Foreign Language Listening Anxiety: The Relationship between Listening Anxiety and Success in Learning English as a Foreign Language

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Sažetak

Strah je složeno psihološko stanje koje je mnogo puta bilo istraživano jer je neprestano prisutno u svim područjima ljudskih života i na koje ujedno i utječe na mnoge načine. Sukladno tomu, strah je prisutan i u usvajanju stranoga jezika. Iako neki istraživači tvrde da strah može imati i pozitivan utjecaj na usvajanje stranoga jezika jer drži učenike u stanju pripravnosti, zapravo je negativni aspekt straha od stranoga jezika taj kojim se israživači neprestano bave. Strah od stranoga jezika može narušiti učenikova izvedba na satu te utjecati na učeničko samopouzdanje što rezultira smanjenom motivacijom i, sukladno tomu, slabijim usvajanjem strang jezika. Kako bi pronašli uzroke straha od strang jezika i načine kako taj strah prevladati, znanstvenici su provodili opsežna istraživanja na tu temu. Horwitz et al. (1986) primijetili su da strah od jezika narušava učeničku izvedbu na stranom jeziku. Ovo se istraživanje bavi strahom od slušanja. Cilj je istraživanja istražiti odnos između straha od slušanja i uspjeha u učenju engleskoga kao stranoga jezika. Točnije, istraživanje se bavi proučavanjem odnosa između straha od slušanja i razumijevanja slušanoga teksta. U istraživanju je sudjelovalo devedeset i sedam učenika II. Gimnazije Osijek. Kako bi se testirao odnos između straha od slušanja i uspjeha u učenju engleskoga kao stranoga jezika, bila su upotrebljena dva instrumenta: upitnik o strahu od slušanja, kojeg su razvili Rost i Ross (1991, citirano u Mihaljević Djigunović 2002) te test razumijevanja slušanoga teksta. Ocjene na kraju školske godine uzete su kao mjera uspjeha u učenju engleskoga kao stranoga jezika. Podaci su analizirani statističkim kompjuterskim programom SPSS 19.0. Rezultati su potvrdili istraživačeve pretpostavke da postoji odnos između straha od slušanja i uspjeha u učenju engleskoga kao strang jezika. U radu su ponuđene razne metode i tehnike koje mogu pomoći učenicima i nastavnicima engleskoga u nadvladavanju straha od slušanja.

Ključne riječi: individualne razlike, strah od stranoga jezika, strah od slušanja, razumijevanje slušanoga teksta, uspjeh, engleski kao strani jezik.

Summary

Anxiety in general is a very complex psychological state which has been researched many times due to the fact that it is constantly present in all areas of people's lives and that it influences them in many ways. As in every other area, anxiety is present in second language acquisition too. Although some researchers claim that anxiety can have a positive influence on language acquisition since it keeps learners alert and, it is the negative aspect that is constantly investigated by language researchers. Foreign language anxiety can harm learners' performance and influence their confidence, which results in decrease of motivation and, therefore, in slower second language acquisition. In order to find out what causes language anxiety and how to overcome it, language researchers have carried out extensive research on this topic. According to Horwitz et al. (1986), foreign language anxiety often harms learners' performance in foreign language. This present study deals with listening anxiety. Its aim is to investigate the relationship between listening anxiety and success in learning English as a foreign language. In particular, it investigates the relationship between listening anxiety and listening comprehension. The study was conducted on the sample of ninety-seven intermediate English students enrolled in Second Grammar School Osijek. In order to be able to test the relationship between listening anxiety and success in learning English as a foreign language, two instruments were administered to the participants: Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS) developed by Rost and Ross (1991, as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002) and a listening comprehension test. Final grades in English were taken as a measure of learning success. The data was analyzed by means of the statistical program SPSS 19.0. and the results confirmed the assumptions that there is a relationship between listening anxiety and success in learning English as a second language. Finally, various methods and techniques which can help teachers and learners of English overcome listening anxiety are suggested.

Key words: individual differences, foreign language anxiety, listening anxiety, listening comprehension, success, English as a foreign language

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1. Introduction

Second language acquisition is influenced by many factors. The factors that are dependent on the learners and that may be different from learner to learner are called individual differences. How well and fast a person will acquire a second language depends a lot on his or her personality, age, gender, motivation, attitudes and beliefs etc. To illustrate, a confident person who usually likes to take risks will hardly have problems when having to speak in front of his or her peers. On the other hand, shy individuals tend to be shy in a language classroom too. Moreover, lack of confidence, shyness, unpreparedness to take risks, negative experiences with language teacher or with peers can lead to anxiety in second language classroom. When anxiety appears in a foreign language classroom, it is called foreign language anxiety and it is very common among foreign language learners. According to Mihaljević Djigunović (2002), language anxiety is one of the most important emotions that influence the process of learning a foreign language. Due to the fact that people are in general very anxious when having to speak in public, foreign language learners mostly feel anxious when having to speak a foreign language. However, many students have problems with "discriminating the sounds and structures of a target language message" (Horwitz et al. 1986: 126). These difficulties occur because of foreign language listening anxiety which is, according to Horwitz et al. (1986), most common anxiety in a foreign language classroom after speaking anxiety. Although there are a lot of discussions about speaking anxiety, language researchers rarely investigate listening anxiety. Negative experience related to listening to a text in English in the language classroom motivated the author of this paper to explore this area in more detail in order to find out why listening anxiety appears and how it can be dealt with not only as an English learner but also as a teacher of English as a foreign language. This paper deals with foreign language anxiety, describes how it influences learners and reports about previous research in the field of language anxiety. Moreover, the principal objective of this paper is to investigate the relationship between listening anxiety and success in learning English as a foreign language.

The first part of the paper reviews anxiety as a psychological term, then foreign language anxiety, and finally listening anxiety in foreign language classroom. The questions of how to recognize language anxiety and how it influences foreign learners of English as a foreign language are explored.

The second part of the paper is a report on the research of the relationship between listening anxiety and success in learning English as a foreign language. The aim of the research, participants, instruments, and data collection and analysis procedure are described. Finally, the results are presented and interpreted.

The third part of the paper focuses is on methods, techniques and activities that learners and teachers of English as a foreign language can use in order to overcome listening anxiety, and, in the same time, to improve the success in learning English as a foreign language.

2. Anxiety

2.1. The Concept of Anxiety

"Anxiety is the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system." (Spielberger 1983, as cited in Horwitz et al. 1986) Anxiety can have a negative or a positive influence on people and their performance. Low level of anxiety keeps a person alert and concentrated and often improves performance and leads to success. However, when describing their feelings in anxious and stressful situations, people talk about dizziness, nausea, weakness, sweating, speech difficulties etc. With such symptoms, it is obvious that anxiety often has a considerable negative influence on people and their actions and it often inhibits them from performing successfully in various areas of life. Anxiety does not only have a negative influence on people's education and career but also inhibits success in sports, or even in social life.

All people feel anxious in certain situations in life. However, not every anxiety is the same. Therefore, psychologists distinguish between different categories of anxiety. According to Oxford (1998), anxiety can be a short-term state or a lasting trait. Anxiety as a short-term state is also called situational or state anxiety and it is an emotion which appears in response to different situations in life which cause tension, nervousness, or worry. Due to the fact that it only appears in certain stressful contexts, situational anxiety diminishes as soon as that context does not exist anymore. The situational or state anxiety will appear every time a person is in a situation that he or she considers stressful, for example while giving a speech, taking an exam or while singing or acting in public. Oxford (1998) explains that, if anxiety does not decrease over time, it becomes a lasting trait. Trait anxiety is a category of anxiety that appears in various situations and is stable over time. People who suffer from trait anxiety can become anxious in any kind of situation and it considerably inhibits their success, knowledge, and even motivation. In contrast to situation-specific anxiety, trait anxiety is a personality characteristic rather than a response to particular anxiety-provoking situations.

Due to the fact that anxiety appears in all areas of life, it is logical that it appears in learning and teaching too. Just like it can inhibit success in sports, social life, and career, it

has an influence on learning a foreign language. In that case, anxiety influences performance when learning a foreign language and often evolves into a trait anxiety which has a strong effect on acquiring a foreign language. According to MacIntyre and Gardner (1993, as cited in Zhao Na, 2007), language learning anxiety belongs to the category of situational or situation-specific anxiety since it appears when a situation requires the use of a foreign language.

