

How Do High and Low Anxious FL Listeners Employ FL Listening Comprehension Strategies? Exploring Student Perspectives*

Yabancı Dilde Dinleme Kaygısı Yüksek ve Düşük Olan Öğrenciler Yabancı Dilde Dinleme-Anlama Stratejilerini Nasıl Kullanıyorlar? Öğrenci Görüşlerinin İncelenmesi

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Abstract. There has been a growing body of research on the relationship between foreign language (FL) listening anxiety and FL listening comprehension strategy use; however, how these strategies are employed by learners with different listening anxiety levels is an area open to investigation. Based on such need, this study aimed at exploring FL listening comprehension strategies used by high and low anxious FL listeners in a Turkish EFL context. For this purpose, 15 high anxious and 13 low anxious listeners at a Turkish university kept reflective journals for five weeks and participated in semi-structured interviews. The qualitative data were analyzed according to the steps of Content Analysis. Findings revealed that both high and low anxious students employed various listening strategies, i.e., cognitive and metacognitive strategies, while listening in the target language. However, high and low anxious listeners differed in the ways they implemented some of the specific strategies such as note-taking, translation, directed attention, and real time assessment. The results of the study proposed implications for FL listening comprehension strategy use and strategy training in relation with FL listening anxiety.

Keywords: FL listening comprehension, FL listening anxiety, FL listening comprehension strategies

Öz. Yabancı dilde dinleme kaygısı ve yabancı dilde dinleme-anlama stratejileri arasındaki ilişkiyi inceleyen çalışmaların sayısı gün geçtikçe artmaktadır. Ancak; bu stratejilerin, yabancı dilde dinleme kaygı seviyesi yüksek ve düşük olan öğrenciler tarafından nasıl kullanıldığı yeterince araştırılmamış bir konudur. Böyle bir ihtiyaca dayanarak, bu çalışma; yabancı dilde dinleme kaygısı yüksek ve düşük olan Türk öğrencilerin yabancı dilde dinleme-anlama stratejilerini nasıl kullandığını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu amaçla, yabancı dilde dinleme kaygı seviyesi yüksek 15 öğrenci ile yabancı dilde dinleme kaygı seviyesi düşük 13 öğrencinin 8 hafta boyunca günlük tutması istenmiştir. Ayrıca, bu öğrenciler sekiz haftanın sonunda yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmelere katılmıştır. Veriler, içerik analizinin adımları takip edilerek analiz edilmiştir. Bulgular, hem yabancı dilde dinleme kaygı seviyesi yüksek hem de yabancı dilde dinleme kaygı seviyesi düşük öğrencilerin bilişsel ve üst bilişsel yabancı dilde dinleme-anlama stratejilerini kullandıklarını göstermiştir. Ancak, bu iki grup öğrenci; not alma, çeviri, yöneltilmiş dikkat ve gerçek zamanlı değerlendirme stratejilerinde kullanım şekli açısından farklılık göstermişlerdir. Bu çalışmanın sonuçları doğrultusunda yabancı dilde dinlediğini anlama strateji eğitimi ile ilgili birtakım önerilerde bulunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yabancı dilde dinleme-anlama, yabancı dilde dinleme kaygısı, yabancı dilde dinleme-anlama stratejileri

Keywords: Skills, thinking skill, primary school, classroom teachers

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Introduction

A significant number of foreign language (FL) learners in many language learning contexts report feelings of inefficiency and apprehension while learning a foreign language. The reasons for this may vary from not being able to understand what is being spoken to being unable to produce relevant utterances (Kılıç, 2007). Studies in affective domain have demonstrated that variables such as motivation orientations, learning strategies and anxiety states of the learners (Dörnyei, 2003) may play an important role in explaining and understanding the nature of FL learning and feelings of inefficiency learners are experiencing (Yu, 2011; Ni, 2012; Pyun et al., 2014).

Among affective variables, anxiety appears as an instrumental figure in determining students' success or failure in FL classes (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986). In its basic sense, FL learning anxiety is defined 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 p. 128). Students who experience anxiety in a FL class might feel apprehension while working with teachers and focusing on their study, and they might even avoid engaging in a language task (Ni, 2012). Horwitz (2001) also asserts that anxiety negatively influences language learning since it has been found to interfere with many types of learning. When learners feel anxious towards language learning, they begin to detract themselves from learning opportunities and this situation may lead to poor performance (Kılıç, 2007).

Although FL learning anxiety is generally associated with speaking in the target language (Mak, 2011; Suleimenova, 2013; Naghadeh et al., 2014; Salem & Dyyar, 2014), other skills such as writing (Hadley, in an interview with Young, 1992; Leki, 1999), reading (Saito, Garza & Horwitz, 1999; Kuru Gönen, 2005; 2007) and listening (Christenberry 2003; Elkhafaifi, 2005; Graham, 2006; Bekleyen, 2007) have been reported to evoke anxiety for FL learners. Among these skills, FL listening is one area that can be quite challenging and anxiety provoking for many language learners especially in contexts where learners do not have much opportunity to practice English outside the classroom (Merç, 2009). While listening in the target language, feelings of anxiety may sabotage comprehension of the input and speech production which in turn affect interaction in a negative way (Vogely, 1998).

