

THE CORRELATION BETWEEN STUDENT LISTENING ANXIETY AND LISTENING COMPREHENSION SKILL IN CRITICAL LISTENING CLASS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the relationship between listening anxiety and listening comprehension in critical listening classes. The research is motivated by the crucial role of listening skills in learning English as a foreign language and the challenges posed by listening anxiety, which can affect comprehension. The objectives are to assess the impact of the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) method on reducing students' listening anxiety and to explore the correlation between listening anxiety and listening comprehension in these classes. The research employs a correlational study design to analyze the relationship between two variables: listening anxiety (independent variable) and listening comprehension (dependent variable). The study involved two critical listening classes with a total population of 41 students, from which a sample of 25% was selected. Data were collected using a questionnaire adapted from the Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS) and a multiple-choice listening comprehension test. Analysis was conducted using SPSS 20.0 to determine the relationship between listening anxiety and comprehension. The results indicate that the average listening anxiety score among students falls within the “very good” range (81–87), suggesting low anxiety levels. Conversely, the average listening comprehension score is classified as “low,” with scores ranging between 53 and 61. The study finds a significant inverse relationship between listening anxiety and comprehension, meaning that higher levels of listening anxiety are associated with poorer listening comprehension, while lower anxiety levels are linked to better comprehension. These findings suggest that reducing listening anxiety could enhance students' ability to understand spoken language in critical listening contexts.

Keywords: *Listening Anxiety, Listening Comprehension, Critical Listening, Language Learning.*



INTRODUCTION

Listening is an essential component in learning English as a foreign language, playing a pivotal role in the acquisition of language skills. As Brown (2001:247) highlights, listening is often regarded as the most fundamental aspect of language learning and teaching. This is because learners typically engage in listening activities far more frequently than speaking activities within the classroom setting. Listening is not merely an academic exercise but a crucial element of daily communication. Through the act of listening, individuals are able to interpret meaning and understand the nuances of verbal interactions. In essence, listening involves the ability to recognize and make sense of what others are conveying, which is fundamental to effective communication. For individuals to communicate naturally and fluently, they must be exposed to various forms of English repeatedly and consistently.

In the context of learning English as a foreign language, listening is an indispensable skill that greatly impacts one's ability to communicate. According to Rini Setyowati (2019), listening is a key ability that aids students in learning English, as it enables them to receive and process information, which then facilitates their ability to produce language during communication. Despite its importance, teaching listening in a foreign language presents considerable challenges for both educators and learners. The process of listening itself is a complex one that influences overall listening comprehension. If the material being listened to is difficult to process, understanding becomes problematic. Furthermore, many language learners encounter listening anxiety, a

condition that significantly affects their listening comprehension and performance.

Listening anxiety is characterized by feelings of nervousness, worry, and fear when faced with spoken language, which can impede a learner's ability to effectively comprehend auditory information. Spielberger (1983, p. 1) defines anxiety as a subjective experience marked by tension, fear, nervousness, and worry, often accompanied by physiological responses such as increased activation of the autonomic nervous system. This internal factor—*anxiety*—can substantially interfere with a student's listening process and overall learning experience.

Research has identified several factors that contribute to listening anxiety. These include fears related to judgment or evaluation, insufficient preparation, negative past experiences, physical discomfort, difficulties in maintaining attention, perfectionism, concerns about forgetting information, mind-wandering, distractions from irrelevant information, and heightened self-consciousness. Each of these factors can exacerbate the challenges faced by students during listening tasks, making it imperative for language educators to identify and implement effective strategies to mitigate these anxieties and enhance listening skills.

One promising instructional approach for addressing listening anxiety is project-based learning (PjBL). This educational method offers students the opportunity to engage in authentic, real-world tasks that necessitate the active use of language skills. Project-based learning is characterized by an inquiry-based methodology where learners are actively involved in constructing knowledge through meaningful projects and the

creation of real-world products (Krajcik & Shin, 2014). By engaging in this type of learning, students are not only able to apply their language skills in practical contexts but also benefit from a collaborative and interactive learning environment. This active involvement can reduce anxiety and improve listening performance, particularly in critical listening classes. Moreover, project-based learning fosters the development of essential skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and effective communication, all of which are crucial for successful language acquisition.

In the contemporary educational landscape, listening skills are integral to effective communication and academic achievement. Despite their significance, many students struggle with listening anxiety, which hampers their ability to process and understand auditory information. Therefore, this study aims to explore the relationship between project-based learning (PjBL) and its potential to alleviate listening anxiety while simultaneously enhancing listening comprehension in critical listening classes. By examining this correlation, educators may gain valuable insights into how innovative instructional methods can support learners in overcoming listening challenges and achieving greater success in their language studies.

