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## Listening Anxiety of the EFL University Students and its Impact on Their Conversation Proficiency

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قلق الاستماع لدى طلاب الجامعة دارسي اللغة الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية وتأثيره على كفاءتهم في المحادثة

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### Abstract

Listening anxiety is a significant psychological factor that affects English as a Foreign Language learners' ability to engage in conversations. It makes someone feel tense, afraid, uncomfortable and worry to affect students' performance through speaking. The present study aims to find out the causes of listening anxiety and its influence on EFL university students' conversation proficiency, and to find out the differences among the four levels of listening anxiety (Classroom Listening Anxiety, Fear of Misunderstanding, Test/Exam Listening Anxiety and Confidence in Listening). In order to achieve these aims, a listening anxiety questionnaire has been constructed to assess the level and sources of anxiety that students experience during English listening activities, especially in classroom, test, and conversation situations. The sample of the present study includes first-year students enrolled in the Department of English at the College of Education for Humanities during the academic year 2024–2025 who represents 55% of its original population. Results indicate that high levels of listening anxiety hinder comprehension, reduce participation in conversations, and negatively influence overall communication skills. Specifically, the study identified four key dimensions of listening anxiety: **Classroom Listening Anxiety**, which reflects learners' discomfort and nervousness when listening in academic settings; **Fear of Misunderstanding**, which highlights anxiety stemming from the possibility of misinterpreting spoken messages; **Test/Exam Listening Anxiety**, referring to increased stress experienced during listening components of assessments; and **Confidence in Listening (reverse items)**, indicating how lower self-confidence is linked to higher anxiety levels. The study recommends educators to create a supportive learning environment that reduces anxiety and enhances conversational competence across these domains. **Keywords:** Listening, Listening Anxiety, English Foreign Language, Investigation, Impact

### ملخص البحث عربي

يعد قلق الاستماع عاملاً نفسياً مهماً يؤثر على قدرة متعلمي اللغة الإنكليزية لغة أجنبية على المشاركة في المحادثات. فهو يخلق شعور بالتوتر والخوف وعدم الراحة والقلق مما يؤثر سلباً على أداء الطلاب في التحدث. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى الكشف عن أسباب قلق الاستماع وتأثيره على كفاءة المحادثة لدى طلاب الجامعة دارسي اللغة الإنكليزية لغة أجنبية، بالإضافة إلى التعرف على الفروقات بين المستويات الأربعة لقلق الاستماع (قلق الاستماع داخل الصف، الخوف من سوء الفهم، قلق الاستماع أثناء الاختبارات / الامتحانات، والثقة في الاستماع). ولتحقيق هذه الأهداف تم إعداد استبيان لقياس مستوى ومصادر القلق الذي يواجهه الطلاب أثناء أنشطة الاستماع باللغة الإنكليزية، خاصة في مواقف الصف،

والاختبارات، والمحاضرة. تتكون عينة الدراسة من طلاب السنة الأولى في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية في كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية للعام الدراسي ٢٠٢٤/٢٠٢٥ والذين يشكلون نسبة ٥٥٪ من المجتمع الأصلي. تشير النتائج الى ان المستويات العالية من قلق الاستماع تعيق الفهم وتقلل من المشاركة في المحادثات وتؤثر سلبا على مهارات التواصل بشكل عام. وقد حددت الدراسة اربعة ابعاد رئيسية لقلق الاستماع:

١. قلق الاستماع داخل الصف: ويعكس شعور المتعلمين بعدم الارتياح والتوتر عند الاستماع في البيئات الأكاديمية.
٢. الخوف من سوء الفهم: ويشير الى القلق الناتج عن احتمال إساءة تفسير الرسائل المنطوقة.
٣. قلق الاستماع في الاختبارات الامتحانات: ويتمثل في زيادة التوتر اثناء مكونات الاستماع ضمن التقييمات.
٤. الثقة في الاستماع (عكس البنود) حيث تظهر النتائج ان انخفاض الثقة بالنفس يرتبط بارتفاع مستوى القلق.

توصي الدراسة بضرورة ان يعمل المعلمون على خلق بيئة تعليمية داعمة تقلل من القلق وتعزز الكفاءة في المحادثة ضمن هذه الجوانب.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الاستماع، قلق الاستماع، اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، التحقيق، التأثير

## 1. Introduction

Listening is a fundamental skill in language acquisition, playing a crucial role in effective communication. However, many EFL learners experience listening anxiety, which impairs their ability to understand spoken English and engage in conversations. Listening anxiety stems from various factors, including fear of misunderstanding, lack of vocabulary, and unfamiliar accents. Listening anxiety refers to the nervousness or stress learners feel when trying to comprehend spoken language in a foreign language context (Vogely, 1998). It is a subset of language anxiety, which includes fear of speaking, writing, and listening in a second language. Many university students experience listening anxiety a psychological barrier that arises when they struggle to comprehend spoken English due to factors such as, fast speech, unfamiliar accents, or fear of misunderstanding. This anxiety may negatively impact their oral communication skills, particularly in conversation-based tasks. Despite the importance of listening as a foundational skill for effective speaking, there is limited empirical research examining how listening anxiety specifically hinders students' achievement in conversational English (Lui, 2016). Hence, the current study aims to:

1. find out the causes of listening anxiety and its influence on EFL university students' conversation proficiency

2. find out the differences among the students' responses on the four levels of listening anxiety (Classroom Listening Anxiety, Fear of Misunderstanding, Test/Exam Listening Anxiety and Confidence in Listening). These aims are supposed to be achieved through answering the following questions:

1. What are EFL learners' perceptions of listening anxiety, its causes, and its influence on their conversation proficiency?

2. Are there statistically significant differences among EFL students' responses across the four dimensions of listening anxiety: Classroom Listening Anxiety, Fear of Misunderstanding or Misinterpretation, Test/Exam Listening Anxiety, and Confidence in Listening (reverse-coded items)?"

The present study is limited to:

1. First year university students at the university of Tikrit/College of Education for Humanities/ during the academic year 2024-2025.

2. Listening Anxiety of the EFL University Students and Their Achievement in conversation

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 The Concept of Listening Anxiety

Anxiety is a feeling that can be experienced in any part and situation of one's life. Kılınç (2015) sees anxiety as a persistent, distressing psychological situation that emerges from the internal conflicts of the individual. Melanlıoğlu (2013) defines it as "emotional reactions including tension sensation, fear and irritability, unpleasant thoughts (concerns) and physiological changes. Horwitz (2001) defines anxiety as "a reaction triggered with the influence of forces oppressed in the mind against a factor that has not been perceived yet. The anxiety that affects human activities also affects learning significantly". Although the relationship between anxiety and learning is thought to be negative, it is not always negative. Sometimes moderate level of anxiety can lead to the highest efficiency. Learning does not only involve a cognitive dimension but also an affective dimension and anxiety affects this affective dimension (Horwitz, 2001). Arslan (2017) has categorized anxiety into two as debilitating and facilitating anxiety depending on the effect it induces. Facilitating anxiety is stated to be facilitating the learning process by enabling students to attach

greater importance to the subject and debilitating anxiety is stated to be negatively affecting student performance by decreasing the participation in the process and distancing students from the activity of listening. Affective states have positive or negative effects on the development of language skills. One of these affective states, anxiety can significantly affect the listening skill having dominant mental and psychological dimensions. Listening anxiety can be defined as the listener's feeling worried, panicked, afraid and frustrated as a result of not making sense of what has been listened during the listening process. Kim (2000) suggests that listening anxiety should be evaluated at three stages; before listening, while listening and after listening. He also states that in the before listening stage, distracted attention and lack of knowledge about the material to be listened will prevent the process from occurring smoothly and in the after listening stage, if the newly learned information cannot be associated with the prior knowledge, then the anxiety level will increase. This state of anxiety particularly emerging in situations where listening is compulsory such as, in-class listening or exam adversely affects the individual's listening process. Melanlıoğlu (2013) argues that listening anxiety is felt when students encounter a very challenging or unfamiliar task. Activities conducted in oppressive classroom environments, where the teacher asks students to participate in the listening activity without making any noise, make the listening process ineffective and cause anxiety to increase so that students develop negative attitudes towards listening. Moreover, the idea of being evaluated at the end of the process makes students concerned. In literature, there are many studies showing that the state of anxiety has some effects on writing skill speaking skill and reading skill. In these studies, it is found out that with increasing level of anxiety, the level of success decreases ( Horwitz (2001). Horwitz (2001) states that there is a significant correlation between anxiety and language skills and that the anxiety-inducing psychological characteristics are influential on speaking and listening. Given the psychological dimensions of listening, it can be argued that the individual can develop positive attitudes towards listening if the effect of anxiety on the listening process is minimized, leading to increasing listening comprehension.

## **2.2 Causes of Listening Anxiety**

Dalman (2016) indicates that listening anxiety among EFL students is a common issue that can significantly impact their language learning and communication abilities. Here are several key causes of listening anxiety in EFL learners.

### **1. Limited Vocabulary Knowledge**

Students may struggle to understand spoken English if they lack sufficient vocabulary, leading to frustration and anxiety during listening tasks (Dalman,2016).

### **2. Speed of Speech**

Native speakers often talk quickly or use reduced forms, which can overwhelm learners who are not accustomed to the natural pace of spoken English (Horwitz,2001).

### **3. Inability to Recognize Accents or Pronunciation Variations**

Different accents, intonation patterns, and pronunciation styles can make comprehension difficult, especially if students have only been exposed to standard textbook English (Lui,2016).