Although listening has been neglected for a long time, research has yielded that it is one of the most important skills in language learning context (Graham, 2011; Goh & Hu, 2014; Jafari & Hashim, 2011; Kömür, 2010; Kurita, 2012; Siegel, 2014; Yaman & Tulumcu & Demirtaş, 2014). In communication process, listening has a crucial part. If the conveyed message cannot be comprehended, the receiver cannot give response, and communication breaks down in return (Çapan & Karaca, 2012). Bearing in mind the importance of listening skills in communication, it is underlined that listening is one of the most anxiety-provoking skills (Vogely, 1998).

Listening in the target language is an active process of problem solving (Oxford, 1993) that requires the employment of various processes such as discriminating sounds, understanding vocabulary and grammatical structures, interpreting stress and intonation along with connecting all these within the immediate as well as the larger sociocultural context of the utterance (Vandergrift, 1999). Throughout these processes, anxiety that may interfere in listening comprehension in an FL class may stem from the nature of the input (voice clarity and enunciation, speed of speech, and variation in pronunciation), level of difficulty of a listening comprehension passage, fear of failure and inappropriate strategy use (Vogely, 1999). Research has shown that ineffective strategy use is likely

to be associated with FL listening anxiety and developing effective listening strategies may help learners to overcome feelings of anxiety (Vogely, 1999; Golchi, 2012).

FL Listening Comprehension Strategies and FL Listening Anxiety

FL listening comprehension strategies are defined as techniques and activities that directly help understanding and recalling a listening input (Rubin, 1975). Various taxonomies of FL listening strategies have been proposed. Among these, O'Malley, Chamot & Küpper (1989) classified FL listening comprehension strategies into three main categories as metacognitive, cognitive and socio-affective strategies. Metacognitive FL listening strategies are related to learners' being aware of the strategies at hand, organizing, and regulating the process of listening (Vandergrift, Goh, Mareschal & Tafaghodtari, 2006). Metacognitive FL listening comprehension strategies are: *directed attention, selective attention, self-evaluation and self-reinforcement, self-monitoring, and self-management*. Cognitive FL listening strategies refer to coping with fundamentals of listening process (Cohen, 2014). That is, these strategies are confined to distinctive listening tasks and require learners handle the learning material more directly (Hardan, 2013). Cognitive strategies include strategies such as *repetition, directed physical response, translation, grouping, note-taking, deduction, imagery, auditory representation, key word, contextualization, elaboration, transferring, inferencing, and resourcing*. Socio-affective strategies bear upon intercommunication and emotional control in listening (Vandergrift, 2003). These strategies in O'Malley, Chamot & Küpper's (1989) taxonomy involve *cooperation and question for clarification*.

In a rather recent classification, Goh (1998) classified FL listening comprehension strategies into two broad categories as metacognitive and cognitive listening strategies without reference to socio-affective aspect of listening in the target language. Goh's (1998) taxonomy also includes *selective attention, directed attention, comprehension monitoring, and comprehension evaluation* strategies as similar to O'Malley et al.'s (1989) classification. Distinctly, metacognitive strategies in Goh's (1998) taxonomy involves *real time assessment of the input*. Although Goh's (1998) taxonomy comprises the cognitive strategies identified by O'Malley et al. (1989), it also covers specific strategies such as *prediction, fixation, and reconstruction*. In this study, the two taxonomies presented are seen as complementary to each other rather than as two distinct classifications since FL listening strategy use involves many processes that may be difficult to grasp by following a single taxonomy (see Appendix A for the list of FL listening comprehension strategies referred to in this study).

FL listening anxiety and FL listening comprehension strategy use are likely relate to each other as feelings of apprehension may intervene in the effective employment of FL listening strategies or lack of FL listening strategy use may result in feelings associated with anxiety. Although these two concepts were rather investigated separately, there has been a growing interest in exploring the relationship between FL listening anxiety and FL listening comprehension strategy use (Gönen, 2009; Golchi, 2012; Xu, 2013; Serraj & Noordin, 2013; Han, 2014; Moghadam & Ghanizadeh, 2015). Studies in this vein seek to explore the existence of a possible relationship from different perspectives in various EFL contexts.

In Persian context, researchers (Golchi, 2012; Serraj & Noordin, 2013; Moghadam & Ghanizadeh, 2015) carried out studies in order to explore the relationship between FL listening anxiety level and FL listening comprehension strategy use of learners. These studies found that FL listening anxiety and FL listening comprehension strategy use affected each other. Moreover, Golchi (2012) investigated FL listening comprehension strategy employment across FL listening anxiety levels and

found that high and low anxious listeners differed in terms of metacognitive FL listening comprehension strategy use.

