.

Lack of knowledge

There are also students that were worried and nervous because of their lack of information and understanding. From the questionnaire results, three students (3.75%) admitted that they found it to be more difficult because sometimes the class shared information that they almost never heard of and that their listening skills were still not good. This is normal because it is not possible to know every single thing that happens in this world. The students become uncomfortable and troubled because they kept thinking that they would not be able to go through the class that well. Below are the quotations of

the students about their anxiety from the interview:

Excerpt 7:

Sometimes I feel I lacked knowledge, which also made me become unconfident. (Student A. P's statement; translated by the researchers)

Excerpt 8:

It is not that often but I do sometimes feel unconfident or lack on knowledge during the class. (Student N's statement; translated by the researchers)

The difficulties in material and lack of knowledge are actually connected with each other, most of the freshmen admitted that the material was not really that difficult. It was just that they were still unfamiliar with it and still short of information. However, because these students had the tendency to sell themselves short and had less of confidence, they made themselves believe they were lacking in knowledge. It was mentioned before in the literature review that foreign language learners are likely to worry too much about understanding as they are likely afraid anxious of embarrassing outcomes (MacIntyre, 1995 in Golchi, 2012). Students also often recognize their timidity to speak or ask and the possibility to embarrass themselves in front of the other students (Eison, 2010). They became too nervous when doing a test and are troubled to answer the test well. Nevertheless, this anxiety is disconcerting because it has become their obstacle in order to do better in the Intensive Listening class.

Stress in the classroom

Most of the students admitted that they felt stress in the class. According to the result from the questionnaires, 34 students (42.5%) admitted that they felt pressure and nervous tension in Intensive Listening class. The tension could come from many things like test or exercise. These students are often too over-thinking and got nervous easily. They admitted briefly that sometimes they felt like crying and that sometimes it is hard for them to sleep. They often got nervous easily first before even facing the problem. Below are the quotations of the students about their anxiety:

Excerpt 9:

I like to attend this class but sometimes I feel nervous in case if I cannot the audio materials clearly. (Student M. A's statement; translated by the researchers)

Excerpt 10:

I sometimes feel nervous or afraid if I cannot follow the class' session well. (Student R's statement; translated by the researchers)

It was mentioned in anxiety in Intensive Listening class

part, that learners may get various factors that cause anxiety and thus ended up being poor in listening class (Golchi, 2012). It is peculiar to see that the students felt so much anxiety and lost so much self-confidence. Most of the freshmen admitted that they always felt troubled when doing a test or exercise. These students seemed to have experienced many uncertainties when they had to answers in a piece of paper. It could make them become too afraid of making mistakes and thus they felt uncomfortable to ask the lecturer or even their classmates. As it is mentioned before in *The Relationship between Anxiety and Listening Class*, listening is after all a complex mental process which involves perception, attention, cognition, and memory at the same time (Hamouda, 2013). With the students being too worried, afraid and having many uncertainties it would not be good for the development of their listening skill.

Reasons for the not feeling anxiety

Though there were a lot of freshmen who admitted that they felt anxious toward the Intensive Listening class, there were also many freshmen who admitted the opposite. Around 42.5% of the freshmen admitted that they did not feel anxious toward Intensive Listening class. The remaining 34 students who admitted they did not feel anxious said that they felt relaxed in the class. The class was just normal thus there was nothing to be nervous with and just thought the class as a fun and exciting class.

Comfortable feelings in the classroom

There were 21 students (26.25%) according to the questionnaire results, who admitted that they felt very comfortable in the Intensive Listening class. These students thought that the class was very enjoyable and relaxing. The materials were not that difficult, not much homework, the job was to only listen and the lecturer was quite pleasing, these were all their thoughts. Hence the students felt very comfortable in the class. Below are the quotations of the students about their absence of anxiety:

Excerpt 11:

I do not have any story of being anxious, nervous or stress in this class. I always feel comfortable in the IL class. (Student Y's statement; translated by the researchers)

Excerpt 12:

This class is very interesting and fun. Even though the class session is quite long, it is not boring. (Student M's statement; translated by the researchers)

These students who admitted that they felt comfortable in the class seemed to be the type who feel very natural

around the class. They felt very comfortable in the Intensive Listening class because there is almost none to make them feel uncomfortable. It was mentioned in an *Electronic Journal for Inclusive Education* that, "the classroom environment can either improve or impede a student's ability to learn and feel safe and comfortable as a member of the class" (Bucholz and Sheffler, 2009). These students had their close friends to help them and their lecturer was quite tolerable like he/she could be reasoned with or when they explaining the materials all of them were easy to understand. Though these students admitted that they sometimes felt nervous but it was not something to be heavily concerned about, it did not affect nor will cause the anxiety in a certain level. It was more like the impermanent nervous feeling that would be occurred when they entered the classroom for the first time.

