Using Group Work as a Remedy for EFL Teacher Candidates' Listening Anxiety

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A R T I C L E I N F O	A B S T R A C T

Problem Statement: The ubiquity of anxious teacher candidates (TCs) for English as a foreign language (EFL) in listening classes and their needs for understanding aural input call for deep concern by foreign-language (FL) teacher educators.

Purpose of Study: As a teacher educator, in my undergraduate-level listening classes, I have frequently observed anxious TCs who are training to be language teachers. The study aligns with the humanistic techniques of work as a remedy for anxious TCs.

Methods: The convergent parallel mixed method used in the study aimed to trace the impact of group-work design on a group of TCs' FL listening anxiety with the help of two scales, the Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS) and the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and with pre- and post-instruction interviews conducted at the beginning and end of an academic semester.

Findings and Results: According to the analysis of the quantitative data, the use of group activities in a listening class was not observed to contribute to the reduction of either learning- or listening-anxiety levels significantly, but TCs' views collected through interviews indicated a decrease in their stated causes and effects of FLLA in the final interviews. In regard to the causes of listening anxiety, the TCs' past FL education, their failure to understand the spoken form of some words, their lack of concentration, and number of unknown words were the most frequently stated causes. In regard to the effects of foreign-language listening anxiety, the participating TCs frequently referred to their poor listening comprehension, fear of speaking, and fear of listening. For coping with their listening anxiety, all of the participants emphasized that the only remedy was to improve their listening.

Conclusions and Recommendations: Overcoming listening anxiety requires long periods of practice with a FL. Fortunately, learners today have numerous opportunities to access aural and visual contexts.

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Introduction

Researchers have experimented with various instruments in order to measure foreign-language (FL) learning anxiety in a valid and reliable manner. FL learning anxiety is believed to manifest itself through such linguistic factors as "distortions of sounds, inability to reproduce the intonation and rhythm of the language, 'freezing up' when called on to perform, and forgetting words or phrases just learned or simply refusing to speak and remaining silent" (Young, 1991, p. 430). For listening in a FL, the picture is no brighter. Unarguably, listening is a complex skill, and students' complaints about the difficulties of listening stem mostly from their feelings of inadequacy or anxiety (Dunkel, 1991). As Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) pointed out, FL learning anxiety is most closely associated with listening and speaking anxiety.

Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Research

Although developing effective listening skills is essential for FL learners' successful acts of communication, listening-anxiety research is scant. In an early study, Vogely (1998) provided an analysis presenting both the sources of and the solutions for reducing listening anxiety in a university-level Spanish course. In another study, by collecting statistical data from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and the Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS), Elkhafaifi (2005) indicated that FL learning anxiety and listening anxiety were separate but related phenomena and that both negatively correlated with student achievement in an Arabic-language course. Innami (2006) investigated the effects of test anxiety on listening-test performance. The results revealed that test anxiety did not influence listening-test performance in the English-language studies of Japanese university students. In addition, with the participation of university-level Japanese learners of English, Kimura (2008) found that one's university major but not one's gender had a statistically significant effect on the level of emotionality, a dimension of FLLAS.

Among the most recent studies, exploring the possible causal relationships between FL listening anxiety and language performance of 300 first-year English majors in China, Zhang (2013) emphasized that FL listening anxiety could affect FL listening performance, but FL listening performance did not affect FL listening anxiety. In another study, Tsai (2013) investigated the effects of listening-strategy training on a group of high school students in Taiwan, another English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, and found that when the degree of listening anxiety was reduced, listening-strategy levels improved. Similarly, with a focus on the connection between FL listening anxiety and listening-strategy use, Liu (2016) found that anxiety and strategy use are two closely interrelated and important factors in language learning. Finally, in another FL listening-anxiety study, similar to the data collection tools used in the present study, Serraj and Noordin (2013) employed the FLLAS and the FLCAS to investigate the correlations among listening comprehension, FL learning anxiety, and FL listening anxiety of 210 Iranian EFL learners. The results

revealed a negative correlation between FL listening anxiety and listening comprehension and also between FL learning anxiety and listening comprehension.

Finally, in one of the few studies with a focus on the relationship between anxiety and pair/small-group work, Andrade and Williams (2009) found no correlation between certain variables related to anxiety and pair/small-group work. Since some degree of anxiety was observed to affect 75% of all learners in their study, they aptly warned that "[t]o optimize learning for all learners, teachers should be aware of anxiety-provoking situations and take steps to minimize their negative impact" (p. 12).