2.2. Foreign Language Anxiety

When learning a foreign language, there are a lot of factors that influence successful language learning. In addition to learner-independent factors, such as learning conditions, teacher, learning materials, and exposure to a foreign language, there are also learner-dependent factors. These factors are different for every individual due to differences in age, gender, personality, intelligence, motivation, learners' aptitude for a second language etc. One of the most important individual differences is also anxiety, which is "a major obstacle to be overcome in learning to speak another language." (Horwitz et al., 1986) When anxiety is only limited to language learning and does not refer to other areas of life, it is called language learning anxiety. Horwitz et al. (1986:125) define language anxiety as "a distinct complex of self- perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process." Horwitz et al. (1986) describe learners who suffer from language anxiety as learners who exhibit a series of symptoms such as apprehension and worry. Moreover, they explain that anxious learners often have difficulty concentrating, become forgetful, sweat, and finally, start missing classes or postpone their homework. All these symptoms may influence the acquisition of a foreign language to a great extent and cannot be ignored. According to Schwarzer (1986, as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović (1998), foreign language anxiety has cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and physical component. The cognitive component of foreign language anxiety refers to negative self-evaluation and fear of negative evaluation by others. The emotional component refers to feelings such as agitation and tension. Behavioral component implies difficulties such as problems with speaking and gesturing and avoiding participation in classroom. The physical component refers to somatic reactions such as sweating or high heart rate.

In order to identify the causes of language anxiety and to find the teaching methods and techniques that could reduce language anxiety, many researchers have examined this problem. Major research on foreign language anxiety was conducted by Horwitz et al. (1986).

After developing the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), Horwitz et al. administered it to seventy-five university students enrolled in Spanish classes. The questionnaire consisted of thirty-three statements (followed by a 5-point Likert type scale) regarding the communication apprehension, test-anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation in the foreign language classroom. The results showed that 49% of students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class" and 47% of them disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement "I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class". They report that a majority of statements regarding foreign language anxiety were supported by a third of the students who took part in the survey. The results showed that high level of anxiety among foreign language learners exists and that it is very common. Therefore, foreign language anxiety cannot be ignored.

2.2.1. Causes of Foreign Language Anxiety

According to MacIntyre and Gardner (1989, as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović 1998), language anxiety appears as the consequence of negative experiences connected to the foreign language. Because of that, language anxiety is a learned emotional response. MacIntyre and Gardner (o.c.) explain that language anxiety appears because learners experience negative feelings in response to a stressful situation in language classroom. If these situations continue to appear, learners start to ascribe these feelings to the foreign language they are learning. Although many researchers investigated the causes of foreign language anxiety, the research conclusions by Horwitz et al. (1986) seem to be most influential. They claim that there are three main causes of foreign language anxiety: communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety.

Communication apprehension is "a type of shyness characterized by fear of or anxiety about communicating with people" (Horwitz et al., 1986: 127). People who usually feel uncomfortable and shy while communicating with people will have the same problem in a foreign language classroom. Moreover, the fact that they have to perform in a language in which they are not fluent intensifies their anxiety. Still, it is possible that some people who are usually shy have no problems when it comes to communicating in a foreign language. Due to the fact that they speak another language, learners feel like they are acting or like it is not them speaking. Because of that, they do not feel under pressure and communicate even more than in their first language. On the other hand, there are learners who are talkative in their first

language but shy and anxious when they have to communicate in a foreign language. From these examples it is obvious that communication apprehension has a great influence on foreign language anxiety.

Another cause of language anxiety according to Horwitz et al. (1986) is test anxiety. It is closely connected to the fear of making mistakes since learners are evaluated and in a way tested every time they perform in a foreign language classroom. Horwitz et al. explain that learners expect too much from themselves and feel humiliated if they did not perform perfectly in a foreign language. For them, making a mistake is a sign that they are incompetent to speak the foreign language. According to Mihaljević Djigunović (2002), test anxiety is especially emphasized when learners do an oral exam since they do not only suffer from test anxiety, but also from speaking and listening anxiety.

The third cause of language anxiety according to Horwitz et al. (1986) is the fear of negative evaluation. The fear of negative evaluation is very similar to test-anxiety since every response in a foreign language is a test in a way. However, the fear of negative evaluation appears when learners are not tested and it can appear out of a foreign language classroom. Learners in a foreign language classroom are frequently asked to speak and to respond to teacher's questions in the language they are learning. While speaking in a foreign language, learners are under the pressure because they feel their peers evaluate them. Peers' evaluation is especially important among adolescents who are usually very sensitive about their reputation. This problem occurs in a language classroom due to the fact that learners are constantly exposed to teacher's questions and that they have to represent their knowledge and intelligence in front of others. Other than that, Tsui (1996) claims that language learning is unique due to the fact that language is not only the aim of learning but also the means of learning. She explains that learners suffer from anxiety in language classroom because they have to communicate in a language in which they are not fluent and therefore unable to display their actual knowledge, intelligence, or personality. Moreover, Tsui (1996) claims that anxiety often appears in language learning due to the fact that learners are much more likely to make mistakes. Since language is the means and the aim of language learning, learners cannot only make mistakes in content but also in pronunciation or form. For example, it is possible that a learner knows the answer to teacher's questions regarding the grammar rules, but still does not want to answer because of the fear of making a mistake in pronunciation. Labov (1969, as cited in Tsui 1996) explains that speaking in class is perceived as "high-risk, low-gain" because there is a lot of chance that they will make a mistake and be humiliated in front of their peers and their teacher. Still, anxiety does not necessarily appear because of

learners' fear they will make a mistake. Allwright and Bailey (1991, as cited in Tsui, 1996) report that learners with high English proficiency also suffer from language anxiety. In their case, they are not afraid they will make a mistake, but they do not want to stand out from their peers. Again, these learners are afraid that their reputation might be endangered because they showed more knowledge than others. Tsui (1996) concludes that this type of behavior is very common in China where modesty is an important part of culture. Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) emphasizes that learners do not necessarily have to be negatively evaluated in order to feel anxious but that they feel high levels of anxiety even when they just think they are being negatively evaluated. In other words, learners are sensitive to imaginary evaluation too.

Young (1991, as cited in Zhao, 2007) claims that foreign language anxiety has six causes: personal and interpersonal, learner beliefs about language learning, instructor's beliefs about language teaching, instructor-learner interactions, classroom procedures, and language tests. According to Zhao (2007), all these aspects can be classified into three categories: the aspects of learners, teachers, and instructional practice. Likewise, Bailey (1983, as cited in Zhao, 2007), claimed that foreign language anxiety is caused by competitiveness, tests, and learners' perceived relationship with their teacher.

Oxford (1998) classifies all the causes in ten categories and names them correlates of foreign language anxiety. In these ten categories there are different variables that influence anxiety, ranging from the learner-dependent factors to external factors which cannot be controlled by a learner.

The first correlate she names is self esteem. Oxford (1998) claims that learners with low self-esteem have lower self-esteem than successful learners. Since the learners with low self-esteem tend to think they are incompetent or not intelligent enough, it influences their learning of a second language. There are learners who have low self-esteem only in specific situations, for example, when speaking a foreign language, but usually feel good about themselves and their abilities.

The second correlate, according to Oxford (1998), is tolerance of ambiguity. When learning a foreign language, it is very common that a learner does not understand everything and often is not sure how to pronounce or stress a word in a foreign language. Therefore, learners have to be able to tolerate the situations in which they are confused by the input they receive. According to Chapelle and Roberts (1986, as cited in Oxford, 1998), learners who tolerate ambiguity tend to be more persistent in learning a foreign language.

Another correlate Oxford (1998) names is risk-taking. Due to the fact that language has to be practiced, learners have to be ready to make occasional mistakes, although they

might be evaluated by their peers and their teacher. Therefore, learners who are not ready to take risks will rarely use the language in front of others, and therefore will not have enough practice. On the other hand, learners who are ready to take risks will occasionally make mistakes, but also learn from them and, finally, improve their knowledge.

Competitiveness is also a correlate of language anxiety that was recognized by Bailey (1983, as cited in Oxford, 1998). Since competitive learners compare themselves to others, they tend to feel pressure and therefore anxiety. Furthermore, Oxford (1998) reports that some learners compare themselves not only to others, but also to an idealized image of themselves.

