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FLIPPED LEARNING AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE LISTENING ANXIETY: COGNITIVE, AFFECTIVE, MOTIVATIONAL, AND SOCIOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

This article, theoretically, explored how flipped learning can mitigate Foreign Language Listening Anxiety (FLLA) through the integration of six pioneering frameworks: Cognitive Load Theory, the Affective Filter Hypothesis, Social Cognitive Theory, Schema Theory, Metacognitive Models, and Multimodal Input Processing. The theoretical model suggested explains how the flipped instruction can alleviate listening anxiety in the form of less processing overload, lower affective filters, enhanced sense of self-efficacy, engagement of existing knowledge, utilization of metacognitive strategies, and use of multimodal input to build meaning. Empirical study examination identifies instances supporting both arguments where the flipped strategies improve comprehension without diminishing anxiety and counter instances when, even with improved performance, anxiety does not decrease. The synthesis emphasizes that flipped pedagogy does not necessarily work; it depends on moderating factors such as task complexity, learner autonomy, teacher mediation, peer interaction, cultural context, and access to technology. Beyond descriptive overview, the studies reconceptualize FLLA as a multivariate construct depending on cognitive, affective, motivational, and sociocultural processes. It also makes design principle deductions for anxiety-sensitive instruction and offers research directions on mediating and moderating factors that are believed to affect FLLA in flipped learning.

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The article ends by hypothesizing that well-designed flipped learning can transform the classroom into a preparation room of confidence and development.

Keywords: Flipped Learning, Foreign Language Listening Anxiety (FLLA), Theoretical Methodology, Language Pedagogy, Cognitive and Affective Frameworks

Introduction

Listening comprehension regularly ranks as the most anxiety-provoking element in foreign/second language learning. Foreign Language Listening Anxiety (FLLA) is typically defined as a state-specific anxiety of not being able to process spoken input in real time, most frequently triggered by rapid speech, unfamiliar accents, lexical density, or lack of context support, which deflects processing and cripples performance. Empirical studies reveal anxiety during listening is inversely linked with achievement, which underlines its pedagogical importance: low-anxiety learning environments will most probably result in more efficacious listening returns and overall course performance.

Cognitively, anxiety diverts working memory capacity required for simultaneous decoding, parsing, and semantic integration of the stream of speech. In response, flipped learning has become a trend that moves initial exposure to basics out of the classroom (most commonly through teacher-created video/audio) and preserves in-class time for collaboration and guided practice.

Pausable, rewindable, replayable pre-class experience can cushion against cognitive overload and support deeper processing before next higher-stakes task and make flipped formats an attractive intervention for FLLA. Krashen's Affective Filter hypothesis further predicts that low-stakes, individual pre-previewing of materials will lower anxiety and provide more input available for acquisition. In addition, Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory further predicts that successful pre-class rehearsal increases self-efficacy, which further controls anxiety and drives persistence with challenging in-class listening activities. The other lenses described in the paper—schema theory, multimodal input processing, and metacognitive models—all reach the same conclusion that priming background knowledge, the use of audio with visual cues, and instruction in planning/monitoring strategies are all easier to develop in reversed order and that each are linked with less stress and with greater understanding.

Research shows that flipped listening instruction can improve listening performance and even alleviate listening anxiety (e.g., Qiu & Luo, 2022; Bolandifar & Salehi, 2024).

Others, on the other hand, note that although performance can be enhanced, classroom or listening anxiety can be reduced nonsignificantly (Hosseini & Mahmoodi, 2023), or anxiety is kept in moderate states by text difficulty and strategy use (Mohamad & Raja Yacob, 2024), and even higher in some environments in flipped classrooms with positive attitudes (Zhang & Pan, 2024).

Thus, this article has only two aims:

1. Integrate cognitive, affective, motivational, and sociocultural explanations of when and why flipped teaching decreases (or doesn't decrease) FLLA

2. Provide an integrated conceptual model that clearly explains how designable features of flipped listening (control of input, multimodality, scaffolding of strategy, supportive feedback) impact cognitive load, self-efficacy, motivation, and ultimately, anxiety and performance.