Listening-Anxiety Research with Teachers/Teacher Candidates

Studies on anxiety and teachers are scant. In one of these, Ohata (2005) carried out in-depth interviews with seven experienced ESL/EFL teachers to trace their perspectives on their students' anxiety in L2 learning. As stressed in the study, although teachers' efforts to sensitize themselves to their students' anxiety might not produce the desired effect, these efforts can still "provide a basis for creating a comfortable, learning-conducive environment in the classroom" (p. 152). In a study closer to the scope of the present study in regard to its choice of participants and data-collection tools, Bekleyen (2009) investigated the listening anxiety of EFL TCs. With that purpose in mind, she used the adapted versions of the two questionnaires (the FLCAS and the FLLAS), open-ended interviews, and listening-test scores. The results indicated that the participants had high FLLA levels, and these stemmed mainly from their previous foreign-language education and their failure to recognize the spoken form of some words.

As a teacher educator, I have frequently observed highly anxious TCs who are training to become language teachers in my undergraduate-level listening classes. In their first year in an ELT program, most TCs find listening to be the most difficult skill to master (Bekleyen, 2007). After high school, candidates take the University Entrance Exam (UEE), which is highly competitive. The English-language component of the UEE contains multiple-choice items that test mainly reading comprehension, translation, and grammar, and it presents a language content at approximately the C1 level of proficiency. Candidates' listening, speaking, and writing skills are not tested at all in this exam. As a result, since many English-language teachers at high schools prepare their students for the UEE, they ignore these students' communicative needs in a foreign language (Bekleyen, 2007). The result or the backwash effect of this situation is the ubiquity of anxious TCs, especially in their first year in ELT programs. The prevalence of such TCs and the caveat that "[t]he impact of these (or any) corrective practices on foreign language anxiety … must, of course, be studied in the classroom" (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 131) have urged me to trace the anxiety levels of my students in our educational setting.

Furthermore, in order to reduce the anxiety levels of my students, I decided to follow several of the humanistic techniques of Community Language Learning (CLL), in which learners' emotions and feelings as well as their linguistic knowledge are taken into account to reduce anxiety (Curran, 1972). In CLL, learners are grouped

for all communicative acts. The aim of group work is to enable learners to learn through interacting with the community, as learning is not viewed as an individual accomplishment but as a collaborative achievement.

In line with the need to establish learner-centered and low-anxiety classroom environments, I decided to use group work as a remedy to support highly anxious TCs in my listening course. To observe the possible effects of group work on the anxiety levels of my students, I decided to gather and analyze their pre-instruction and post-instruction anxiety scores together with their views on their FLLA. Unlike previous FLLA studies, in which some quantitative data were collected at one point in time, in the present study, two sets of data (i.e., before instruction and after instruction) were collected both quantitatively and qualitatively in order to derive a more comprehensive picture of the phenomena than could be obtained from each data set alone. The research questions posed were as follows:

1.   How does group work affect the FLLA level of these TCs?

2.   How does group work affect the FLCA level of these TCs?

3.   Does FLLA correlate with FLCA?

4.   What changes are traced in the TCs' initial and final views regarding the possible causes and effects of their listening anxiety and their ways of coping with it?

Methods

Research Design

In essence, the purpose of this study was fourfold. First, I aimed to capture and compare the initial and final FLLA scores of a group of EFL TCs. Second, I made a similar comparison between the initial and final FLCA scores of the TCs. Third, although the learning anxiety of these TCs was not the main concern of the study, following prominent FLLA studies (Bekleyen, 2009; Elkhafaifi, 2005; Serraj & Noordin, 2013), I included these scores in order to be able to see a possible correlation between the two (i.e., FLLAS and FLCAS scores). Fourth, to achieve a more elaborate understanding of my students' listening anxiety, I decided to collect pre- and post-instruction qualitative data. Semi-structured interviews that I conducted aimed to probe the three components of listening anxiety: (1) causes of listening anxiety, (2) effects of listening anxiety, and (3) how these TCs cope with their listening anxiety. In summary, I used one of the procedures of mixed methods, a convergent parallel mixed method, in which "[o]ne database could help explain the other database, and one database could explore different types of questions than the other database" (Creswell, 2014, p. 15), to be able to better interpret the results obtained from two data types.

Participants

In order to be a language teacher in Turkey, TCs must have a university degree, and the core institutions educating teacher candidates are four-year programs within faculties of education (Akyel, 2012). The study group for this research consisted of 93 volunteers varying in age from 18 to 21 years among the first-year students (i.e., TCs) taking a compulsory listening course in an ELT program. The three-hour listening course is among the first-year compulsory courses that are mainly centered on the improvement of four skills. The researcher was their course instructor, and convenience sampling was used.