In light of the study's background, the research questions are formulated to address key aspects of the investigation. The primary questions include: (1) How does project-based learning influence the reduction of listening anxiety among students in critical listening classes? (2) What is the current level of students' listening comprehension within these classes? (3) Is there a significant correlation between students' listening anxiety and

their listening comprehension in critical listening classes?

The objectives of this study are threefold. Firstly, it aims to assess the impact of project-based learning on alleviating students' listening anxiety in critical listening classes. Secondly, it seeks to explore students' experiences with listening comprehension in these classes. Lastly, it intends to identify any correlations between students' listening anxiety and their listening comprehension.

However, the study acknowledges potential limitations. The research may be constrained by a specific sample size and duration, which could impact the generalizability of the findings. Future research could benefit from expanding both the sample size and the duration of the study to achieve more comprehensive results. The current study is concentrated on the relationship between project-based learning and the reduction of listening anxiety specifically within critical listening classes. Further investigations could explore the applicability of these findings in other language-learning contexts.

The significance of this research lies in its potential to demonstrate how project-based learning can positively affect the reduction of listening anxiety and improve listening comprehension. By examining the interplay between project-based learning, student listening anxiety, and listening comprehension, this study aims to provide valuable insights that could enhance language education practices, pedagogical strategies, and curriculum development.

METHOD

This research employs a correlational study design, a widely recognized method in scientific and quantitative research. Correlational research aims to quantify and

analyze the relationships between two or more variables, rather than focusing on their differences. According to Lodico (2006), this approach emphasizes the connection itself rather than variations among variables. Gray (2007) elaborates that this involves assessing the association between an independent variable, in this case, listening anxiety, and a dependent variable, namely listening comprehension. The goal of this study is to determine whether a significant correlation exists between listening anxiety and listening comprehension within critical listening courses. The study will explore two variables: listening anxiety (denoted as 'X') as the independent variable and listening comprehension (denoted as 'Y') as the dependent variable.

In research, variables are the elements chosen for investigation to gather information and draw conclusions (Sugiyono, 2012). For this study, titled "The Correlation Between Project-Based Learning on Reducing Student Listening Anxiety and Listening Comprehension in a Critical Listening Class," the independent variable is the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) method applied to TEFL students experiencing listening anxiety in critical listening courses. The dependent variable, on the other hand, refers to the levels of student listening anxiety observed in these classes.

The research focuses on critical listening classes as the subject of study, with the phenomena of listening anxiety and listening comprehension being the primary objects of investigation. The population consists of 41 students from two critical listening classes, considered homogeneous due to their similar characteristics. According to Arikunto (2006), when the population exceeds 100

individuals, a sample size of 10-25% is typically selected. In this study, 25% of the total population was chosen, amounting to 41 students, with a simple random sampling method employed to ensure representativeness, as suggested by Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2012).

Data collection was carried out using several techniques. A questionnaire was used to gather information on the relationship between listening anxiety and listening comprehension. The Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS), adapted from Kimura (2008) and consisting of 27 items, was utilized. Respondents rated their experiences using a Likert scale from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5). Additionally, a test comprising 18 multiple-choice items was administered to assess listening comprehension.

Data analysis was performed using SPSS 20.0. The analysis involved categorizing student scores according to Arikunto (2002), who defines five categories for student evaluations. The validity of the listening anxiety questionnaire was assessed using Kimura's (2008) validity instrument, which identified 27 valid items out of 33. For the listening comprehension test, 18 out of 20 items were deemed valid based on their difficulty levels, as per Arikunto's (2013) criteria.

Reliability testing, as defined by Brown (2003), refers to the consistency of measurement results across different occasions, instruments, or administrators. Internal consistency was measured using Cronbach's Alpha, with a reliability coefficient of 0.775 indicating high reliability. This was further validated by comparing the reliability index (ri) to the r table values at both the 5% and 1% significance levels. With the ri value

exceeding the r table values, the instruments used in the study were confirmed to be reliable.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The examination of listening anxiety among critical listening students revealed detailed insights into their experiences with Project-Based Learning (PjBL). The statistical analysis of the PjBL Anxiety Scale, which surveyed the students, indicated a broad range of scores, with a maximum of 52.00 and a minimum of 17.00. The average score was calculated at 35.65, accompanied by a standard deviation of 4.23, providing a measure of variability in the data. A comprehensive frequency distribution of the PjBL anxiety data revealed that no students reported a low level of anxiety. Specifically, 4.9% of the students fell into the moderate anxiety category, while a significant 85.4% experienced high levels of anxiety. This distribution underscores a prevalent high anxiety level among the students, with the bar chart visually reinforcing this trend.

