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THE EFFECT OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF ADVANCE ORGANIZER ACTIVITIES ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' LISTENING COMPREHENSION ANXIETY

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigated the effect of different types of advance organizer activities on listening anxiety of Iranian EFL intermediate students. A total of 79 students from a private language school in three experimental groups (Key Vocabulary, Key Grammar, and combined Key Vocabulary and Grammar) and one control group participated in this study. The research data was collected with the use of quantitative methods, including the following instruments: Target Forms, Vocabulary List, IELTS Listening Passages and Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale [FLLAS] developed by Kim (2005). The findings revealed that none of the three types of advance organizer activities used in this study affected listening anxiety.

Keywords: *Listening Comprehension, Listening Anxiety, Advance Organizer*

INTRODUCTION

In the process of second language acquisition, listening undisputedly plays a major part. Fortunately, in recent years, the language teaching profession has placed a great deal of premium on listening comprehension. It is believed to be a key skill in second or foreign language and plays a critical role in communication and in language acquisition (Anderson and Lynch, 1988; Rost, 1990). Regarding the central role of listening in learning a foreign language, Nation and Newton (2009) also stated that listening includes information by which the listener can gather the essential knowledge for using the language and only then can the learner begin to speak. As Dunkel (1991) declared that listening comprehension is perceived to be a polestar of SLA theory building, research, and pedagogy. Thus, listening can be considered as one of the most important macro-skills in the domain of language learning and teaching.

In spite of its main role in SLA, listening is regarded by some (e.g., Kurita, 2012; Graham, 2006) to be a difficult skill. Kurita (2012) considers listening as the most difficult language skill to learn. Since, in listening there is less opportunity or it is not as easy to go back over previous input, Graham (2006) considered the listening comprehension more difficult than reading comprehension. Some factors have been reported to make listening comprehension more controversial which include aspects of the input such as accent, complex syntactic structures, fast speech rate, and in addition to learner's shortcomings such as limited vocabulary, insufficient memory, a lack of confidence in listening, a lack of necessary cultural and background knowledge to understand the topic and so on and so forth (Chang and Read, 2006; Goh, 1999, 2000).

Additionally, according to the research literature, for many L2 students, listening is stressful and hard work (e.g., Chang and Read, 2006). Language anxiety, as MacIntyre and Gardner (1991a) stated, frustrates foreign language learning by interfering with the "acquisition, retention, and production of the new language" (p. 86). Compared with other classrooms, students feel more anxious in foreign language classes (Horwitz *et al.*, 1986). Anxious students are not willing to participate in class and consequently they sit in the back row of the classroom or avoid doing their homework. Moreover, they usually do not participate in oral classroom activities or answers voluntarily (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991a). They also tend to avoid difficult linguistic structures that more confident students will try to use (Dalkilic, 2001). For all these reasons, Foss and Reitzel (1991) concluded that language anxiety is negatively correlated with language course grades and other competency assessments.

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Vogely (1999) identified a number of factors which can be blamed as the sources of foreign language listening anxiety. These include listening input, listening process (strategies and time), and instructional factors, such as in-class practices and tests. This is more obvious when most language learners complain about not being able to “listen” or “hear” appropriately. Furthermore, it has been seen that learners do not usually know the nature of listening or how to improve their listening, or how to overcome the listening comprehension problems happening during their listening tasks (Poorabdollahi *et al.*, 2013). Recent research on teaching listening validates a discriminating interest in enhancing awareness of student on the listening process (Berne, 1998; Mendelsohn, 2001). For Rost (2001), listening tasks “involve explicit pre-listening” steps, some activities that the learner does prior to listening to the main input in order to increase readiness” (p. 20).

According to Schmidt (1995) learning process is based on awareness, attention and noticing and language learning cannot occur unconsciously. Language Awareness is by definition interdependent with explicit learning because in explicit learning the learner is aware and actively involved in processing the input. As such, Soons (2008) believed that explicit learning and instruction become crucial in the classroom, because they stimulate language awareness and enhance language acquisition. In situations, where students work with authentic language data, language awareness can be used as a method, a task or activity type (Wright, 2002).

