The relationship between listening anxiety, listening strategies and listening comprehension in English as a foreign language

Ćupurdija, Marija

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J.J. Strossmayer University of Osijek

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Marija Ćupurdija

The relationship between listening anxiety, listening strategies and listening comprehension in English as a foreign language

Diploma paper

Mentor: izv. prof. dr.sc. Višnja Pavičić Takač

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1. Introduction

Over the past few decades, researchers all over the world have become interested in investigating learners' individual differences and their impact on learning a second or foreign language. The focus of this paper is on one particular individual difference - language learning strategies, or to be more precise, on listening strategies used by learners of English as a foreign language. Language learning strategies are specific techniques which learners use to achieve their learning goal in a way which suits them best. During listening, learners use different strategies to improve their understanding of the listening input. Listening anxiety may influence their listening comprehension and the use of strategies, and therefore represent an obstacle to effective listening. Anxiety which occurs before or during listening can affect learners in different ways and to different degree; while some experience high levels of anxiety, others do not find listening stressful at all.

The theoretical part of this paper identifies important terms – language learning strategies and their classification, listening comprehension and listening anxiety. The overview of relevant research done in this field is also given. The experimental part, i.e. the study, investigates the relationship between listening anxiety, listening strategies and listening comprehension. First, the sample is described. This is followed by the description of the design of the study and the instruments. The procedure is explained, and finally, the results of the study are presented and discussed.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Language learning strategies

Griffiths (2004:1) mentions a well-known proverb: “Give a man a fish and he eats for a day. Teach him how to fish and he eats for a lifetime”. When this proverb is applied to the language teaching and learning area, it might be interpreted to mean that if teachers provide students with answers, without engaging them in the process, the immediate problem is solved. However, if learners are taught the strategies and trained to come up with the answers themselves, they receive an enormous power to manage their own learning.

Language learning strategies are one of the main factors which determine how successful students will be in learning a second or a foreign language. There are numerous definitions of this term. According to Rebecca Oxford (2003:8), “language learning strategies are specific behaviours or thought processes that students use to enhance their own L2 learning.” Chamot (2004:14) defines them as “conscious thoughts and actions that learners take in order to achieve a learning goal”, while Cohen (2010:164) explains language learning strategies as “conscious and semi-conscious thoughts and behaviours used by learners with the explicit goal of improving their knowledge and understanding of a target language.” Even though various authors define strategies in slightly different ways, it can be said with a great amount of certainty that there are no good or bad language learning strategies. There are many factors which make a certain strategy helpful or useless for an individual. Oxford (2003:8) claims that a strategy is useful if “the strategy relates well to the L2 task at hand, the strategy fits the particular student’s learning style preferences to one degree or another, and the student employs the strategy effectively and links it with other relevant strategies.” In other words, certain conditions need to be met in order for a strategy to make learning faster, easier and more enjoyable.

2.1.1. Classification of language learning strategies

Various classification systems are used to group individual strategies into categories. Oxford's (1990) system of six basic types of language learning strategies, according to Oxford (2003), and Cohen's (1990) system related to separate language skills, according to Cohen (2010), will be explained in detail.

The six major groups of L2 learning strategies that have been identified by Oxford (1990) are metacognitive, cognitive, memory-related, compensatory, social and affective language learning strategies. Metacognitive strategies are used to manage the overall learning process, e.g. identifying one's own learning style preferences and needs, planning for an L2 task, gathering and organizing materials, arranging a study space and a schedule, monitoring mistakes, evaluating task success and the success of a given learning strategy.

Cognitive strategies enable direct manipulation of the language material. These are e.g. note-taking, summarizing, synthesizing, outlining, reorganizing information, practicing in naturalistic settings, and practicing structures and sounds formally.

Memory-related strategies help learners to link one L2 item or concept with another. These strategies do not necessarily involve deep understanding. Various memory-related strategies make possible for learners to learn and retrieve information in an orderly string using acronyms. Other known techniques enable learning and retrieval using sounds: rhyming; mental pictures of the word itself or the meaning of the word: images; a combination of sounds and images - the keyword method; body movement - total physical response; mechanical means – flashcards; or location - on a page or blackboard.

Compensatory strategies are used by learners to make up for missing knowledge. This group includes guessing the meaning of a word from the context while listening and reading; using gestures or pause words while speaking, using synonyms and "talking around" the missing word, i.e. using other known word to explain the target one.

Affective strategies are e.g. identification of one's mood and anxiety level, talking about feelings, rewarding oneself for good performance, and using deep breathing or positive self-talk to enhance one's learning.

Social strategies help the learner work with others and understand the target culture in addition to the language. This category includes asking questions to get verification, asking for clarification of a confusing point, asking for help in doing a language task, talking with a native-speaking conversation partner, and exploring cultural and social norms (Oxford, 2003).

Cohen (2010) names three different categories; strategies associated with vocabulary learning, the ones connected to the learning of grammar and the strategic use of translation. Examples of vocabulary strategies are making a mental image of new words, going over new words often at the beginning to make sure they are learned, making an effort to remember the situation where the word was heard or seen in writing, and if it was written, trying to remember the page it was written on, using words just learned in order to see if they work.

Grammar strategies used in order to master a verb tense are, for example, memorizing preterit endings by means of chants, songs or using an acronym to remember when imperfect tense should be used. Another grammar strategy used in order to check for number and adjective agreement is underlining all nouns and their respective adjectives in the same colour to emphasize agreement.

Strategic use of translation includes planning out what one wants to say or write in the L1 and then translating it into the target language; while listening to spoken L2, translating parts of the input into one's own L1 to help store the concepts; and making an effort to forget about one's native language for a moment and to think in the target language only.

Another type of classification of strategies is by skill area, according to Cohen (1990); Paige, Cohen, Kappler, Chi and Lassegard (2006) as cited in Cohen (2010). The four basic skill categories are speaking, writing, reading and listening. Practising new grammatical structures in different situations, initiating conversations in the new language as often as possible, looking for a different way to express the idea; for example, using a synonym or describing the idea or object being talked about are some of the examples of speaking strategies.

Writing strategies include making an effort to write different kinds of texts in the target language (for example, personal notes, messages, letters and course papers). Other examples of writing strategies are reviewing what one has already written before continuing to write new material, revising the essay once or twice to improve the language and content etc.

Some of the reading strategies are making a real effort to find reading material that is at or near one's level; planning how to read a text, monitor to see how the reading is going, and then check to see how much of it was understood. Reading strategies also include guessing the approximate meaning by using clues from the surrounding context and using a dictionary in order to get a detailed sense of what individual words mean.

Listening strategies include strategies to increase exposure to the new language, e.g. listening to a talk show on the radio or watching a TV show; strategies to become more

familiar with the sounds in the new language, e.g. imitating the way native speakers talk; and strategies for better understanding the new language in conversation. This group also includes strategies used before listening to the language, e.g. deciding to pay special attention to the way the speaker pronounces certain sounds; and strategies used when listening in the language, e.g. listening for word and sentence stress to see what native speakers emphasize when they speak and practising 'skim listening' by paying attention to some parts and ignoring others. If some or most of what someone says in the language is not understood, learners can make educated guesses and inferences about the topic based on what has already been said and look to the speaker's gestures and general body language as a clue to meaning (Cohen, 2010).

2.1.2. Listening strategies

Since language learning strategies are defined by Oxford (2003) as specific behaviours conducted in order to enhance one's L2 learning, listening strategies could be defined as processes activated by learners to enhance their listening comprehension and to improve their understanding of the listening input. Listening strategies are one of the factors which influence the degree of successful listening comprehension. That is why it is important that learners are aware of various listening strategies and their significant role in the listening process. Gonen (2009:45) claims that "although strategies are used generally by successful FL learners, using strategies specific to language skills is important for achieving success in these skills."

