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Achievement Emotions in EFL Listening Class: A Quantitative Study Using AEQ-S

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Abstract:

In English language learning, productive skills such as speaking and writing are often prioritized, while a vital receptive skill such as listening is frequently assumed as a secondary status. This undervaluation contributes to negative stereotypes and adds the challenges faced by EFL learners. Among the overlooked matters is the emotional experience of learners, which provides a crucial role, particularly in skill-based course like listening that demand sustained attention and confidence. This study aims to examine the achievement emotions experienced by EFL learners in listening class using the Achievement Emotions Questionnaire – Short (AEQ-S), developed by Pekrun et al. (2011). A total of 37 university students completed the AEQ-S, which measures both positive and negative emotions across three domains: classroom activities, learning processes, and test-taking situations. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and paired-sample t-tests. The finding revealed a significant difference in all three contexts. In classroom-related activities, positive emotions ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 0.65$) were significantly higher than negative emotions ($M = 2.50$, $SD = 0.71$), ($t(36) = 6.947$, $p < .001$). A similar trend was found in learning-related ($t(36) = 6.139$, $p < .001$) and test-related situations ($t(36) = 5.488$, $p < .001$), indicating the consistency of emotional dominance across academic conditions with *enjoyment* as the most frequently experienced emotion. These findings highlight the critical need to integrate emotional consideration into listening pedagogy. By fostering emotionally supportive environments, educators can enhance learners' engagement and aid them to navigate the challenges of listening comprehension.

Keywords: *Achievement Emotions, Listening, AEQ-S, Enjoyment*

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Introduction

The communicative competence always has been a prideful fundamental goal that educators strive to achieve particularly in English language education environment. The pursue roots from a consistent academic requirement and an essential need to enable EFL learners in effectively conditioning themselves into professional environment laden with world globalization and interdependence. English as lingua franca has long established its dominance in diverse fields from international communication, professional context, to education and been amplified its significance of nurturing balanced and comprehensive English proficiency (Crystal, 2012). Yet the issue of how learners acquire, adapt, process, and apply English across various skills stay as the main concern of scholarly and pedagogical discussion in applied linguistics.

Language learning conventionally involves four skills: listening, reading, speaking, and writing. These are categorized into two primary groups which are receptive skills, listening and reading; and productive skills, which are speaking and writing. Receptive skills essentially benefit learners' ability in absorbing, interpreting, and constructing the input meaning, while productive skills dive into the proficiency of active production in communicating ideas, messages, and thoughts. Both receptive and productive skills are a must combination essential to manifest a good communicative competence. Principally, the duo have to be cultivated simultaneously ensuring a comprehensively balanced mastery of the target language (Toshpo'latova, 2024). In fact, some uneven pedagogical emphasis appears to be repeated in classroom settings.

At some points, it is a well-known fact that listening poses inherent challenge for its lack of visual aids, unlike reading or writing, which own the support of clear print form. There are no words to see or underline but only transient auditory signals to swiftly process and internalize. Consequently, there is a burden shadowing learners' effort in understanding the courses. They might rely solely on their own auditory skill and instincts when interpreting spoken language. Hence, the growing self-doubt and anxiety become unavoidable variable in verbal communication. The two opposite perceptions claim listening as both well-acknowledged language development essential yet frequently described as abstract, challenge-induced, and unfortunately discouraging for students. The tension between its importance in acquiring proficiency in a new language and its inherent difficulties underscores the necessity for targeted strategies aimed at enhancing listening skills among learners while also clarifying expectations within educational settings.

Beyond the visible aforementioned issue in skill development lays another critical yet often overlooked dimension: the emotional experiences of learners within language education. The weight of emotions, both positive and negative, sincerely affecting primary variable in learning activities namely motivation, engagement, attention span, and classroom focus. Positive emotions involve enjoyment, pride, hopefulness, while negative ones circle among anxiety, boredom, and hopelessness. Those emotions particularly pertinent to listening as they play crucial role in aiding sustained concentration and self-assurance. They either facilitate or hinder comprehension efforts considerably. Negative emotions like anxiety or boredom may obstruct effective learning by detracting from focus or creating mental barriers that impede understanding. Conversely, positive emotions such as enjoyment can foster persistence and resilience among learners facing challenges.