Instruction

The goal of any listening instruction is to prepare students to understand genuine speech so that they can communicate with others as members of the English-speaking community (Rost, 2002). Recent models view listening as an active and interpretive process in which listeners shape meanings through the act of interpreting rather than receiving them intact. Teachers also have enormous responsibilities, such as assisting learners in this process by providing support and by suggesting ways to ease comprehension difficulties. In line with the humanistic techniques of CLL, one of the ways of supporting learners is having them work in groups (Nation & Newton, 2009). Group work allows learners to negotiate with others and, at some points, provides help for "those who are getting left behind to keep up with what is going on" (p. 47).

Traditionally, in the CLL method, no syllabus or textbook is followed and language-learning activities basically incorporate translation, transcription, and recording. However, we used the *NorthStar High Intermediate Listening and Speaking* book to improve the TCs' listening skills as well as their speaking and pronunciation. All the comprehension exercises in this textbook aimed to provide practice with predicting, identifying main ideas and details, interpreting, and note taking. The TCs did all these exercises in groups of three or four, and the group members were self-selected. In other words, in order to create a sense of community among TCs, encourage interaction, and prioritize their feelings, with the role of a counselor and a paraphraser, I avoided pushing the TCs to do any of the listening tasks individually and instead asked them to share their ideas with group members first in a stress-free environment. In summary, following the main tenets of CLL, I acted as a counselor helping my clients understand their FL listening anxieties, and I blended their feelings and group-work design into my listening classes to provide a possible remedy for their anxieties (Curran, 1972).

Data Collection

In a convergent parallel mixed method research design, the two data types (i.e., quantitative and qualitative) should be collected at the same moment in time if the purpose is to delve into the interpretation or analysis of the research problem (Creswell, 2014). Following this, first, I administered two instruments, the FLCAS and FLLAS, at the beginning and end of the semester. Right after I administered the

scales, I conducted interviews, again at the beginning and at the end of the semester. A total of 93 students (67 females and 26 males) voluntarily completed the scales, and 24 of them (16 females and 8 males) and 21 of them (14 females and 7 males) volunteered to take part in the initial and final interviews, respectively. The same TCs attended the initial and final interviews, but three of them failed to attend the final interviews. I shared several of their statements using pseudonyms. This study employed the following data-collection tools:

The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). The FLCAS (Horwitz et al., 1986) consists of 33 items that are indicative of communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation in the foreign-language classroom. Responses range from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree," and the scale has demonstrated internal reliability achieving an alpha coefficient of .93. The reliability and validity of this scale were computed by Aydın (1999) to ensure that it can be used in Turkish EFL settings, and one item was removed as a result of the reliability and validity studies. The internal consistency of this version was .91.

The Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS). This scale was developed by Kim (2005) and adapted for Turkish use by Bekleyen (2009). Since none of the items required modifications, no changes were made. The FLLAS showed high reliability with a score of .93 (Kim, 2005), and the internal consistency of its adapted version was .90.

Background questionnaire. I prepared a background questionnaire to gather demographic information about the participants' age, gender, the high school they graduated from, the number of years of their language study, and the listening instruction they received in high school and in the prep year at university.

Semi-structured interviews. Having perused the interview questions used in previous FL anxiety research (Andrade & Williams, 2009; Aydın, 1999; Bekleyen, 2009; von Wörde, 2003), I designed semi-structured interview questions to learn more about the participants' listening anxiety. Another colleague carried out the final interviews, and all interviews were recorded with the TCs' consent and were held in Turkish to facilitate the data-gathering process.

Data Analysis

For the analysis of the quantitative data, I analyzed the TCs' answers to the items in the FLLAS and FLCAS with SPSS Statistics; therefore, I obtained the mean, mode, median, frequencies, percentages, and standard deviations. To test the significance of the possible changes between the pre- and post-instruction scores of the FLLAS and the FLCAS, I used t-tests. In addition, to assess and interpret possible correlations between TCs' initial FLLAS and FLCAS scores and final FLLAS and FLCAS scores, I conducted Pearson product-moment correlations.

For the analysis of qualitative data, first I translated the interview data into English. Second, I carried out a qualitative content analysis that "involves the counting of instances of words, phrases, or grammatical structures that fall into specific categories" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 245). Before I conducted the interviews, I

explained what my purpose was with the interview questions and consulted the opinions of two experts in the field of language education concerning the validity of these questions. For inter-rater reliability (i.e., different interviewers giving similar ratings when observing the same performance), half of the content analysis (i.e., coding of the statements) was conducted by two scholars including the researcher, and an agreement of 92% was reached.