Unlike previous reviews that merely report results, this article proposes a conditional conceptual model specifying under what conditions flipped learning alleviates listening anxiety, under what conditions it is a non-effect, and under what conditions it may even enhance it. The original contribution lies in synthesizing six theoretical perspectives into a single explanatory framework together with precise descriptions of boundary conditions and design principles for anxiety-sensitive instruction.

Flipped designs are likely to promote willingness to communicate and improve listening performance but are different in terms of the consistency and size of anxiety reduction in research and setting. For instance, while there are studies that show anxiety reductions as well as improvement in listening (Bolandifar & Salehi, 2024; Qiu & Luo, 2022), there are other studies that show weaker or setting-specific effects (Chen & Lin, 2021; Hosseini, Rajabi, & Mahmoodi, 2024).

Current research also highlights that learner variables such as prior digital literacy, language, and self-regulation processes influence outcomes (Rasheed et al., 2020; Mohamad & Raja Yacob, 2024; Zhang & Pan, 2024). Generally, the findings highlight that flipped learning is not a panacea for

everything. The outcome is a demand for theoretically driven design principles and empirically testable hypotheses, both of which are addressed in the subsequent sections by synthesising theories and findings.

Theoretical Explanatory Accounts for Foreign Language Listening Anxiety

Foreign Language Listening Anxiety (FLLA) has been explained under the umbrella of several theoretical frameworks, each of which offers insightful explanation of the confluence of anxiety with the complex activity of listening comprehension. Classic explanations such as anxiety's filter function within input processing are emphasized within more mature theories such as Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis, while cognitive theories cite bounds on working memory capacity and processing capability (Baddeley, 2003; Eysenck, Derakshan, Santos, & Calvo, 2007; Field, 2008).

Motivational theories, particularly Bandura's (1997) Social Cognitive Theory, explain how students' self-efficacy beliefs affect coping responses, and schema theory (Anderson & Pearson, 1984) explains how prior knowledge helps predict and understand. Later models highlight the importance of metacognitive regulation of listening (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012), multimodal support through dual coding (Paivio, 1986; Mayer & Fiorella, 2022), and sociocultural accounts of coordination of cognition, affect, and activity (Qin, Yao, & Jin, 2022).

No single theory is sufficient; rather, FLLA is best accounted for by a multi-theory synthesis that involves cognitive processing limitations, affective barriers, motivation self-regulation, schema activation, metacognitive monitoring, and multimodal support. Flipped learning is an entry point in this theoretical realm as technology, but above that: it is an instructional intervention instantiating these constructs directly. To understand why flipped classrooms might, in some cases, cure listening anxiety and, in others, not, one must follow the path through which flipped instruction bridges each model.

Cognitive Approaches: Working Memory and Processing Bottlenecks

Second language listening comprehension is short-term in nature: once auditory input has gone by, it has gone by, except that it may stay with repetition (Buck, 2001). Students have to sound out, identify words,

examine syntax, and make inferences—all within stringent time limits. This is a working memory bottleneck, further compounded in slower and more effortful L2 processing (Baddeley, 2003). Anxiety also adds to this bottleneck since it appropriates attentional resources at the cost of efficiency and accuracy (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Eysenck et al., 2007).

Traditional listening pedagogy also perpetuates this issue by requiring students to scan input once through (Vandergrift, 2007). Flipped instruction is a lifesaver: pre-class listenings provide time-flexible exposure, in which students can stop, repeat, and pre-view material. This counters extraneous load (i.e., pace, novelty, background noise) and encourages more semantic processing. The explanation slots into Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, 1988), which distinguishes intrinsic load (difficulty of the material), extraneous load (presentation characteristics), and germane load (resource employed to build schemas). By alleviating extraneous load, flipped design releases mental space for schema construction and consolidation, and hence aids comprehension.

No less importantly, flipped designs also align with dual-processing models of listening. Students can give more attention to bottom-up decoding (phonological awareness, lexical access) during out-of-class work and then give more attention during class to top-down prediction, inferencing, and meaning construction (Field, 2008; Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). This scaffolding explicitly deals with cognitive impairment at the root of FLLA, offering a principle account of why flipped styles tend to lower listening apprehension among most students.

Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis: The Emotional Gatekeeper

Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis is a tried and true explanation for why emotions regulate intake of input. Anxiety is very high and the "filter" is up, and nothing can get past it to the language acquisition device. Foreign Language Listening Anxiety (FLLA) is a perfect illustration: fearful learners are able to hear the words but can't process them for meaning (Krashen, 1982; Horwitz, 2017).

Flipped classrooms are an affective filter-reducer because it allows students to preview material in the privacy of their own, without judgment from peers, embarrassment and fear are minimized (Lee & Wallace, 2018). Students who have been exposed to input beforehand go to class better

prepared and self-assured, lower the affective filter for tasks of performance.

Flipped learning does not, however, cut filters alone. Highly complicated or ill-made pre-class material can increase frustration, moving the filter up even before class activity (Webb & Doman, 2020). This is to highlight one underlying principle: flipped design must scaffold task difficulty carefully in an effort to offer understandable input and not overpower learners.

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory: Self-Efficacy and Anxiety Regulation

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory of 1997 focuses more on the interplay between cognition, environment, and behavior. The most influential among them is self-efficacy—having a feeling that one can accomplish a given task. Efficacy and anxiety are negatively related: high students in self-efficacy perceive challenges as manageable, while students low in self-efficacy perceive challenges as threatening (Bandura, 1997).

Research confirms the role of flipped learning towards efficacy development through mastery experiences: students develop a sense of competence by mastering pre-class content even in small quantities. Perceived self-efficacy is then transferred to live classrooms, producing less stress and resilience (Chen Hsieh et al., 2017). Vicarious experiences—students observe others engaging with course materials—and social persuasion by teachers on pre-class work are provided by flipped learning (Zheng et al., 2020).

Empirical studies also confirm this. For instance, Bolandifar and Salehi (2024) determined that flipped classes enhanced the willingness to communicate of the learners, a downstream effect of the increased efficacy. Similarly, Zainuddin and Attaran (2016) proved that flipped facilitates self-directed learning that increases learners' sense of agency, but the SCT account also predicts why a few students will still find themselves anxious in flipped classrooms: students with strong low efficacy tendencies will view pre-class failure (e.g., struggling to grasp videos) as signals of their inadequacy. Flipped designs therefore work best under the accompaniment of incremental success rather than overwhelming difficulty.

Schema Theory: Predictability and Preparedness as Anxiety Buffers

Schema theory defines comprehension as the activation and integration of prior knowledge structures. Anxiety is highest when students do not know

what is happening next. Without context anchors, any noise is ambiguous, and this increases tension and cognitive load. Pre-class video pre-exposes vocabulary, cultural references, and background knowledge so that students arrive in class with schemata activated. This predictability reduces uncertainty and increases world knowledge and thus decreases anxiety.

One of the subtleties is that schemata activation is culture embedded: collectivist students will activate more group-shared schemata, and individualist students will activate more personal experience. Flipped versions can accommodate both needs, through teamwork on pre-class discussion or reflective self-study.

Metacognitive Models: Strategic Control Over Anxiety

Metacognitive theory sets listening as a strategic, rather than receptive, process. Skilled listeners plan (e.g., anticipation of what will be heard), check meaning in the process (e.g., monitoring), and judge (e.g., review of achievement). Anxiety turns these loops around: anxious learners exaggerate minuscule errors, omit checking, and cannot recover from failure (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012).

Flipped learning allows metacognition through the creation of time and space for students to build strategies outside of the high-pressure classroom setting. Students, for example, can be prompted to predict in-class videos, monitor their understanding if practiced several times, and reflect on them later. Instructional staff can then allow awareness of strategies in the classroom. Rahimi & Abedini (2009) concluded that combined metacognition and self-efficacy predict listening and reduce anxiety. Flipped pedagogies achieve this by incorporating metacognitive cues into pre-classwork (e.g., reflection questions, reflective tasks). Theoretical importance is that metacognitive enablement not just enhances understanding but also encourages affective resilience, since students feel they have means of coping with adversity.

Multimodal Input Processing: Redundancy and Reassurance

Listening apprehension is increased when input is ambiguous—when learners cannot disambiguate sound or sense. Multimodal learning theory predicts that providing auditory input with visual aid improves understanding by providing dual coding (Paivio, 1986). Flipped learning capitalizes on this through the use of video-based content that integrates

audio, image, and perhaps captions, thereby eliminating ambiguity and enabling understanding.