### **4. Fear of Misunderstanding**

Learners may worry about missing important information or misinterpreting the speaker, which creates pressure and anxiety, particularly in high-stakes situations like exams or conversations (Lui,2016).

### **5. Lack of Confidence**

Students who doubt their listening skills may feel nervous or intimidated when listening to English, further hindering their comprehension (Dalman,2016).

### **6. Difficulty Processing Information in Real-Time**

Unlike reading, listening happens in real-time. If students can't keep up with the flow of information, they may become anxious and lose track of the conversation (Lui,2016).

### **7. Test Anxiety**

Listening sections in language tests can provoke anxiety due to time pressure, fear of failure, or unfamiliar test formats (Dalman, 2016).

### **8. Low Exposure to Authentic Listening Materials**

Students who are only exposed to scripted or simplified English in class may struggle when faced with authentic spoken English, leading to anxiety (Dalman, 2016).

### **9. Cultural Differences**

Unfamiliar topics, idioms, or cultural references in listening materials can confuse learners and make them feel out of their depth ( Dalman, 2016).

## 10. Classroom Environment

A stressful or overly competitive classroom atmosphere can increase listening anxiety, especially if students fear being judged for incorrect answers or asking for repetition (Lui, 2016).

### 2.3 Effect of Listening Anxiety on Conversation

Research indicates that listening anxiety negatively affects conversational skills in several ways:

#### 1. Reduced Participation

Anxious learners tend to avoid speaking opportunities due to fear of misunderstanding or embarrassment (Horwitz et al., 1986). Studies show that students with high listening anxiety participate 30% less in classroom discussions compared to their low-anxiety peers (Zhang, 2019).

#### 2. Poor Comprehension

Anxiety impairs working memory, making it harder to process spoken input (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). Learners with high anxiety often misinterpret questions or respond inappropriately due to cognitive overload (Vandergrift, 2007).

#### 3. Lower Confidence and Fluency Issues

Anxious speakers exhibit more pauses, repetitions, and self-corrections, reducing conversational flow (Woodrow, 2006). A study by Liu (2016) found that 60% of EFL learners with listening anxiety reported feeling "unprepared" even when they knew the vocabulary.

#### 4. Negative Emotional Responses

Frustration and stress create a vicious cycle: poor performance → increased anxiety → further avoidance. Physiological symptoms (e.g., sweating, rapid heartbeat) worsen performance (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002) and (Oxford, 2017).

## 3. Methodology

### 3.0 An Introductory Note

This part points out a detailed description of the procedures used to visualize the empirical aspect of the present study. It consists of information about the population and the sample of the study; the construction of the questionnaire; its reliability; its content and face validity, and its administration.

#### 3.1. Population and Sample of the Study

The population of the present study consists of Iraqi EFL first year students at the College of Education for Humanities, and the College of Education for Women at the university of Tikrit. The total number of these students is 400 distributed between the two Colleges. The College of Education for Humanities has been randomly selected to represent the sample of the current study. The total number of the EFL 1<sup>st</sup> year students at this College is 265 who represent 66% of its original population.

#### 3.2 Construction of the Listening Anxiety Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a method of collecting data that explore the subjects' attitudes, ideas, perceptions, points of view, etc. Thus, it is a multipurpose and adaptable research tool (Sharp, 2009:61). Having valid, reliable and unambiguous questionnaire is a very important issue. The primary objective of this questionnaire is to **identify, measure, and analyze the anxiety students experience when listening to English**, particularly in academic and test-related contexts.

More specifically, it aims to:

- **Diagnose:** Determine if a student suffers from listening anxiety and gauge its severity.
- **Pinpoint Sources:** Identify the specific triggers or sources of this anxiety (e.g., speed of speech, fear of failure in exams, unfamiliar vocabulary).
- **Differentiate:** Discriminate between different *types* of listening anxiety a student might face. A student might be calm in class but panic during tests, or vice versa.
- **Inform Intervention:** Provide teachers and educational institutions with actionable data to develop targeted teaching strategies, learning materials, and support systems to help reduce this anxiety and improve listening comprehension skills. The questionnaire is methodically structured based on principles from educational psychology and psycholinguistics. Its design is intentional and multi-faceted.

#### A. General Information (Optional)

The fields for Gender and Educational Level allow researchers or teachers to correlate anxiety levels with demographic variables. This can help identify if anxiety is more prevalent at certain learning stages or between different groups.

#### B. The Four-Part Framework (The Dimensions of Anxiety)

The core strength of this questionnaire is that it breaks down the broad concept of "listening anxiety" into **four distinct dimensions**. This allows for a nuanced and precise analysis rather than a single, general score.