Social anxiety includes, according to Leary (1983, as cited in Oxford, 1998), speech anxiety, shyness, stage fright, embarrassment, social-evaluative anxiety and communication apprehension. Learners are influenced by social anxiety when they are in a situation in which they are evaluated. Therefore, these learners tend to avoid the situations in which they might be evaluated negatively and, accordingly, they rarely participate in language classroom activities.

Just like Horwitz et al. (1986), Oxford (1998) also recognizes test anxiety as one of the major causes of foreign language anxiety, explaining that it influences learners when focusing on the task.

Especially interesting correlate of foreign language anxiety is identity and culture shock. According to Oxford (1998), a learner is less anxious if he or she feels identified with a language group of a target culture. On the other hand, learners sometimes get more anxious if they start feeling they are losing their own identity because they over-identified with the new language group.

Learners' and teachers' beliefs significantly influence language learning. Since learners tend to expect too much from themselves, anxiety appears when they realize they cannot meet their own expectations. Teachers, on the other hand, often have their own beliefs about language teaching that higher the level of anxiety in language classroom. For example, many teachers believe they have to correct their learners every time they do a mistake. Although mistakes should not be ignored completely, some learners develop anxiety when their teacher corrects them every time they try to reproduce the target language.

Classroom activities and methods can also heighten the level of anxiety in language classroom. According to Koch and Terrel (1991, as cited in Oxford, 1998), oral presentation and quizzes in front of the class are most anxiety-producing activities. However, listening, writing, and reading also provoke anxiety.

Instructor-learner interactions are also a very important factor of foreign language anxiety, according to Oxford (1998). Oxford emphasizes the importance of handling mistakes since too much correction leads to anxiety. Tsui (1996) names the following three important aspects of instructor-learner interactions: teacher's intolerance of silence, uneven allocation of turns, and incomprehensible input.

Teacher's intolerance of silence, according to Tsui (1996) represents a problem for learners since they do not have time to think about the answer to the question their teacher asked them. Since the teacher repeats the question until someone answers, learners feel under the pressure and incompetent. That influences their self-esteem and they start to feel uncomfortable in a foreign language classroom.

Tsui further reports that uneven allocation of turns demotivates learners who are rarely allocated because they feel that they are ignored by the teacher and that their teacher thinks they are not able to answer the question. On the other hand, learners who are often allocated feel that their teacher is "picking on them" and feel anxious when they have to answer teacher's questions.

The last cause Tsui (1996) mentions is incomprehensible input from the teacher. Learners feel anxious because they are not sure what their teacher asks them or what they are supposed to do. According to Horwitz et al. (1986), many learners feel frightened and nervous when they do not understand what their teacher says.

All in all, although researchers named and classified the causes of foreign language anxiety differently, they identify similar causes of foreign language anxiety.

2.2.2. Foreign Language Anxiety and Achievement

All the causes that were mentioned above have a great influence on language learning and affect learners in many ways. Many researchers have tried to answer the question if language anxiety influences achievement in the foreign language classroom. Since students who suffer from high foreign language anxiety describe their difficulties as "freezing in class, standing outside the door trying to summon up enough courage to enter, and going blank prior to tests" (Horwitz et al. 1986:128) it is not likely that foreign language anxiety has no influence on achievement in foreign language classroom. According to Horwitz (2001) it is not only intuitive that anxiety has an influence on language learning, but it is also logical. Moreover, anxiety has been one of the researched variables in education and psychology.

Already in 1960s, language researchers examined the relationship between foreign language anxiety and achievement. However, Horwitz (2001) explains that the results were different due to the fact that the researchers were not specific about the type of anxiety they were measuring. Therefore, researchers found different types of relationships between foreign language anxiety and achievement: some studies found no relationship between the two variables, some identified a negative relationship, and some even the positive relationship.

The positive relationship between foreign language anxiety and achievement is the topic that is still examined and where researchers' opinions collide. Some researchers, as Horwitz (1990, as cited in Oxford 1998) claim that anxiety is only helpful when learners have to deal with simple tasks. Oxford (1998)) claims that language anxiety does not necessarily need to be harmful and explains that some research shows that it can be helpful because it keeps learners alert and concentrated.

However, most language researchers talk about negative influence of language anxiety on learners' performance since it is the negative influence that causes problems. Horwitz et al. (1986) refer to the negative type of anxiety as "debilitating anxiety" because it reduces participation in language classroom and influences learners' beliefs and attitudes towards the foreign language.

It is interesting that Young (1991, as cited in Oxford 1998) explains that learners do not have to suffer from language anxiety in all the language skills. For example, it is possible that a learner feels very anxious while speaking, but not while reading or writing.

Finally, according to Horwitz (1990, as cited in Oxford, 1998), there are researchers (Sparks and Ganschow, and their colleagues) who suggested the possibility that high anxiety is not the cause of language anxiety, but the result. Horwitz (1990, as cited in Oxford, 1998) admits that it is logical to conclude that language anxiety might be the result of poor language achievement rather than the cause. On the one hand, students who do well in language class are often very confident learners and students who do poorly are mostly anxious. Still, Horwitz (1990, as cited in Oxford, 1998) disagrees with this possibility explaining that anxious foreign language learners feel uncomfortable with their language abilities even when their abilities are good.

All in all, language anxiety tends to have influence on language learning and achievement and it is crucial that language learners examine it in order to help teachers and learners to overcome language anxiety.

2.2.3. Foreign Language Anxiety Research in Croatia

Research on foreign language anxiety in Croatia was conducted by Mihaljević Djigunović (2002). Although different aspects of language anxiety were examined with the help of already developed instruments, the main focus of the research was on the causes of language anxiety in Croatia. Due to the fact that causes for language anxiety may differ from country to country, Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) collected data by means of descriptive research methods. 392 English learners enrolled in different schools in Zagreb were involved in the study in which questionnaires and interview were used. Learners were asked to describe the anxiety they feel while learning or using English. The results pointed to the following reasons: negative self- perception, language characteristics, teacher, objective circumstances, language usage in classroom, language usage outside the classroom, mistakes, comprehension problems, evaluation, and general foreign language anxiety. Language usage in class appeared to be the most common cause of foreign language anxiety since learners feel they are constantly evaluated by their peers and their teacher. Other than that, common causes of foreign language anxiety are evaluation and negative self-perception. Fear of evaluation appears during oral and written exams both, although it is more common during oral exams. According to Mihaljević Dijugunović (2002), learners are very uncomfortable with the fact that they are constantly being evaluated. Negative self-perception is very important, especially when talking about adolescents. During adolescence learners have problems with their self-esteem, their self-perception and they are very concerned about their peers' opinion about them. Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) reports that in her research adolescents claimed to have lack of talent for learning foreign languages. Some of them ascribed their anxiety to the fact that they are too old for learning or even that they are not intelligent enough. Since foreign language learning requires constant performing and participation in class, it is very logical that self-perception significantly influences foreign language learning.

The relationship between foreign language anxiety and self-perception was examined by Mihaljević Djigunović (1998) too. The factors that were used to examine the relationship were: learner's self-perception, teacher's perception, peers' perception, learners' satisfaction with their grade, and learner's aspiration toward a higher grade. The results showed that there was relationship between language anxiety and all the factors that were examined except

learner's aspiration toward a higher grade. These findings showed that the higher level of language anxiety, the lower the negative self-perception. However, although the anxiety level is high, aspirations toward a higher grade will not decrease. Mihaljević Djigunović (1998) concludes that the results show it is necessary to create a positive atmosphere in the language classroom which will lower the foreign language anxiety level.

3. Defining Foreign Language Listening Anxiety

As it has been stated earlier, foreign language anxiety is very common among learners. Although some learners suffer from high level of general foreign language anxiety, there are learners who, according to Gonen (2009), experience language anxiety specific only to one of the four language skills: speaking, listening, writing, or reading. It is very common that learners have no problem reading and doing a comprehension check, but experience difficulties when they have to speak in front of their peers. Speaking anxiety is probably the most common anxiety in foreign language learning due to the nature of public speaking itself. People usually feel anxious while speaking publicly even in their mother tongue. Therefore, speaking in foreign language is logically the skill that evokes the most language anxiety problems. However, Horwitz et al. (1986: 126) claim that foreign language anxiety "centers on the two basic task requirements of foreign language learning: listening and speaking." They report that learners often complain they are unable to discriminate sounds and structures in a foreign language. According to Horwitz et al. (1986: 126), one male student in their research claimed to hear only "a loud buzz whenever his teacher is speaks the foreign language." They add that many learners have problems understanding the message their teacher tries to communicate to them. Therefore, listening is the skill in which students also often lack confidence and feel very anxious about. While listening to a foreign language, learners cannot control the speed, pronunciation or accent of the speaker. Therefore, it is not surprising that learners often feel anxious about listening in the foreign language classroom. Furthermore, some authors (e.g. Christenberry, as cited in Gonen, 2009: 45) claim that listening is a very "difficult area to teach properly" and thus it is the skill which is "likely to cause anxiety."