In line with language awareness is the concept of Advance Organizer (AO) proposed by Ausubel (1960). He stressed that students can only learn best when they find meaning in their learning and that the use of AOs helps students to activate prior knowledge in the new instructional context, making the instructional process meaningful to them. Ausubel, Novak, and Hanesion (1978) found that true advance organizers are developed with an awareness of the learner's existing knowledge structure. AOs provide students with background knowledge that may improve their comprehension of foreign language materials (Chung, 2002). According to Herron (1994) these advance organizers can be in various forms ranging from pictures, verbal descriptions and key vocabulary to pre-questioning techniques and cultural background knowledge. Additionally Underwood (1989) advocated advance organizers as they help students focus on the topic through narrowing down the things that the students expect to hear and activating relevant prior knowledge and already known knowledge. Mendelsohn (1995) makes a similar point, noting that the knowledge activated by pre-listening activities gives students a basis for forming hypotheses, making predictions and inferencing about what they hear. To sum up, the present study aimed to examine the role of advance organizers in listening comprehension anxiety in an Iranian EFL context.

Anxiety

Foreign Language Listening Anxiety

Although listening comprehension is associated with cognitive domain, one cannot ignore the affective domain of language learning process. Affective refers to emotion or feeling. The affective domain is the emotional side of human behavior, and it may be juxtaposed to the cognitive side. The development of affective states or feelings involves a variety of personality factors, feelings both about ourselves and about others with whom we come into contact. Anxiety plays an important affective role in language learning too (Brown, 2000). It can either be a state or a permanent trait of fear or apprehension (Horwitz and Young, 1991; Young, 1998).

Goleman (1995) reports that “anxiety undermines the intellect” (p. 83); this can be explained neurobiologically because anxiety “can create neural static, sabotaging the ability of the prefrontal lobe to maintain working memory” (p. 27). It seems that foreign language anxiety is closely associated with the oral aspects of language (Saito *et al.*, 1999). Regarding anxiety in language learning classroom, speaking has been most emphasized (Young, 1990); however, listening comprehension can also be very stressful for learners. Like the reading, listening is a receptive skill, despite the fact that in listening we have limited time to process the input. This and other constraints as possible difficulties in hearing which could result from learner impediments, acoustic inadequacies, and factors related to the speaker (e.g., unfamiliar accent, lack of clarity and proper enunciation), must be taken into account. Krashen has noted that listening “is highly anxiety provoking if [the discourse] is incomprehensible” (cited in Young, 1992).

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Negative self-concept with regard to listening and low self-esteem regarding the ability in listening is among the reasons that students develop anxiety about listening (Joiner, 1986). In a test situation, this anxiety can be greatly exacerbated. Test anxiety has two components: the cognitive, involving worry, which Eysenck (1979) defines as “concern about one’s level of performance, negative task expectations, and negative self-evaluation,” and the emotional, which includes the feelings of “uneasiness, tension and nervousness” (p. 364) that people experience as a result of worry. Both negatively affect performance.

Most of the studies on language anxiety have concentrated more on describing the problem than on exploring ways to solve this issue (Arnold, 2000). The relieving or reducing anxiety is crucial because, as Neville (1989) states dramatically, “the anxious classroom is toxic” (p. 244). Looking back at the designer methods developed in the 1970s, we can see that some solutions are implied in those methods of language teaching. In the Silent Way (Gattegno, 1972), Suggestopedia (Lozanov, 1979), and Community Language Learning (Curran, 1976), eliminating or minimizing anxiety is an important issue, as it is in Total Physical Response (Asher, 1977) and Krashen’s (1982) affective filter. As humanistic psychologist and educator Rogers (1983) has pointed out, a supportive attitude on the part of the teacher is likely to reduce anxiety. Horwitz *et al.*, (1986) have suggested that teachers have two basic ways to deal with anxiety: (a) help students learn to cope better in anxiety-provoking situations or (b) make the learning situation less stressful (p. 131). One way to reduce anxiety in forms as diverse as stage fright and snake phobias is through systematic desensitization, which aims to eliminate or reduce anxiety by repeated and controlled exposure to a potentially anxiety-causing situation, generally in one’s imagination, until the situation can be experienced without anxiety (Davis, 1986). Since individuals provoke feelings of anxiety by telling themselves that they are not good enough to the task at hand, another possible solution is cognitive restructuring, used to confront the tendency of many people to self-verbalize and formulate negative thoughts about their abilities. Because self-concept can have a great impact on behavior, McCoy (1979) recommends creating an awareness of these self-verbalizations, convincing learners of their irrational nature, and substituting alternative, positive verbalizations. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991b) affirm that “while changing a person’s self-perception is not easy, the benefits of improving the self-image of language students seem worthwhile” (p. 303).