Teachers and researchers have increasingly pointed out that emotions in the classroom should not be brushed aside. This is particularly true in EFL situations, where students are not only dealing with new words and grammar but also the pressure that comes with learning in a foreign language. Listening activities make the challenge even

heavier; they are abstract, demanding, and often tiring. Because of this, learners naturally experience different kinds of feelings. Some emotions make the task easier, while others become obstacles. At first, it may sound unnecessary to look closely at such reactions. After all, they might seem like small matters. Yet these “small” aspects often end up shaping the way lessons work in practice and how effectively students learn.

Grasping how students feel is not just about listing emotions, it also requires digging into what causes those feelings in the first place. When teachers notice, for instance, that learners become hopeless during listening activities, they can look more closely at what sparks that reaction and adjust their teaching in response. On the other hand, if certain tasks bring enjoyment, teachers can intentionally provide more of them to help sustain students’ drive. Seen in this way, studying emotions becomes more than observation; it works as a trigger for practical change. Recognizing emotions helps identify barriers, which in turn opens the door to solutions that boost motivation and performance. This cycle is central to tackling the real challenges EFL learners face, while also building a classroom atmosphere that is both supportive and engaging.

A valuable lens for exploring emotions in learning is Pekrun’s (2006) Control-Value Theory (CVT) of achievement emotions. The framework suggests that emotions emerge from how learners perceive two things: their level of control over a task and the value they attach to it. In the context of listening, limited control due to fast delivery, unfamiliar accents, or unknown vocabulary often produces anxiety or even hopelessness. On the other hand, when learners value listening highly and feel some degree of control, they are more likely to experience enjoyment and hope. CVT also provided the foundation for assessment tools such as the Achievement Emotions Questionnaire (AEQ), which captures a broad range of emotions including enjoyment, hope, pride, boredom, anxiety, and hopelessness (Pekrun et al., 2011). A shorter version, AEQ-S, maintains strong reliability while being more practical for classroom research (Putwain & Pekrun, 2017).

Although CVT and AEQ have been widely applied in educational psychology, they have yet to be fully exploited in second and foreign language acquisition research. Shao et al. (2022) show that emotions act as mediators between learners’ control-value appraisals and their performance, with enjoyment playing a particularly strong role in sustaining effort and self-regulation. Still, most of these studies address language learning in general rather than focusing on listening. This gap is notable because receptive skills, especially listening, are closely linked with negative emotions such as anxiety, as demonstrated by Pae (2023) and Cui and Kong (2024). The lack of listening-specific investigations highlights the need for more focused research into how emotions affect students’ experiences with listening tasks, particularly in EFL contexts where listening is often one of the most difficult skills to master.

Beyond individual differences, classroom environments themselves play a decisive role in shaping how learners feel. Dewaele and MacIntyre (2022) emphasize that teachers are central in establishing the emotional tone of a class, and this climate in turn influences participation and achievement. Choices in instructional design, classroom interactions, and assessment can either soften or intensify negative emotions. For example, offering scaffolder support and gradually increasing listening complexity can nurture hope and enjoyment, whereas heavy emphasis on high-stakes listening tests may heighten anxiety and hopelessness. Ravichandran and Amran (2024) point out that exam-oriented listening situation often provoke stronger emotional reactions than everyday tasks, showing that situational context can be just as influential as the skill itself.

Taken together, previous studies reveal three important gaps. First, although emotions are now acknowledged as essential to language learning, systematic investigations of their role in listening remain scarce. Second, while CVT and AEQ offer strong theoretical and methodological tools, they have not yet been fully used to examine listening-specific emotions in EFL settings. Third, despite evidence that classroom practices and teacher behavior strongly affect how learners feel, pedagogical implications are still underexplored. Bridging these gaps is necessary for progress in both theory and practice of listening instruction.

Further, the present study sets out to examine EFL learners' emotions during listening comprehension. The focus is on both positive emotions (such as enjoyment and hope) and negative ones (including anxiety, boredom, and hopelessness). Guided by the AEQ-S, the research explores which emotions dominate across three settings: classroom interaction, general learning processes, and test-related situations. Framing the study within CVT and drawing on recent advances in language emotion research, the goal is to provide a clearer picture of how emotions influence listening. Ultimately, the findings are expected to inform teaching strategies that improve not only listening ability but also the emotional climate of classrooms, creating conditions that are both more supportive and more effective for language learning.