Similarly, in Chinese context, the relationship between FL listening anxiety and FL listening comprehension strategy use was also investigated (Yang, 2012; Xu, 2013; Han, 2014). It was proposed that these two phenomena affected each other in that high anxious listeners used more FL listening comprehension strategies or vice versa. Additionally, Chinese high and low anxious listeners mostly differed in cognitive (Xu, 2013) and metacognitive (Han, 2014) FL listening comprehension strategy use. These studies illuminate the way in identifying FL listening comprehension strategies used by learners with different anxiety levels. However, it is not clear whether these strategies are employed by learners to alleviate their FL listening anxiety, and whether participants' proficiency levels might have an effect on the employment of FL listening strategies by high and low anxious listeners. These studies pinpoint a need for conducting more studies in different EFL context to understand the true nature of the relationship between FL listening anxiety and FL listening comprehension strategies in depth.

In Turkish EFL context, although studies investigating FL listening anxiety and FL listening comprehension strategy use are scarce, there have been some attempts to shed light on this phenomenon. In a study, Bekleyen (2009) investigated anxiety levels of Turkish FL learners and the ways they used to cope with this feeling. She found that participants experienced higher level of FL listening anxiety in general. Regarding the strategies used to diminish the effects of FL listening anxiety, participants articulated that they used practicing, asking for help, thinking positively, and simply doing nothing. In another study in Turkish EFL context, Gönen (2009) revealed that highly anxious learners were distressed during listening both inside and outside of the classroom and they did not seem to be making use of FL listening comprehension strategies effectively. Moreover, participants lacked awareness of FL listening strategies that would help them to solve many problems they experience while listening in the target language. These studies also underline the need for conducting more studies to shed light on the use of FL listening anxiety and FL listening comprehension strategies.

As it can be deduced from the literature, FL listening anxiety may serve as a debilitating factor that interrupts FL listening comprehension. Although teaching learners FL listening comprehension strategies is one of the suggested ways to help learners reduce the level of FL listening anxiety (Vogely, 1998; Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009), FL listening comprehension strategies used by FL listeners with lower level of anxiety or the differences in FL comprehension strategy use of high and low anxious listeners have not been investigated thoroughly. Conducting more studies on this issue in different EFL contexts would provide implications for both learners and teachers to cope with FL listening anxiety and use effective FL listening comprehension strategies.

Aim and Significance of the Study

FL listening anxiety and FL listening comprehension strategy use have been investigated in a rather separate fashion and these concepts have generally been associated with listening achievement. Studies focusing on the relationship between FL listening anxiety and FL listening comprehension strategy use mainly focus on determining the frequency of strategy use while listening in the target language (Gerçek, 2000; Gönen, 2009; Bidabadi & Yamat, 2011) or identifying FL listening comprehension strategy use of the learners regardless of their anxiety level (Goh, 1998; Ertürk, 2006; Ma & Oxford, 2013). Moving beyond these attempts to understand and explore how low and high anxious FL listeners differ in their employment of FL listening comprehension strategies would

undeniably broaden our perspective in finding solutions to lower down anxiety and creating opportunities for more effective strategy use while listening in the target language. With this motivation, the current study tried to seek the answer for the following research question:

- How do high and low anxious FL listeners in a Turkish EFL context employ FL listening comprehension strategies?

Method

Participants and Setting

A total of 28 first-year students in an ELT department at a state university in Turkey participated in this study. Participants were selected on the basis of purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2012). In qualitative studies, purposeful sampling is used to make a more deliberate choice of participants to be able to comprehend the phenomenon at hand (Creswell, 2012). Since this study aimed at exploring high and low anxious FL listeners' FL listening comprehension strategy use, participants were selected according to their anxiety scores. Based on extreme case sampling strategy as one type of purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2012, p. 208), among 135 first year students in the department, 28 students who were identified as high and low anxious listeners participated in the study.

The selection of the participants was done by following a two-step procedure. In the first step, a listening section of TOEFL was administered to all first-year students at the department (135 students). Box-and-whisker plot presented the data according to their central range and therefore helped us to determine the learners with same FL listening proficiency level. As a result, the participants who got higher and lower scores from listening section of TOEFL than the average were excluded from the study. At the end of this analysis, among 135 students, a total of 79 participants were identified in order to prevent proficiency serving as an intervening variable.

In the second step, participants were grouped according to their FL listening anxiety levels. These anxiety levels were identified by using Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS) developed by Kim (2000) and adapted by Kılıç (2007). According to their FLLAS scores, learners were divided into three groups by using the formula with mean and standard deviation scores: high anxious, medium anxious, and low anxious (Aydın, 1999). As a result of the calculation, a total of 28 participants were selected for the purposes of the study. 15 of the participants were identified as highly anxious FL listeners while 13 of them were determined as learners experiencing lower level of FL listening anxiety.