Reducing Listening Anxiety

Vocabulary can arouse listening anxiety (Vogely, 1998). In foreign language situation, paying too much attention to new sounds can cause comprehension deficits during listening. Hence, appropriate treatments should be given to deal with new vocabulary. To alleviate anxiety over new vocabulary, foreign language teachers can provide a list of new words with phonetic symbols before listening and familiarize learners with the new words. Applying word lists are gradually decreased among foreign language teachers, but they can be a very useful tool for preliminary acquaintance to new words (Nation, 1982; Schmitt and Schmitt, 1995). With a new word list, students can pay more attention to information rather than to the distracting new sounds. Since guessing has been commonly adopted by the communicative approach, foreign language teachers can encourage the students who possess higher proficiency level and adequate background knowledge, to guess meanings of new words (Schmitt, 1997). Fittingly, foreign language teachers may tell the messages to students that it is common to guess the meanings of new words when learning a foreign language and there is nothing wrong with wrong guesses or it is not embarrassing to guess incorrectly. Arnold (2000) believes that while new vocabulary can be a source of anxiety, listening instructions that focus too much on production and correct answers can also arouse anxiety. Arnold (2000) further states that foreign language teachers should avoid using only those listening production approaches that rely merely on correct answers, which can create high levels of anxiety and distract learner attention. If teachers encourage students to take risks to make mistakes, it would be more useful than asking only for correct answers. There are two advantages in encouraging risk-taking mistakes. First it can be seen as a message to learners that making mistakes is a normal process of learning which help students to reduce the concerns over “losing face,” a normal phenomenon often observed in foreign language classrooms (Horwitz *et al.*, 1986; Liu, 2007; Yan and Horwitz, 2008). Second, as Field (2003) stated, mistakes help the foreign language teachers to appropriately address the process of making

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mistakes by recognizing how learners make specific mistakes. Besides, foreign language teachers should also help learners to build up confidence and self-esteem by providing them with encouragement, empathy and comforts (Atasheneh and Izadi, 2012).

Kondo and Ying-Ling (2004) and Oxford (2008) offered other ways to relieve foreign language listening anxiety. For example, Oxford suggests “indirect strategies,” which include using “progressive relaxation, deep breathing and mediation,” and using “music” and “laughter.” (pp. 164-165) Oxford also encouraged foreign language teachers to teach “direct strategies” such as association and elaboration (see pp. 60-69) to alleviate language anxiety. All these strategies may help learners cope with listening anxiety. Vogely (1998) attempted to identify the source of listening anxiety in the language classroom and noted that foreign language listening anxiety (FLLA) appeared to be associated with the types of listening input, listening process (strategies and time), and instructional factors, such as in-class practices and tests. Similarly, Gojian (2014) investigated the effect of lexical and grammatical awareness on reducing learners’ anxiety and consequently improving listening comprehension. For this purpose, 60 students at the Pre-intermediate English proficiency level were selected for the study. He divided students into experimental and control groups. Quantitative findings indicated a negative association between listening anxiety and linguistic knowledge. The results showed a notable improvement in learners’ listening comprehension and reducing their anxiety due to receiving lexical and grammatical awareness. In another study, Chang (2008) investigated the effect of four types of listening support (pre-teaching of content and vocabulary, question preview, and repeated input) on the anxiety levels of college students in Taiwan. The result indicated that there were significant differences in anxiety according to the type of support. Batiha *et al.*, (2014) investigated the factors that contribute the most in provoking general FL classroom anxiety. The sample study consisted of thirty four postgraduate Arab students majoring in English. The FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) as well as focus group interviews were employed to collect the required data. The results of the study suggested that lack of vocabulary was one of the factors that provoked the general FL classroom anxiety the most. Some of the participants indicated that lack of vocabularies which are difficult to understand frustrated them. Noro (2006) clarified the nature of listening anxiety by the qualitative analysis of the data obtained both by questionnaire and oral interviews with Japanese college students. He found the main sources of listening difficulties are rate of speech, vocabulary and pronunciation. In another study Teng (1998) found that listening support reduces the test anxiety. According to Teng (1998) investigation of college students, 47 percent preferred to hear the input for a listening test twice, whereas the other 53 percent wanted to listen three times or more. Teng concluded that this high percentage of students requesting repeated input indicates the effect of listening support as a means of reducing listening test anxiety. As with related studies previously done on the same issue, the authors could not find any study specifically addressing the relationship between AO and listening anxiety. This lack of study highlights more than ever the significance of the current study.