Methods

This research applied a descriptive quantitative design to look into the kinds of emotions EFL students go through in their listening classes. The design is intentionally picked because the purpose was not to test cause-and-effect, but to get a picture of how often certain emotions appeared and how positive and negative feelings were spread across learning situations. In other words, the concern here was more about observing emotional patterns than changing variables, which fits the nature of descriptive research (Creswell, 2014).

The study involved 37 students from an English education program at an Indonesian university. They were chosen purposively, since all of them were currently taking a listening course when the data were collected, which meant their emotional experiences were relevant to the study. The group was mixed, including both men and women, and they came from different semesters, so the sample still represented a fairly typical EFL student body in higher education. Before the survey began, the participants were told what the study was about, and joining it was completely voluntary. To keep them safe and comfortable, their names were not recorded and the information they shared was treated as confidential.

The instrument used in this study was the Achievement Emotions Questionnaire-Short (AEQ-S), first developed by Pekrun et al. (2011). This questionnaire has been widely recognized as a reliable tool for examining both positive emotions such as enjoyment, hope, and pride, and negative ones, including anxiety, hopelessness, and boredom. What makes the AEQ-S particularly useful is that it organizes emotions into three different academic situations: emotions that occur during class activities (for instance, while following a lecture), emotions connected to individual learning outside the classroom, and emotions that emerge in testing contexts like examinations.

The AEQ-S is made up of a series of items on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). In this study, several items were slightly modified so that they fit better with listening classes for example, statements such as *"I enjoy listening class activities"* or *"I feel anxious during listening tests."* These changes were kept minimal to make sure the instrument stayed true to its original

design, while still making the questions more relevant for the context of listening. To make the process simpler, the questionnaire was distributed online through Google Forms. Participants were first given short instructions before answering, and most of them finished within about 30 minutes. Their answers were automatically stored in Google Forms, then exported into Microsoft Excel, and finally moved into SPSS (version 25) for statistical analysis.

The data analysis in this study was carried out through several steps. First, descriptive statistics were calculated, focusing on the mean and standard deviation of both positive and negative emotions in the three different contexts. These results gave a general picture of which emotions tended to appear more strongly among the students. Before moving to the main analysis, a normality test was conducted using the Shapiro–Wilk test, since the number of participants was fewer than fifty. The test showed that the data were normally distributed, which meant that parametric statistical procedures could be applied. After that, the study used inferential statistics. A paired-sample t-test was run to compare the average scores of positive and negative emotions within each context, classroom activities, learning activities outside class, and test situations. This test was chosen because it is designed for comparing two related groups, in this case the two types of emotions reported by the same students. The output of the t-test included the *t* values, the degrees of freedom ($df = 36$), and the *p* values.

The results were then interpreted to identify which emotions were most dominant in each of the three contexts. Particular attention was given to enjoyment, as it consistently appeared as the most reported positive emotion across the data. Finally, ethical procedures were followed throughout the research process. All participants had given their consent to join the study, and their information was kept anonymous. The data were only presented in summary form, with no personal details revealed.

Results and Discussion

Findings

The present study examined the emotions experienced by EFL learners during listening classes at the university level. It considered three main contexts: classroom activities, individual learning, and test situations. Overall, the results indicated that students tended to show stronger positive emotions than negative ones. More specifically, the mean score for positive emotions was $M = 3.78$ ($SD = 0.65$), whereas negative emotions had a lower mean of $M = 2.50$ ($SD = 0.71$). This disparity suggests that learners approached listening with a constructive emotional orientation, reflecting greater enthusiasm, hope, and pride than anxiety, boredom, or hopelessness. A series of paired-sample t-tests further revealed that positive emotions were significantly higher than negative emotions in all three contexts: classroom-related ($t(36) = 6.947, p < .001$), learning-related ($t(36) = 6.139, p < .001$), and test-related ($t(36) = 5.488, p < .001$). These findings provide strong statistical evidence that positive emotions predominated in EFL listening.