The students in this study were required to listen, read, speak, and write in English in most of their courses. As for FL listening, they were taking a course that was mostly concerned about FL listening skill. In this course, students were entailed to recognize and use abbreviations and symbols, take notes affectively, and mark important notes and organize them. Hence, they were required to use some FL listening comprehension strategies while dealing with the activities during in-class listening and for academic success. From an ethical perspective, confidentiality and anonymity of information regarding participants' responses were guaranteed. For this purpose, a consent form was provided. Students in the study were also informed that their participation was on a voluntary basis and they could opt out from the study any time they wanted. The participants were also assured that their withdrawal or participation would not affect their course grades.

Instruments

The purpose of this study was to explore FL listening comprehension strategies used by the students with high and low FL listening anxiety. To achieve this goal, two qualitative data collection instruments were used: learner diaries and semi-structured interviews.

Learner diaries

In order to gain a more detailed understanding of high and low anxious listeners' strategy employment, participants in this study were asked to keep diaries. Learner journals and diaries are less structured and therefore, may provide more accurate data that will not be acquired through questionnaires or scales (Ma & Oxford, 2013). As this study aimed at identifying FL listening comprehension strategies used by learners with high and low anxiety, diary keeping appeared as an appropriate instrument. In this way, specific strategies they used while listening in the target language could be revealed.

Learner diaries kept by the students focused on the nature of the feeling of anxiety they experienced during FL listening activities, difficulties they encountered while listening in a FL, and kinds of FL listening comprehension strategies they used to ease their listening comprehension. Since participants in the study were not familiar with diary keeping, first of all, they were trained on how to keep effective diaries that would unveil their FL listening experience. In this training, sample diaries written by other language learners were presented in order to guide participants in diary keeping with regard to any feeling they experience during listening in the target language. Additionally, guiding questions based on the current literature on FL listening strategy use (Appendix B) on diary keeping were provided for the participants. The appropriateness of these guiding questions was checked by a group of experts in the FL teaching field. Participants were asked to write their diaries regularly right after their listening classes each week. Moreover, they were encouraged to speculate on not only their FL listening practices in school but also all the activities that required them engage in FL listening outside the classroom. Participants were informed that they could write diaries in their native language in order to avoid any language problems that would hinder their expressions. Diary keeping lasted for a total of five weeks.

Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were also used to support diary entries and gain a deeper understanding of how high and low anxious FL listeners employed FL listening comprehension strategy use (Appendix C). One of the biggest advantages of interviews is that they are useful to obtain beneficial data that the researchers directly observe (Creswell, 2012). Semi-structured interviews help researchers act more flexible in letting participants produce spontaneous utterances and narratives (Brinkmann, 2014). Therefore, semi-structured interviews with open ended questions were conducted to collect detailed information on participants' FL listening anxiety and FL listening comprehension strategy use. Similar to learner diary questions, appropriateness of the semi-structured interview questions was also checked by a group of experts in the field.

The interviews were conducted with all 13 low and 15 high anxious FL listeners in order to investigate how learners felt anxious during listening, what they did in order to cope with this feeling of anxiety, what kind of strategies they used in and out of listening class, and their opinions regarding the relationship between listening anxiety and listening strategy use in general. Interview

sessions were arranged and conducted with each student separately and were held in students' native language. Interview questions were given to the participants before the sessions to inform them about the content of the interview sessions. Semi-structures interviews were transcribed verbatim.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection procedure lasted for eight weeks by following the steps below:

- 1) In the first week, all of the first-year students in the department were asked to take the TOEFL exam. A total of 79 participants with similar TOEFL scores were identified for their possible inclusion in the study.
- 2) In order to identify learners with high and low FL listening anxiety levels, a listening anxiety scale, namely FLLAS, was distributed. According to the scores gained from this scale, 28 students-15 high anxious and 13 low anxious- were selected as the participants of the study.
- 3) Participants kept learner diaries for five weeks about how they felt during their FL listening experiences and the strategies they used while listening in the target language.
- 4) After the collection of the diaries, all participants in the study were invited to participate in semi-structured interview sessions.

Data Analysis Procedures

For the analysis of the learner diaries and semi-structured interviews, *Content Analysis Method* was used. The purpose of content analysis is to reach to the concepts and the relationships that can explain the collected data (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006). By following the steps of content analysis, any instance of FL listening comprehension strategy use was determined and labeled as a code. After the coding of all strategies related to FL listening comprehension strategy use, similar codes were grouped together for further comparison to form subcategories. Then, emerging subcategories were placed to fit into the main categories in the framework of FL listening comprehension strategies based on O'Malley et al.'s (1989) and Goh's (1998) taxonomies. (see Appendix A for the framework). The codes which did not fit in the framework were also analyzed according to the basic principles of content analysis and were presented as well.

In order to ensure the reliability of the results gathered through learner diaries and semi-structured interviews, two separate researchers experienced in content analysis analyzed the qualitative data independently. Inter-rater reliability was calculated by using "[agreement/(agreement + disagreement)] X 100" formula (Tawney & Gast, 1984) and was found as .87.