According to O'Malley and Chamot (1990) and O'Malley at al. (1985) as cited in Hsueh-Jui (2008), there are three main types of listening strategies – metacognitive, cognitive and social. While using metacognitive listening strategies, learners consciously pay attention to the spoken text, and they also monitor and evaluate their comprehension of the text. Cognitive strategies are related to comprehending and storing input in working memory or long-term memory for later retrieval. They include, e.g. elaboration, inferencing and translation. Social strategies are techniques used to collaborate with others, to verify understanding and to lower anxiety.

2.2. Listening comprehension

It is very important to emphasize the difference between “listening” and “listening comprehension”. According to Hasan (2000) as cited in Kijpoonphol (2008) “listening” is a process of just listening to the message without interpreting and responding to the text, while “listening comprehension” is a process which includes meaningful interactivity and an overall understanding of the text. Holden (2004:257) defines listening comprehension as “an active process in which the listener must discriminate among sounds, understand words and grammar, interpret intonation and other prosodic clues, and retain information gathered long enough to interpret it in the context or setting in which the exchange takes place.”

As can clearly be seen from the explanation, listening is a very complex process during which listeners are certainly not passive, as has been thought for a long time, but, in contrary, they need a great amount of concentration and mental effort. “Listening comprehension is a set of highly integrated skills, all of which play an important role in the process of language acquisition” (Holden, 2004:259).

O’Malley, Chamot and Kupper (1989) as cited in Osada also define listening comprehension as an active process “in which listeners select information from the auditory and/or visual clues and relate the information to existing knowledge in their long-term memory for better understanding and comprehending what they hear”. Byrnes (1984) as cited in Osada (2004:55) characterizes listening comprehension as a “highly complex problem-solving activity” that can be broken down into a set of distinct sub-skills.

2.3. Listening anxiety

Anxiety as a psychological term refers to a personality trait which can influence the process of learning in general, and language learning or acquisition in particular (Izadi, 2012). However, psychologists distinguish several categories of anxiety. According to Spielberger, (1983) as cited in Horwitz (2001) anxiety as a personality "trait" is differentiated from a transient anxiety "state." Trait anxiety is defined as a relatively stable personality characteristic while state anxiety is conceptualized as a response to a particular anxiety provoking stimulus, an important test, for example.

Gonen (2009) claims that although anxiety is often associated with fear, frustration and negative arousal, foreign language learning anxiety is regarded as a unique type of anxiety characteristic to learning a foreign or second language. MacIntyre and Gardner (1994:284) define foreign language learning anxiety as "the feeling of tension and apprehension especially associated with second language context, including speaking, listening, reading and writing." The researchers also state that there is a consistent negative correlation between language anxiety and language achievement, indices being course grades and standard proficiency tests. Whether anxiety is the cause or the effect of poor performance on tests, it has been proven that it is one of the important affective filters which relates to success or failure in language learning (Krashen (1987) as cited in Izadi (2012)).

Horwitz et al. (1986) examined language anxiety that appears in foreign language classrooms. They define foreign language classroom anxiety as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (Horwitz et al.:128).

Past studies have indicated that L2 listening anxiety is one of the important learner variables affecting success and failure in language learning. "L2 listening can be stressful to different degrees in different ways to different individuals" (Kimura, 2011:42).

Vogely as cited in Gonen (2009) clearly emphasizes that the anxiety accompanying listening comprehension is one of the most ignored but possibly one of the most debilitating type of anxiety. Legac (2007) states that even though anxiety can sometimes have a facilitative effect, most authors emphasise its debilitating effect. The author mentions Elkhafaifi's (2005) examples, such as altered performance, lower test scores and final grades. Finally, in the opinion of many researchers, strategy instruction can positively influence language anxiety, which teachers and instructors should always bear in mind.

3. An overview of relevant research

Listening comprehension, until recently, has attracted little attention in both theory and practice, according to Osada (2004). While three other language skills – reading, writing, and speaking, are directly taught, students are expected to develop their listening skills without any help. Mendelsohn (1984) as cited in Osada (2004) cynically called this kind of approach osmosis, which is also known as the audio lingual method. In this osmosis approach, it is believed that students will improve their listening comprehension skill simply by listening to the target language all day, or through experience. Call (1985) as cited in Osada (2004) attributes this neglect of listening comprehension to the belief that listening is a passive skill and that adequate instruction in listening comprehension constitutes mere exposition to the spoken target language.

The status of listening began to change in 1970's. It shifted from incidental and peripheral to the one of central importance. "Listening was no longer taken for granted and treated as a passive language skill, but the active role of the listener started to be recognised" (Legac, 2007:218). It began to be seen an active process for the listener because he/she does not simply receive what the speaker actually says, but constructs a representation of the meaning. During the next decade, research in exploring the complexity of this skill substantially increased. Throughout the 1990's, aural comprehension in second or foreign language became an important area of study (Osada, 2004). Brown (1986) as cited in Osada (2004) noticed that, in spite of the fact that listening comprehension became an important facet of language learning, classroom practices in numerous schools in various countries still demonstrate that listening is regarded as the least important skill in language teaching.

A few researchers have attempted to investigate the relationship between the listening strategy use and listening ability in L2. The results of the research conducted by Goh (2002) have shown that a more proficient listener uses both cognitive and metacognitive strategies. By doing so, one is able to achieve a meaningful interpretation of a text, and at the same time demonstrates the ability to use prior knowledge, linguistic cues, and contextual information. On the other hand, a less proficient listener is often distracted by unfamiliar vocabulary, and uses a limited range of strategies.

Chang (2008) claims that the use of listening strategy has been studied extensively over the past two decades, particular focus being on identification of the strategies used by successful and less successful language learners. Chang mentions the results of previous research in this area. Murphy (1987), Chin & Li (1998), Goh (2002), and Chao & Chin

(2005) all reported that more advanced listeners significantly differ in the usage of language learning strategies from less advanced listeners. Higher proficiency learners use increasingly varied strategies than lower proficiency language learners. It has been discovered by Vandergrift (1997) that the usage of metacognitive strategies increases with the listener's proficiency. Vogely (1995) and Bacon (1992) found that listeners tend to use bottom-up strategies when working with a more difficult text. The results of Rost and Ross's (1991) and Vandergrift's (1997) study showed that successful learners possess the ability use both linguistic and background knowledge at the same time, while poor learners may over rely on one kind of knowledge only. Native speakers of English and advanced learners of English mainly use semantic cues while listening, while intermediate L2 learners, on the other hand, rely more on syntactic cues, according to Conrad (1985). With regard to strategy instruction, Thompson and Rubin (1996), Vandergrift (1999), Field (1998), and Mendelsohn (1994, 1995) concluded that there is no immediate effect on enhancing listening comprehension. Moreover, these researchers stated that, in order to make the strategy instruction effective, higher listening proficiency is required.

Hsueh-Jui (2008) describes Vandergrift's (2003) investigation, whose aim was to examine the relationship between listening proficiency and listening strategy use. The participants of the study were 36 junior high school students of French in Canada. The researcher wanted to examine their use of listening strategies. The results have shown that the more proficient listeners employed metacognitive strategies more frequently than less proficient listeners. Vandergrift's study suggested that teaching less proficient listeners to use metacognitive strategies (e.g. analysis of the listening task requirements, activation of appropriate listening processes, making predictions of the task, and monitoring and evaluating one's comprehension) would enhance their listening performance.

In Hsueh-Jui's (2008) investigation, 101 university students, who were all non-English majors, participated. The study aimed to investigate the interrelationship between learners' listening strategy use, listening proficiency, and learning style. Results showed a statistically significant difference in strategy use between advanced, upper-intermediate and lower-intermediate group. The advanced listeners had used all the strategies to enhance their listening comprehension, which resulted in significant variations between the three groups. The study also showed that the more proficient listeners were more flexible than the less proficient listeners in their learning styles. On the other hand, the less proficient listeners restricted themselves to a particular style. The results of the study suggest that strategies-based instruction within second or foreign language classrooms would be useful to increase

learners' awareness of their individual learning style and of deciding and choosing the appropriate strategy during task performance. This kind of strategy training would enable a learner to take control of his/her own learning by planning a goal, monitoring the process, and evaluating the learning outcome. Hsueh-Jui states that nurturing an individual's metacognition is the key to successful learning.