The present study aims to answer the following research questions and null hypotheses about FLLA among EFL learners and to find out which kind of AO influence learners’ listening anxiety more and take a step in developing listening comprehension by determining profitable types of advance organizer:

1. Do Key Vocabulary (KV) advance organizer activities affect EFL learners’ listening anxiety?
2. Do Key Grammar (KG) advance organizer activities affect EFL learners’ listening anxiety?
3. Do combined Key Vocabulary and Grammar (KVG) advance organizer activities affect EFL learners’ listening anxiety?
4. Is there a significant difference in listening anxiety among groups receiving different types of advance organizer activities (KV, KG and KVG) and the group receiving no advance organizer (NAO)?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Methods

Participants

Seventy nine Iranian female EFL students aged between 15 and 20, making up three experimental groups and one control group, at a private language school participated in this study. All participants had already

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taken conversation classes for three to four years. The groups were assigned randomly to three experimental groups and one control group.

Instruments

This study used the following data sources:

Listening Passages

The listening passages taught in the classes were academic listening tasks from section three of two IELTS books, Focus on IELTS (Connell, 2010) and Cambridge English IELTS 9 (Cambridge University Press, 2013). There is a short lecture and a discussion and conversation involving two, three or four people. The conversation is divided into two parts and participants have to answer ten questions based on what they hear.

Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS)

This scale, developed by Kim (2005), consists of 33 questions, each accompanied by a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” (1 point) to “strongly agree” (5 points). The reliability of this questionnaire was investigated for this study by Cronbach Alpha which was relatively high (Cronbach Alpha= 0.80).

Target Forms

Target forms which used for key grammar group, were constructed by the researcher and two other EFL experts. The main purpose of having two other preview developers was to minimize the threats to internal validity. The two EFL experts read the passages independently and they wrote several key grammatical structures which were required and heard consistently in academic listening of IELTS.

Vocabulary List

A list of key vocabulary items and idiomatic expressions considered to be important for understanding the passages were made by the researcher. The list was approved and in some cases was revised by two other experts in EFL. Students in the key vocabulary group were also asked to review a list of 570 word families listed in the Longman Exams Dictionary. These words are commonly found in academic texts and were selected by examining a large corpus of written academic texts.

Procedure

Seventy nine intermediate students were chosen and divided into four groups– three experimental groups (key vocabulary group, key grammar group and the combined key vocabulary and grammar group) and one control group. Then the Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale was administered to all four groups.

Over the next four weeks the following procedure was carried out on the four groups. The classes were met three times a week. All the groups were instructed by the same teacher. The key vocabulary group was provided with two types of vocabulary: 1. A list of 570 academic vocabulary and 2. The vocabulary used in their listening activities.

As for the list of 570 academic words, the students were asked to review about fifty words prior to each session as homework. Hunt and Beglar (1998) introduced ‘independent strategy development’ approach to vocabulary instruction which emphasizes training learners to use dictionaries in teaching vocabulary. After which they would listen to the listening passage and answer the relevant questions.