- **Part 1: Classroom Listening Anxiety:** It focuses on anxiety generated by the live classroom environment and real-time interaction (e.g. teacher speaking fast, failing to answer a question). Items: 1, 2, 3.
- **Part 2: Fear of Misunderstanding:** Targets the *cognitive* aspect of anxiety—the worry about not decoding the meaning correctly. It is less about the situation and more about the internal fear of error. Items: 5, 7, 8.
- **Part 3: Test/Exam Listening Anxiety:** It measures anxiety related to performance pressure, evaluation, and the formal conditions of testing (e.g. time limits, missed answers affecting grades). Items: 9, 10, 11, 12.
- **Part 4: Confidence in Listening (Reverse Items):** This is a critical design feature. Items 4 and 6 are reverse-coded. The purpose of Reverse Coding is to prevent "response bias," where a participant might mindlessly agree (or disagree) with all statements without reading them carefully. It forces the respondent to engage more thoughtfully with each item

#### C. Likert Scale

The use of a 5-point Likert scale (**Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree**) is a standard in psychometric testing. It transforms subjective feelings into **quantitative data** that can be statistically analyzed, compared, and tracked over time.

The objective behind using a questionnaire is to obtain relevant information in most reliable and valid manner. Therefore, the validation of questionnaire forms an important aspect of research methodology and the validity of the outcomes (Tavakoli, 2012:513). To establish valid questionnaires and ensure their face validity, the intended questionnaire has been exposed to a jury of specialists in linguistics and methodology. They have unanimously approved that the questionnaire areas and items are appropriate except for few modifications concerning some items that have been handled before the pilot administration of the questionnaire.

#### 3.3 Pilot Administration of the Questionnaire

It is essential to conduct a pilot test of the questionnaire before it is used in a full –scale implementation to identify any shortcomings that require modifications and to find out to what extent the items are clear and comprehensible and to assess the required time to fill out the questionnaire (L and Jr., 2005:123) and (Healy,2012:156). Therefore, students' questionnaire tried out on some specialists in the field of English methodology and linguistics. The resulting feedback shows that the items are clearly understood and the entire questionnaire is user-friendly which requires an estimated time ranges from twenty-five to thirty minutes. The reliability coefficient of questionnaire has been found out by using Cronbach's Alpha Formula which is a measure of internal consistency. The obtained reliability coefficient is 0.90 which indicates that the questionnaire is reliable.

#### 3.4 Final Administration of the Questionnaire

The intended questionnaire has been sent to the involved participants in the current study. All of the respondents have been informed about the significance, justification and aims of the study. Furthermore, the respondents have also been given the assurance that the adopted questionnaire is used for the purpose of a scientific study and their responses are essential for improving, identifying, measuring, and analyzing the anxiety students experience when listening to English, particularly in academic and test-related contexts. Therefore, respondents have been encouraged to take the time to read the questionnaire thoroughly and state their points of view honestly on whether they strongly agree or strongly disagree with the given evaluative statements by putting a tick (✓) in the column of their choice and in front of each statement. This will support a greater understanding of the criteria that are incorporated or met in the constructed the Listening Anxiety Questionnaire.

#### 4. Analysis of Data and Discussion of Results

##### 4.0 Introductory Note

This section illustrates the statistical analysis of the collected data in the light of the questions related to the current study. It also sheds light on the discussion of results.

##### 4.1 Analysis of Data

#### 4.1.1 Results Related to the First Question

In order to answer the first question of the current study which state " *What are the EFL learners' perceptions of listening anxiety, its causes, and its influences on their conversation proficiency?*". To obtain the results of the students' *listening anxiety*, the students' responses on each item that is based on the 5-point likert scale have been calculated. Then the total scores have been classified them into four levels (*Classroom Listening Anxiety, Fear of Misunderstanding, Test/Exam Listening Anxiety, Confidence in Listening (reverse items)*). The interpretation of the students' *listening anxiety* to *conversation proficiency* is presented in table 1.

**Table 1** Categories of students' *Listening Anxiety*

| Score               | Category  |
|---------------------|-----------|
| $X < 40$            | Very Low  |
| $40 \leq x \leq 50$ | Low       |
| $50 > x \leq 65$    | Average   |
| $65 > x \leq 80$    | High      |
| $x > 80$            | Very High |

The Likert Scale 5-point intervals are used to illustrate the sample's *listening anxiety* based on the obtained mean scores, as shown in table 2.

**Table 2** The Interval and Description of Students' *listening anxiety* on conversation proficiency by using the 5-Points Likert Scale

| Likert Scale | Interval  | Description       |
|--------------|-----------|-------------------|
| 1            | 1.00-1.79 | Strongly disagree |
| 2            | 1.80-2.59 | Disagree          |
| 3            | 2.60-3.39 | Neutral           |
| 4            | 3.40-4.20 | Agree             |
| 5            | 4.21-5.00 | Strongly agree    |

The results are described in table 3 by using the SPSS version 26 programmer.