Cohen (2010) describes an illustrative case study of listening strategies of an advanced EFL listener in Taiwan conducted by Chen in 2007. The subject of the study was a 30-year-old Taiwanese woman who had majored in English. Verbal report revealed that she used 18 strategies in order to comprehend four audio texts: (1) prediction; (2) using background knowledge; (3) listening for key words; (4) grammar analysis; (5) note taking; (6) inferring the context of the text; (7) message integration; (8) translation; (9) visualization; (10) reinterpretation; (11) selecting strategies; (12) increasing concentration; (13) prediction confirmation; (14) problem identification; (15) selective attention; (16) evaluation; (17) recalling the main idea; and (18) deleting impossible answers. By using and analysing verbal report, the researcher was able to demonstrate that listening comprehension strategies varied by task. The reported strategies were categorized into three main groups: strategies for monitoring comprehension; strategies for assisting comprehension; and strategies for enhancing comprehension. These strategies were used in three listening phases: pre-listening; while-listening; and post-listening.

Many other factors, in addition to listening competence, may influence learners' choices of strategy use (Chang, 2008). Chang (2005) conducted a small-scale study in which she interviewed seven Chinese students who were studying overseas. The results of her in-depth study showed that there is a relationship between choice of listening strategy and listening anxiety. In particular, she found that listening strategies significantly influenced listening anxiety.

According to Gonen (2009), Vogely conducted a research focusing on listening comprehension anxiety and strategies that could be employed to help learners cope with this anxiety more effectively. The results revealed that the nature of speech can affect learners' level of anxiety, as well as the use of unfamiliar topics or unfamiliar vocabulary in the listening text. Other causes for anxiety reported by the students were the nature of the listening comprehension practice and insufficiency of listening time. In his research, Vogely proposed "that the use of listening strategies could help relieve student anxiety toward a listening comprehension activity" (Gonen, 2009:45).

Gonen (2009) mentions another study on listening anxiety, conducted by Elkhafaifi (2005). The aim of the study was to find out whether FL listening anxiety existed as a phenomenon distinguishable from general foreign language anxiety and whether anxiety affected student achievement and listening comprehension performance in Arabic courses. It was discovered that listening anxiety indeed is a distinguishable phenomenon. It was also reported that females experienced higher anxiety levels than males. Furthermore, the study revealed an unexpected result: students who took Arabic as an elective course experienced the highest levels of anxiety. Elkhafaifi (2005) claims that, if instructors want to reduce anxiety while teaching listening, they need to take it into consideration in listening comprehension exercises and classroom strategies.

Important variables that influence the performance of test takers, according to Bachman and Palmer (1996), as cited in Chang (2008), are test task characteristics, e.g. previewing questions, multiple listening, sufficient background or linguistic knowledge, and being familiar with the test format. Chang's (2008) study aimed to investigate the strategies employed by L2 learners for various test tasks, and the relationship between test tasks and the learners' choice of strategies. Furthermore, she wanted to examine whether L2 learners experiencing varying levels of listening anxiety use varied strategies for varied test tasks, and if they do, what the differences were and what could be done to close the gap between the groups.

The participants who took part in this study were 22 business major students at a college in Taiwan with an average age of 18 years. Based on a TOEIC test results, their listening proficiency was between beginning and low intermediate, and based on a listening anxiety questionnaire, twelve participants were anxious and ten non-anxious. In order to elicit the types of strategies learners used, Chang designed four types of listening test support; pre-viewing questions, repeated input, topic preparation, and vocabulary instruction.

One of the instruments used in the study was a listening strategy questionnaire with the purpose of examining the strategies most frequently used in a general test situation. The second instrument was a questionnaire on listening anxiety. The last instrument administered to elicit students’ responses on their use of strategies was a listening comprehension test with four forms of listening support previously mentioned.

Chang examined whether strategy use was affected by varying types of listening support or whether students simply adopted the same strategies used in a general test situation. Students’ oral reports on strategy use showed that varying types of listening support did have an effect on their strategy use, varying from metacognitive strategies, such as

finding content clues from test questions and predicting possible topics, to cognitive strategies like revising comprehension, matching words, and listening selectively. The results also revealed that listening support had more effect on listeners' metacognitive strategies, which helped them predict and plan their listening.

The researcher also analysed the strategies used by anxious and non-anxious students while taking a listening test with varied types of listening support. Non-anxious students used many more strategies than the anxious ones. Thirteen strategies were identified, including cognitive strategies, such as trying to hear every word, translating what they heard into their native language, listening selectively, etc., metacognitive strategies, such as predicting the topics through the words found in the test questions and vocabulary lists; and even affective strategies, such as not thinking about the mark and suppressing negative thoughts.

Chang concludes that all forms of listening support (previewing questions, repeated input, topic preparation, vocabulary instruction) influenced learners' use of strategy to some extent. Previewing questions caused some students to be more selective and helped them focus on information which was required in order to answer the questions. Before listening to the text, the majority of students tried to predict the topic by using the information from the questions. Also, while listening, many students looked for answers by matching the words found in the test questions and the ones heard in the recording. Repeated input offered students the chance to revise their comprehension. It also assisted their strategy use and allowed them enough time to encourage themselves not to be nervous. With regard to topic preparation, students tended to focus on the details due to the fact that they had been exposed to the global background of the topics. Finally, as far as vocabulary instruction before the test is concerned, students usually tried to predict the topic or content of the text by using the words from the lists.

Furthermore, strategies reported by anxious students were similar across the four groups. The strategies most frequently mentioned were matching words found in the test questions and heard in the recordings, predicting discourse topics from test questions, continuing to revise comprehension through repeated input, directly listening for detailed information when the topics were known, and predicting the topics through vocabulary in the lists and test questions. In contrast to the anxious group, non-anxious students used many varied strategies, but only three reflected a direct effect from listening support. These were listening for relevant information, predicting the topic and identifying key words through the vocabulary list and test questions.

Finally, Chang (2008:21) mentions the pedagogical implication of her study: "Looking into the strategies used by learners in varied test tasks may help language teachers understand whether a wrong answer is due to a lack of comprehension or a lack of strategic knowledge or competence. With answers to these questions, language teachers will be able to help their students learn more effectively."

Gonen (2009) conducted a research on the relationship between listening strategies and listening anxiety. It has been noticed that many students in the Turkish EFL context experience anxiety while listening in the foreign language. The purpose of the study was to find out whether the participants use FL listening strategies and to what extent they employ them to help them overcome FL listening anxiety. 60 intermediate level students enrolled at the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University in Turkey were the subjects of the study. They were all learning English as a foreign language. Instruments which were used were Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS) and Listening Comprehension Strategy Inventory (LCSI). After the completion of the instruments, five students from lower FL anxiety level and five students from higher FL anxiety level were randomly chosen for a semi-structured interview with open ended questions. The results showed that the number of students experiencing high levels of anxiety was larger than the students with medium and low levels of FL listening anxiety. As far as strategy use was concerned, it was shown that the subjects in the study do not employ many listening strategies and their use of these strategies is at an average level. In order to find out whether there was a relationship between FL listening anxiety and FL listening comprehension strategy use of the subjects, a Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient was computed. The negative correlation between two variables indicated that when students' anxiety level increases, their use of listening strategy use decreases and vice versa. Qualitative findings gathered through the interviews with high and low anxious students also supported that finding. High anxious students usually did not employ effective listening strategies and they had more concerns while listening in the target language compared to low anxious students. The results also discovered that low anxious students were not even aware of using listening strategies to ease and enhance their comprehension during listening. "Findings of this study have yielded a need for taking the affective side of listening into consideration and helping our language learners employ appropriate listening strategies" (Gonen, 2009:49).