Normal class condition

There are also students who almost felt nothing toward the class. From the questionnaires' outcome, eight of the students (10%) admitted that the class is not hard, not that fun, stressful or anything. They simply think that the class was normal and there was nothing to worry about with the class. Though they admitted that the class was normal they also thought that the class was a little bit challenging compared to the previous listening class. Besides that, there was not a lot of homework so they could just take it easy. Below are the quotations of the students about their absence of anxiety:

Excerpt 13:

I think the class is just normal, but the given materials are sure was challenging than the previous semester. (Student F. T. W's statement; translated by the researchers)

Excerpt 14:

It is just so-so. It is good, enjoyable. Not much homework. (Student Y. F. P's statement; translated by the researchers)

The freshmen of this type seem to be the kind of students that did not really put much deliberation in the class and tend to be more easy-going. This type of students is like likely to be lower of carefulness yet are more flexible and spontaneous, but they can also shows negligence and tend to lack of consistency (Gopikrishnan, 2006). Their main reason is just to attend the class and have a good score or just pass the class, so they did not really put many reactions toward the class. Some things did captivate them but it was only for a moment.

Excitement for being in the class

Based on the questionnaire results, five students (6.25%)

admitted that they felt excited in the class. These students seem to be the students who enjoy themselves in the class. They are often excited of the materials that the lecturer will give to them and what they are going to do in the class. They also always thought that the class was enjoyable, not boring and really fun to attend. They thought that the lecturer was also nice because they always give an opportunity to ask and shared their opinions. They were happy to be able to attend the class and because of their excitement, it seems that they did not have any anxiety when attending the class. However, these students also admitted that they could have a little nervousness in them but even so, they confessed that that nervousness was often gone quickly. Below are the quotations of the students about their absence of anxiety:

Excerpt 15:

This class is so fun and exciting because it trains our listening skill through listening to audios or watching videos. (Student K's statement; translated by the researchers)

Excerpt 16:

I feel excited about joining this class because I like listening practice. (Student A. K's statement; translated by the researcher)

The freshmen who admitted this seemed to like challenges more and quite enjoying themselves in attending the Intensive Listening class. They did not feel any burden and accepted the challenges and difficulties in the class with open hands. These students were also quite positive about Intensive Listening and very enthusiastic about attending the class. This is related to Barker (2014)'s opinion. Since enthusiasm could bring relations with positive feelings it could focused the engagement in some actions, subject or area of interest (Barker, 2014). Also, positive thinking could encourage the need to develop which is really good for the students' growth.

Conclusion

This research aims to look for the reasons for anxiety in Intensive Listening class for English Education program's freshmen. Its purpose is also to find other possible problems that could harm the freshmen's study by taking the listening class. Judging from the findings that were found, even though most of the students felt anxious toward the Intensive Listening class, it seems that there were also many who felt the other way. The findings showed that the freshmen could feel anxious due to difficult materials, lack of knowledge, and stress, which eventually led to their lack of confidence in learning the listening skill. Furthermore, the students also had multiple symptoms of anxiety that could hinder them with their

performances in the Intensive Listening class.

On the other side, the freshmen who admitted the other way felt that the class was comfortable, normal, and exciting. These students tended to be more relaxed or positive toward the class with a sufficient amount of confidence which led them to those feelings. For the students who admitted they did not feel anxious, the class was probably easier for them compared to the students that felt anxious. However, it was much more difficult for the ones who admitted since it is more like a mental weight for them which made them uncomfortable, and it is not good for the development of the students' English learning process. If it is hard for the students to feel comfortable with learning, at some point, the students could detest the class and found it to be obscure to learn.

In order to help the students to overcome its feeling of anxiety, students and lecturers could build a positive and supportive classroom atmosphere, such as teaching in a pleasing method with calm or peaceful impression during the lesson, jest in the classroom with the students, and giving appreciating attitude both from lecturers and students. Students should also be studying the lesson and getting prepared in advance before coming to the classroom so that they would not be very surprised with new materials. Also, it would be much better if the quality of materials is improved since it could get harder for the students to listen to another language with a different accent if some materials are not clear enough like audio or video material. Furthermore, lecturers could give positive supports, such as giving verbal and nonverbal praises or good grades to the students, all of these if were combined will hold great importance in making the student less anxious, become more comfortable, and feel more content with the listening class.