In classroom settings, enjoyment emerged as one of the most frequently reported emotions. 17 students agreed that they enjoyed listening classes, while 20 strongly agreed that they looked forward to learning, and 15 agreed they felt energized during class. Similarly, hope was widespread: 17 students strongly agreed that they were full of hope about their listening progress, and 16 agreed that they felt confident when they understood the material. Pride was also evident: 14 students strongly agreed that they felt pride when doing well in listening.

However, negative emotions, while less frequent, were not absent. Sixteen students agreed that they sometimes felt nervous during class, and 13 reported embarrassment when unable to follow a listening passage. Boredom was less pronounced, with 17 students disagreeing that they got bored. Hopelessness was minimal, with 20 strongly disagreeing that they had “lost hope” in listening. This pattern indicates that while positive emotions clearly dominate in classroom-related contexts, anxiety and embarrassment remain persistent challenges for a subset of learners.

The learning-related context elicited the strongest positive emotional responses. Enjoyment was most pronounced here: 22 students strongly agreed that when their listening studies went well, it gave them a rush of excitement. Hope was equally strong, with 17 agreeing they felt confident about mastering listening material, and 18 agreeing they were optimistic about progress. Pride was also salient, with 19 strongly agreeing that excelling in listening filled them with pride.

At the same time, negative emotions were evident, particularly anxiety. Thirteen strongly agreed that they worried about coping with listening tasks, 15 agreed that worry made them sweat, and 14 admitted to feeling ashamed of their lack of ability in listening. Helplessness, however, was less commonly endorsed, with most students disagreeing with statements that suggested despair or lack of control. This suggests that while enjoyment, pride, and hope are highly motivating factors in the learning process, listening-related anxiety can undermine learners’ confidence, making it a central affective barrier in this domain.

In the test-related context, the emotional profile was more complex. Enjoyment levels were moderate, with most students choosing neutral responses when asked if they enjoyed listening tests. Hope, however, remained strong: 20 students agreed they were optimistic during listening exams, and 18 agreed they thought optimistically about their performance. Pride was also reported, with 11 strongly agreeing they felt proud during tests, and 17 agreeing that pride fueled their effort. The most distinctive emotion in test settings was relief. A large majority, 28 students, strongly agreed that after listening exams they could “breathe easy,” reflecting the strong role of relief as a post-assessment emotion.

Negative emotions were prominent in test contexts, particularly anxiety. Seventeen students agreed that they worried about test difficulty, while 14 strongly agreed that their heart pounded during listening exams. Shame was moderate, with 11 agreeing they felt embarrassed when they could not perform well. Hopelessness remained low, with most students disagreeing with items suggesting despair. Taken together, these results demonstrate that although optimism and relief dominate listening tests, anxiety is also heightened in evaluative situations.

Across all three contexts, enjoyment consistently emerged as the dominant positive emotion, while anxiety was the most frequently reported negative emotion. Hope and pride were also strong motivators, particularly in classroom and learning contexts, while relief played a unique role in test-related scenarios. Negative emotions, though present, were consistently reported at lower levels than positive ones, underscoring that learners generally approach listening with constructive emotional orientations, even while experiencing situational anxiety and embarrassment.

Discussion

The unbalanced perception and treatment between receptive and productive skills are manifested in the notable tendency in several EFL contexts. The bias that associated with productive skills is privileged from its creation of broader chances to show a greater visibility of productive performance. It emerges from class discussion,

oral presentations, verbal debate, written assignments, also essays, that all serve as the obvious direct demonstration of learners' language ability. Conversely, receptive skills are quite frequently attributed as passive process and silent analysis with less demonstrative proficiency. Although as a matter of fact, listening, as one of the most cognitively demanding skills of four, is often taken for granted and underestimated. Vandergrift and Goh (2012) express that listening consists of a highly complex comprehensive activity laden with sustained attention, predictive and intuitive inferencing, and active meaning construction which is far from its false attribute of a mere passive reception. In contrast, its less noticeable demonstrative side often results in underdeveloped sufficient strategy training, reduced classroom focus, and inefficient instructional time, causing learners themselves to undervalue its importance.