Results

Quantitative Results

First of all, I analyzed the TCs' initial and final FLLA (i.e., pre-instruction and post-instruction) scores statistically. As shown in Table 1 below, no significant difference was found at the level of .05 between the TCs' initial and final listening-anxiety levels, which means that the intervention provided (i.e., TCs' classroom listening experiences with a group-work design) did not significantly influence their listening-anxiety levels.

Table 1

Descriptives Using a t-test for Initial and Final FLLA and FLCA Scores

	Pre-instruction		Post-instruction			
	M	SD	M	SD	*t*	p
FLLA	105.15	14.22	105.96	15.00	-.65	.52
FLCA	92.31	19.58	89.97	23.42	1.50	.14

*p>.05

To trace the effects of group-work activities performed in listening classes on the FLCA levels of the TCs, I also analyzed the initial and final FLCA (i.e., pre-instruction and post-instruction) scores, as shown in Table 1 above. Again, no significant differences were observed at the level of .05, suggesting that TCs' learning-anxiety levels did not increase or decrease as a result of their exposure to classroom listening activities performed in groups.

Furthermore, I compared the TCs' initial FLLA and FLCA scores with Pearson product-moment correlation to assess the relationship between TCs' listening anxiety and learning anxiety at the beginning of the semester. As shown in Table 2 below, a significant positive correlation ($r=0.65$, $p<0.01$) was found, which means that the TCs with higher levels of FLLA tended to have higher levels of FLCA and vice versa. The shared variance (r^2) was .42. Similar to the correlation between the initial scores, a significant positive correlation ($r=0.74$, $p<0.01$) was obtained in the comparison of the final FLLA and FLCA levels of the TCs. The shared variance was .55. Another point to be made is that not only were these correlations significant but they were also strong, except for .48, which is moderate (Cohen, 1988).

Table 2

Pearson Product Correlation Matrix

Variables	1	2	3	4
1-IFLLA	-	.65**	.65**	.48**
2-FFLLA		-	.62**	.74**
3-IFLCA			-	.77**
4-FFLCA				-

**p<.01

Qualitative Results

Causes of FLLA: In regard to the causes of their listening anxiety, initially, all TCs stated that they felt anxious while listening in English and referred to the inadequacy of their previous education and their failure to understand the spoken form of some words as the two main causes.

Table 3

Initial Views on Causes of FLLA

No	Stated causes	frequency
1	Inadequacy of previous education	13
2	Failure to understand the spoken form of some words	10
3	Lack of concentration	4
4	Unknown words	4
5	Lack of topical knowledge	3
6	Noise	3
7	High rate of speed of the speech	2
8	When the speaker is a native speaker	2
9	Poor quality of the listening material	2

As reflected in Table 3 above, lack of concentration, the existence of some unknown words in the text, lack of topical knowledge, noise, the high rate of speed or poor quality of the listening material, and the native speakers' speech were the other less commonly stated causes of listening anxiety for these TCs. As noted earlier, EFL students at high schools in Turkey receive language instruction based on reading and grammar mainly in order to pass the UEE; therefore, TCs have great difficulty in skill classes other than reading in their first year of education at an English-medium program like ELT. Listening, especially, becomes a nightmare for such students because of the disparity between what they study in high school and what they are expected to achieve as TCs who aim to become language teachers. Some of these issues were stated as follows:

> Since I did not do any listening at high school and did tests only to pass the UEE, I feel myself highly incompetent in listening and writing classes. (Rana)

> I am planning to improve my listening this year as it is the first time I take a real listening class. (Beyaz)

Table 4

Final Views on Causes of FLLA

No	Stated causes	frequency
1	Fear of missing some parts in listening texts	7
2	Losing face in front of others	3
3	Inadequacy of previous education	3
4	High rate of speed of the speech	3
5	Fear of making mistakes	2
6	Unknown words	2
7	Noise	2
8	Lack of topical knowledge	1

However, in their final views, I realized that some of the TCs stated how comfortable they started to gradually feel in their listening classes. While eight of them still felt anxious from time to time about listening in English, nine TCs said that they had been anxious at the beginning but were feeling much more comfortable, and four of them found themselves neither anxious nor comfortable while listening. In addition, the final stated causes of FLLA were fewer than the initial ones (see Table 4). After their one-semester experience in a university-level listening class, they mostly referred to their fears of missing some parts in listening texts, as exemplified in the following interview excerpt:

> If I miss some words, I feel stressed and sometimes cannot concentrate on the coming parts. (Esin)

Effects of FLLA: In regard to the effects of listening anxiety, I observed a difference between the TCs' initial and final statements. Initially, poor listening comprehension was commonly stated as the main effect (see Table 5). Interestingly, while poor listening comprehension was mentioned as an effect of FL listening anxiety, a parallel concept, failure to understand the spoken form of some words, emerged as a cause of FLLA in initial interviews (see Table 3).