The anxiety that appears during listening in a foreign language classroom is called foreign language listening anxiety. Due to the fact that it appears only in specific situations it is a situation-specific or situational anxiety. Since listening is a receptive skill due to the fact that

learners do not produce messages while listening, but receive them, researchers refer to foreign language listening anxiety also as a receptive fear. Receptive fear is, according to Wheeles (1975, as cited in Li, 2009:1) "the fear of misinterpreting, inadequately processing or not being able to adjust psychologically to messages sent by other." Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) reports that learners who suffer from receptive fear have problems understanding complex messages and prefer messages that do not include a lot of information.

There are three approaches towards receptive fear. The first approach to receptive fear is, according to Wheeles and Scott (1976, as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002) that it appears in particular situations when new messages are received. The second approach towards receptive fear is that it is a part of reaction that appears when processing new information. In other words, learners feel anxious when they have to process complex information. According to the third approach, receptive fear appears only when learners do not have enough pre-knowledge to process the new information. In this case, learners suffer from anxiety because they are afraid they will misunderstand the message they received.

Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) concludes that learners who suffer from receptive anxiety spend too much of their cognitive capacity on their fear. Therefore, they do not have enough of cognitive capacity to process the information i.e. to understand correctly the messages they receive. In other words, learners are overloaded with information they cannot process fast enough. Because of the negative experiences with misunderstanding the message, they develop receptive fear. Although learners experienced negative outcomes in the past, they are worried that these negative outcomes may repeat in future and therefore avoid situations which can lead to negative outcomes. Therefore, Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) emphasizes that receptive feat is actually a learned pattern of thinking.

However, it is also emphasized that the above mentioned findings concerning the receptive fear were derived from the study about receptive fear in the first language and suggested that the level of receptive fear in the foreign language is even higher due to the fact that learners do not have to process information only to understand their cognitive meaning, but they have to process the foreign language too. Therefore, foreign language anxiety is actually the receptive fear that appears when receiving and processing new information in a foreign language.

In the process of foreign language learning, listening is a very important skill since it is crucial for understanding the message that is being sent toward a learner. If learners suffer from receptive fear, i.e. feel anxious already while they are listening to the foreign language, they will possibly be anxious while performing in other skills. For example, if learners have

problems understanding teacher's instructions, it is highly possible that learners will feel anxious about the reading task their teacher assigned to them. In addition, Gonen (2009) emphasizes that listening is a more spontaneous skill compared to reading and writing, and that it is necessary to develop strategies that will help overcome foreign language listening anxiety.

3.1. Listening Ability

When communicating, people use different language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. These four skills are categorized into two types. Listening and reading are called receptive skills since people receive messages when reading or listening. Productive skills is the term for writing and speaking since people actually produce messages themselves when speaking or writing. All these four skills appear together in a meaningful conversation. According to Hinkel (2006, as cited in Harmer, 2001: 265), "in meaningful communication, people employ incremental language skills not in isolation, but in tandem." This means that, in order to communicate, people have to use all the four skills. Therefore, all the four skills have to be integrated in a foreign language classroom.

Listening is a receptive skill. As it has already been explained in the text above, it means that the messages are received, and not produced. Since learners do not produce messages in a foreign language when listening, listening has been considered to be a passive activity at one time. However, Vandergrift (2004) claims that listening involves complex cognitive and psychological processes.

According to Vandergrift (2004), two cognitive processes are involved in listening comprehension: top down and bottom up processes. Top-down processes are processes used when listeners use context and their pre-knowledge to understand the received message. Bottom-up processes are used when learners construct meaning gradually combining small units of meaning "form the phoneme-level up to discourse-level" features (Vandergrift, 2004: 4). Vandergrift (2004) explains that these processes interact and that listeners "create a mental representation of what they have heard" (Vandergrift, 2004: 4) In other words, listeners use both of these cognitive processes at the same time to understand the received message.

According to Vandergrift (2004), learners of a foreign language cannot process the messages they hear very fast due to the fact that they have limited language knowledge. Since foreign language listeners concentrate on details in order to understand the messages, they have problems with comprehension because the speech is too fast for the complex processes

they use. Therefore, as Vandergrift (2004) reports, top-down processes should be emphasized when receiving a message. In other words, teachers should instruct learners to concentrate on the global meaning of the listened text and not on details.

For the description of listening ability, Buck (2001) uses the model, or framework adapted from Bachman and Palmer (1996, as cited in Buck (2001) emphasizes that it is the most widely accepted general description of language ability. The framework for describing listening ability consists of language competence and strategic competence.

Language competence is the knowledge that the listener already brings to the listening situation. It is divided into four categories: grammatical knowledge, discourse knowledge, pragmatic knowledge, and sociolinguistic knowledge. The grammatical knowledge includes knowledge about phonology, stress, intonation, spoken vocabulary, and spoken syntax. The discourse knowledge refers to understanding of understanding longer utterances or interactive discourse between two or more speakers. The pragmatic knowledge refers to understanding whether received message conveys ideas, manipulates, teaches or whether it is a creative expression. Sociolinguistic knowledge is the knowledge about characteristics of utterances of particular sociolinguistic groups, such as slang, idiomatic expressions, dialects, cultural references, figures of speech, etc.

Strategic competence includes "the cognitive and metacognitive strategies, or executive processes, that fulfill the cognitive management function in listening." (Buck, 2001: 104) It consists of cognitive strategies and metacognitive strategies. Cognitive strategies are defined as mental activities that are responsible for comprehending and storing input. Cognitive strategies are: comprehension processes, storing and memory processes, and using and retrieval processes. In contrast to comprehension processes which are associated with the processing of input, storing and memory processes are associated with storing of the input. Finally, using and retrieval processes are associated with assessing memory. Metacognitive strategies are the activities that are performed by the executive strategies in the management of cognitive strategies. These are: assessing the situation, monitoring, self-evaluating, and self-testing. Assessing the situation is the activity of assessing one's own knowledge and available internal and external resources before engaging in the task. While monitoring refers to determining the effectiveness of performance while engaged in the task, self-evaluating refers to determining after engaging in the task. Self-testing is actually testing to determine the effectiveness of one's own language use.

3.2. Influential Factors and Effects of Foreign Language Listening Anxiety

According to Vogely, (as cited in Gonen, 2009: 45), listening anxiety is "one of the most ignored but potentially one of the most debilitating type of anxiety is the anxiety accompanying listening comprehension." Since listening is the receptive skill, it is often neglected as a skill that provokes anxiety in a foreign language classroom. It is often considered that if a learner does not have to be productive in a foreign language i.e. speak or write, that he or she will not experience high levels of anxiety. However, since listening is actually receiving messages in a foreign language, it is the foundation on which other skills depend. In other words, if a learner did not understand the received message correctly and feels uncomfortable about it, it is highly possible that the learner will not be able to respond correctly and will feel anxious about the response he or she has to provide. As it has already been mentioned, learners who feel anxious while listening to a text are preoccupied with their fear and cannot concentrate on the message they receive or on the processing of it. Taking this into consideration, it is obvious that foreign language listening anxiety has an important effect on learners and, therefore, on their achievement.

In order to overcome foreign language listening anxiety, it is important to identify the factors that cause it and to examine how they influence foreign language learning. Foreign language listening anxiety is closely connected to general foreign language anxiety. Taking this into consideration, the three causes of foreign language anxiety according to Horwitz et al. (1986) discussed in chapter 2.2.1. can easily be connected to foreign language listening anxiety. The first cause, communication apprehension, appears while listening too due to the fact that it actually refers to the fear of communication with people in general. It is logical that a person who usually feels uncomfortable while communicating with people in a foreign language will probably have negative feelings while receiving messages from the person he or she talks to. Next, test anxiety appears because learners in a foreign language classroom feel their knowledge is being evaluated and tested. Therefore, learners fear they will make a mistake. This fear is also experienced when learners receive messages. In other words, test anxiety is present while learners are doing a listening task or receive messages in a foreign language. That means that test anxiety is a cause of foreign language listening anxiety, as it is the cause of general foreign language anxiety. The third cause is closely connected to test

anxiety and it is, at it has already been said, the fear of negative evaluation. Learners in a foreign language classroom are under a constant pressure because they fear what others will think of them and their knowledge. The same feelings are experienced while listening because learners are afraid that their peers and teacher will evaluate them negatively if they do not understand or misinterpret the message that is being received. The learners are afraid that their teacher or their peers will think their knowledge is insufficient or that they are not intelligent. Moreover, young learners and teenagers are probably afraid that they will be laughed at since it is a very common pattern of behavior among these age groups of learners.