**Table 3** The Results of the Students' *Listening Anxiety*

| N                                   | Items of Listening Anxiety                                 | No. of frequencies |       |         |          |             | Mean | S.D. | Percent | Scale |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------|------|------|---------|-------|
|                                     |                                                            | S. Agree           | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | S. Disagree |      |      |         |       |
| Part 1: Classroom Listening Anxiety |                                                            |                    |       |         |          |             |      |      |         |       |
| 1                                   | I feel nervous when the teacher speaks too fast in English | 9                  | 13    | 7       |          |             | 4.06 | 0.75 | 45      | Agree |

|                                                        |                                                                                                |    |    |   |   |   |      |       |    |         |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|---|---|---|------|-------|----|---------|
| 2                                                      | I become anxious when I cannot follow what is being said during a lecture                      | 3  | 22 | 4 |   |   | 3.96 | 0.49  | 76 | Agree   |
| 3                                                      | I feel embarrassed when I fail to understand a question asked orally in class.                 | 10 | 16 | 3 |   |   | 4.24 | 0.63  | 55 | Agree   |
|                                                        | Average                                                                                        | 7  | 17 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 4.08 | 0.623 | 59 |         |
| <b>Part 2: Fear of Misunderstanding</b>                |                                                                                                |    |    |   |   |   |      |       |    |         |
| 4                                                      | I got worried when I cannot catch every single word in the listening task                      | 19 | 10 |   |   |   | 5.65 | 0.48  | 66 | S.Agree |
| 5                                                      | I worry about misunderstanding what I hear in English                                          | 16 | 10 | 3 |   |   | 4.44 | 0.68  | 55 | S.Agree |
| 6                                                      | I feel uncomfortable when the words in the listening text are unfamiliar                       | 13 | 13 | 3 |   |   | 4.34 | 0.66  | 45 | Agree   |
|                                                        | Average                                                                                        | 16 | 11 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 4.81 | 0.60  | 55 |         |
| <b>Part 3: Test/Exam Listening Anxiety</b>             |                                                                                                |    |    |   |   |   |      |       |    |         |
| 7                                                      | I am afraid of misinterpreting the speakers' intended meaning.                                 | 3  | 16 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 3.51 | 1.08  | 55 | Agree   |
| 8                                                      | I become anxious when I am not sure whether I understand the message correctly.                | 4  | 18 | 6 | 1 |   | 3.86 | 0.69  | 62 | Agree   |
| 9                                                      | I feel more anxious in listening tests than in other types of language tests.                  | 4  | 15 | 9 |   | 1 | 3.72 | 0.84  | 51 | Agree   |
|                                                        | Average                                                                                        | 4  | 16 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 3.69 | 0.87  | 56 |         |
| <b>Part 4: Confidence in Listening (reverse items)</b> |                                                                                                |    |    |   |   |   |      |       |    |         |
| 10                                                     | <i>I get nervous when I miss part of the listening passage and cannot answer the questions</i> | 11 | 9  | 9 |   |   | 4.06 | 0.84  | 38 | S.Agree |
| 11                                                     | I feel stressed when the time limit is short in a listening test                               | 16 | 10 | 3 |   |   | 4.44 | 0.68  | 55 | S.Agree |
| 12                                                     | I panic when I cannot reply the listening passage during an exam                               | 12 | 13 | 4 |   |   | 4.27 | 0.71  | 45 | Agree   |
|                                                        | Average                                                                                        | 13 | 11 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 4.25 | 0.74  | 46 |         |

### Part 1: Classroom Listening Anxiety

In the first statement (I feel nervous when the teacher speaks too fast in English), (45%) of students agree that they feel nervous when the teacher speaks too fast in English. The results of the second statement (I become anxious when I cannot follow what is being said during a lecture) show that (76%) of students agree with becoming anxious when they cannot follow what is being said during a lecture. As for the third statement, (*I feel embarrassed when I fail to understand a question asked orally in class*) (55%) of the students agree with *feeling embarrassed when they fail to understand a question asked orally in class*

## Part 2: Fear of Misunderstanding

The fourth statement (*I got worried when I cannot catch every single word in the listening task*) shows that (66%) of students strongly agree that they get worried when they cannot catch every single word in the listening task. The fifth statement (*I worry about misunderstanding what I hear in English*) show that (55%) of students strongly agree with worry about misunderstanding what I hear in English. In the sixth statement (*I feel uncomfortable when the words in the listening text are unfamiliar*) (45) of the students agree with I feel uncomfortable when the words in the listening text are unfamiliar.

## Part 3: Test/Exam Listening Anxiety

In the seventh statement (*I am afraid of misinterpreting the speakers' intended meaning*), (55%) of students agree that they are afraid of misinterpreting the speakers' intended meaning. The results of the eighth statement (*I become anxious when I am not sure whether I understand the message correctly.*) show that (62%) of students agree with become anxious when they do not sure whether they understand the message correctly. As for the ninth statement, (*I feel more anxious in listening tests than in other types of language tests.*) (51%) of the student agree that they feel more anxious in listening tests than in other types of language tests.