For nervous students, multimodality develops insurance policies: if they are missing an auditory cue, visual cues or subtitles will fill in. Redundancy dispels doubt and brings about a sense of control that immediately decreases anxiety. Experimental evidence (e.g., Chen & Lin, 2021) confirm that audiovisual support is linked to increased comprehension and decreased tension. Increasingly, educators are using multimodality as an inclusive pedagogy.

But negatives too: excessive multimodality can overwhelm students, loading up unnecessary cognitive load. That is, multimodality must be balanced—sufficient redundancy but not so redundant that working memory gets loaded up.

Cross-Theoretical Integration: Towards a Holistic Model

Each model contributes something distinct, but together they account for flipped learning's potential of FLLA:

Cognition: Flipped formats reduce working memory load via repetition, pacing, and predictability.

Affect: They reduce affective barriers with first exposure in low-stakes, personal environments.

Motivation: They establish self-efficacy based on peer modeling and mastery experience.

Schema: They access prior knowledge, reducing uncertainty.

Metacognition: They foster strategic awareness, allowing learners equipped with strategies to compensate for difficulty.

Multimodality: They reduce uncertainty by providing multiple cues to meaning.

But these are conditional processes: when pre-class activities are overly demanding, filters become more than less over time; when self-efficacy is low, failures affirm more than reduce anxiety; when multimodal input overloads, cognitive load grows more than reduces.

Therefore, the theoretical synthesis reveals a conditional model: flipped learning can reduce anxiety, provided it is designed to be congruent with cognitive capacity, affective state, motivational needs, and cultural context.

To systematize summarizing these outcomes, the following table combines the six theoretical pathways and highlights the key moderators that moderate their influences on language learning anxiety.

Table 1. Six Theoretical Pathways and Key Moderators

Theory	Mechanism	Moderator(s)	Effect on Anxiety
Cognitive Load	Reduced extraneous load	Task complexity	↓ Anxiety if input scaffolded
Affective Filter	Low-stakes exposure	Input difficulty	↓ Anxiety if comprehensible
Social Cognitive	Self-efficacy via mastery	Learner autonomy	↓ Anxiety if small successes provided
Schema Theory	Activation of prior knowledge	Cultural norms	↓ Anxiety if schemata activated
Metacognitive	Strategic regulation	Teacher scaffolding	↓ Anxiety with explicit guidance
Multimodality	Dual coding redundancy	Input overload	↓ Anxiety if balanced; ↑ Anxiety if excessive

As Table 1 shows, every theoretical pathway is viable for reducing anxiety but only in some moderating situations. The conditionality of this insight underscores the imperative of an integrated model that incorporates cognitive, affective, social, and cultural factors. On this integration as its basis, the following section explains the Conceptual Framework, positioning flipped learning as a context-appropriate strategy within alignment with these theoretical frameworks.

Conceptual Framework: Theoretical Syntheses

The foregoing sections have recognized six prevailing theoretical perspectives—cognitive, affective, motivational, schema-based, metacognitive, and multimodal—jointly casting some illumination on several mechanisms of Foreign Language Listening Anxiety (FLLA).

While each model provides insightful information, no model can explain how flipped learning reduces anxiety in listening. Figure 1 provides an integrative conceptual framework to synthesize these perspectives. This model illustrates the ways in which flipped pedagogy addresses a range of listening anxiety dimensions, illustrating the pathways through which

cognitive load is alleviated, affective obstacles are reduced, self-efficacy is enhanced, prior knowledge is signaled, strategic regulation is encouraged, and multimodal input provides redundancy and reassurance.