Results and Discussion

This study aimed at exploring how high and low anxious FL listeners employed FL listening comprehension strategies while listening in the target language. As a result of content analysis, a total of 504 strategies were identified from learner diaries and semi-structured interviews for FL listening comprehension strategy use of high and low anxious FL listeners. Strategies identified were categorized according to the FL listening comprehension strategies framework based on the taxonomies of O'Malley et al. (1989) and Goh (1998). As a result of qualitative analysis, FL listening comprehension strategies participants used were categorized under two main categories,

namely cognitive and metacognitive strategies. The analysis of the diaries and semi-structured interviews did not reveal employment of socio-affective strategies. The table below shows the number of strategies related to FL listening comprehension strategy use of both high and low anxious listeners according to two main categories (cognitive and metacognitive strategies).

Table 1.

Distribution of FL Listening Comprehension Strategies Used by High and Low Anxious FL Listeners

FL Listening Comprehension Strategies	(High Anxious Listeners)			(Low Anxious Listeners)		
	Diaries	Interviews	Total	Diaries	Interviews	Total
	N*	N*		N*	N*	
Cognitive Strategies	92	49	141	106	47	153
Metacognitive Strategies	62	34	96	78	36	114
Total	154	83	237	184	83	267

N*= Number of the strategies

As it is seen in the Table 1, cognitive strategies were the most used category by all of the learners (294 strategies) regardless of their anxiety level. Metacognitive strategies were the second preferred category by all of the participants in the study (210 strategies). In general, low anxious FL listeners employed more FL listening comprehension strategies than the high anxious ones in two categories.

When Table 1 is analyzed in detail, it is visible that there are differences in the number of the strategies high and low anxious listeners employed in all main categories of FL listening comprehension strategies. For *cognitive strategy* use, low anxious listeners employed them (153 strategies) more than high anxious listeners (141 strategies). Similarly, for *metacognitive strategies*, low anxious listeners (114 strategies) used more of them when compared to high anxious listeners (96 strategies). Although there are slight descriptive differences in the number of the strategies used between two groups of FL listeners, it was clear that both high and low anxious listeners employed FL listening comprehension strategies while listening in the target language. However, a close investigation of their expressions in the learner diaries and interviews revealed differences in the employment of some strategies in each category between high anxious and low anxious FL listeners in the study. In the remaining part of this section, specific FL listening comprehension strategies which were employed differently by high and low anxious students in the study were presented with excerpts from learner diaries and semi-structured interviews to give a sound answer to the research question. For the other FL listening strategies that were not presented here, qualitative analysis did not reveal any difference in terms of strategy use between two groups of FL listeners.

In **cognitive FL listening comprehension strategies**, further analysis of the data showed that high and low anxious FL listeners differed in the use of *note-taking* and *translation* strategies. **Note-taking** strategy was portrayed as “writing down the ideas, important points, and organizing the information as a summary” (O’Malley et al. 1989). The analysis of the qualitative data demonstrated that although both high anxious and low anxious listeners took notes during listening, the content of what they wrote down differed. The excerpts below demonstrate how high and low anxious listeners employed note taking strategy.

- a. This week, I listened to a discussion in Critical Reading lesson. **While listening, I tried to focus on key words and take notes on numbers and percentages.**

Learner diary – Low anxious listener 1

b. I used to try to write down everything I heard. I even tried to write down articles because I only understood the articles during listening at that time. But I have learnt that I do not need to write down everything. Now, I am trying to take notes on the words I catch during listening.

Semi-structured Interview – High anxious learner 14

The excerpts above indicated that *low anxious listener 18* took notes of points that she thought would be important for further activities. Effective listeners focus on listening text with a purpose in their minds such as collecting a particular information that might aid them in further tasks. This process is called ‘selective listening’. Note taking is a kind of selective listening, mostly suitable for longer texts (Rost, 2011). On the other hand, *high anxious listener 14* tried to scribe everything she heard during listening and therefore, lost track of the recording. As a result of not being able to listen selectively according to her purpose, her FL listening anxiety level might have increased. Reversely, due to anxiety this listener had been experiencing, she might not have been able to note down important points that would have helped her comprehension. It is worth mentioning that high anxious learner’s quotation was excerpted from the interviews conducted at the end of the study. From her expressions it was clear that this learner realized the inefficiency of his strategy use while taking notes during listening. This learner is now trying to use this strategy in an effective way. Although it is beyond the focus of the current study, how such attempts would affect her level of anxiety might be tracked in a future investigation.

Deciding whether FL listening anxiety effected FL listening strategy comprehension use or that listeners felt anxious because they did not use FL listening comprehension strategies efficiently was quite difficult. Therefore, another possible explanation may be that as learners felt anxious during listening in the target language, they might have panicked and thought that they needed to write down everything in order to understand. Consequently, they might have fallen back in the listening activity. On the other hand, low anxious listeners might have been able to detect important aspects of the listening recording selectively such as dates, numbers, names etc. As they could anticipate what would be useful in order to comprehend the aural input, they might not have felt anxious.