As the productive skill, listening is a 'front gate' of input information that a later directly affects the process of language production. Thus, making listening holds undeniably pivotal role in language acquisition process. The quality of output produced by productive skills depends on how well learners' utilize their auditory ability. It is a well-established understanding among educators and linguists that students are expectedly unable to serve accurate and meaningful expressions in a new language if their listening comprehension skills are underdeveloped. Paradoxically, however, several students perceive listening as a "double-edged sword." On one hand, at several situations they feel lost and uncertain about what exactly their language courses require from them. This issue arises from the false claim that listening might appear to be a passive activity, where students mindlessly attend classes and listen without clear guidance on specific actions or strategies expected to achieve a certain target. Such ambiguity transform into frustration as students struggle with the educators as well as their own expectations while navigating complex auditory information.

Emotions serve as a salient variable in EFL context because learners engage with foreign language that noticeably is not their own. They deal with limited opportunities and unfavorable environment where at several occurrences the chance for authentic practice is rare. Different with natives who naturally acquire listening skills through immersion, EFL learners must intentionally gritting their teeth to train and accustom themselves through series of new sounds interpretation, unfamiliar accents, and culturally specific references. This cognitively demanding process further leaves learners particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in their emotional states. For instance, a learner experiencing high levels of anxiety during a listening test may struggle to comprehensively understand even simple utterances which may lead to self-doubt; on the other hand, one experiencing enjoyment during classroom listening activities may be more inclined to persevere and improved hopefulness over time.

Perceiving and treating auditory ability as secondary skill carries consequences especially when the learners fail to take the value which later stems into lack of motivation, decreased engagement, and unwillingness to participate in classroom activity. Pae (2023) argues that emotions in language learning are associated with particular skills: productive skills are tied with enjoyment, while the receptive skills are perceived as anxiety-induced ones. This is in line with Cui and Kong's research (2024) about the prominent enjoyment experienced by speaking and writing class, highlighting the uneven emotional load across skills. Overall these researches show that undervaluing listening does not stem from misplaced priorities, it also comes from how learners experience certain emotion during the process that leads to imbalance which further slow their listening development.

In recent years, emotions have moved to the center of discussions about how people learn languages. Earlier cognitive models often pushed emotions to the margins, treating them as secondary to thought and memory. However, current perspectives in educational psychology and applied linguistics recognize them as key drivers of learning. Emotions shape motivation, direct attention, influence engagement, and affect self-regulation (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). Mega et al. (2020) emphasize that emotions are not just outcomes of learning but also active contributors to success. Enjoyment and hope, for example, can strengthen persistence and effort, while negative emotions such as anxiety, boredom, and hopelessness drain learners' energy and undermine performance. In the language classroom, anxiety continues to be the most widely reported negative state, whereas enjoyment has consistently been identified as the strongest positive predictor of achievement (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2022).

Many teachers point out that listening, more than any other skill is easily shaped by emotions. Reading, for instance, lets learners slow down or go back to a passage, but listening gives no such luxury. It requires quick thinking, real-time understanding, and instant interpretation. If comprehension fails, the moment is gone; this can make the task stressful and even disheartening. Krug and Zander (2023) note that feelings like anxiety or boredom can interfere with working memory, leaving learners with little mental space to process what they hear. On the other hand, positive emotions such as hope or enjoyment tend to keep students attentive and willing to keep going even when the material is tough. Ravichandran and Amran (2024) also found that hope and enjoyment were the most common positive emotions in both speaking and listening, although anxiety still played a major role especially during listening. All of this shows that emotions are not side concerns in teaching listening; they sit right at the heart of how the skill develops.

The predominance of positive emotions in this study demonstrates their central role in shaping learners' engagement with EFL listening. Enjoyment, in particular, was reported at the highest levels, especially in learning-related contexts, where 22 students strongly agreed that successful listening gave them a rush of excitement. This aligns with Pekrun's (2006) Control-Value Theory (CVT), which posits that enjoyment arises when learners perceive high control and value in a task. Learners' recognition of the importance of listening, coupled with their sense of competence, likely underpinned their positive affective orientation.

These findings corroborate earlier studies showing that enjoyment fosters persistence and engagement in language learning. Shao et al. (2022) observed that enjoyment promotes resilience and self-regulation in second language learning, while Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014, 2022) highlighted that positive emotions enhance motivation even in the presence of anxiety. Similarly, Li (2022) found that classroom enjoyment reduced disengagement and burnout among EFL students, emphasizing its protective role against emotional exhaustion. In the present study, enjoyment's dominance across all contexts suggests it acts as a powerful buffer against the cognitive demands of listening, consistent with the idea that positive affect broadens learners' attentional and cognitive resources.