In his study, A Self-presentational Perspective on Foreign Language Listening anxiety, Kimura (2011) describes two descriptive researches about the existence and sources of listening anxiety. Vogely (1988) conducted a survey on 140 American university students

who were studying Spanish. The results of the survey indicated that 91% of the participants experienced anxiety while listening to Spanish. According to open-ended questions that were asked after listening comprehension examination, common sources of anxiety during the input stage were speed of delivery, poor enunciation, different accents, unfamiliar intonation, and the length of the listening passage. With regard to the processing stage, possible sources of anxiety were inappropriate strategy use and lack of processing time.

Kim (2002) as cited in Kimura (2011) conducted another descriptive study in order to examine affective reactions of L2 listeners. The participants of the study were twenty Korean university students of English. They were all taking required courses and reported having intermediate proficiency levels. The participants were asked to complete one-way listening comprehension task after which retrospective interviews were conducted.

The students claimed that listening in English made them feel nervous, tense, worried, and irritated. Their underdeveloped foreign language skills and reception-related anxiety caused them to have difficulties with organizing their thoughts while listening to English speakers. Features that caused comprehension problems were fast speech and lack of clarity, and learners' limited knowledge of the L2 which induced negative emotional reactions. These features were characterized as demotivating and anxiety provoking. Kim concluded that "his Korean learners of English lacked exposure to authentic English speech and that they needed to learn to use appropriate strategies and raise their awareness of effective use of their linguistic knowledge and strategies" (Kimura, 2011:45)

Kimura states that the research findings in the field of L2 listening skills and strategies have shown that poor listeners use strategies ineffectively, that they lack control over listening strategies, and experience anxiety while listening to information in an L2. While advanced L2 listeners possess the ability to flexibly coordinate an array of strategies, unskilled listeners, in order to comprehend listening input, usually resort to on-line translation (Goh, (2005); Vandergrift, (2003), as cited in Kimura, (2011)). According to Graham (2006); Hasan (2000); Wenden, (1986), (1999a), (1999b), a widespread misconception is present in L2 listening: "People feel that they have to listen to and make sense of every word and understand every detail to comprehend the message" (Kimura, 2011:45). When they fail to follow the text in this way, they become frustrated and worried. Strategy-based instruction would be a reasonable step in refuting this belief. According to Field (2000), listening comprehension practice without appropriate strategy instruction can develop a detrimental sense of failure instead of helping unskilled listeners. "They think that their failure to comprehend the text is because they failed to understand a word or an important verb, while if

they are trained to listen for the gist and main points, much of their apprehension may be attenuated" (Izadi, 2011:183).

According to Izadi (2011), Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's (1986) study on foreign language learning anxiety is the most influential study in the literature. They claimed that language anxiety consists of three components: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation.

Furthermore, Horwitz et al (1986) developed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), an instrument to measure anxiety. Studies using this particular instrument came to a similar conclusion; there is a consistent moderate negative correlation between the FLCAS and measures of second language achievement (usually students' final grades).

The first usage of FLCAS by Horwitz (1986) discovered a significant moderate negative correlation between foreign language anxiety and the grades students expected in their first semester, and also their final grades. These results indicate that students who experienced lower levels of foreign language anxiety expected and received higher grades, and students with higher levels of anxiety both expected and received lower grades in their language class. Another study which found significant negative correlation between language anxiety and performance, in this case on a vocabulary learning task, was that of MacIntyre and Gardner (1989).

Izadi (2011) claims that the number of studies conducted on the importance of listening comprehension in foreign language teaching and its probability to provoke anxiety in the learners, is insufficient. However, recently there has been some promising research such as Horwitz and Young (1991), who found that anxiety has a negative influence on listening comprehension. Similarly, Sadighi, Sahragard and Jafari (2009) as cited in Izadi (2011) also found a significant negative correlation between Iranian EFL learners' foreign language class anxiety and their listening comprehension.

Izadi (2011) in his research wanted to investigate the correlation between listening test results and foreign language anxiety. Another aim of the study was to question the role of the teachers in minimizing or maximizing anxiety which listening test takers can experience. 60 intermediate students were selected for the study, all majoring in English translation. The researcher used English Language Proficiency Test, Foreign Language Class Anxiety Scale, and two listening comprehension tests. On the basis of their scores in the proficiency test, the participants were divided into three groups: elementary, intermediate and advanced. Only the intermediate students were chosen to participate take the listening test. During the treatment

session, the researcher tried to remove the participants' fear of evaluation by creating a friendly atmosphere, reinforcing their self-confidence and offering them support and interest. The researcher also informed the test takers that they would get the opportunity to repeat the test in case they did poorly and ensured them that negative scores would not be considered. Immediately after the treatment, another listening comprehension test was administered to them to find out whether the treatment session can influence the test results. The results of the study showed a moderate but significant negative correlation between FLCAS and listening comprehension. Moreover, the results showed that the high anxious students significantly improved their result in the second listening comprehension test because of the reduction of their level of anxiety during the treatment session.

Izadi (2011) suggests possible ways of reducing language anxiety, e.g. the more frequent language learners are evaluated, the less anxious they become in the tests. Another important point which he emphasizes is that foreign language tests, listening tests in especially, should be made as clear as possible. Ambiguous and confusing test tasks and formats are common sources of anxiety. Testers should be careful while arranging test items. The recommended way is to start with the easiest question, because if the first question in listening comprehension tests is difficult, it may cause anxiety which will influence all of the following items.

The implications of this study may benefit English language instructors. Izadi (2011) suggests that foreign language instructors should address the emotional concerns of anxious students, acknowledge these feelings as legitimate, and then attempt to lessen students' feelings of being inadequate, confused or inept. They can also build students' confidence and self-esteem in their foreign language ability through constant encouragement, reassurance, positive reinforcement, and empathy. Possibly the most important recommendation Izadi (2011) offers is that foreign language instructors need to train the students to listen for the main points, and do not expect themselves to understand every word while listening. Finally, test givers should try to encourage a relaxed testing environment, because a low-stress testing atmosphere allows the test takers to concentrate more fully on test items rather than being distracted by worry and fear of evaluation.

Wang (2010) examined the influence of anxiety on listening comprehension. Moreover, possible sources of listening anxiety and coping strategies are discussed. 125 second-year English majors participated in this study. The researcher used the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) to measure learners' proficiency and the Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS).

The results showed that anxiety due to the tension and worry over English listening and concern about insufficient prior knowledge are roughly equal. Anxiety due to lack of confidence for the participants is less than the two previously mentioned categories.

It was discovered that listening anxiety experienced by students is not very high, to the majority of participants. However, they experience severe anxiety in some interactive listening situations. 70.3% of the participants report that it is difficult to understand English with an accent, 51.8% of the participants report that they get nervous if a listening passage is read only once during the English listening exams, when a person speaks English very fast, 69.4% of them worry that they might not understand all of it, while listening to English, 73.1% of the participants feel more relaxed if there are some visual clues.

The best way to cope with listening anxiety caused by listening to English with an accent is to listen to more authentic English. With regard to speed of input is concerned, most Chinese students are too polite and afraid of losing their status among peers to ask for repetition and clarification, but that is exactly what they need to do in order to alleviate the anxiety caused by high velocity of input. As for visual cues, the most common ones provided are question items. However, it is not possible to get visual cues for help during listening tests. 26.9% of the participants report that they do not feel nervous at all while taking listening exams.

The scores of TOEFL, which represent the listening proficiency, are significantly and positively correlated with the scores of two listening exams. In other words, those students who have higher scores in two listening exams usually score high in the TOEFL listening tests. According to the mean scores of TOEFL and that of two semesters' listening exam scores, the 125 participants were divided into three groups: HI - the group of high grades, AVE - the group of average grades, and LOW - the group of low grades. Similarly, according to the mean of the subjects' FLLAS score, the students were classified into three groups: LO-ANX – 16% of students, AVE-ANX – 73% of students, and HI-ANX – 11% of students.