Translation strategy was described as “using the first language in order to understand the second language” (O’Malley et al. 1989). Findings revealed that high anxious listeners had a tendency to translate everything they heard into L1 while low anxious listeners tried to understand the listening text as it was. The excerpts below illustrate the difference between high and low anxious listeners in terms of their translation strategy use.

c. In order to comprehend what I hear, I try to understand in English instead of trying to translate to Turkish.

Learner diary – Low anxious listener 2

d. During listening activities all I did was trying to translate everything my teacher said. It was very exhausting. I constantly fell behind the lesson and that made me feel really anxious.

Semi-structured interview – High anxious listener 15

For translation strategy, *low anxious listener 2* pointed out that he did not translate what he heard into Turkish during FL listening. Instead, he preferred to comprehend the listening recording in the target language. On the other hand, *high anxious listener 15* tried to translate everything he heard in order to handle the listening difficulties. Xu (2013) also found that listening comprehension anxiety correlated negatively with the use of translation strategy. That is, when listeners employed word by

word translation during listening task at hand, they might feel more anxious as their comprehension is blocked. One explanation for this difference might be that as high anxious listeners put extra cognitive effort during listening, which is an online process requiring FL learners to comprehend the message within the immediate moment (Vogely, 1998; Vandergrift, 1999), translating what was heard during listening might cause anxiety. It is also proposed that using translation as a FL listening comprehension strategy is a characteristic of less skilled listeners which would lead to comprehension difficulties; and therefore, need to be eliminated as soon as possible (Vandergrift, 2003, Vandergrift & Goh, 2012; Zeng & Goh, 2015). Although it was not clear whether the high anxious listeners in this study were experiencing anxiety as they used translation more often than the low anxious ones or whether their employment of translation strategy caused anxiety, qualitative analysis yielded that high anxious listeners employed translation strategy too often in an inefficient way compared to low anxious ones.

In **metacognitive FL listening strategies**, directed attention and real time assessment of input were employed differently by high and low anxious FL listeners. **Directed attention** strategy was related to “paying all the attention to input and avoiding distractions” (Goh, 1998). It involves maintaining concentration and continuing listening despite some problems experienced. High and low anxious listeners used this strategy in a different fashion. The excerpts below demonstrate how high and low anxious listeners used directed attention strategy during listening in the target language.

e. In order to understand what I heard during listening, I cleared everything in my head and tried to concentrate on the listening text with all my mind. **I tried not to allow anything to distract me from listening.**

Learner diary – Low anxious listener 6

f. **This week, I tried to listen more carefully in the class. While doing so, I got distracted by the details and therefore I felt anxious.** I think this technique did not help me. I think I should change it.

Learner diary – High anxious listener 5

In the excerpt above, *low anxious listener 6* asserted that she tried to concentrate on the listening material by not allowing anything to distract her from understanding. However, *high anxious listener 5*'s utterances put forward that although he focused on the listening text, he got distracted by the details. He thought that paying attention did not help him to comprehend the intended message. Regarding his own expressions, not being able to exploit the strategy in an effective way might have caused negative arousal for this learner. In other words, paying too much attention to details instead of trying to understand the general intended meaning might likely to trigger fear of not being able to understand which in turn might cause anxiety. Such inefficient use of strategy for this high anxious learner may have also resulted from the level of anxiety he had experienced. Due to high level of anxiety, this learner might have lost concentration to handle the listening task.

The strategy of **real time assessment of input** was defined as “determining whether a specific part of the input is crucial for realizing one’s comprehension goals” (Goh, 1998). This strategy is generally employed by listeners while determining the importance of unfamiliar words. That is, listeners use tactics to assess whether a word they hear is crucial for understanding the rest of the text. Such an on-the-spot decision helps listeners monitor noticing problems during listening and make decisions about them. Real time assessment of the input was one of the specific strategies high and low anxious listeners in the study employed in a different way. The excerpts below exemplify such difference for the strategy of real time assessment of input:

g. My own ways to understand ... I try to pay more attention if I do not understand the meaning of a word or I cannot comprehend as a result of the style of the speaker. **I try to focus more in order to have a general understanding although there are unknown words.**

Semi-structured interview – Low anxious listener 1

h. I had difficulty in understanding the recording we had to listen in the class this week. **I got distracted all the time and therefore the listening text was difficult to understand. Although I tried to listen with complete attention, I lost track as a result of dealing with unknown vocabulary.**

Learner diary – High anxious listener 20

According to the utterances of *low anxious listener 1*, it might be put forward that he was not obsessed with unknown vocabulary because he was aware that the words that he did not know did not prevent him to understand the general meaning. He was able to focus on comprehending the text in the target language rather than sticking on individual words. However, *high anxious listener 20* was not able to avoid unknown vocabulary intervening with her comprehension. She asserted that as a result of trying to deal with unknown words, she got distracted and lost the track of what she was listening. It was clear that this learner was not able to assess the importance of unknown words for understanding the rest of the listening. A possible explanation for this situation might be that focusing on the meanings of all unknown words during listening might result in feeling of anxiety, or feeling anxious might direct attention more to unknown individual words. Since listening involves an online comprehension process which requires focused attention (Goh, 1998), the learner might not be able to comprehend the intended message due to lack of real time assessment for the importance of unfamiliar words.