Hope was also a salient emotion. Learners consistently expressed optimism about mastering listening, both in classroom and test settings. This reflects findings from Cui and Kong (2024), who reported that advanced learners often display more hope and enjoyment in productive skills but less so in receptive ones, underscoring the significance of these results in listening contexts. The role of hope as an anticipatory emotion suggests that learners believed in their capacity to improve and succeed, which is central to maintaining long-term motivation. Pride further contributed to learners'

positive affective experiences. Nineteen students strongly agreed that excelling in listening filled them with pride, echoing findings by Shao et al. (2022) that pride fosters persistence and strengthens learners' self-concept. In the listening classroom, pride may stem from overcoming perceived difficulty, reinforcing learners' self-confidence.

Finally, relief emerged as a distinctive test-related emotion. Nearly three-quarters of learners (28 students) strongly agreed they could "breathe easy" after exams, reflecting relief as a natural response to the cessation of evaluative stress. While rarely examined in SLA research, relief has been noted in assessment studies. Riegel and Evans (2022) found that frequent assessments shaped students' achievement emotions, with relief often accompanying the completion of high-stakes tasks. The prominence of relief here underscores the value of considering post-task emotions, not just those experienced during learning.

Despite the dominance of positive affect, negative emotions were not absent. Anxiety was the most salient, particularly in classroom and test contexts, where 16–17 students reported nervousness and worry. This finding is consistent with a robust body of literature linking listening to heightened anxiety. Elkhafaifi (2005) demonstrated that listening anxiety can significantly hinder comprehension, while Zhao (2021) found a clear negative correlation between listening anxiety and academic achievement among Chinese college students. In the current study, the presence of anxiety even alongside high enjoyment highlights the ambivalent nature of affect in listening: learners can value and enjoy listening while simultaneously experiencing evaluative pressure.

Boredom was relatively less pronounced, yet still relevant. Seventeen students disagreed that they were bored during listening, suggesting low levels of disengagement. This resonates with Krug and Zander's (2023) argument that boredom is less frequent in dynamic, engaging classroom settings but can emerge when tasks lack challenge. Given that listening is often perceived as passive ("just sitting and listening"), boredom remains a potential risk.

Hopelessness was minimal, with most students strongly disagreeing with items expressing despair. This is encouraging, as hopelessness has been linked to academic disengagement and dropout (Pekrun et al., 2007). The absence of strong hopelessness in this sample indicates that while learners may experience situational anxiety or embarrassment, they still hold an overall belief in their capacity to improve.

These findings support the notion that listening is a pivotal yet double-edged skill in EFL learning. On one hand, it provides essential input for productive skills, making it foundational for overall communicative competence. On the other hand, learners often perceive listening as confusing, passive, and difficult, since it relies heavily on auditory processing without visual cues. This tension was reflected in the coexistence of high enjoyment and persistent anxiety in learners' responses. As Zhao (2021) noted, listening anxiety poses unique challenges due to the ephemeral nature of spoken input, requiring concentration and self-reliance. The dual perception of listening as both essential and overwhelming explains why learners experience a broad spectrum of emotions in this domain.

A central insight from this study is the way emotions trigger motivational chain reactions. Enjoyment and hope fuel persistence, engagement, and resilience, while anxiety and embarrassment can create barriers that hinder performance. Understanding this dynamic provides a diagnostic tool for educators: if students exhibit high anxiety in tests, interventions such as scaffolding, pre-listening activities, or low-stakes assessments can mitigate negative effect. Similarly, nurturing enjoyment through authentic materials and interactive tasks can reinforce positive cycles of motivation.

This resonates with Pishghadam et al. (2016), who emphasized the role of emotions in shaping EFL classroom dynamics, and with Li et al. (2022), who demonstrated that classroom environment and emotions jointly mediate learners' willingness to communicate.