The target grammatical structure which was going to be heard in the listening within that particular session was introduced to the key grammar group as follow. Participants in this group were taught through an ‘awareness’ approach (Ur, 1996) for grammar instruction. After which they would listened to the listening passage and answer the relevant questions.

As for the third experimental group, the same process which took place in the first and second experimental groups also happened simultaneously for the third group.

The control group practiced listening comprehension without using any advance organizers; that is, participants in the control group were not provided with any kind of advance organizers. In the final session, once again the Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale was administered to all four groups. It is worth mentioning that the students who were absent, in analyses of data, were totally excluded from the study.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

As mentioned earlier, the purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of different types of advance organizer activities on Iranian EFL learners' listening comprehension anxiety. Thus, a pre-test of listening anxiety was administered to participants at the beginning of the course in order to compare it with post-test. In the following table (table 1) descriptive statistics of the four groups on pre-listening anxiety are presented:

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Scores on Pre- anxiety for all Groups (KV, KG, KVG, and Control)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
KV	21	36	89	65.48	9.822
KG	19	47	83	59.85	12.395
KVG	19	40	92	67.13	16.088
Control	20	34	88	65.05	12.098

As table 1 shows the mean scores for all groups in pre-anxiety score are quite equal and are around sixty. In order to select the most appropriate statistical analysis to compare the performance of groups on this test, it was necessary to make sure whether these scores enjoyed a normal distribution and meet the assumption of using parametric tests (T-Test and ANOVA); the scores were submitted to the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test which revealed no statistically significant difference. Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5 concluded that the data for all groups come from a normal distribution.

Table 2: Normality Check for Scores of Key Vocabulary Group

	One-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov		
	Pre anxiety	Post anxiety	Diff anxiety
N	21	22	21
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	1.003	.696	.759
P value	.267	.718	.612

Table 3: Normality Check for Scores of Key Grammar Group

	One-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov		
	Pre anxiety	Post anxiety	Diff anxiety
N	13	13	13
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	.687	.445	.647
P value	.733	.989	.797

Table 4: Normality Check for Scores of Key Grammar + Key Vocabulary Group

	One-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov		
	Pre anxiety	Post anxiety	Diff anxiety
N	15	15	13
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	.497	.545	.407
P value	.966	.928	.996

Table 5: Normality Check for Scores of Control Group

	One-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov		
	Pre anxiety	Post anxiety	Diff anxiety
N	20	21	19
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	.618	.516	.763
P value	.840	.952	.606

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As tables indicates p-value for all groups are more than .05 which indicate normality of scores distribution ($p > 0.05$). Then to examine the first, second, and third null hypotheses a paired sample t-test was run.

Research Question 1

In order to investigate the first research question, a paired-samples t-test was conducted to see whether key vocabulary (KV) advance organizer activities in the first experimental group (vocabulary group) affect the learners’ listening anxiety. Tables 6 and 7 show the results for research question one:

Table 6: Paired Sample Statistics for the Effect of AO on Listening Anxiety for Vocabulary Group

	Mean	N	S.D	Std. Error Mean
pre anxiety	65.48	21	9.822	2.143
post anxiety	69.90	22	11.207	2.446

Table 6 shows that the mean of listening anxiety scores in the vocabulary group before teaching vocabulary was 65.48. After teaching vocabulary the mean of listening anxiety scores increased to 69.90 which had a slight rise.

Table7: Paired Sample T-Test on the Effect of AO on Listening Anxiety for Vocabulary Group

	Paired differences		Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
	Mean	S.D		Lower	Upper			
pre anxiety – post anxiety	-4.429	11.272	2.460	-9.560	.702	-1.800	20	.087

According to Table 7, the mean of difference before and after the period was -4.429 which means that mean of learners’ listening anxiety score after teaching vocabulary as an advance organizer activity had a significant increase. The standard deviation of the scores before and after the treatment was 11.272 which means the data had a low deviation and differences were close to each other. Thus the above tables show that the mean of learners’ listening anxiety scores after teaching vocabulary did not have a significant change. Therefore the null hypothesis for question one is confirmed since there wasn’t a significant change between pre and post listening anxiety of the learners. In other words teaching key vocabulary could not have a significant impact on the students’ listening anxiety.