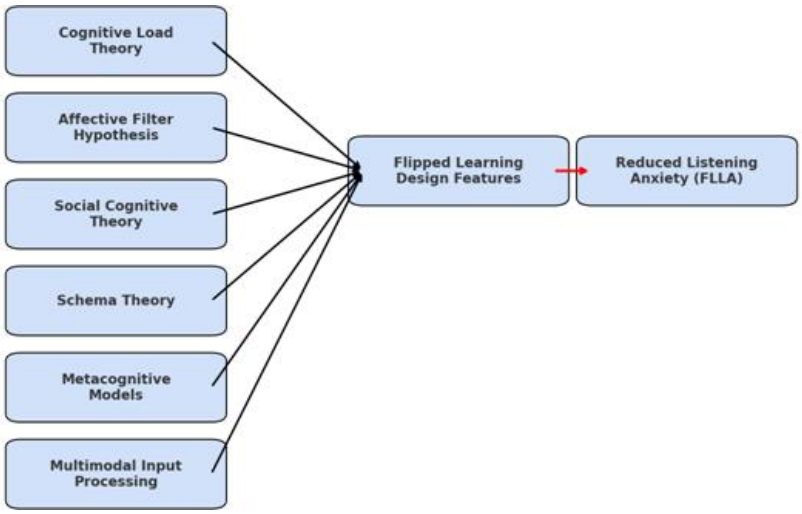

Figure 1. Conceptual framework: Flipped learning and foreign language listening anxiety (FLLA) - *Source: Authors' illustration*

Figure 1 presents this research's conceptual model. It integrates six of the most prominent theoretical frameworks—Cognitive Load Theory, the Affective Filter Hypothesis, Social Cognitive Theory, Schema Theory, Metacognitive Models, and Multimodal Input Processing—to explain how flipped learning can reduce Foreign Language Listening Anxiety (FLLA).

Each of these theoretical stances brings a distinct line of explanation: Cognitive Load Theory suggests elimination of processing limitation through pacing and repetition; the Affective Filter Hypothesis suggests minimizing affective filters through making learning environments low-stakes; Social Cognitive Theory suggests mastery experiences and self-efficacy; Schema Theory suggests background knowledge activation and predictability; Metacognitive Models suggest strategic awareness and regulation development; and Multimodal Input Processing suggests elimination of vagueness through audiovisual redundancy.

These theoretical concepts converge on flipped learning design features, which realize the mechanisms in systematic pre-class familiarization, adaptive pacing, multimodal support, and scaffolding of strategy. The

outcome, illustrated on the right, is Foreign Language Listening Anxiety (FLLA) mitigation. The model thus consolidates various theoretical concepts into a merged model, discuss why flipped learning promises to be highly effective in mitigating the cognitive, affective, and motivational components of listening anxiety.

In addition to the six pathways, the model incorporates moderator variables such as task complexity, learner autonomy, teacher mediation, cultural norms, and access to technology. These moderators affect the direction and strength of the pathways. The boundary conditions can be summarized as follows: flipped learning reduces anxiety when input is supported, autonomy is fostered, and multimodal cues are in balance; it is neutral when pre-class preparation is mechanical or unsupported; and can even increase anxiety when tasks are too difficult, scaffolding is absent, or cultural expectations enhance evaluation pressure.

Empirical Evidence about Flipped Learning and Listening Anxiety

The literature on flipped classroom and Foreign Language Listening Anxiety (FLLA) has grown extremely large over the last decade and yielded a heterogeneous but more integrated body of findings. The research in various contexts—China, Iran, and Malaysia—both illustrate the limitations as well as the promise of flipped teaching. To best highly value this evidence, it is important not just to enumerate outcomes but also to take account of mechanisms, contextual moderators, and paradoxes which arise throughout the literature.

Strong Evidence: Flipped Learning as an Intervening Factor Reducing Anxiety

One overall trend throughout the literature is that flipped designs allow students to have greater freedom, autonomy, and prior preparation over listening input, overall to alleviate anxiety. Qiu and Luo (2022) illustrated that Chinese EFL students in flipped listening classes had lower anxiety and greater comprehension scores than students in typical classes.

Chief among these were the benefits of repetition and self-pacing : two of the design elements which most obviously reduce the cognitive overload and working memory load .

This finding substantiates strongly both Cognitive Load Theory and Metacognitive Models, and asserts that the facilitation of opportunities for

learners to slow down and self-check minimizes both processing difficulty and affective tension. And so did Bolandifar and Salehi (2024) ensure Iranian learners not only experienced reduced anxiety in listening but also increased willingness to communicate in English after a flipped learning intervention. They felt more confident because they had already been exposed to the listening texts before classroom time. This is in line with Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory : flipped exposure is now a mastery experience, which enhances self-efficacy and eliminates the fear of public failure. Mohamad and Raja Yacob (2024) in Malaysia also affirmed that students liked the safe environment offered by pre-class preparation.