## Part 4: Confidence in Listening (reverse items)

The tenth statement (*I get nervous when I miss part of the listening passage and cannot answer the questions.*) shows that (38%) of students agree with getting nervous when they miss part of the listening passage and cannot answer the questions. The eleventh statement (*I feel stressed when the time limit is short in a listening test*) shows that (55%) of students strongly agree with feeling stressed when the time limit is short in a listening test. In the twelfth statement (*I panic when I cannot reply the listening passage during an exam*) (45%) of the students agree that they panic when they cannot reply the listening passage during an exam.

**Table 4** The Mean Scores, Percentage, Scale and Category of Students' Listening Anxiety on Conversation Proficiency

| Levels                                          | Mean | Percentage | Scale          | Category |
|-------------------------------------------------|------|------------|----------------|----------|
| Part 1: Classroom Listening Anxiety             | 4.08 | 59%        | Agree          | Average  |
| Part 2: Fear of Misunderstanding                | 4.81 | 55%        | Strongly agree | Average  |
| Part 3: Test/Exam Listening Anxiety             | 3.69 | 56%        | Agree          | Average  |
| Part 4: Confidence in Listening (reverse items) | 4.25 | 46%        | Strongly agree | Low      |

Results show that students' Classroom Listening Anxiety gets mean scores of 4.08 which interpreted as average and which recoded (59%) of students as agree. Fear of Misunderstanding gets mean scores of 4.81 which interpreted as average and which recoded (55%) of students as strongly agree. Test/Exam Listening Anxiety gets mean scores of 3.69 which interpreted as average and which recoded (56%) of students as agree. Confidence in Listening (reverse items) gets mean scores of 4.25 which interpreted as low and which recoded (46%) of students as strongly agree.

### 4.1.2 Results Related to the Second Question

Comparison between the Mean Scores of the students' on: Part 1: Classroom Listening Anxiety, Part 2: Fear of Misunderstanding, Part 3: Test/Exam Listening Anxiety, and Part 4: Confidence in Listening (reverse items) To verify the second question which is, " Are there statistically significant differences among EFL students' responses across the four dimensions of listening anxiety: Classroom Listening Anxiety, Fear of Misunderstanding or Misinterpretation, Test/Exam Listening Anxiety, and Confidence in Listening (reverse-coded items)? ". A one- way ANOVA is used to see whether there are any significant differences between the mean scores of the students' responses on the four levels of Listening Anxiety, as shown in the table 4 below:

**Table 5** One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Among the Four levels of Listening Anxiety

|  | Sum of Squares | DF | Mean Square | F-value    |           | Sig. |
|--|----------------|----|-------------|------------|-----------|------|
|  |                |    |             | Calculated | Tabulated |      |
|  |                |    |             |            |           |      |

|                |         |     |        |        |     |      |
|----------------|---------|-----|--------|--------|-----|------|
| Between Groups | 85.543  | 3   | 28.514 | 11.150 | 3.5 | 0.05 |
| Within Groups  | 286.414 | 112 | 2.557  |        |     |      |
| Total          | 371.957 | 115 |        |        |     |      |

Table 5 shows that the Calculated F-value is 11.150 which is higher than the tabulated F-value 3.5 at 0.05 level of significance and DF = 3-12. This indicates that there are statistically significant differences between EFL students' responses in the four levels of listening anxiety.

**Table 6** Comparisons of Means Among the Four parts of Listening Anxiety (Scheffe<sup>a</sup>)

| Groups                                                 | N  | Subset for alpha = 0.05 |       |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----|-------------------------|-------|
|                                                        |    | Mean scores             |       |
|                                                        |    | 1                       | 2     |
| Test/Exam Listening Anxiety                            | 29 | 11.10                   |       |
| Classroom Listening Anxiety                            | 29 | 12.27                   | 12.27 |
| Confidence in Listening (reverse items)                | 29 |                         | 12.79 |
| Fear of Misunderstanding                               | 29 |                         | 13.44 |
| Sig.                                                   |    | .056                    | .056  |
| Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed. |    |                         |       |
| a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 29                 |    |                         |       |

According to table (6), the comparison of means shows that the mean scores of the students in Test/Exam Listening Anxiety is 11.1034, Classroom Listening Anxiety is, 12.2759, Confidence in Listening (reverse items) is 12.79 and Fear of Misunderstanding is 13.44 with harmonic mean sample size = 29. These results indicate that most students' have fear of misunderstanding.

## 4.2 Discussion of the Results

The analysis of mean scores of the first question reveals important insights into the listening anxiety levels experienced by EFL students across the four dimensions: Classroom Listening Anxiety, Fear of Misunderstanding, Test/Exam Listening Anxiety, and Confidence in Listening (reverse items). The scores indicate varying degrees of anxiety, which can inform educators about the specific challenges students face in listening comprehension.