In addition, Vogely (1998, as cited in Li, 2009) claims that the main factors that influence foreign language listening anxiety are the characteristics of the input, the process of foreign language listening, and the instructional and personal factors. This categorization is similar to that of Kim (2000, as cited in Li, 2009) who divided the causes of foreign language listening anxiety also into three categories: characteristics of the text, personal characteristics, and process-related characteristics. Although slightly different in terminology, the categorizations divide the causes similarly.

Both researchers emphasize the importance of the input, i.e. the characteristic of the text that is being listened to. To clarify, there are a lot of characteristics of the text that can define how easy or difficult the text will be for a learner: pronunciation, intonation, speed, length of the text, acoustic conditions, and difficulty level of vocabulary. If the text is difficult for a learner, it is possible that the learner will feel overloaded with information and that will induce negative attitudes towards listening in a foreign language. If this situation continues to happen, if will cause foreign language listening anxiety.

The researchers also identify the personal characteristics of learners as important cause of foreign language listening anxiety. According to Li (2009), many learners feel anxious when they are listening to a text with an unfamiliar topic. Learners do not have enough background knowledge about the topic and that makes the possibility that they will misinterpret the text higher. This is why learners start to feel insecure and develop listening anxiety. Vogely (1998, as cited in Li, 2009), however, adds the factor of instructions to this category too. By doing that, Vogely emphasizes the importance of good instructions as a condition to correct understanding of the message that is being received. This is also logical due to the fact that unclear or too complicated teacher's instructions can also confuse learners and induce anxiety.

The third factor that influences foreign language listening anxiety, according to Kim (2009) and Vogely (1998, as cited in Li, 2009) is associated with the processing of the input.

Since learners cannot process the message they received, they easily develop negative attitude towards listening in a foreign language, what later develops into foreign language listening anxiety.

3.3. Foreign Language Listening Anxiety in Croatia

The research on foreign language listening in Croatia was conducted by Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) on the sample of twenty-one learners of English as a foreign language. The study examined the relationship between foreign language anxiety and foreign language listening anxiety. In other words, the aim was to find out if the level of foreign language listening anxiety was higher of lower than the level of general foreign language anxiety. The instrument that was used to examine this relationship was the questionnaire developed by Rost and Ross (1991, as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović 2002) The results showed that there is a positive correlation between foreign language listening anxiety and general foreign language anxiety. That means that foreign language anxiety increased together with general foreign language anxiety. However, there was no relationship between foreign language listening anxiety and success in learning English. Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) claims that the results do not necessarily show that listening anxiety does not influence foreign language learning, but that it is more likely that listening skills are not very important in evaluating language competence in schools. Moreover, she adds that listening anxiety is probably connected with the success indirectly because it is the general foreign language anxiety that influences success in foreign language learning.

An additional research question in the study by Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) aimed at exploring the relationship between foreign language listening anxiety and negative self-perception. Logically, the results showed that learners with high levels of foreign language listening anxiety had a high level of negative self-perception too.

4. Exploring the Relationship between Listening Anxiety and Success in Learning English as a Foreign Language

4.1. Aim

According to many studies that have been conducted by various researchers such as Horwitz (1986), MacIntyre and Gardner (1989), Elkhafaifi (2005) and others, anxiety is one of the most important factors that influence foreign language learning. Moreover, they emphasize speaking and listening anxiety as skills that cause most problems. However, according to Vogely, (as cited in Gonen, 2009), listening anxiety is the anxiety that is ignored the most. Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) conducted a similar research. She examined the relationship between foreign language listening anxiety, and success in English that was measured by the grade in English. The results showed that there is no relationship between these two variables. However, she emphasized that it does not necessarily mean that listening anxiety has no influence on success, but that it influences the success indirectly due to the fact that listening anxiety is closely related to general foreign language anxiety. In order to understand the importance of listening anxiety in foreign language learning, this study is going to examine the relationship between foreign language listening anxiety and the success in foreign language learning. Therefore, the research questions this study aims to answer are:

Is there a relationship between foreign language listening anxiety and a) success in learning English as a foreign language, and b) listening comprehension?

4.2. Methodology

4.2.1. Participants

The participants in the study were ninety-seven intermediate level learners of English as a foreign language attending the Second Grammar School in Osijek, Croatia. All the participants were second graders aged 15-16.

According to Table 1, many learners have good grades in English. The majority of the participants (45. 4%) had excellent (5) grade in English last year. 21. 6% had very good (4), 25. 8% had good (3), and only 7% had sufficient (2). The frequency of last year's grades is illustrated in the Figure 1.

Table 1. Final Grade that the Participant had Last Year in English

	Frequency	Valid Percent
grade 2	7	7.2
grade 3	25	25.8
grade 4	21	21.6
grade 5	44	45.4
Total	97	100.0

Figure 1. Frequency of Last Year's Grades

Grade 5 Grade 4 Grade 3 Grade 2
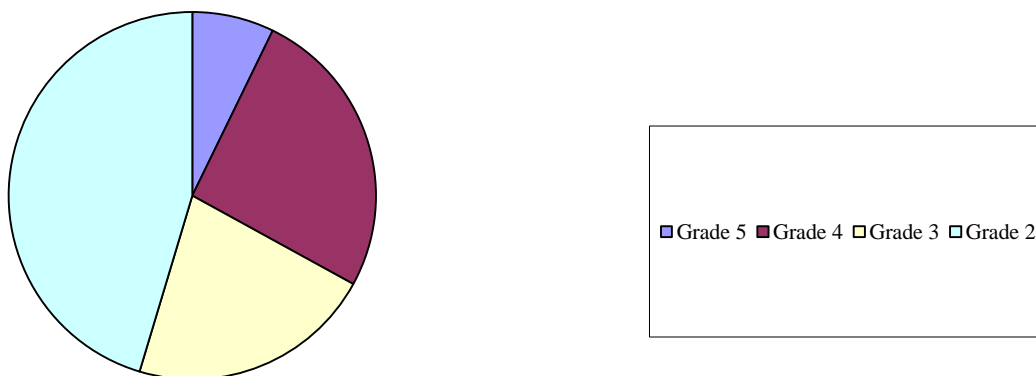
As it can be seen from Table 2, the participants mostly hoped for better grades when asked about this year's grades: This time, 46, 4 % hoped for an excellent (5) grade, 33% for a very good (4) grade, 18, 6% for a good (3) grade, and only 2.1 % of the participant with sufficient (2) assumed that the grade would stay the same. Figure 2 represents the frequency of aspired final grades in English.

Table 2. Aspired Final Grade

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	grade 2	2	2.1
	grade 3	18	18.6
	grade 4	32	33.0
	grade 5	45	46.4
	Total	97	100.0

Figure 2. Frequency of Aspired Final Grades

□ Grade 5 ■ Grade 4 □ Grade 3 □ Grade 2
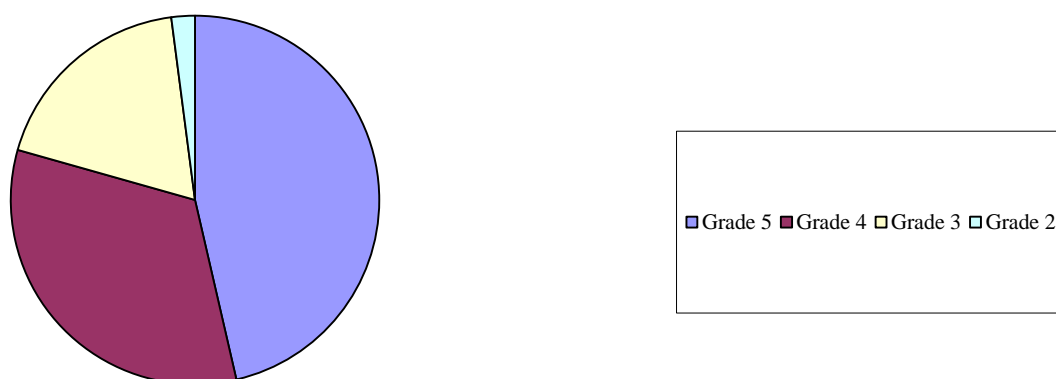
When looking at the average grade participants have in English (see Table 3), it is 3.0515, (Std. D. 1.00386). The grades that the participants assumed to have at the end of this year are not very different, but still higher (3.2371); Std. D. 0.82630.