Table 5

Initial Views on Effects of FLLA

No	Stated effects	frequency
1	Poor listening comprehension	16
2	Fear of speaking	5
3	Fear of listening	4
4	Lack of concentration	4
5	Paying more attention	3

The TCs believed that their listening anxiety caused comprehension problems, fear of speaking, fear of listening, lack of concentration, and, as a positive effect, paying closer attention to catching the important words. Some of their statements were similar to the following one:

> Since I do not feel comfortable while listening in English, this affects my listening. (R: How?) I am afraid of doing listening. (Behiye)

Similar to the decrease in the number of stated causes of FLLA, at the end of the semester, the TCs stated fewer effects, and these were focused mainly on a decrease in their participation in classroom activities and paying more attention so as not to miss words (see Table 6). Although some of the TCs stated that they still felt anxious and sometimes missed some words while listening, more than half stated that they felt confident, as they were better able to understand the whole text.

Table 6

Final Views on Effects of FLLA

No	Stated effects	frequency
1	Decrease in participation into activities in class	7
2	Paying more attention so as not to miss words	5
3	Loss of concentration	3
4	Feeling uncomfortable in listening classes	3
5	Decrease in motivation	1

In summary, when asked about the possible effects of their feelings of anxiety in listening at the end of the semester, while more than half of the TCs (13 participants) stated that they did not suffer from listening anxiety any longer, eight TCs stated that they still had listening anxiety from time to time, and that it affected their participation in class activities, their concentration, and their motivation, and urged them to pay closer attention so as not to miss words. Some of the statements were similar to the following one:

> (R: How did you feel in listening classes this semester?) I was nervous at the beginning, but my anxiety decreased in time and I feel OK now. (Hasan)

Ways of coping with FLLA: When asked about their ways of coping with their listening anxiety at the beginning of the semester, all of the participants emphasized that the only way to cope was to improve their listening. As identified in Table 7 below, while 16 participating TCs suggested strategies such as watching films and serials, eight believed in putting more effort into listening. Listening to songs by paying attention to lyrics, practicing listening on several websites, and speaking with foreign friends were the other ways stated by the participating TCs.

Table 7

Initial Views on Ways of Coping with FLLA

No	Stated ways	frequency
1	Watching films/serials (with or without subtitles)	16
2	Putting more effort into listening	8
3	Listening to songs by paying attention to lyrics	5
4	Practicing listening on several websites	5
5	Speaking with foreign friends	3

Some TCs stated that they forced themselves to understand the scripts without subtitles. Similarly, while listening to songs, either they followed the lyrics at the same time or checked their comprehension right after listening to the song. Some also referred to online listening websites, as the following statements illustrate:

> I listen to music in English a lot, and I write down the lyrics as much as I can, and then I check my notes with the original lyrics to see how I performed. (Sema)

> There are some websites to do online listening and I use them. (R: Such as what?) For instance, I do listening on ESL/EFL conversations of ESL/Listening English as a Second Language or on ESL Cyber Listening Lab. (Aliye)

The TCs' initial and final ways of coping with their listening anxiety did not vary to a great extent (see Table 7 and Table 8), but the participants added new strategies at the end of the semester, such as reading books (probably because many teachers in the program emphasize the importance of a large vocabulary, which can be achieved mainly through reading), taking notes, and trying to catch all the important words in a listening text (probably due to the task requirements in listening classes).

Table 8

Final Views on Ways of Dealing with FLLA

No	Stated ways	*frequency*
1	Watching films/serials (with or without subtitles)	12
2	Listening to songs by paying attention to lyrics	10
3	Practicing listening on several websites	5
4	Putting more effort into listening	5
5	Reading books	5
6	Speaking with foreign friends	4
7	Taking notes	2
8	Paying closer attention to catch all the important words	2

In the final interviews, I also asked for TCs' views on working in groups in listening classes, and they stated unanimously that they found it highly beneficial, edifying, and fun. They believed that performing in groups completed each other's missing knowledge, helped them to learn from each other, enabled them to compare themselves with others, provided more talking time, built greater confidence in oneself, offered different opinions and corrective feedback when needed, and also created a less stressful talking environment compared to talking directly with the teacher. They also stated that, with the help of groups, they improved their existing friendships and had more fun compared to individual study. Several of their statements follow:

> I believe I have improved myself a lot in group activities. (R: Why do you think so?) Because it is a lot stress-free compared to talking to teacher in front of the whole class. (Merve)

Working in groups was fun and more beneficial than individual study. (R: Why?) I was able to get different opinions from my friends and learn different things. (Nadire)

If I could not understand a thing that day, my friends in the group helped me with it. I believe we completed each other's missing knowledge in groups. (Hilmi)

Discussions and Conclusion

First of all, in this study, a significant difference was not observed between the initial and final anxiety levels of this group of TCs. It can be claimed that the use of group activities in listening classes did not contribute to the reduction of their anxiety in a statistically significant way. Similarly, in the only study reviewed with a focus on the relationship between pair/small-group work and FL learning anxiety, Andrade and Williams (2009) found no correlation between the two. The lack of a contributing effect of group work might be interpreted in several ways. It is possible that the participating TCs in this study needed more exposure than they could receive in an academic year to listening activities in groups in order to be able to have lower levels of FLLA. Moreover, even if anxiety levels had been reduced significantly, this would not have been directly related to group-work design used because the participants were exposed to different teaching methods and techniques in other classes. Besides, positive correlations were found between TCs' initial and final levels of listening anxiety and learning anxiety. Corroborating previous FL listening-anxiety research (Bekleyen, 2009; Elkhafaifi, 2005; Serraj & Noordin, 2013), these findings provide further support for the existence of a clear relationship between FL listening anxiety and FL learning anxiety as related phenomena.

In the analysis of the qualitative data, however, there was a visible difference between the TCs' initial and final statements. Although the participating TCs' listening- and learning-anxiety scores did not differ significantly, a decrease was observed in their stated causes and effects of FLLA. Nearly half of the participating TCs stated that they were feeling much more comfortable about listening at the end of the semester.

In regard to the causes raised in initial interviews, the TCs referred mainly to their past FL education and their failure to understand the spoken form of words. These were among the commonly raised causes of listening anxiety by the TCs in Bekleyen's (2009) study. Thus, Bekleyen (2009) aptly pointed out that the competitive UEE, in which speaking and listening skills are totally ignored, creates a backwash effect and, as a result, learners find themselves incompetent in listening- and speaking-skills courses at English-medium programs like ELT at Turkish universities. Therefore, this one-shot exam needs to be redesigned to include all four skills in a balanced way. In their final views on causes, the TCs referred to their fears of missing some parts while listening and losing face because of misunderstandings. As for these causes, it can be concluded that they were parallel to the sources of

listening-comprehension anxiety in Vogely's study (1998), some of which were the nature of speech (i.e., fast speech, poor enunciation, different dialects, etc.), level of difficulty, lack of practice in the past, and fear of failure. These and other related causes stem from the fact that anxiety reaction impedes learners' ability to perform successfully in language learning, as it presents an obstacle to be overcome (Horwitz et al., 1986).

In regard to the effects of listening anxiety, Horwitz et al. (1986) refer to subjective feelings, psycho-physiological symptoms, and behavioral responses and go on to say that anxious FL learners exhibit avoidance behavior. In a similar vein, in this study, decreased participation in class activities, fear of speaking, fear of listening, lack of concentration/motivation, and feeling uncomfortable in listening classes were among the stated effects raised in initial and final interviews. In addition, in Williams and Andrade's study (2008), the most commonly stated emotional reaction to FL anxiety was that either participating EFL learners' minds went blank or they lost their concentration.

In regard to coping with FLLA, the TCs suggested several strategies, such as watching films, listening to songs, practicing listening on websites, speaking with foreign friends, and putting more effort into listening. These corroborate students' suggestions for reducing listening-comprehension anxiety in Vogely's study (1998), which included note-taking, combining listening with other skills, and creating out-of-class time for listening. Finally, in regard to the impact of group-work design on anxiety, a word of caution is due. Although no significant differences were found between the TCs' initial and final levels of anxiety and no statistically significant contribution of being engaged in group activities in class was observed, the participants' views on studying in groups were highly positive in the final interviews.