The data collected implied that the listening proficiency of second-year English majors is negatively correlated with the listening anxiety, or, when the listening anxiety increases, the proficiency decreases, and vice versa. Wang (2010) concludes that FLLAS has a significant but debilitating correlation with English listening achievement, which indicates that anxiety does affect listening proficiency negatively.

The researcher also suggests several coping strategies. First of all, English teachers should take affective state of students into consideration by trying to create a low-anxiety and friendly classroom atmosphere. According to previous research, the more strategies students

use during their listening process, the lower their degree of anxiety is. Teachers of English should know that the mastery of a variety of strategies and frequently using these strategies to handle anxiety is helpful in listening and learning to highly anxious learners with low listening proficiency. Wang also claims that instructors should get rid of the teaching model in which they just play a record or cassette. Instead, teachers should try to make listening classes interesting and rewarding so that a learner does not feel bored or tired about listening. Finally, students should be aware of their present level of foreign language learning. They should be encouraged to find appropriate strategies to lower their anxiety and solve problems in order to improve their listening level and their overall foreign language learning.

Chang (2005) explored if learners with similar language proficiency and different levels of listening anxiety use different listening strategies before and while taking a listening test. The participants chosen for the study were seven Chinese students who took an English proficiency program in a New Zealand university. They were asked to fill in a listening anxiety questionnaire and were divided into two groups: anxious and non-anxious students. The participants were then interviewed, the anxious group was first, and the interview with non-anxious group was conducted three days later.

The data collected during the interviews were grouped into six categories: reasons for being anxious or non-anxious, strategies used before, while and after taking a listening test, strategies used for practising listening outside classes and for watching English TV programs or videos. It was found that the major difference between anxious and non-anxious groups was in handling incomprehensible input. The anxious group reported that they felt lack of composure, while the non-anxious group was able to stay calm and tolerate more unintelligible information.

Both groups stated that factors such as the amount of preparation time and information about the test would affect the ways they prepared for the test. If students are not given enough time to prepare, they make very little effort before or during the test.

The two groups used different strategies while taking the test. The participants in the anxious group tried to hear every word clearly and they needed to translate what they heard into Chinese. Conversely, non-anxious group listened for key words and predicted the incoming message. In spite of the usage of dissimilar strategies, both groups avoided taking notes because they did not have enough time to do it.

After taking the test, the anxious group would check their answers in various ways, using textbooks, dictionaries or previous work, but they would not consult with their teachers or peers. On the other hand, non-anxious group reported that they would check their answers

only when it was not clear to them why they could not answer questions they thought were quite easy before the test.

With regard to practising listening outside class, in addition to the usage of strategies and the amount of time, the groups usually selected different listening materials. The anxious group did more listening practise, chose programs with plenty of talking, and believed that meeting new people and making foreign friends was an important way to improve their English.

While watching English TV programs or videos, students in non-anxious group relied on pictures to understand the plot. Unlike them, the anxious students read the subtitles in order to understand movies.

Chang showed that there is a relationship between listening anxiety and the usage of listening strategies, i.e. the choice of listening strategies was influenced by anxiety level. Among other factors, listening anxiety depended on low listening proficiency. The researcher states that it is possible for teachers to reduce learners' levels of anxiety by giving strategy instruction, giving sufficient preparation time, and providing information about test formats.

4. The study

4.1. Aims of the study

The aim of this study was to explore listening strategies used by high school students, to investigate whether they experience anxiety and to what extent, and to discover whether there is a relationship between listening strategies, anxiety and listening comprehension. The study provides answers for the following research questions:

- Is there a difference in anxiety levels between male and female participants?
- Is there a difference in the usage of listening strategies between male and female participants?
- Is there a difference in the usage of listening strategies between good, average and poor students?
- Is there a relationship between anxiety levels and success?
- Is there a relationship between proficiency in English and listening comprehension?
- Is there a relationship between anxiety levels and proficiency?
- Is there a relationship between anxiety levels and listening comprehension?
- Is there a relationship between anxiety levels and listening strategies?

4.2. The participants

The participants recruited for this study were one hundred and one student of high school in Donji Miholjac. Seventy four students were female, and twenty seven were male. The participants attended first, second, third and fourth grade of high school. They have been learning English as a foreign language for six, seven, eight or nine years. Their grade in English (mark) was taken as a measure of success, and grade (age) was taken as a measure of proficiency level.

Table 1. Participants with regard to proficiency level

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	first grade	23	22.8	22.8	22.8
	second grade	27	26.7	26.7	49.5
	third grade	24	23.8	23.8	73.3
	fourth grade	27	26.7	26.7	100.0
	Total	101	100.0	100.0	

The same number of students (27) attended second and fourth grade (Table 1). The majority of participants had a B in English, and the rarest grade was a D (Table 2).

Table 2. Participants with regard to success

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2	13	12.9	12.9	12.9
	3	20	19.8	19.8	32.7
	4	38	37.6	37.6	70.3
	5	30	29.7	29.7	100.0
	Total	101	100.0	100.0	

4.3. The design of the study

The study was conducted in November 2012 in High school “Donji Miholjac” in Donji Miholjac. On November 14th, two questionnaires were administered to the students of the fourth grade. Afterwards, they listened to a tape and solved a listening test with multiple choice questions. On November 17th, the same procedure was repeated with students of the first, second and third grade.

4.4. Instruments

Several instruments were used in this study. The first one was English Listening Strategies Questionnaire designed by Chang (2008). It is used to examine the strategies most frequently used just before and while listening to a certain text in English. It contains twenty three items – five items refer to actions made just before listening, and the remaining eighteen items refer to steps taken while listening. The questionnaire has a five-point scale, ranging from *never* to *always*. Cronbach alpha is .726 which means that the scale can be considered reliable.

The second instrument used was listening anxiety questionnaire developed by Rost and Ross (1991). It contains twenty items. Four items were negatively worded and had to be reversed before scoring. The questionnaire also has a five-point scale ranging from *"I absolutely do not agree"* to *"I completely agree"*. It is used to examine students' feelings of pleasure or anxiety which accompany the listening process. It also measures students' attitudes toward listening in general. Cronbach alpha is .904 implying that the scale can be considered reliable.

The last instrument used was a listening test developed by the researcher. It contains ten multiple choice questions. Each correct answer carries one point.

4.5. The procedure

The students were informed about participating in the study, but they were not involved in any preparatory activity. The study was conducted in a language classroom, during regular English classes, at the beginning of a class. The researcher introduced herself, gave the instructions and administered the questionnaires and the listening test. The students were asked to briefly read through the materials and ask questions if something was not clear. In order to fill in the questionnaires, the students had to read each item carefully, and circle the number from one to five, depending on the extent to which certain statement applied to them. The students then listened to the text, and, while listening, had to answer ten multiple choice questions. They listened to the text only once. The average time needed for filling in the questionnaires and solving the listening test was fifteen minutes.

4.6. Results

The computer program SPSS was used to analyse the data collected in the study. First of all, the descriptive statistics referring to listening strategies used by the participants are shown (Table 3).