Students had reported that coming to class with prior experience eliminated the fear of "blank moments" when listening in live listening drills. This is an allusion to the interrelation of Schema Theory and the Affective Filter Hypothesis : pre-class preparation primes schemata and reduces uncertainty, which reduces affective filter in the classroom as far as listening goes. Combined, these studies show a very strong trend : if flipped learning is carefully planned, it will reduce anxiety over listening by addressing cognitively, affectively, and motivationally rooted vulnerabilities simultaneously.

Divergent Findings: Cases Where Decrease in Anxiety Did Not Occur

There isn't all the evidence. Hosseini and Mahmoodi (2023) didn't observe a reduction in foreign language listening anxiety (FLLA) where comprehension improved in flipped settings. Students improved accuracy but weren't less anxious.

Why might this be occurring? There are many reasons why:

1. Task difficulty : Should pre-class videos be too hard, they would increase instead of decreasing students' anxiety. In SCT, failure experiences reduce rather than enhance self-efficacy.

2. Deficit in scaffolding : Without instruction by the teacher or metacognitive feedback, flipped tasks resemble a separate task. Students will complete them mechanically without building the sense of control necessary to reduce anxiety.

3. Cultural factors : There are cases of collectivist classrooms in which students are still anxious to participate in class discussion even when

exposed previously outside the classroom. Even familiarity may not counter strong social evaluation apprehensions.

4. Computing differences: Computer illiterates or those with poor computer access are likely to feel left behind or fearful of flipped expectations.

This contradictory evidence speaks volumes: it shows that flipped learning is no panacea for FLLA. Rather, it is an if-then pedagogy —its benefits materialize only when flipped learning is adopted in combination with students' proficiency levels, technological settings, and affective demands.

Moderating and Mediating Variables

The advanced evidence base tells us that a number of variables mediate whether flipped learning subverts or sustains FLLA:

Learner Autonomy: Flipped classroom assumes learners are able to look after themselves in the home environment. More autonomous learners are accommodated; less autonomous learners might experience flipped activities as stress-evoking tasks.

Input Difficulty: Pre-class materials need to be comprehensible input. Difficult input causes cognitive overload and raises anxiety rather than lowering it.

Teacher Mediation: The teachers play a central role in organizing flipped tasks. When teachers provide scaffolding, strategy instruction, and formative assessment, students perceive tasks as helpful and not risky.

Peer Dynamics: Flipped learning reverses modes of classroom interactions. In supportive peer contexts, it reduces anxiety; in competitive or evaluative contexts, it may extend it.

Cultural Norms : Collectivist students will be more receptive to group grading and less accustomed to previous-class work. Flipping pedagogy should thus be adjusted according to cultural norms.

Technological Accessibility: The flipped pedagogy will only succeed if students utilize hardware and connectivity regularly. All these contribute to reasons why results are varied: the same flipped design can empower some pupils but frustrate others.

Meta-Synthesis: Theory Explains Variable Results

Variable results discovered during empirical research begin to make sense when placed in the theory context. For instance, where inverted tasks work effectively in reducing extraneous cognitive load, students are no longer so overwhelmed and, therefore, so nervous (Qiu & Luo, 2022). Similarly, where tasks yield mastery experiences, students' self-efficacy is increased, which in turn decreases anxiety (Bolandifar & Salehi, 2024). Flipped lessons also minimize uncertainty through the activation of earlier schemata and maximizing predictability in input (Mohamad & Raja Yacob, 2024). But on the other hand as well: when lessons inadvertently maximize the affective filter through excessive difficulty or isolation, anxiety persists (Hosseini & Mahmoodi, 2023).

Anxiety also persists when learners are not provided with sufficient metacognitive cues, lacking any strategies for dealing with comprehension problems. Lastly, multimodal cues—so prevalent in flipped learning—can reassure or overload: their lack makes input ambiguous, and their surplus makes it stressful. Empirical studies therefore don't contradict the theoretical models—but conditionally confirm them. Theories would suggest that anxiety is reduced only when input is controlled, filtered feeling is at a minimum, efficacy is improved, schemata are activated, and strategies are facilitated.