For **socio-affective FL listening strategies**, none of the participants in both groups in this study employed strategy types as *asking for clarification* and *cooperation*. This result might stem from the fact that FL listening experiences of the participants generally centered around classroom listening tasks which required them to give response to listening tasks by listening input from sources such as tape recorder, video or the teacher rather than interacting with each other or other speakers of the target language. Since their listening experiences were limited to in-class listening activities, utilizing verbal signs of people around them or asking for clarification to comprehend aural input might not have been employed as FL listening comprehension strategies. As a result, difference in both groups' employment of any of the socio-affective FL listening strategies was not detected in the study.

All in all, qualitative analysis yielded that although both high and low anxious FL listeners employed various FL listening comprehension strategies, how they employed some of these strategies differed. For some specific strategies, it was evident that -in contrast to high anxious learners- low anxious listeners were able to utilize selective listening in a more effective way, translate less, direct their attention to listening input and identify important aspects of the input for comprehension while listening in the target language.

Conclusions and Implications

This study aimed at investigating how learners with high and low levels of FL listening anxiety employed FL listening comprehension strategies. To achieve this goal, 15 high and 13 low anxious listeners were asked to keep learner diaries and participate in semi-structured interviews. The

findings yielded that both high and low anxious FL listeners in the study used cognitive strategies the most, which was followed by metacognitive strategies. The relationship between FL listening anxiety and FL listening comprehension strategy use is not easy to be detected as one may not easily decide whether some learners feel less anxious as a result of employing effective FL listening comprehension strategies or vice versa. Identifying the direction of such relationship was beyond the scope of the current study. Yet, it might be concluded high and low anxious FL listeners employed some specific FL listening comprehension strategies in differing ways.

Listening comprehension process is difficult to be observed or evaluated directly; and thus, teachers and learners have the tendency to ignore its primary importance in second language acquisition (Chastain, 1988). Due to the nature of listening comprehension processes, many FL learners may struggle with anxiety during listening activities in the classrooms. Findings of the present study put forward that high and low anxious FL listeners used some of the FL listening comprehension strategies in a different way and that low-anxious listeners used these identified strategies in a more effective way. Based on this finding some implications might be proposed to create an anxiety-free classroom atmosphere in which FL listening comprehension strategies are implemented more effectively.

Some high anxious listeners asserted that at the beginning of the semester they did not employ FL listening strategies effectively mainly resulting from their fear of not being able to understand. However, throughout the study, it was observed that they began to realize the importance of effective FL listening strategies and gained awareness about it. Even some high anxious listeners expressed feeling less anxious while listening in the target language towards the end of the term. Although identification of a possible change in the FL anxiety levels of the participants at the end of the study was not in the scope of the current study, it might be seen as an evidence for the importance of strategy training. Therefore, it is noteworthy to investigate the effects of explicit FL listening comprehension strategy training on the FL listening anxiety. Explicit strategy training might include the presentation of the FL listening comprehension strategies and actual employment of these strategies embedded in various FL listening tasks.

Another implication of this study is the importance of raising awareness on the employment of FL listening comprehension strategies. In this study, all participants used FL listening comprehension strategies, regardless of their FL anxiety levels. However, effectiveness of their strategy employment differed for some specific strategies. FL listeners may use various FL listening comprehension strategies but when these strategies are not used effectively they would not become successful listeners in the target language. Thus, creating awareness on the usefulness and effectiveness of FL listening strategies may guide FL listeners to select appropriate listening strategies to ease their comprehension and abandon the ones which block comprehension and successful interaction. Various consciousness raising activities and tasks can be implemented in FL courses to raise awareness on FL listening comprehension strategies. Such attempts may also have effects on creating an anxiety-free classroom atmosphere for effective FL listening experiences.

Regarding the results and implications of the current study, some suggestions are proposed for further studies. A future study can focus on implementing FL listening comprehension strategies and investigating the effects of such implementation on the anxiety levels of the FL listeners. Further exploration of identifying which FL listening comprehension strategies have correlation with FL listening anxiety would shed light on the relationship between anxiety and strategy use. The participants in this study were first year ELT students. As learners' needs may vary in different

contexts, further studies might be conducted in different contexts such as secondary/high schools, preparatory language schools at universities or institutions teaching foreign languages for specific purposes. High and low anxious listeners in these environments can be detected and the difference between these two groups of listeners regarding their FL listening comprehension strategy use may be investigated. The findings of such investigation might be taken as basis for designing a listening program with a focus on listening strategy training. The current study lasted for five weeks and any possible change in the strategy employment of the participants was not the concern of the current study. Therefore, as a further research, a longitudinal study can be designed to observe the change in FL listening anxiety level and FL listening comprehension strategy use.