Table 3. The frequency of using listening strategies (descriptive statistics)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I try to hear every word clearly.	100	1.00	5.00	4.0100	.94810
I guess the meaning of unknown words by using context clues, such as the situation (e.g., a supermarket), and relationship between speakers (e.g., a salesperson and a customer.)	101	1.00	5.00	3.7525	1.06213
I focus on the message (main ideas and key words), not every word.	101	1.00	5.00	3.7327	1.03818
I link what I know and my previous experience with what I hear.	101	1.00	5.00	3.7030	.93322
I monitor my attention. If I am absent-minded, I will refocus immediately.	101	1.00	5.00	3.4752	1.17127
I fill the gaps by guessing based on words and phrases I understand.	100	1.00	5.00	3.2600	.99107
I imagine a picture of the context to comprehend texts.	101	1.00	5.00	3.1485	1.21972
I give up on the words I don't understand or miss so I can keep up with the speaker.	101	1.00	5.00	3.0594	1.09382
I listen for topic, then details.	101	1.00	5.00	2.9901	1.01484
I use the title to predict what the speaker would say and listen to confirm my predictions.	101	1.00	5.00	2.8218	1.07141
I try to relax myself and keep telling myself it is useless to be nervous.	95	1.00	5.00	2.7684	1.30834
I pay more attention to pronunciation, e.g. stressed words, and the variation of intonation.	101	1.00	5.00	2.7426	1.03589
If I know the content that will be tested, I try to think of possible questions that I will have to answer.	101	1.00	5.00	2.7129	1.22749

I prepare myself in advance to pay full attention to the tasks.	101	1.00	5.00	2.6733	1.08728
I pay particular attention to repeated words.	101	1.00	5.00	2.6535	.98423
I tell myself that I am a good listener and I can do well on my listening tasks.	101	1.00	5.00	2.5941	1.30521
I have to mentally translate what I hear into Croatian, so I can understand what the speaker says.	101	1.00	5.00	2.5842	1.21875
Before taking an English test, I think about the purpose of the test and then choose strategies to manage it.	101	1.00	5.00	2.4752	.99593
I listen for grammatical structures, e.g. the verb tenses, the passive voice, etc.	101	1.00	5.00	2.4059	1.09707
Even though I don't know what will be tested, I will do my best to do the preparation, e.g. doing more listening practice, memorizing new words.	101	1.00	5.00	2.2277	1.13913
I repeat words or phrases softly or mentally.	101	1.00	5.00	2.0891	.94973
I like closing my eyes and listening.	101	1.00	5.00	1.7822	1.18831
I take notes.	101	1.00	5.00	1.6238	2.18106
Valid N (listwise)	93				

As can be seen from the Table 3, listening strategy which is used most frequently is:“ I try to hear every word clearly” (M=4.01, SD=.948). This can be differently interpreted. It is a positive thing that students are focused and that they want to understand everything. However, they should know that they do not need do understand every single word to get the main idea of the text. It is the teacher’s job to emphasize this fact and to make it clear for everyone. Students also often guess the meaning of unknown words by using context clues (M=3.75, SD=1.06), focus on the main idea (M=3.73, SD=1.03) etc.

Students rarely close their eyes while listening (M=1.78, SD=1.18) and they rarely take notes while listening (M= 1.62, SD=2.18). Many factors can be the cause of this. Even if they like closing their eyes while listening, students may ignore this strategy to avoid embarrassment among peers. As far as note taking is concerned, they probably did not develop the habit of note taking, or their tasks while listening do not require taking notes.

Next, levels of anxiety students experience are shown in Table 4. The highest number of students (44) experience low level of anxiety, 42 students experience medium levels of anxiety and only 4 students are highly anxious.

Table 4. Levels of anxiety

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	44	43.6	48.9	48.9
	2.00	42	41.6	46.7	95.6
	3.00	4	4.0	4.4	100.0
	Total	90	89.1	100.0	
Missing	System	11	10.9		
Total		101	100.0		

Table 5. Listening test results

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
	3	4	4.0	4.0	5.0
	4	5	5.0	5.0	9.9
	5	13	12.9	12.9	22.8
	6	11	10.9	10.9	33.7
	7	23	22.8	22.8	56.4
	8	21	20.8	20.8	77.2
	9	17	16.8	16.8	94.1
	10	6	5.9	5.9	100.0
	Total	101	100.0	100.0	

According to Table 5, the majority of students had seven out of ten points on the listening test. One student circled two correct answers. The test was solved 100% correctly by six students.

Correlation analysis was used to describe the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables. The first correlation was used to explore the relationship between the result of the listening test and total anxiety score (Table 6).

Table 6. Correlation between total anxiety and the result of the listening test

		Result of the listening test
Total anxiety	Pearson Correlation	-.400**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	90

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The negative correlation coefficient (-.400) indicates a negative correlation between total anxiety and the result of the listening test which implies that the higher level of anxiety people experience, the lower result they achieve. The strength of correlation is medium, according to Cohen (1998).

Table 7. Correlation between total anxiety and success

		grade in English
Total anxiety	Pearson Correlation	-.452**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	90

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The second correlation was used to investigate the relationship between success in English and total anxiety score (Table 7). The correlation coefficient is negative in this case as well, (-.452) which indicates a high result on one variable, and a low result on the second variable. In other words, the higher grades in English students have, the lower anxiety level they experience. The Pearson value suggests that there is a medium relationship between grades in English and total anxiety.

Table 8. Correlation between anxiety and proficiency level

		grade
Total anxiety	Pearson Correlation	.325**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002
	N	90

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The third correlation analysis was run to find out the relationship between proficiency level and total anxiety score (Table 8). The correlation has a positive direction (.325), which means that students in higher grades experience greater anxiety levels. It is difficult to interpret this result; students in higher grades may feel the need to appear successful, and because of that they are faced with more pressure, leading to higher levels of anxiety. Once more, the strength of the relationship between these two variables is medium.

To find out whether there is a relationship between FL listening anxiety and FL listening comprehension strategy use of the participants, a Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient was computed once more (Table 9).

Table 9. Correlation between total anxiety and the usage of "before listening" strategies

		Before listening
Total anxiety	Pearson Correlation	.236*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.025
	N	90

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

It can be seen from Table 9. that there is positive correlation between anxiety levels and the usage of "before listening" strategies. This result implies that the usage of strategies increases with the level of anxiety, i.e. students who experience higher levels of anxiety use more listening strategies before listening to a text. Possible explanation of this unexpected finding may be attributed to the fact that learners' are well aware of their anxiety and to their endeavours to overcome it by trying hard to use various and numerous listening strategies in order to prepare for listening. Unlike the previous result, there is no significant relationship between the usage of strategies while listening and students' anxiety levels, as can be seen from Table 10.

Table 10. Correlation between total anxiety and the usage of "while listening" strategies

		whilelistening
totalanxiety	Pearson Correlation	-.072
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.521
	N	82

Independent samples t-tests were used to compare the mean scores (total anxiety and the usage of listening strategies) of two different groups of people (male and female students). The first independent samples t-test was used to answer the research question: "Is there a significant difference in anxiety levels for male and female students?"

Table 11. a) Difference in anxiety levels for male and female students (descriptive statistics)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Male students	22	20.00	63.00	41.5909	13.37965
Female students	68	23.00	81.00	49.6471	14.02957

As can be seen from Table 11.a), female students experience higher levels of anxiety (M=49.65, SD=14.03) than male students (M=41.59, SD=13.38). According to the t-test shown in Table 11.b), there is a statistically significant difference in anxiety levels for male and female participants in the study. In other words, male and female students experience significantly different levels of anxiety, with female learners experience higher levels of anxiety.

Table 11. b) Difference in the anxiety levels for male and female students (t-test)

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
totalanxiety	-2.367	88	.020

Table 12.a) Difference in the usage of listening strategies for male and female students ("before listening" strategies) (descriptive statistics)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Male students	27	1.40	4.00	2.3556	.56659
Female students	74	1.00	4.20	2.6027	.74723

The second research question was: "Is there a significant difference in the usage of "before listening" strategies for male and female students?" As can be seen from table 12.a), female students (M=2.60, SD=.75) use strategies before listening more frequently than male students (M=2.36, SD=.57). However, this difference is not statistically significant, according to the test (Table 12.b).