Research Question 2

In order to investigate the second research question, a paired-samples t-test was conducted to see whether key grammar (KG) advance organizer activities in the second experimental group (grammar group) affect the learners’ listening anxiety. Tables 8 and 9 show the results for research question two:

Table 8: Paired Sample Statistics for the Effect of AO on Listening Anxiety for Grammar Group

	Mean	N	S.D	Std. Error Mean
pre anxiety	59.85	19	12.395	3.438
post anxiety	66.31	19	16.106	4.467

Table 8 shows that the mean of listening anxiety scores in the vocabulary group before teaching grammar was 59.85. After teaching grammar the mean of listening anxiety scores increased to 66.31.

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Table 9: Paired Sample T-Test on the Effect of AO on Listening Anxiety for Grammar Group

	Paired differences			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
	Mean	S.D	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper			
pre anxiety – post anxiety	-6.462	14.175	3.931	-15.028	2.104	-1.644	18	.126

According to Table 9, the mean of difference before and after the period was -6.462 which means that mean of learners’ listening anxiety score after teaching grammar as an advance organizer activity had a significant increase.

The standard deviation of the scores before and after the treatment was 14.175 which means the data had a high deviation and differences were not close to each other. Thus the above tables show that the mean of learners’ listening anxiety scores after teaching grammar did not have a significant change. Therefore the null hypothesis for question two is not rejected since there wasn’t a significant change between pre and post listening anxiety of the learners. In other words teaching key grammar could not have a significant effect on the students’ listening anxiety.

Research Question 3

In order to investigate the third research question, a paired-samples t-test was conducted to see whether combined key vocabulary and grammar (KVG) advance organizer activities in the third experimental group (key vocabulary and grammar group) affect the learners’ listening anxiety. Tables 10 and 11 show the results for research question three:

Table 10: Paired Samples Statistics for the Effect of AO on Listening Anxiety for KVG Group

	Mean	N	S.D	Std. Error Mean
pre anxiety	69.54	19	15.262	4.233
post anxiety	67.62	19	15.327	4.251

Table 10 shows that the mean of listening anxiety scores in the key vocabulary and grammar group before teaching vocabulary and grammar was 69.54. After teaching vocabulary and grammar jointly, the mean of listening anxiety scores slightly decreased to 67.62. The paired sample t-test to compare the scores on this test is presented in the following table:

Table 11: Paired Sample T-Test on the Effect of AO on Listening Anxiety for KVG Group

	Paired differences			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
	Mean	S.D	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper			
pre anxiety – post anxiety	1.923	11.913	3.304	-5.276	9.122	.582	18	.571

According to Table 11, the mean of difference before and after the period was 1.923 which means that mean of learners’ listening anxiety score after teaching vocabulary and grammar as an advance organizer activity had an increase; however, this increase was significant. The standard deviation of the scores before and after the treatment was 11.913 which means the data had a high deviation and differences were not close to each other. Thus the above tables show that the mean of learners’ listening anxiety scores after teaching vocabulary and grammar did not have a significant change. Therefore the null hypothesis for question three is not rejected since there wasn’t a significant change between pre and post listening

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anxiety of the learners. In other words teaching key vocabulary and grammar could not have a significant effect on the students’ listening anxiety.

Research Question 4

In order to investigate the fourth research question, an ANOVA was conducted to see whether there is a significant difference in listening anxiety among groups receiving different types of advance organizer activities (KV, KG and KVG) and the group receiving no advance organizer (NAO). Tables 12 and 13 show the results for research question four:

Table 12: Descriptive Statistics for Listening Anxiety among All Groups

Group	Mean	N	S.D
Key vocabulary	4.43	21	11.272
Key grammar	6.46	13	14.175
Key vocabulary+ key grammar	-1.92	13	11.913
Control	-1.11	19	11.160
Total	1.98	66	12.193

As table 12 displays, there are perceptible differences between the mean score of the groups.