In conclusion, the freshmen will be able to feel comfortable and less anxious in listening class if the teachers help them build their confidence. Considering their interest and needs will help them lessen their anxiety and eventually get rid of it. Thus, they will be able to start having fun in the class and become more comfortable which will make the learning become more effective. In addition, it would be great, if in the future this research will be continued. I suggest that other researchers look up for more data on other listening classes that are also considered difficult for the students, such as Academic Listening class. From this class, more specified and stronger findings could probably be found.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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(circle your answer)

0 **1** **2** **3** **4**
 (never) (rarely) (sometimes) (often) (all the time)

4.) How often did the anxiety or the nervousness interrupt you in your daily life?

(circle your answer)

0 **1** **2** **3** **4**
 (never) (rarely) (sometimes) (often) (all the time)

5.) How often did the anxiety or the nervousness interrupt you in your academic life?

(circle your answer)

0 **1** **2** **3** **4**
 (never) (rarely) (sometimes) (often) (all the time)

6.) How often did the anxiety or the nervousness interrupt you in your social life?

(circle your answer)

0 **1** **2** **3** **4**
 (never) (rarely) (sometimes) (often) (all the time)

7.) How often did the anxiety or the nervousness interrupt you in your family?

(circle your answer)

0 **1** **2** **3** **4**
 (never) (rarely) (sometimes) (often) (all the time)

Please tick you answer in the columns provided!

1. *Have you ever felt stressed/anxious/nervous during Intensive Listening class?*

Yes

Never

2. *How often did you feel the emotions above during Intensive Listening class?*

• Never • Rarely • Sometimes • Often • All the time

• All the time

3. *What are the things that usually made you stressed/anxious/nervous in the Intensive Listening class?*

(please tick more than one answer)

Lack of knowledge

Over thinking

Tests/quizzes

Class' Projects

Final grade

Deadlines

Other (please write in the column below)

4. Usually, how did you feel physically/mentally when you felt stressed/anxious/nervous while

attending Intensive Listening class?
(please tick more than one answer)

- Restless
- Fatigue
- Difficult in concentration
- Upset
- Tense muscles
- Sweaty/cold hands
- Butterflies in the stomach
- Insomnia
- Other (please write in the column below)

5. Usually, how did you overcome your stress/anxiety/nervousness for Intensive Listening class?

(please tick more than one answer)

- Waiting it to pass by
- Crying
- Sleep
- Breath slowly
- Just puss it the mind
- Talk with somebody
- Eat
- Reading some novels/comics
- Trying creative things
- Calming one's body in a relaxing place
- Other (please write in the column below)

6. Do you have any interesting story regarding your emotions in Intensive Listening class? If yes, please write it briefly in the box below.

(Please leave your contact information below; in case an interview session is needed. Thank you!!)

Name:

Student's number:

WhatsApp/LINE/Phone number:

~Thank you very much for your participation, God bless you!~

Appendix 2 (Interview questions)

Interview Questions

1. What was your impression toward Intensive Listening class? Easy, fun, relaxing or even difficult?
2. How do you feel about Intensive Listening class?
3. Did you ever feel nervous or anxious during the Intensive Listening?
4. Based on your questionnaire answer, you admitted that you experienced _____ . Please do explain briefly what sort of anxiety that you felt.
5. Please do explain what are the things that made you anxious during the Intensive Listening?
6. Did your anxiety or nervousness interrupted your performance in:
 - Intensive Listening class,
 - daily life,
 - academic life,
 - social life and
 - Your family?
7. Besides the anxiety/nervousness, did you encounter other problems, obstacles or other factors that could disrupt your performance during the Intensive Listening class?
8. Did you get stressed/anxious/nervous from Intensive Listening class' tests/quizzes, projects and deadlines? Explain Why.
9. Did you feel incapable in academic field of listening skill?
10. Please explain specifically in brief, how's your emotion went on when you felt stress/anxious/nervous during the Intensive Listening.
11. Please explain how did you sort out your stress/anxiety/nervousness in Intensive Listening class.

Do you have any interesting story regarding your emotions in Intensive Listening class?