The facts that cannot be brushed aside are that listening comprehension is at the heart of FL learning and, fortunately, learners today have numerous opportunities to access aural and visual contexts. Despite the immense impact of listening skills on communication, "L2 listening remains the least researched of all four language skills" (Vandergrift, 2007, p. 191). In other words, there is a "relative paucity of research into listening compared with the skills of speaking, reading or writing" (Graham, 2017, p. 107). FL learners encounter various kinds of listening difficulties and, unarguably, many show high levels of listening anxiety (Bekleyen, 2007; Elkhafaifi, 2005; Kimura, 2007; Serraj & Noordin, 2013; Zhang, 2013); therefore, a huge responsibility is placed on their teachers. "[L]istening environments in which individuals are sufficiently motivated and stimulated need to be designed within learning environments". Teacher educators should also follow an attentive approach to the design of such learning environments in their contexts in order to gain a better understanding of TCs' listening difficulties, which will result, in turn, in better pedagogy and learning. Finally, as Tsai (2013) and Liu (2016) remind us, listening anxiety in L2 and strategy use are highly connected; therefore, the use of active listening strategies should be mediated at all levels of language learning.

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Grup Çalışmasının İngilizce Öğretmen Adaylarının Dinleme Endişelerine Bir Çözüm Önerisi Olarak Kullanımı

Özet

Problem Durumu: Endişe seviyesi yüksek öğretmen adaylarının yaygınlığı ve onların dinlediğini anlamaya yönelik ihtiyaçları öğretmen eğitimcilerini çok daha duyarlı olmaya yönlendirmektedir.

Araştırmanın Amacı: Dinleme derslerimdeki endişe seviyesi yüksek öğretmen adaylarının sıklığı ve yabancı dildeki endişeyi düzeltici çalışmaların sınıf içinde uygulanması yönündeki öğütlere kulak vererek sınıfımdaki öğretmen adaylarının endişelerini izlemeye karar verdim. Endişeyi azaltmak için önerilen teknikler öğrenciyi duygu ve tepkileriyle bir bütün olarak ele alan Toplulukla Dil Öğrenimi (Community Language Learning) yönteminde sıklıkla karşımıza çıkar ve öğrencilerin bütün iletişimsel eylemleri grup içinde bir topluluk üyesi olarak yapması öğütlenir.

Öğrenme merkezli ve az endişeli bir sınıf yaratma amacıyla dinleme derslerimdeki bütün etkinlikleri öğretmen adaylarının gruplar halinde yapacağını duyurdum ve ders etkinliklerini bu yönde şekillendirdim. Dinleme derslerinin grupça yapılmasının endişe üzerindeki muhtemel etkisini araştırmak için ise dönemin başında ve sonunda iki ölçek yardımı ile öğretmen adaylarının endişe seviyelerini istatistiksel olarak belirledim. Bu nicel veriyi daha iyi yorumlamak ve sorunu daha net inceleyebilmek için ise hem dönem başında hem dönem sonunda gönüllü öğretmen adaylarından yarı yapılandırılmış yüz-yüze görüşmeler yoluyla nitel veri topladım.

Araştırmanın Yöntemi: Karma araştırma deseni kullanılan bu çalışmada bir grup İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğretecek öğretmen adayının yabancı dilde dinleme endişelerini sağlıklı bir şekilde değerlendirmek için iki ölçek kullanılmıştır: (1) yabancı dilde dinleme endişesi ölçeği ve (2) yabancı dil öğrenme endişesi ölçeği. Çalışma deseninin ilk adımında bu iki ölçek dönem başında gönüllü olan birinci sınıf öğrencisi 93 öğretmen adayına (67 kız ve 26 erkek) uygulanmıştır. Daha sonra aynı ölçekler dönem sonunda tekrar aynı gruba uygulanarak olası etki ve değişimleri gözlemek hedeflenmiştir. Bu iki ölçek yardımıyla elde edilen verileri öncelikle SPSS istatistiklerini kullanarak analiz ettim. T-testler yardımıyla dönem başı ve sonundaki yabancı dilde dinleme ve öğrenme endişesi verilerini ayrı ayrı kıyaslayabildim. Ayrıca dönem başı ve sonundaki dinleme ve öğrenme endişesi verilerini Pearson-product-moment korelasyonları yaparak aralarındaki olası kolerasyonları gözlemeyi hedefledim.

Bu ölçeklerin yanı sıra öğretmen adaylarından 24 tanesi (16 kız ve 8 erkek) dönem başındaki ve bunların 21 tanesi (14 kız ve 7 erkek) ise dönem sonundaki görüşmelere katılmaya gönüllü olmuştur. İlgili alan-yazını dikkatli okumalarımdan sonra bir grup görüşme sorusu hazırladım ve bu sorular ile öğretmen adaylarının dinleme endişelerinin sebeplerini, bu endişenin kendi üzerlerinde gözledikleri etkilerini ve bununla baş etmek yöntemlerini paylaşmalarını hedefledim. Ayrıca dönem sonundaki görüşmelerde grup çalışmaları ile ilgili fikirlerini de topladım. Nitel verilerin analizini nitel içerik analizi yöntemi ile yaptım. Soruların geçerliğini artırmak için alanda uzman olan iki kişinin fikirlerini aldım ve sorularda önerilen değişiklikleri yaptım. Güvenirlik için ise nitel verinin yarısının analizini bir meslektaşımla ayrı ayrı yapıp kıyasladık. İçerik analizlerimizde %92 oranında benzerliğe eriştik.