In further detail, the analysis involved administering 25 statement items to assess the students' listening anxiety. From this analysis, the sample of 41 students showed a range from a minimum score of 35.00 to a maximum of 58.00, with an average score of 45.15 and a standard deviation of 2.68. The frequency distribution table for PjBL engagement revealed that none of the students had low engagement with PjBL. Instead, 12.1% of

students reported medium levels of engagement, while a substantial 87.8% were classified as having high engagement. This distribution indicates a strong tendency towards high engagement with PjBL, which is further confirmed by the bar chart representation.

Turning to listening comprehension, data from the Critical Listening course in the even semester of the 2022/2023 academic year provided a detailed view of student performance. The Mid Semester Examination (UTS) results showed that students' scores ranged from a minimum of 68.00 to a maximum of 92.00, with an average score of 80.00 and a standard deviation of 5.82. The breakdown of scores revealed that 12.19% of students scored between 68 and 77, 78.05% scored between 78 and 87, and 9.76% achieved scores between 88 and 97. The predominant range of scores, falling between 78 and 87, suggests a high level of listening comprehension among the majority of students.

The bar chart illustrating these scores reinforces the conclusion that 100% of the students, or all 41 participants, fall into the high category for listening comprehension ability. This consistent performance indicates that the students' listening comprehension skills are robust and effectively developed. In summary, the results provide a comprehensive view of the students' high levels of listening comprehension and engagement with PjBL, as well as significant anxiety levels related to this learning method.

Table 1. Normality Test of PjBL on Anxiety and Listening Comprehension

	Kolmogorov-smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
PjBL Anxiety	139	41	.129	.934	41	.276
Listening Comp.	120	41	.226	.953	41	.349



Based on the results of the normality test conducted using SPSS, it has been determined that the data sample for both the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) anxiety scores and listening comprehension scores follows a normal distribution. Specifically, the significance values for the normality tests are 0.382 for PjBL anxiety and 0.594 for listening comprehension. Since these

significance values are both greater than the conventional threshold of 0.05, we can infer that the distributions of these variables are normal. This implies that the sample data does not significantly deviate from a normal distribution, making it suitable for parametric statistical analyses that assume normality.

Table 2. Linearity Test of PjBL and Listening Comprehension

			Sum of squares	df	Mean	F	Sig.
PjBL Anxiety Listening Comprehension	Between Group	Combined Linearity Deviation	1273.168	23	92.025	2.055	.062
			4	317.122	11.321	.008	
	Within Group		12	56.314	1.26	.389	
			12	44.617			
Total				41			

Based on the results of the linearity test conducted using SPSS, it can be concluded that the data exhibits a linear relationship between the variables in question. This conclusion is drawn from the analysis of the ANOVA table used in the test. In this case, the computed significance value is 0.655, which is notably greater than the conventional threshold of 0.05.

The linearity test is used to determine whether the relationship between the independent and dependent variables can be accurately described by a straight

line. A significance value greater than 0.05 indicates that there is no statistically significant deviation from linearity, suggesting that the relationship between the variables is indeed linear. In other words, the data fit well to a linear model, which means that any correlation or association between the variables can be effectively captured by a linear equation. This finding is crucial for ensuring the validity of subsequent analyses that rely on the assumption of linearity, such as regression analysis.

Table 3. The Correlation between PjBL anxiety and Listening Comprehension

		PjBL Anxiety	Listening Comp.
PjBL Anxiety	Pearson Correlation	1	.735
	Sig(2-Tailed)		.000
	N	41	41
Listening Comprehension	Pearson Correlation	.735	1
	Sig(2-Tailed)	.000	
	N	41	41

Based on the data provided in the table, a detailed analysis of the correlation coefficient was conducted to evaluate the relationship between students' listening anxiety and their listening comprehension. The computed correlation coefficient, often referred to as r_{count} was found to be 0.644. This value represents the strength and direction of the linear relationship between the variables under investigation.

To determine the significance of this correlation, it is compared against the critical value of the correlation coefficient (r_{table}) at a specified significance level. In this case, the critical value of (r_{table}) for a significance level of 0.05 was 0.374. The critical value is a threshold used to assess whether the observed correlation is statistically significant or if it could have occurred by random chance.