Towards a Conditional Model of Flipped Learning and FLLA

The overall body of evidence supports a conditional effectiveness model:

Significant anxiety reductions are seen when flipped learning is reinforced by explicit pre-class input, mediated by teacher facilitation, and aligned to learner need.

Negative or null results are seen when flipped learning is poorly scaffolded, misaligned for expertise, or poorly supported technologically and pedagogically.

Theoretical Methodology

The theoretical approach of the present research is based on the assumption that the nature of Foreign Language Listening Anxiety (FLLA) has to be accounted for by different frameworks, rather than a single empirical data set. Foreign language listening anxiety (FLLA) has come under the spotlight of cognitive, affective, motivational, and sociocultural frameworks,

shedding light on different mechanisms but all insufficient in isolation. A theoretical perspective then allows us to transcend disciplinary divisions, integrate multidisciplinary perspectives, and develop an integrated model of explanation relating flipped learning to preventing listening anxiety.

Rationale for a Theoretical Perspective

Three reasons interrelatedly suggest the need for the utilization of a theoretical approach:

1. Fragmentation of the Literature

Empirical studies on FLLA and flipped classroom teaching are scattered across different contexts and will be liable to generate inconsistent findings (e.g., Qiu & Luo, 2022 vs. Hosseini & Mahmoodi, 2023).

The use of a theoretical orientation enables one to resolve such contradiction in a systematic manner through the explanation of these using shared conceptual frameworks such as Cognitive Load Theory, Affective Filter Hypothesis, and Social Cognitive Theory.

2. Synthesis More Than Description is Required

Literature reviews are typically limited to summarizing findings in conventional reviews. Theoretical methodology attempts to generate new knowledge by means of theories and connecting data. Empirical research on flipped classroom and anxiety are best placed when integrated into larger models of cognition, affect, and motivation.

3. Framework-Construction in Subsequent Research

The general aim of this paper is to construct a conditional conceptual model that can serve to guide future empirical investigations and everyday classroom practice. A theoretical approach is in the best position to serve this purpose because it allows the researcher to move away from context-bound findings and towards a more generalizable structure.

Sources of Theoretical Data

The six frameworks were prioritized based on three dimensions: (1) straightforward explanatory value for listening comprehension and anxiety (e.g., Affective Filter Hypothesis, Cognitive Load Theory), (2) common use in empirical flipped classroom research (e.g., Schema Theory, Social Cognitive Theory), and (3) complementarity in describing cognitive, affective, motivational, and multimodal processes. Other theories such as

Self-Determination Theory or Control-Value Theory were also considered but excluded since their constructs share a highly high overlap with the chosen models or extend the precise focus on listening anxiety.

The theoretical position is supported by three levels of "data":

Foundational Theories: These are Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, 1988), Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis (1982), Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1997), Schema Theory, Metacognitive Models of Listening (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012), and Multimodal Input Processing (Paivio, 1986). Each theory provides explanatory constructs applicable to FLLA.

Empirical Research Reinterpreted in Theoretical Terms: Unfortunately, articles such as Qiu & Luo (2022), Bolandifar & Salehi (2024), and Hosseini & Mahmoodi (2023) have empirical results. In this case, they are not being presented as independent outcomes but as data points to be reinterpreted within the framework of theoretical models.

Meta-Analytical Evidence From the Literature: Secondary syntheses of the literature on flipped teaching and listening anxiety research provide a meta-analytical level that supervises the integration of the primary studies and theories.

Procedure Steps

Theoretical methodology takes place in four procedural steps:

1. Theoretical Mapping

Each of the theoretical models is plotted individually against FLLA phenomenon. For instance, Cognitive Load Theory accounts for listening processing bottlenecks and Schema Theory accounts for predictability reducing uncertainty.

2. Cross-Framework Comparison

Frameworks are then contrasted in order to identify points of convergence and divergence. To this end, both Cognitive Load Theory and Metacognitive Models both place control of processing at the center, but whereas the former is specific to constraints, the latter addresses strategies.