The use of the AEQ-S in this study provides a methodological contribution by adapting a validated instrument to the underexplored domain of EFL listening. The AEQ has been widely validated in multiple domains, including science (Macías León et al., 2021), physical education (Fierro-Suero et al., 2021; Ibrahim et al., 2020), and physics (Bhansali et al., 2023). These studies confirm the flexibility of the AEQ framework in capturing domain-specific emotions. Similarly, Sadoughi and Hejazi (2021) validated shortened AEQ for foreign language contexts, while Shao et al. (2023) applied CVT to examine multiple emotions in SLA classrooms. By applying AEQ-S to listening, the present study expands its scope, echoing the adaptability shown in AEQ-Physics and AEQ-PE. This methodological precedent strengthens confidence in the findings, while highlighting listening as a fruitful domain for future AEQ-based research.

The findings carry several pedagogical implications. First, fostering enjoyment should be a deliberate instructional goal, as enjoyment enhances persistence and reduces disengagement (Li, 2022). Teachers can achieve this by incorporating authentic listening materials, multimedia resources, and interactive comprehension tasks. Second, addressing anxiety is critical, especially in tests. Strategies such as pre-listening support, practice with diverse accents, and formative assessment can reduce performance pressure. Third, acknowledging relief as a post-test emotion suggests that reducing test-related stress could enhance learners' overall well-being. Teachers also play a pivotal role in shaping classroom emotional climates. As Dewaele and MacIntyre (2022) argued, teacher encouragement and supportive feedback can cultivate positive affect while minimizing anxiety. Similarly, Ahmed et al. (2021) emphasized that students' classroom emotional experiences are highly sensitive to teacher-student interactions. Thus, training teachers to recognize and respond to learners' affective cues is vital.

This study contributes to the literature by (1) foregrounding listening-specific emotions, (2) demonstrating the dominance of positive affect in this domain, (3) identifying relief as a salient but underexplored test-related emotion, and (4) extending the AEQ-S into a listening context. Future research should employ longitudinal designs to trace emotional fluctuations over time, as emotions are inherently dynamic (Muftah & Alhazmi, 2023). Additionally, qualitative methods such as interviews or classroom observations could complement self-report data, offering deeper insights into learners' lived emotional experiences. Finally, exploring the bidirectional relationship between achievement and emotions, as suggested by Li and Xing (2024), could provide further clarity on how emotions both shape and are shaped by listening success.

Conclusion

This research set out to examine how EFL students experience emotions during listening classes, drawing on data collected with the Achievement Emotions Questionnaire-Short (AEQ-S). The focus was not only on the classroom itself but also on learning outside of class and on testing situations. What clearly emerged from the findings is that students were far more likely to report positive emotions than negative ones. Enjoyment, in particular, stood out as the most dominant feeling across all three contexts. While emotions such as anxiety and boredom were certainly present, they did not take center stage. Instead, the stronger influence came from constructive feelings that encouraged students to stay motivated, persistent, and actively engaged in the listening process.

From a teaching perspective, these results carry important implications. Listening instruction is often approached as a purely cognitive skill, with attention directed mainly toward strategies and comprehension tasks. However, this study shows that the emotional climate of a listening class matters just as much. When teachers create a supportive and encouraging environment, they give students a better chance to deal with potential setbacks and to approach listening tasks with confidence. In practice, this might mean designing activities that students find meaningful, lowering the pressure during tests, or even building in moments where learners can share their difficulties without fear of judgment. Such small changes can ease anxiety and reduce disengagement, which in turn supports both comprehension and overall language development.

On the academic side, the study contributes to the growing body of work on the role of affect in second language acquisition. While emotions in speaking or writing have been more widely studied, listening has often been overlooked. This research helps to fill that gap by offering concrete evidence that listening is also shaped by the balance of positive and negative feelings. Of course, the study has its limits. The sample size was relatively small, and the use of self-reported data always carries the risk of subjectivity. Because of this, future work could take a different approach, using larger groups of students, tracking them over longer periods of time, and combining surveys with interviews or observations. Such methods would provide a more detailed picture of how emotions shift and evolve during listening.

In the end, the main message is clear, emotions are not separate from listening, they are part of it. Encouraging enjoyment is not a minor detail but a central part of effective pedagogy. By putting students' feelings at the heart of teaching, listening lessons can become more engaging, productive, and rewarding.

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