Table 3. Final Grades in English

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
grade that the participant had last year in English	97	2,00	5,00	4,0000	1,08012
grade that the participant aspires to have this year in English	97	2,00	5,00	4,2371	,82630

4.2.2. Instruments

In order to find out whether there is a relationship between foreign language listening anxiety and success in learning English as a foreign language, two instruments were administered to participants: listening comprehension test and a questionnaire. The first instrument was administered in order to measure learners' success in listening comprehension. The instrument was comprised of a listening comprehension task which consisted of seven multiple-choice questions about the listening text. The comprehension test was a test from the book *Oxford Exam Excellence.* The test was chosen in cooperation with the participants' English teacher in order to insure that the test was suitable for the learners' level of knowledge. The learners' grades in English at the end of the last year were taken as a measure of learners' success in learning English as a second language. The participants were also asked to predict what their grade at the end of the current school year would be. In Croatian school system there are five possible grades, four of them being passing grades: 5 (excellent), 4 (very good), 3 (good), 2 (sufficient). The one falling grade is, 1 (insufficient). The second instrument was administered in order to measure the listening anxiety. The instrument used was the Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS) which was developed by Rost and Ross (1991, as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović 2002) to measure foreign language listening anxiety. The scale is a self-report measure of language learners' feelings of listening anxiety in the foreign language classroom and it consists of 20 items, each accompanied by a five-point Likert scale: *1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= I don't know, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree.* In order to avoid untruthful results which could occur due to language barrier, the Croatian translation of the scale was used. (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002).

4.2.3. Procedure

The instruments were administered in the students' regular classes by the researcher. Students were informed about the purpose of the study and were urged to be as honest as possible while answering questions in the questionnaire. In order to make the research as valid as possible, participants were also urged to do the comprehension check on their own and not

to look at each other's tests. It was explained to the participants that the results of the tests would not be available to their teacher and that they would be used only for the purposes of this research. Although the participants were asked to write their names on the questionnaire and the comprehension test, it was explained to them that their tests were anonymous and that the name should be written only to assure proper matching of the two instruments. Moreover, participants were allowed to use a pseudonym if they wanted to remain completely anonymous. After that, the researcher administered the first instrument, the comprehension test from the book *Oxford Exam Excellence* and played the CD. The recording was played twice. After the comprehension test was completed, the researcher urged the participants to write what their grade in English last year was and to write their assumptions about the grade in English this year. Having completed that task, the participants were given the second instrument: Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale. The researcher explained the five-point Likert scale and urged the participants once more to be as honest as possible and to complete all the items. The researcher gave the participants as much time as needed. Each procedure lasted for about 20 minutes. The data was analyzed by means of the statistical program SPSS 19.0.

5. Results

5.1. Descriptive Statistics

In order to test the relationship between listening anxiety and success in listening comprehension, the learners were asked to complete a short comprehension test.

From the results in Table 4, it can be seen that the participants were very successful in listening comprehension. The mean for the whole sample was 6.4227 (Std. D. 1.07853). That means that most of the learners did not have any problems answering the listening comprehension test i.e. that many learners answered correctly to all questions.

Table 4. Listening Comprehension Test Mean

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Results of the listening comprehension test	97	2,00	7,00	6,4227	1,07853

As it can be seen from Table 5, 69.1% of the participants completed the listening comprehension test completely correctly. 17.5% had 6 of 7 correct answers. 4.1% had 5 of 7 correct answers and 6.2% 4 of 7 correct answers. Only 2.1% had 3 correct answers and 1% had 2 correct answers. The frequency of correct answers is illustrated in Figure 3.

Table 5. The results of the Listening Comprehension Test

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	2 of 7 correct answers	1	1.0
	3 of 7 correct answers	2	2.1
	4 of 7 correct answers	6	6.2
	5 of 7 correct answers	4	4.1
	6 of 7 correct answers	17	17.5
	7 of 7 correct answers	67	69.1
	Total	97	100.0

Figure 3. Frequency of Correct Answers
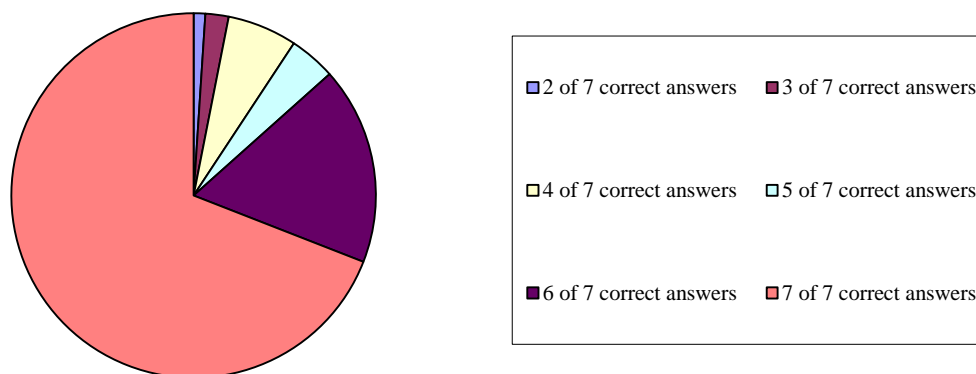
In order to measure the listening anxiety level of the sample, participants were administered with Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale developed by Rost and Ross (1991, as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović 2002). According to Table 6, the results of Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale have shown that listening anxiety mean for the whole sample is 2.2969 (Std. D. 0.34879). The mean indicates that most participants responded to the statements in the questionnaire negatively and therefore the listening anxiety among the

participants can be described as rather low. The standard deviation being only 0.34879, the result of the listening anxiety is relatively representative for the sample.

Table 6. Listening Anxiety Mean

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Listening anxiety mean	97	1.40	3.10	2.2969	.34879

In addition to that, the frequency of answers on the question 13 in Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (see Appendix 1) about self-confidence when listening indicates that most of the learners do not feel confident when listening in English. (See Figure 4)

Figure 4. Frequency of answers for the statement "I feel confident when listening in English."

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neither Agree Nor Disagree
Agree
Strongly Agree
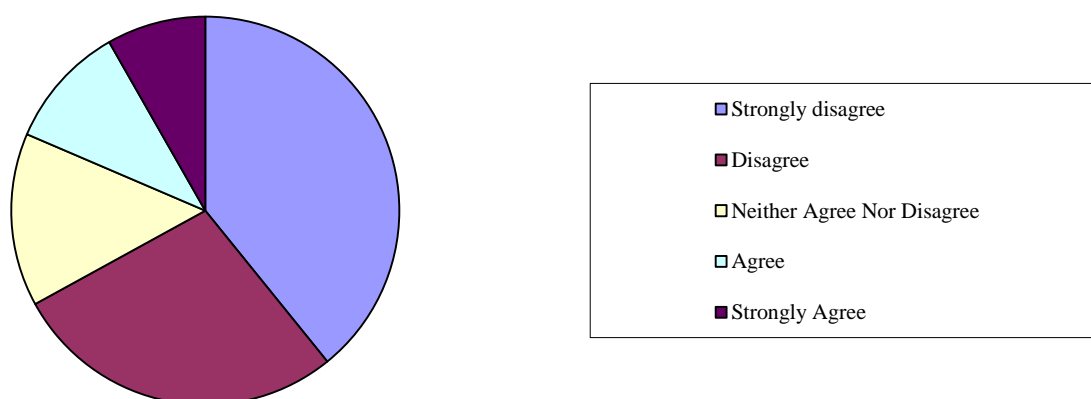
5.2. Correlation analysis

In order to answer whether there is a relationship between foreign language listening anxiety and success in learning English as a foreign language, the correlation between following variables had to be assessed:

- Result of the listening comprehension test
- Grade that the participant aspires to have this year in English
- Grade that the participant had last year in English
- Listening anxiety

As it can be seen from Table 7, the results have shown that there is a negative correlation between listening anxiety and results of the listening comprehension test. This means that as listening anxiety increases, results of the listening comprehension test decrease and vice versa.