Araştırmanın Bulguları: Dönem başı ve sonundaki yabancı dilde dinleme ve öğrenme endişesi verilerinin istatistiki incelemesi sonucunda grup çalışmasının katılımcı öğretmen adaylarının dinleme endişesi ve öğrenme endişesi seviyelerinde önemli bir fark yaratmadığını gözledim (Bkz. Tablo 1). Bunların yanı sıra dönem başı ve sonundaki dinleme ve öğrenme endişe puanları arasında kolerasyona baktığımda ise her ikisinde de istatiki açıdan önemli ve olumlu kolerasyon buldum (Bkz Tablo 2). Bunun yorumu ise dinleme endişesi yüksek olan öğretmen adaylarının öğrenme endişesinin de yüksek olduğudur.

Görüşmelerle elde edilen nitel veriler öğretmen adaylarının dinlemedeki endişelerinin esas sebepleri olarak geçmişteki (lisedeki özellikle) İngilizce dersleri, bazı kelimelerin telafuzunu tanımamaları, konsantrasyon eksiklikleri ve bilmedikleri kelimeler olarak gördüğü söylenebilir. Dinleme endişesinin etkileri olarak ise dinlediğini anlamayı başaramamayı, konuşma ve dinlemeden korkmalarını sıralamışlardır. Dinleme endişesiyle baş etme yolları ile ilgili ise en sıklıkla vurguladıkları dinlemelerini geliştirme gereksinimleridir.

Tartışma ve Sonuç: Dönem başı ve sonundaki dinleme endişesi ve öğrenme endişesi seviyelerinde grup çalışmasının önemli bir fark doğurmamasının birçok sebebi olabilir. Andrade ve Williams'ın (2009) çalışmasında da ikili ve grup çalışmalarının endişeyi azaltmada etkisi gözlenmemiştir. Muhtemel sebeplerden biri bir dönem boyunca yapılan ders içi çalışmaların katılımcıların endişe seviyelerine etki edecek uzunlukta ve yoğunlukta olmayışıdır. Dinleme ve öğrenme endişesi arasındaki önemli olumlu kolerasyonlar ise alan yazını desteklemektedir (Bekleyen, 2009; Elkhafaifi, 2005; Serraj ve Noordin, 2013), ve bu ikisinin çok yakından ilişkili olduğu ve beraber çalışılması gerektiği gerçeğini bize hatırlatır niteliktedir.

Nicel verilerde istatistiki bir fark gözlenmese de dönem sonunda yaptığım görüşmelerde öğrencilerin dinleme endişesinden daha az yakınır olduğunu fark ettim. Dinleme endişeleri ile ilgili dönem sonunda daha az sebep ve etki belirttiklerini ve kendilerini daha iyi hissettiklerini belirtmeliyim. Geçmiş eğitimlerini suçlamaları ve bazı kelimelerin telaffuzunu tanımamaları Bekleyen'in (2009) çalışmasına katılan benzer katılımcılar tarafından da dile getirilmiştir. Dinleme endişesinin etkileri öznel duygular, psikolojik, fizyolojik ve davranışsal tepkiler ve

konsantrasyon kaybı olarak özetlenebilir. Buna benzer biçimde katılımcılar dinleme endişesinin etkileri olarak dinlediğini anlayamama, konuşma ve dinlemeden kaçınma ve konsantrasyon kaybına vurgu yapmışlardır.

Dinleme endişeleriyle baş etme yolları olarak katılımcı öğretmen adayları yabancı dilde film izlemeyi, şarkı dinlemeyi, websiteler yardımıyla dinleme çalışmayı, yabancı arkadaşlarla sohbet etmeyi ve dinleme dersinde daha fazla çaba göstermeyi sıralamışlardır. Bunlar alanyazındaki dinleme endişesini azaltma için öğrenci önerilerine paralellik göstermektedir. Sonuç olarak günümüzde ders dışı dinleme olanaklarına erişimin kolay olduğu teknoloji çağında dinlemeyi geliştirmek ve iletişimde daha başarılı olmak tüm öğretmen adaylarının hedefi olmalıdır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Dinleme endişesi, Öğrenme endişesi, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce, Öğretmen adayları.