Table 12.b) Difference in the usage of listening strategies for male and female students ("before listening" strategies) (t-test)

		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Before listening	Equal variances assumed	-1.561	99	.122

Table 13.a) Difference in the usage of listening strategies for male and female students ("while listening" strategies) (descriptive statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Male students	26	1.94	3.78	2.8077	.36826
Female students	67	2.00	3.94	2.9693	.39548

The final t-test was used to investigate whether there was a significant difference in the usage of "while listening" strategies for male and female students (Table 13). Once more, the results show that female students (M=2.97, SD=.39) use strategies while listening more often than male students (M=2.81, SD=.36) (Table 13.a). Similarly to the previous result, there is no significant difference in the usage of "while listening" strategies with regard to gender (Table 13.b)

Table 13.b) Difference in the usage of listening strategies for male and female students ("while listening" strategies) (t-test)

		t-test for Equality of Means		
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
While listening	Equal variances assumed	-1.802	91	.075

ANOVA was used to compare the mean scores (usage of listening strategies and total anxiety) of three different groups of participants: good, average and poor students. In the first case, ANOVA was used to answer the research question: "Is there a difference in the usage of listening strategies for good, average and poor learners?"

Table 14.a) Difference anxiety level for good, average and poor students (descriptives)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
1.00	26	36.8846	10.68579	2.09566	32.5685	41.2007	20.00	60.00
2.00	31	48.2258	13.31843	2.39206	43.3406	53.1110	21.00	81.00
3.00	33	55.6667	12.12607	2.11088	51.3669	59.9664	30.00	78.00
Total	90	47.6778	14.23150	1.50013	44.6970	50.6585	20.00	81.00

The results show that poor students experience the highest level of anxiety (M=55.67, SD=12.13). The first group of participants, the good students, are the least anxious (M=36.88, SD=10.69) (Table 14. a). It can be seen from Table 14. b) that the difference between the three groups of participants is statistically significant. To be more exact, all of the three groups differ significantly from one another. Good, average and poor learners experience significantly different levels of anxiety (Table 14.c).

Table 14. b) Difference in anxiety level for good, average and poor students (ANOVA)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5144.249	2	2572.125	17.372	.000
Within Groups	12881.407	87	148.062		
Total	18025.656	89			

Table 14. c)Difference in anxiety level for good, average and poor students (post-hoc)

(I) success	(J) success	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1.00	2.00	-11.34119*	3.23588	.002	-19.0571	-3.6253
	3.00	-18.78205*	3.19084	.000	-26.3905	-11.1736
2.00	1.00	11.34119*	3.23588	.002	3.6253	19.0571
	3.00	-7.44086*	3.04351	.043	-14.6980	-.1837
3.00	1.00	18.78205*	3.19084	.000	11.1736	26.3905
	2.00	7.44086*	3.04351	.043	.1837	14.6980

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 15. a) Difference in the usage of listening strategies for good, average and poor students ("before listening" strategies) (descriptives)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
1,00	30	2.4933	.74414	.13586	2.2155	2.7712	1.40	4.20
2,00	38	2.6000	.72634	.11783	2.3613	2.8387	1.40	4.00
3,00	33	2.5030	.67291	.11714	2.2644	2.7416	1.00	3.80
Total	101	2.5366	.70933	.07058	2.3966	2.6767	1.00	4.20

As can be seen from Table 15.a), average students use strategies before listening most often (M=2.60, SD=.73). Good students use "before listening" strategies least frequently (M=2.49, SD=.74). According to the Table 15, the difference in the usage of "before listening" strategies for good, average and poor learners is not statistically significant.

Table 15.b) Difference in the usage of listening strategies for good, average and poor students (before listening strategies) (ANOVA)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.246	2	.123	.241	.786
Within Groups	50.068	98	.511		
Total	50.314	100			

Table 16. a) Difference in the usage of listening strategies for good, average and poor students ("while listening"strategies) (descriptives)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
1,00	24	3.1088	.47012	.09596	2.9103	3.3073	1.94	3.94
2,00	36	2.9136	.33159	.05527	2.8014	3.0258	2.39	3.61
3,00	33	2.8013	.35137	.06117	2.6768	2.9259	2.00	3.50
Total	93	2.9241	.39290	.04074	2.8432	3.0051	1.94	3.94

The group which uses strategies while listening most often is the first group, or the good learners (M=3.10, SD=.47). (Table 16.a) Poor learners use "while listening" strategies least frequently (M=2.80, SD=.35). According to Table 16.b), the difference between the three groups is statistically significant.

Table 16. b) Difference in the usage of listening strategies for good, average and poor students ("while listening" strategies) (ANOVA)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.320	2	.660	4.611	.012
Within Groups	12.882	90	.143		
Total	14.202	92			

Table 16. c) Difference in the usage of listening strategies for good, average and poor students ("while listening" strategies) (post-hoc)

(I) success	(J) success	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1.00	2.00	.19522	.09970	.129	-.0424	.4328
	3.00	.30745*	.10150	.009	.0656	.5493
2.00	1.00	-.19522	.09970	.129	-.4328	.0424
	3.00	.11223	.09118	.438	-.1051	.3295
3.00	1.00	-.30745*	.10150	.009	-.5493	-.0656
	2.00	-.11223	.09118	.438	-.3295	.1051

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

It can be seen from Table 16.c) that there is a difference in the frequency of using listening strategies between poor and good learners while listening. This result can have important pedagogical implications. By finding out where the differences lie exactly, less successful learners may benefit from the experience of more successful ones.

4.7. Discussion

The results have shown that male and female participants experience different levels of anxiety. We can conclude that gender is one of the factors which may influence the anxiety level. Good, medium and poor learners experience different levels of anxiety which means that language competence is another important factor which has an effect on listening anxiety. It has also been shown that students with higher grades also had higher scores on the listening test. The result which showed that students in higher grades (older students), experience higher levels of anxiety came as a bit of a surprise. It is usually thought that they are already used to test taking, while younger students tend to take test situations more seriously. However, this was not the case. Students with higher anxiety scores had lower results on the listening test, which means that anxiety can affect efficiency in a negative way. There is no significant difference in the usage of listening strategies with regard to gender. None of the listening strategies can be seen as strictly "female" or strictly "male" strategies. The results showed that students with higher levels of anxiety use more strategies before listening. This, too, is a surprising result, since previous research findings discovered a negative correlation between the two variables. This result may be interpreted to mean that these students want to alleviate their anxiety by using strategies before listening in order to prepare themselves as much as possible. There is no significant correlation between anxiety scores and the usage of strategies while listening, which is in contrast to many previous research discoveries. There is no significant difference in the usage of "before listening" strategies with regard to success. However, there is a difference in the usage of "while listening" strategies between poor and good students, which is an important piece of information language teachers may benefit from. It could be used in strategy training, i.e. those listening strategies which are proven to be productive could be brought to attention of less successful students, enabling them to use more appropriate listening strategies and to expand their variety. The usage of more effective strategies during listening comprehension can also be viewed as a way of overcoming anxiety, which makes strategy based instruction even more beneficial to FL learners.

5. Conclusion

Every student of high school in Donji Miholjac uses listening strategies. However, students use different strategies and with different frequency. The participants experience different levels of anxiety; but the low level is the most common. There is a positive correlation between anxiety and strategies used before listening, which is not consistent with other research findings done in this field. Students with higher grades have higher scores on the listening test, and they use strategies while listening more frequently than poor students – the ones with lower grades. This fact is of great importance to foreign language educators and it could be used in strategy training, i.e. teachers can organise or implement strategy training in their work, which could enable poor students to use a greater variety of listening strategies and to use strategies more frequently and appropriately. Furthermore, if learners are trained how and when to use listening strategies, it may positively affect their listening anxiety, i.e. they might experience less fear and feel more relaxed, causing them to achieve greater success and to enhance their listening comprehension. Listening anxiety could be alleviated by using more effective listening strategies, which is another reason why FL learners may benefit from strategy based instruction. The limitation of this study is the unequal number of male and female participants, which questions the reliability of the results on gender differences.