Furthermore, there is also a negative correlation between grades and listening anxiety. This also implies that as listening anxiety increase, the grades decrease and vice versa.

The positive correlation in Table 7 can be seen between grades and the results on the listening comprehension test. That means that as the results in the comprehension test increase, the grades increase too.

The strength of significant correlation can be small (r = .10 to r = .29 or r = -.10 to r = -.29), medium (r = .30 to r = .49 or r = -.30 to r = -.49) or large (r =.50 to r = 1 or r = -.50 to r = -1).

The results, displayed in Table 7, show that there is a small negative correlation between listening anxiety mean and the results of the listening comprehension test. The negative correlations between listening anxiety mean and final grades are large.

Table 7. Correlations

	The results of the listening comprehension check	Grade that the participant aspires to have this year in English	Grade that the participant had last year in English	Listening anxiety mean
The results of the listening comprehension test				
Grade that the participant will probably have this year in English	.307**			
Grade that the participant had last year in English	.345**			
Listening anxiety mean	-.333**	-.500**	-.590**	

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

6. Discussion

Consistent with expectations, the results showed that foreign language learners experience listening anxiety. The listening anxiety mean obtained by means of Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale developed by Rost and Ross (1991, as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002) indicated that most of the learners do not suffer from high level of foreign language listening anxiety. However, as Figure 4 represents, most of the learners do not feel confident when listening in English. Since confidence represents an important factor in acquiring a foreign language, the results imply that listening in English is problematic for learners and that researchers' and teachers' attention should be drawn to this matter.

However, the participants of the study proved to be very good at the listening comprehension test. The majority of the learners answered to all of the questions correctly. Furthermore, the participants' final grades in English show that the learners are successful in learning English. These results may imply that there is no relationship between listening anxiety level and the success in listening comprehension or in learning English as a foreign language. However, the results of listening comprehension test may also indicate that listening comprehension test was too easy for the learners or that the low level of listening anxiety did not influence the learners' performance. Furthermore, good grades in English do not necessarily indicate that there is no relationship between listening anxiety and success in English. It is possible that the listening skill does not play an important role when evaluating the success in English in this sample.

In order to examine the relationship between listening anxiety and success in listening comprehension as well as general success in English, the correlation between these three variables was calculated.

As it can be seen from the results of this study, there is a negative correlation between foreign language listening anxiety and the results of the listening comprehension test. Furthermore, there is a negative correlation between listening anxiety and grades, which are, together with the listening comprehension test result, a measure of success in learning English as a foreign language. Although the present study does not examine the influence of listening anxiety on success and vice versa, the data suggest that there is a relationship between the level of foreign language anxiety and success in listening comprehension and success in English in general.

It is also necessary to emphasize that the research was conducted in a casual atmosphere. That means that the participants were not afraid of negative evaluation because the researcher explained that the results would not be available to their teacher. Moreover, the researcher suggested to the learners to answer the listening anxiety questionnaire and the listening comprehension test under a pseudonym. By doing this, learners could be sure that their results would be completely anonymous. The researcher added that the results would not be used for any other purpose but for the research about foreign language listening anxiety. The question is raised if the learners' anonymity while doing the comprehension exercise and while answering the questionnaire contributed to the results. It is highly possible that the learners experienced a lower level of anxiety than they usually experience during listening in their English classrooms due to the fact that they are usually evaluated by their teacher and peers if they have to read their answers out loud. Even if the listening task they usually do during English lessons is not actually a test, learners still feel under the pressure and it possibly influences their performance. To conclude, this fact implies that listening anxiety in actual conditions, i.e. during English lessons in schools, could be even higher.

The study found that there is a significant negative correlation between foreign language listening anxiety and the results in listening comprehension test. Negative correlation implies that if one variable increases, the other decreases and vice versa. In this case, the results confirmed the researcher's assumption that as foreign language listening anxiety increases, success in listening comprehension test decreases. On the other hand, the higher the results in listening comprehension test, the lower the level of foreign language listening anxiety. Moreover, there is also a significant negative correlation between foreign language listening anxiety and the overall success in English. The success in English was measured by means of expected grades in English at the end of the ongoing school year and the grades in English at the end of the last year. All in all, the results have shown that as the listening anxiety increases, overall success in English decreases and vice versa. As the results imply, it is possible that the negative correlation between foreign language listening anxiety and grades in English shows that listening anxiety actually affects success in listening in English as a foreign language.

The results in this study are, however, different from the results Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) reported in her study of the relationship between listening anxiety and success in English. Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) explains that it does not necessarily mean there is no relationship between these two variables, but that listening anxiety affect success indirectly.

According to Mihaljević Djigunović (2002), there is a connection between foreign language listening anxiety and general foreign language anxiety. Moreover, Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) reports that the level of foreign language listening anxiety in her study was even higher than the level of general foreign language anxiety. Therefore, it is highly possible that it is actually foreign language listening anxiety that influences success in English the most. On the other hand, as Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) suggests, there is a possibility that this negative correlation does not necessarily reflect the impact of listening anxiety in particular. This relationship could imply that listening anxiety is strongly connected with foreign language anxiety in general and therefore with learners' beliefs about their knowledge. In other words, there is a possibility that listening anxiety affects learners' success in English indirectly because it is closely connected with foreign language anxiety in general. Learners who suffer from high level of foreign language anxiety tent to have negative self-perception. This was confirmed by Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) in her research on the relationship between foreign language anxiety and negative self-perception. The results have shown that there is a negative correlation between these two variables. Since learners who have negative self-perception tend to feel anxious not only about one skill but transfer their fear to all skills and, therefore, on a foreign language in general, it is possible that listening anxiety affects success in English indirectly as a part of general foreign language anxiety and learners' attitudes.

Furthermore, Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) suggests that it is also possible that there was no relationship between foreign language anxiety and success in English due to the fact that listening skill is not a significant factor in evaluating the learners. Therefore, it is possible that the results of the present study were different from those of Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) due to the fact that listening skill was very important in evaluating the participants. In other words, the teacher probably emphasized the importance of listening skill when evaluating the participants.

The positive correlation was found between the results in listening comprehension and grades in English. In other words, as the listening comprehension test results increase, the final grade in English increases too. This could also mean that listening comprehension is a very important factor when evaluating learners and that it influences the final grade a lot. However, it could also mean that learners who do not suffer from high level of listening anxiety and therefore have better results in listening comprehension are usually more self-confident and therefore participate more in English classroom, are not afraid to speak, to practice, and to develop their knowledge.

All in all, the results showed that there is a significant relationship between foreign language listening anxiety and success in listening comprehension and success in learning English. Therefore, researchers and teachers should pay attention to listening anxiety and find the ways to overcome it.

7. How to Reduce Listening Anxiety

As it can be seen from the results of the study, foreign language listening anxiety affects learners of English in a negative way. Therefore, a lot of attention should be drawn to foreign language listening anxiety and the ways in which it can be overcome. One of these ways could also be development and employment of listening strategies that are, according to Gonen, (2009), strongly connected with foreign language listening anxiety. Gonen's research showed that learners who suffer from foreign language listening anxiety do not use effective listening strategies. On the other hand, low anxious learners use effective listening strategies, but are not aware of it. It is not only the responsibility of learners to work on their anxiety. Teachers should help learners transcend the negative feelings about listening comprehension. Gonen (2009) claims that the most important part of reducing anxiety is actually making learners aware of the problem they have. Other than that, he also states that it is crucial to instruct the students in a right and clear way, since the "listening anxiety may arouse when the students do not understand what they are going to do or what kind of information s/he should concentrate on for selective listening." (Gonen, 2009: 49) According to Oxford (1998), language teachers can make the listening comprehension less anxious by boosting self-esteem and self-confidence of a learner, giving students permission to use the language with less than perfect performance, giving rewards that are meaningful to students and that help support language use or by reducing competition present in the classroom.