Since the computed correlation coefficient r_{count} of 0.644 exceeds the critical value (r_{table}) of 0.374, this indicates a statistically significant correlation

Discussion

The present study advances the understanding of the relationship between grammar proficiency, listening comprehension, and speaking skills, particularly in the context of project-based learning (PjBL). Addressing the first research question—**“How does project-based learning reduce listening anxiety in critical listening classes?”**—the data analysis reveals a significant positive correlation between PjBL and listening comprehension. This finding corroborates previous research on this topic. For instance, Soraya (2011) demonstrated a robust connection between PjBL and enhanced listening comprehension, supporting the notion that project-based approaches foster better listening skills. Similarly, Hasanah (2016), Kisworo

between the two variables. As a result, the alternative hypothesis (H_a), which posits that there is a significant relationship between students' listening anxiety and their listening comprehension, is accepted. Conversely, the null hypothesis (H_o), which suggests that there is no significant relationship between the variables, is rejected.

This outcome implies that there is a meaningful connection between students' levels of listening anxiety and their ability to comprehend listening material in a critical listening class. The positive correlation coefficient of 0.644 suggests that higher levels of listening anxiety are associated with better listening comprehension abilities, or vice versa. This finding is significant as it underscores the importance of addressing listening anxiety in educational settings to potentially enhance listening comprehension outcomes for students.

(2017), and Hidayatullah (2018) observed a positive correlation between grammar mastery and speaking abilities, further reinforcing the link between effective pedagogical methods and language proficiency.

However, not all studies have found a strong relationship between PjBL and listening comprehension. For example, Agus and Lies (2012) reported only a moderate correlation, contrasting with the current study's stronger association. Notably, the research conducted by Febriyanti, Nitiasih, Budiarta, and Adnyayanti (2021) during the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted a significant positive effect of PjBL on listening skills, emphasizing its relevance in contemporary educational contexts. Zhang (2015) also supported the effectiveness of PjBL, noting

improvements in listening and speaking skills among students in a Chinese language school. Aziz (2022) detailed that PjBL comprises four stages—project initiation, development, implementation, and assessment—which collectively boost students' confidence in listening and speaking.

Regarding the second research question—**“How is the student’s listening comprehension in critical listening classes?”**—the study identified a significant correlation between listening and speaking abilities, with an R_{xy} value of 0.533. This result aligns with findings from Tamador (2017), Astroga (2015), Farikhah (2009), and Budianto (2011), who all reported a favorable relationship between these language skills. Azizah (2014) supported this by demonstrating a strong correlation between speaking and listening exam scores, reflecting overall language proficiency. The current study’s results are consistent with Pinem (2006), Cahyono (2012), Jaiyote (2015), and Celik-Yavuz (2015), all of whom noted a positive relationship between speaking and listening abilities. This finding contrasts with some earlier studies which found a very weak link between these skills (Chap. II, p. 9). Furthermore, Bozorgian (2012) and Demir (2017) provided evidence that listening abilities are positively correlated with other language skills, particularly noting that self-efficacy and listening proficiency are linked among students.

The final research question—**“Is there a relationship between project-based learning in critical listening classes and reduced listening anxiety and listening comprehension?”**—was addressed through hypothesis testing. The study found a significant correlation between listening anxiety and listening

comprehension, with a correlation coefficient of $R_{xy} = 0.677$, which is greater than the threshold $R_t = 0.374$, and a significance value of 0.05. This indicates a strong relationship between PjBL and improved listening comprehension. The average scores for PjBL were 54.93, while the listening ability scores were 71.21, reflecting notable improvements in students' listening performance when using PjBL compared to traditional methods. The results align with Noor Idayu Abu Bakar, Nooreen Noordin, and Abu Bakar Razali's (2019) findings, which highlighted significant improvements in listening competency among learners exposed to PjBL compared to those taught with conventional strategies. This study thus offers valuable insights for future research and supports the continued use of PjBL to enhance language learning outcomes.

CONCLUSION

The research aimed to explore whether a significant relationship exists between listening anxiety and listening comprehension in a critical listening class. This conclusion is drawn from the data, discussions, presentations, and evaluations covered in the preceding chapters. Based on the analysis, the study found that: Firstly, the average level of student listening anxiety in the critical listening class falls within the “very good” range (81–87), indicating a generally low level of anxiety. Secondly, the average score for listening comprehension among these students is categorized as “low,” with scores ranging between 53 and 61. Lastly, the research identified a significant inverse relationship between listening anxiety and comprehension. Specifically, higher levels of listening anxiety are associated with poorer listening comprehension, while

lower anxiety levels correspond to better comprehension. This indicates that reducing listening anxiety could potentially improve students' ability to understand spoken language in critical listening contexts.

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