6. Appendices

Upitnik o strategijama slušanja engleskog jezika (Chang, 2008)

Ovo je upitnik o strategijama kojima se koristimo prilikom slušanja engleskog jezika u raznim situacijama. Nema točnog ili netočnog, dobrog ili lošeg odgovora na ove izjave. Molim vas, odgovorite u kojoj se mjeri ove izjave odnose na vas prema navedenoj skali. Ne odgovarajte na temelju onoga što drugi ljudi misle da biste trebali činiti.

1 – nikada 2 – gotovo nikada 3 – ponekad 4 – gotovo uvijek 5 – uvijek

A) PRIJE RJEŠAVANJA TESTA SLUŠANJA NA ENGLESKOM JEZIKU

1. Prije rješavanja testa slušanja na engleskom jeziku, razmišljam o njegovoj svrsi te onda odabirem strategije za rješavanje tog testa.	1 2 3 4 5
2. Ako mi je poznat sadržaj koji će se testirati, unaprijed pokušavam smisliti moguća pitanja na koja ću morati odgovoriti.	1 2 3 4 5
3. Unaprijed se pripremim kako bih se mogao/la potpuno usredotočiti na zadatke.	1 2 3 4 5
4. Iako ne znam što će se testirati, nastojim se što bolje pripremiti, na primjer, više vježbati slušanje, pamtiti više riječi.	1 2 3 4 5
5. Govorim sebi da sam dobar slušatelj i da mogu uspješno riješiti zadatke na testu slušanja.	1 2 3 4 5

B) TIJEKOM RJEŠAVANJA TESTA SLUŠANJA NA ENGLESKOM JEZIKU

6. Nastojim jasno čuti svaku riječ.	1 2 3 4 5
7. Usredotočim se na poruku (glavne ideje i ključne riječi), ne na svaku riječ.	1 2 3 4 5
8. Popunjavam praznine pogađajući na temelju riječi i fraza koje znam.	1 2 3 4 5
9. Pogađam značenje nepoznatih riječi na temelju konteksta, kao što je situacija (npr. supermarket) i veza između govornika (npr. prodavač i kupac).	1 2 3 4 5

10. Više pažnje obraćam na izgovor, npr. riječi koje su naglašene, i na promjene u intonaciji. 1 2 3 4 5

11. Posebnu pažnju obraćam na riječi koje se ponavljaju. 1 2 3 4 5

12. Slušam gramatičke strukture, npr. glagolska vremena, pasiv, itd. 1 2 3 4 5

13.Ne obraćam pažnju na riječi koje ne razumijem ili propustim kako bih mogao/la nastaviti pratiti govornika. 1 2 3 4 5

14. Povezujem ono što znam i svoja prethodna iskustva s onim što čujem. 1 2 3 4 5

15. Zamišljam sliku konteksta kako bih razumio/la tekst. 1 2 3 4 5

16. Moram u sebi prevesti ono što čujem na hrvatski, kako bih razumio/la što govornik govori. 1 2 3 4 5

17. Vodim bilješke dok slušam. 1 2 3 4 5

18. Koristim naslov kako bih predvidio/la što će govornik reći te slušam kako bih potvrdio svoje predviđanje. 1 2 3 4 5

19. Prvo slušam kako bih shvatio/la temu teksta, zatim slušam detalje. 1 2 3 4 5

20. Ponavljam riječi ili fraze lagano u sebi. 1 2 3 4 5

21. Pratim svoju pažnju. Ako primijetim da "odlutam" mislima, odmah ću se ponovno usredotočiti. 1 2 3 4 5

22. Pokušavam se opustiti i stalno si govorim kako je beskorisno biti nervozan. 1 2 3 4 5

23. Volim zatvoriti oči i slušati. 1 2 3 4 5

Upitnik o strahu od slušanja (Rost i Ross, 1991)

Molim vas, pažljivo pročitajte izjave te odgovorite u kojoj se mjeri one odnose na vas prema navedenoj skali:

1– nikada 2 – gotovo nikada 3 – ponekad 4 – gotovo uvijek 5 – uvijek

1. Uzrujam se kad nisam siguran/na da dobro razumijem ono što slušam na engleskome. 1 2 3 4 5

2. Kad slušam engleski, često razumijem gotovo sve riječi, ali svejedno ne shvaćam što se želi reći. 1 2 3 4 5

3. Kad slušam engleski, toliko se zbunim da ne mogu pratiti što slušam. 1 2 3 4 5

4. Uhvati me strah ako znam da je tekst za slušanje dugačak. 1 2 3 4 5

5. Nervozan/na sam kad moram slušati engleski tekst o nepozantoj temi. 1 2 3 4 5

6. Uzrujam se svaki put kad pri slušanju naiđem na nepoznatu gramatiku. 1 2 3 4 5

7. Postanem nervozan/na i zbunjen/a kad pri slušanju ne razumijem svaku riječ. 1 2 3 4 5

8. Smeta me kad pri slušanju naiđem na riječ koju ne znam izgovoriti. 1 2 3 4 5

9. Obično si pri slušanju prevodim riječ po riječ. 1 2 3 4 5

10. Zbog kompliciranih gramatičkih konstrukcija u engleskome, teško mi je slijediti značenje teksta koji slušam. 1 2 3 4 5

11. Brine me kako ću svladati engleski izgovor toliko da mogu bez problema razumijeti što slušam. 1 2 3 4 5

12. Uživam slušati engleski. 1 2 3 4 5

13. Osjećam se sigurnim/om u sebe dok slušam engleski. 1 2 3 4 5

14. Kad se jednom navikneš, slušanje na engleskom i nije tako teško. 1 2 3 4 5

15. Najteža stvar u engleskom za mene je svladati slušanje. 1 2 3 4 5

16. Više bih volio/la da samo učim čitati engleski, a ne i slušati. 1 2 3 4 5

17. Nije mi problem razumjeti što slušam, no teško mi je na engleskome odgovoriti na pitanja kojima se provjerava razumijevanje. 1 2 3 4 5

18. Zadovoljan/na sam kako razumijem što slušam na engleskome. 1 2 3 4 5

19. Britanska (američka, australska, kanadska) kultura i ideje vrlo su mi čudne. 1 2 3 4 5

20. Da bi se moglo razumjeti što se sluša na engleskome, treba znati mnogo o britanskoj (američkoj, australskoj, kanadskoj) kulturi. 1 2 3 4 5

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Abstract

Language learning strategies represent one of the most important factors which determine the degree of success in learning a second or foreign language. Listening strategies are one of the subgroups of this large category which learners use in order to enhance their listening comprehension. Listening anxiety may have an effect on learner's success, usually a debilitating one. This study aims to investigate the relationship between listening anxiety, listening strategies and listening comprehension. For this purpose, 101 high school students were chosen to participate. They were asked to fill in a listening anxiety and listening strategies questionnaire and to solve a listening test with multiple choice questions. The results are presented and discussed, and some pedagogical implications are stated.

Key words*: listening strategies, listening anxiety, listening comprehension*

Sažetak

Strategije za učenje jezika predstavljaju jedan od najvažnijih čimbenika koji određuju stupanj uspjeha u učenju drugog ili stranog jezika. Strategije slušanja su jedna od podgrupa ove velike kategorije koje se koriste kako bi se unaprijedilo razumijevanje slušanjem. Strah koji se javlja tijekom slušanja može imati utjecaj na uspjeh, obično negativan. Ovim se istraživanjem nastoji istražiti odnos između straha od slušanja, strategija slušanja i razumijevanja slušanjem u engleskom kao stranom jeziku. Kako bi se to ostvarilo, 101 učenik je sudjelovao u istraživanju. Od njih je zatraženo da ispune upitnike o strahu od slušanja i strategijama slušanja te da riješe test slušanja s pitanjima višestrukog izbora. Rezultati su prezentirani i objašnjeni te su ukratko navedene važnosti za nastavu stranog jezika.

Ključne riječi: *strategije slušanja, strah od slušanja, razumijevanje slušanja*