### 1. Classroom Listening Anxiety (Mean = 4.08)

The mean scores of 4.08, interpreted as average, with 59% of students agreeing, signifies a notable level of anxiety in classroom settings. This indicates that a majority of students experience discomfort during listening activities, likely due to the pressure of immediate evaluation and social judgment. It highlights the need for classroom environments that are supportive and less intimidating.

### 2. Fear of Misunderstanding (Mean = 4.81)

With a mean score of 4.81 and 55% of students strongly agreeing, this dimension captures a significant concern among students. The fear of misunderstanding can create barriers to effective communication and hinder learning. This finding emphasizes the importance of addressing this anxiety, as it can lead to avoidance behaviors or reduced participation in listening exercises.

### 3. Test/Exam Listening Anxiety (Mean = 3.69)

The mean scores of 3.69, categorized as average, indicates that 56% of students agree with feelings of anxiety related to tests and exams. While slightly lower than the other dimensions, this score still reflects a

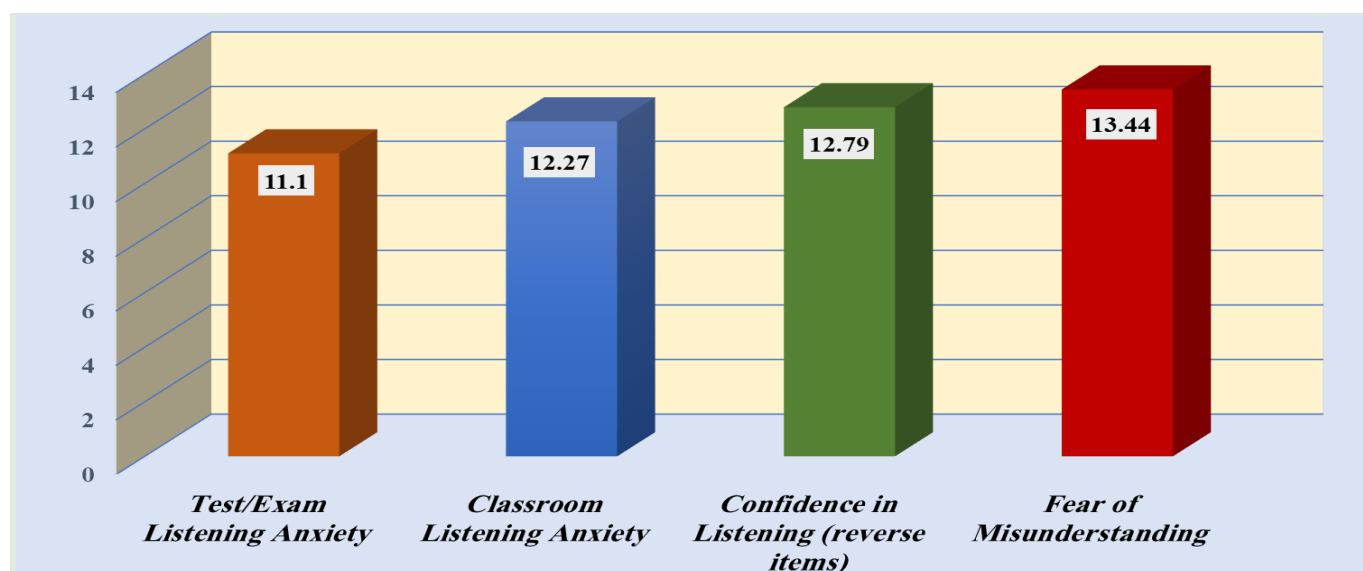
relevant concern that could negatively impact performance. Educators should consider integrating test preparation strategies that alleviate anxiety, such as practice tests in a supportive environment.

#### 4. Confidence in Listening (Reverse Items) (Mean = 4.25)

The mean score of 4.25, interpreted as low, with 46% of students agreeing, suggests that many students struggle with confidence in their listening abilities. The reverse scoring indicates that a higher score denotes lower confidence, which is concerning. This finding points to the necessity for building listening skills through positive reinforcement and constructive feedback to enhance students' self-efficacy.