In order to find methods and techniques that can help reduce foreign language listening anxiety, it is necessary to minimize the causes of foreign language listening anxiety as much as possible. As it has been discussed in chapter 3.1., foreign language listening anxiety is closely connected to general foreign language anxiety. Therefore, the methods and techniques for reducing foreign language listening anxiety are also very similar to those for reducing foreign language anxiety in general. Methods and techniques for reducing foreign language

anxiety range from activities and strategies that learners can use to help themselves to the methods and techniques teachers can use to help their learners cope with language anxiety. Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) claims that, in order to reduce foreign language anxiety, learners must recognize the anxiety first. To recognize foreign language listening anxiety, Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) suggests FLLAS (Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale) that was developed by Rost and Ross (1991, as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002). After recognizing the problem, learners should identify the factors that cause anxiety in their case. There are a lot of factors that possibly cause listening anxiety, ranging from the personal characteristics of learners to the external factors such as listening material or teachers' techniques. Learners with low self-esteem and negative self-perception should work on their beliefs and nurture positive attitudes about themselves. Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) reports that learners with positive self-perception do not start to feel anxious about language learning after a negative experience in the language classroom. In other words, when learners with a positive self-perception make a mistake, they will not ascribe that to their incompetence, but to the fact that they have not studied enough. In comparison, learners with low self-esteem and negative self-perception will tend to think they are not intelligent or talented enough and, therefore, withdraw from participation in class. Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) suggests learners should learn how to self-encourage themselves and develop positive perception of themselves. In that way, learners also encourage themselves to actively participate in the language classroom. Although these techniques actually apply to anxiety in general, learners have to cope with it since it is usually the major cause of foreign language anxiety. Communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation all derive from the learners' belief that they are going to be negatively evaluated and judged by others. Therefore, learners must boost their self-confidence in order to cope with anxiety that appears as a result of negative self-perception.

Another very important personal characteristic when talking about listening anxiety is learners' ability to tolerate ambiguity. Learners who are not able to tolerate confusion and ambiguity tend to panic because they do not understand everything. Tolerance of ambiguity is closely connected to learners' beliefs about receptive skills. According to Mihaljević Djigunović (2002), learners often believe that they have to understand every word in text in order to understand what the text is about. Since learners get confused when they do not understand some word or phrase they hear, they concentrate on their inability and therefore cannot concentrate on the text they are listening to. Therefore, teachers should instruct

learners not to worry about words they do not understand, but to concentrate on the global understanding of the text.

In the listening process, there are various methods and techniques that can help learners cope with foreign language listening anxiety. First of all, learners should involve some listening strategies that will help them develop their listening skills. Li (2009) suggests the following strategies:

- Grasping the main point

As it has already been discussed, learners should not concentrate on each word in the text but on the global meaning of the text they are listening to. In that way, learners are concentrated on the content and, therefore, more likely to understand what the text is about. That influences learners' self-confidence and therefore reduces anxiety.

- Cultivating a good habit of listening

Li (2009) suggests learners should make notes or write down some key words while listening. Moreover, they should also try to summarize the main idea of the text after listening to the text. By doing that, learners have more chance to understand what the text is about.

- The ability of prediction

Before every listening task, there should be a pre-listening task which will motivate learners for the topic but also encourage them to predict what the text is going to be about. In that way, learners think about the topic before, refresh their pre-knowledge about the topic and their vocabulary. Furthermore, they predict the context and prepare themselves for what they are going to hear. The more learners prepare, the smaller the chance that they will not understand what the text is about. Therefore, predicting is a great way to minimize the chance of developing listening anxiety.

- Connecting the old knowledge with the new thought imagination

Connecting the old knowledge with the new topic is very similar to predicting since learners refresh their pre-knowledge while predicting. The chance that learners will

understand the gist of the text is higher if learners know something about the content of the text from their own experience or because it is connected to their previous knowledge.

- Making an inference from non-language information

A very important factor that influences listening comprehension is non-language aspect of listening. That means that learners should learn to acquire information from intonation, tone, background, and attitudes of speakers.

Other than personal characteristics of learners, there are also external factors that influence foreign language listening anxiety. As it has been discussed in chapter 3.1., characteristics of the input can influence foreign language listening anxiety. Since learners cannot control the input, it is the teacher's obligation to choose texts that are appropriate to learners' level of knowledge. If they ignore this obligation, learners will possibly develop foreign language anxiety since they will be overloaded with information they do not understand, and therefore, cannot process. Tsui (1996) claims that one of the important causes of foreign language listening anxiety is incomprehensible input. Therefore, teachers should be careful with their instructions and questions. In order to reduce foreign language listening anxiety in the foreign language classroom, teachers should give simple and clear instructions and ask simple and clear questions.

Finally, one of the most effective ways to reduce foreign language anxiety and listening anxiety is establishing a good relationship between the teacher and learners. Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) suggests that teachers should create a casual and positive atmosphere in the foreign language classrooms by instructing learners to work in pairs and groups. Tsui (1996) claims that it is good to focus on content rather than form. When instructing learners to discuss some topic in groups, they do not have to speak in front of the whole class, and they are not that afraid that they will misunderstand the message they receive. Actually, learners are not that afraid of negative evaluation since their teacher usually cannot hear them while they are working in their groups. Tsui (1996) reports that competition can also be helpful when teachers want learners to focus on content. Due to the fact that learners want to be better than another group, they tend to forget about the anxiety and focus on the content. All in all, group and pair work seem to be a good way to encourage learners to actively participate in the foreign language classroom and to create a low-anxiety classroom atmosphere.

To conclude, coping with anxiety is not an easy task, either for learners or for teachers. However, as it can be inferred from the text above, there are many methods and techniques which can help learners and teachers to cope with language anxiety.

8. Conclusion

In this study, the relationship between foreign language listening anxiety and success in learning English as a foreign language, as well as the listening comprehension was examined. It was concluded that there was a significant relationship between the variables. As it can be seen from the negative correlation between the variables, the more anxious the learners are, the worse they do on a listening comprehension test and vice versa. In addition, the study confirmed that the less anxious the learners are, the better grade they achieve. There is a connection between learners' success and the anxiety learners feel while doing comprehension check tasks. These conclusions should motivate teachers to identify anxious learners and not to ignore listening anxiety in EFL classrooms. Future research should examine why listening anxiety occurs and which problems occur while listening to a text in English. Furthermore, researchers should concentrate on strategies and activities that are most suitable for anxious learners. In other words, researchers should examine how to listen and which materials to use while listening in order to lower the level of foreign language listening anxiety. These findings may help teachers work with anxious learners and give them some guidance how to lower the listening anxiety in their classrooms.

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10. Appendices

- Appendix 1: *FLLAS*

Name:

Upitnik o strahu od slušanja

Strah od slušanja često se pojavljuje u nastavi stranog jezika. Cilj ovog upitnika je otkriti kako

i u kolikoj mjeri strah od slušanja utječe na rezultate i uspješnost pri učenju stranog jezika.

Odgovore treba davati uzimajući u obzir stvarne osjećaje i misli za vrijeme slušanja.

Za svaku tvrdnju postoji više mogućih odgovora:
Zaokružite odgovor koji vas najbolje opisuje. Ne postoje točni ili netočni odgovori.

1= uopće se ne slažem

2= djelomično se slažem

3= ne znam

4= prilično se slažem

5= potpuno se slažem

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

2. Kad slušam tekst na engleskom, 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 nepoznatoj 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/nervozna 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 gramatičkoh 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 razumjeti 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 u engleskome i nije tako teško.   1   2   3   4   5

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

16. Više bi 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 razumjevanje.   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

- Appendix 2: *Listening Comprehension Test*

Name:

Listening comprehension

First read sentences 1-7. You are going to hear a radio interview with an elderly man. Choose the correct option: a, b, or c, according to the information you hear in the recording.

1. Mr Sinclair tells us that he
   a) has already celebrated his 100th birthday.
   b) is going to celebrate his 100th birthday soon.
   c) cannot remember precisely when his birthday is.

2. Mr Sinclair has been married
   a) once.
   b) twice.
   c) three times.

3. How many grandchildren does Mr Sinclair have?
   a) six.
   b) ten.
   c) twelwe.

4. When he was young, Mr Sinclair
   a) worked in the open air.
   b) ate a healthy diet.
   c) took regular exercise.

5. Most of Sinclair's brothers and sisters
   a) resembled their mother.
   b) lived for a long time.
   c) had health problems.

6. Mr Sinclair believes it is important
   a) to avoid problems.
   b) to work hard.
   c) to be optimistic.

7. Mr Sinclair gave up smoking
   a) at the same time as his wife
   b) to please his wife.
   c) when his wife left him.

What is the grade you had in English last year? _____

What do you think, what will be your final grade in English this year? _____