Table 13: ANOVA for Listening Anxiety among Three Different Groups

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	765.899	3	27.431	1.779	.160
Within Groups	8897.086	62	2.106		
Total	9662.985	65			

According to Table 13 and the fact that p-value is 160 ($p\text{-value}=160 > 0.05$), there is no significant difference among the mean of all four groups. Consequently for this question no other methods will be used to determine the differences among the groups. Therefore the null hypothesis for question twelve is not rejected since there wasn’t a significant difference between the mean of listening anxiety scores of the one group and that of the other groups.

Discussion

The current study examined the effects of using advance organizers on listening anxiety, and the results of the current treatment have shown that none of the three types of AOs used in this study affected listening anxiety. In other words, none of the null hypotheses regarding the effect of teaching AOs on the listening anxiety were rejected.

These results are not in line with those of Vogely (1998), Chung (2002), and Zhang (2013). Vogely (1998) had claimed vocabulary can arouse listening anxiety. Vogely (1998) investigated the source of listening anxiety in the language classroom and found that foreign language listening anxiety (FLLA) associated with the types of listening input, listening process (strategies and time), and instructional factors, such as in-class practices and tests. Chung (2002) had reported that vocabulary pre-teaching activities had a positive psychological effect on reducing their anxiety. This study also contrasts with Arnold’s idea (2000) who believed that while new vocabulary can be a source of anxiety, listening instructions that focus too much on production and correct answers can also arouse anxiety. In addition, Zhang (2013) claimed that in order to alleviate listening anxiety, appropriate treatments should be given to deal with new vocabulary. However the present study disproved the above mentioned studies in that there was no significant difference in learners’ pre and post listening scores. The results of the current study also contrast with those of Batiha *et al.*, (2014) which investigated the factors that contribute in provoking general FL classroom anxiety. The results of the study indicated that lack of vocabulary was one of the factors that provoked the general FL classroom anxiety. They found that lack of vocabularies which are difficult to understand frustrated the learners. Similarly, the results of Noro’s study (2006) which aimed to clarify the nature of listening anxiety, showed that one of the main sources of listening

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anxiety is vocabulary. Contrary to the results of the current study, Teng (1998) found that listening support (repeated input) reduces the test anxiety. It is interesting to make a comparison between the results of this study and those of Gojian (2014) whose study was similar to current study. He investigated the effect of lexical and grammatical awareness on reducing learners' anxiety. Unlike the results of current study, his findings showed a notable improvement in learners' anxiety due to receiving lexical and grammatical awareness. Also, the results of this study contrast with that of Chang's study (2008) which revealed that different types of listening support (pre-teaching of content and vocabulary, question preview, and repeated input) affected the anxiety levels of students. These contrary results may be due to the proficiency levels of students.

Conclusion

The aim of the present study was to determine the effect of different types of advance organizers (AO) on listening anxiety of EFL learners. Findings of this study in affective research did not show the importance of reducing listening anxiety in listening comprehension. This led to the rejection of all null hypotheses. The three hypotheses were analyzed through paired-samples t-test. The first, second, and third null hypothesis claiming that different types of advance organizer activities do not affect EFL learners' listening anxiety were not rejected. In addition the fourth question which was analyzed through an ANOVA claiming that there is no significant difference in listening anxiety among groups receiving different types of advance organizer activities (KV, KG and KVG) and the group receiving no advance organizer (NAO) was not rejected either. It may be due to the fact that many factors can cause anxiety. For instance, difficulties associated with rate of speech, lexical features and pronunciation are other sources of stress. Reviewing the related literature, the current study had conflicting results, thus effect of AO deserve further investigation as a means of reducing listening anxiety. Also, various forms of listening support should be taken into consideration. The various types of listening supports may have different effect on listening anxiety and benefit learners more.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The study was intended to investigate the listening anxiety in order to determine the level of learners' listening anxiety before and after the instruction within different types of AO. However, the result showed no significant effect of AO on listening anxiety, since listening anxiety can be a difficult obstacle in listening comprehension; attempts must be made to minimize this as much as possible. Also, this study examined the AO on listening anxiety of female learners; conducting this research on male students is recommended, too.

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