The findings obtained from the one-way ANOVA of the second question reveal significant differences in the mean scores of EFL students across the four dimensions of listening anxiety, namely: Classroom Listening Anxiety, Fear of Misunderstanding, Test/Exam Listening Anxiety, and Confidence in Listening (reverse items). The calculated F-value of 11.150 surpasses the critical F-value of 3.5 at 0.05 significance level, indicating that the differences observed are statistically significant. Fear of Misunderstanding (Mean = 13.44). This dimension records the highest mean scores, suggesting that fear of misunderstanding is a prominent concern among students. This result aligns with the common anxiety experienced in language learning contexts, where students often worry about misinterpreting spoken language, which can lead to misunderstanding and ultimately affect their performance. Confidence in Listening (Reverse Items) (Mean = 12.79) The relatively high mean scores suggests that while students may experience some confidence, it is overshadowed by their anxieties. This dimension being a reverse item means that lower scores reflect higher confidence. Thus, students may still struggle with feelings of inadequacy regarding their listening skills. Classroom Listening Anxiety (Mean = 12.2759). This mean score indicates a moderate level of anxiety in classroom settings. This could be attributed to the pressure of being evaluated in a classroom environment, where students may fear judgment from peers and instructors. Test/Exam Listening Anxiety (Mean = 11.1034) Although this dimension has the lowest mean scores, it still indicates a significant level of anxiety. This may reflect the pressure students feel during formal assessments, which is common in educational settings. The differences in mean scores are shown in figure 1.

**Figure 1** Mean Scores Among the Four Levels of Listening Anxiety



#### 5. Conclusions

In the light of the obtained results, the following conclusions have been drawn:

##### 1. Fear of Misunderstanding is the Primary Source of Anxiety:

- This dimension has recorded the highest mean scores (4.81 out of 5 in the first analysis, 13.44 in the second analysis), identifying the most significant concern for students.
- A majority of students strongly fear misinterpreting spoken content, which can lead to avoidance behaviors and hinder the learning process.

##### 2. Low Confidence in Listening Abilities:

- The analysis of the reverse-scored items (Confidence in Listening) has revealed notably low self-efficacy among students (Mean = 4.25, where a higher score indicates lower confidence).
- A significant number of students struggle with feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt regarding their listening skills.

### **3. Significant Anxiety in the Classroom Environment:**

- A majority of students (59%) experience a moderate level of anxiety (Mean = 4.08) during in-class listening activities.
- This anxiety is likely attributed to the pressure of immediate evaluation and fear of judgment from peers and instructors.

### **4. Test Anxiety is Present but Relatively Less Severe:**

- Although test/exam anxiety gets the lowest mean scores among the dimensions (3.69), it still represents a substantial level of concern, agreed upon by 56% of students.
- The pressure of formal assessments remains a source of stress that can impact students' performance.

### **5. Statistically Significant Differences Between Anxiety Dimensions:**

- The one-way ANOVA results confirmed that the differences in mean scores across the four anxiety dimensions are **statistically significant** (F-value = 11.150 > Critical value = 3.5).
- This validates that these dimensions (Fear of Misunderstanding, Classroom Anxiety, Test Anxiety, and Low Confidence) are distinct constructs, and the levels of anxiety they cause vary significantly from one dimension to another.

In term of the obtained results and drawn conclusions, the following recommendations are given:

- There is a clear need to foster supportive classroom environments that reduce social pressure and the fear of immediate evaluation.
- Directly addressing the "Fear of Misunderstanding" through strategies like teaching prediction skills and compensatory listening strategies is crucial.
- Building student confidence through positive reinforcement, constructive feedback, and appropriately levelled listening tasks is essential.
- Incorporating practice tests and test preparation strategies can help alleviate performance-related anxiety.

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## The Appendix

### Listening Anxiety Questionnaire for Assessing Students in Conversation

#### General Information (Optional):

Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female

Educational Level: ☐ High School ☐ University ☐ Postgraduate

#### Part 1: Classroom Listening Anxiety

#### Part 2: Fear of Misunderstanding

#### Part 3: Test/Exam Listening Anxiety

#### Part 4: Confidence in Listening (reverse items)

| No. | Statement                                                                                | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Strongly Agree | Agree |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------|---------|----------------|-------|
| 1   | I feel nervous when the teacher speaks too fast in English.                              |                   |          |         |                |       |
| 2   | I become anxious when I cannot follow what is being said during lecture.                 |                   |          |         |                |       |
| 3   | I feel embarrassed when I fail to understand a question asked orally in class.           |                   |          |         |                |       |
| 4   | I got worried when I cannot catch every single word in the listening task.               |                   |          |         |                |       |
| 5   | I worry about misunderstanding what I hear in English.                                   |                   |          |         |                |       |
| 6   | I feel uncomfortable when the words in the listening text are unfamiliar                 |                   |          |         |                |       |
| 7   | I am afraid of misinterpreting the speakers' intended meaning.                           |                   |          |         |                |       |
| 8   | I become anxious when I am not sure whether I understand the message correctly.          |                   |          |         |                |       |
| 9   | I feel more anxious in listening tests than in other types of language tests.            |                   |          |         |                |       |
| 10  | I get nervous when I miss part of the listening passage and cannot answer the questions. |                   |          |         |                |       |
| 11  | I feel stressed when the time limit is short in a listening test                         |                   |          |         |                |       |
| 12  | I panic when I cannot reply the listening passage during an exam.                        |                   |          |         |                |       |