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Appendix

Appendix A. FL Listening Comprehension Strategies (O'Malley, Chamot & Küpper, 1989; Goh, 1998)

FL Listening Comprehension Strategies	Definition
Metacognitive Strategies	
<i>Directed attention</i>	Laying aside all unrelated items or information and to focus on specific parts of the listening task.
<i>Selective attention</i>	Making decisions on the aspects of input to pay attention that will help retention.
<i>Self-evaluation and self-reinforcement</i>	Understanding the conditions that help learning and arranging for the existence of those conditions.
<i>Self-monitoring</i>	Being aware of one's own features and to check, verify and correct his/her comprehension.
<i>Self-management</i>	One's preparations regarding the conditions that help him/her in his/her learning and comprehension.
<i>Real-time assessment of input</i>	Determining whether a specific part of the input is crucial for realizing one's comprehension goals.
Cognitive Strategies	
<i>Repetition</i>	Imitation of a language model including overt practice and silent rehearsal.
<i>Directed physical response</i>	Making connection between the new information and physical action with directives.
<i>Translation</i>	Using the first language in order to understand the second language.
<i>Grouping</i>	Reordering or reclassifying and labelling the material in order to learn effectively
<i>Note taking</i>	Writing down the ideas, important points, and organizing the information as a summary.
<i>Deduction</i>	Making a conclusion from the facts and information presented in the listening context by applying rules consciously.
<i>Imagery</i>	Making connections between the new information and visual concepts for retention.
<i>Auditory representation</i>	Remembering the sounds for words, phrases, or longer language units.
<i>Key word contextualization</i>	Retention of new information by means of familiar words in the mother tongue.
<i>Elaboration</i>	Placing of a new word in a meaningful language sequence.
<i>Transfer</i>	Connecting new information to already existing concepts in the memory.
<i>Inferencing</i>	Utilizing previous information about a language item to solve the problems in the new concepts of a language item.
<i>Inferencing</i>	Guessing the meanings of new items, predicting the outcomes, and filling in missing information by looking at the context thoroughly.
<i>Resourcing</i>	Using target language materials as reference.
<i>Prediction</i>	Making guesses about the next part of the input such as a word, a phrase, or an idea.
<i>Fixation</i>	Focusing on a small part of the input in order to comprehend it.
<i>Reconstruction</i>	Using words from the input and sometimes background knowledge to have an understanding of the original input.
Socio-affective Strategies	
<i>Cooperation</i>	Utilizing verbal signs of the people around the listener to understand the meaning.
<i>Question for clarification</i>	Asking for repetition, explanation or examples from the speaker for in order to comprehend the aural input

Appendix B. Learner Diary Questions (Turkish)

Lütfen bütün hafta yaptığınız İngilizce dinleme etkinliklerini (sınıf içi/sınıf dışı) düşünerek aşağıdaki soruları yanıtlayınız.

1. Ne tür İngilizce dinleme etkinliklerinde bulundunuz?
 - a. Sınıf içinde dinlediklerinizi anlamak için hangi yolları kullandınız?
 - b. Sınıf dışında dinlediklerinizi anlamak için hangi yolları kullandınız?
2. İngilizce dinleme yaparken sizi neler kaygılandırdı? Ne tür güçlüklerle karşılaştınız? Bu güçlüklerin üstesinden gelmek için hangi yolları kullandınız?
3. İngilizce dinlerken kullandığınız yollar dinlemeye yönelik kaygılarınızı azaltmaya yardımcı oldu mu?

Appendix C. Semi-Structured Interview Questions (Turkish)

1. İngilizcede herhangi bir dinleme yaparken kendinizi nasıl hissedersiniz?

Rahat (olumlu duygular içeren ifadeler) olunduğu ifade edilirse:

- a. Sizce İngilizcede herhangi bir şey dinlerken rahat olmanızın sebepleri nelerdir?
- b. Sınıf içinde ne tür İngilizce dinleme etkinliklerinde bulunursunuz? Dinlediklerinizi anlamak için hangi yolları kullanırsınız?
- c. Sınıf dışında ne tür İngilizce dinleme etkinliklerinde bulunursunuz? Dinlediklerinizi anlamak için hangi yolları kullanırsınız?

Kaygılı (olumsuz duygular içeren ifadeler) olunduğu ifade edilirse:

- d. Sizce İngilizcede herhangi bir şey dinlerken rahat olamamanızın sebepleri nelerdir?
- e. Sınıf içinde ne tür İngilizce dinleme etkinliklerinde bulunursunuz? Dinlediklerinizi anlamak için hangi yolları kullanırsınız?
- f. Sınıf dışında ne tür İngilizce dinleme etkinliklerinde bulunursunuz? Dinlediklerinizi anlamak için hangi yolları kullanırsınız?