3. Alignment Theory-to-Evidence

Empirical outcomes are compared with theory outcomes. Problematic experiments (e.g., Qiu & Luo, 2022) confirm theoretical efficiency improvement and load reduction predictions, while questionable outcomes (e.g., Hosseini & Mahmoodi, 2023) reveal the limitations of the latter.

4. Conditional Model Incorporation

Finally, the conceptual models and empirical findings are integrated into a synthesized conditional model (see Figure 1). The synthesized conditional model hypothesizes that flipped learning decreases FLLA only if certain cognitive, affective, motivational, and contextual conditions are met.

Maintaining Rigor and Credibility

In an endeavor to scientifically validate this theoretical framework, the following principles are maintained:

Transparency: Each step of interpretation is faithfully backed up to some study or theory, and not by bound-leap guessing.

Triangulation: Multiple theories are brought to bear on each phenomenon, without the favoring of one explanation over any other.

Critical Reflexivity: Both studies' and theories' limitations are acknowledged—for example, Krashen's filter is charged with empiric vagueness, yet still heuristic worthwhile.

Generativity: The ensuing model is not only descriptive but also allows for testable hypotheses for future empirical research, meeting the double mandate of theory: explanation and prediction.

Contribution of the Methodology

In applying this theory-driven methodology, the research extends what works reporting: it develops a multi-level, conditionally explanatory model that positions flipped learning in the bigger picture of listening anxiety. This involves that the article not only informs us what works but, through this form of explanation, informs us why and under what conditions flipped learning reduces or fails to reduce FLLA.

Discussion and Implications

The convergence of theoretical models and empirical evidence displayed here suggests that flipped learning has the strong potential to be a successful Foreign Language Listening Anxiety (FLLA) intervention. This

potential is not universal or inevitable, however. Instead, all the evidence points to an open conditional model: flipped learning reduces FLLA if well designed, scaffolded, and aimed at learner need, but reduces or even inhibits if these are lacking.

Theoretical Implications: Reconceptualizing Listening Anxiety

The integration requires the reconceptualization of listening anxiety in applied linguistics. Foreign Language Listening Anxiety (FLLA) was, until recently, mostly an affective construct, explained as learners' emotional reactions to listening. Although affective explanations such as Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis remain valid, the present integration emphasizes that FLLA cannot be an emotionally pure occurrence. Rather, it has to be conceived as a metacognitive and cognitive operation, wherein learners regulate the demands of mental processing and maintain them in check in an attempt to exert significant control over their listening experience.

Cognitively, anxiety is activated when working memory is overloaded by fast or condensed input, and hence real-time meaning processing is difficult. From the metacognitive perspective, anxiety is raised when there are no competent detection or recovery procedures from failure in comprehension. Motivational aspects also intervene: absence of self-efficacy heightens anxiety by causing fear of failure.

Finally, aspects of socioculture such as peer monitoring and class atmosphere contribute to the extent to which the learners will treat the listening task as a safe environment to try things out or as an anxiety-provoking context that evokes self-monitoring. Hence, anxiety in listening should be understood as a complex process occurring due to the simultaneous operation of cognitive, affective, motivational, and social processes. Flipped learning is effective because it has concurrent effects on more than a single dimension: pressure during processing decreases, emotion hurdles are minimized, efficacy increases, and classroom dynamics change.

Pedagogical Implications: Anxiety-Sensitive Flipped Classroom Design

The conditional model of flipped learning has important practical implications for language teaching. Teachers and curriculum writers need to drop the naive assumption that flipped learning will somehow magically

reduce anxiety. Instead, they need to adopt an anxiety-sensitive design process so that flipped elements are appropriately adapted to learners' needs.

Key pedagogical strategies are:

1. Scaffolding Input Difficulty

Pre-class listening materials must be graded with care for accessibility. Too accessible and they shortchange students; too challenging and they raise anxiety. Scaffolding by means of transcripts, glossaries, or sequences of tasks can identify that perfect balance. Teachers can operationalize scaffolding by providing transcripts or glossaries for pre-class videos, structuring tasks in progressive difficulty, and embedding reflection questions to check comprehension.

2. Promoting Learner Autonomy and Metacognition

Teachers do not intend to take for granted that students learn how to learn through flipped content. Direct instruction of metacognitive approaches such as predicting what is to be learned, verifying understanding, and reading difficult parts is empowering students with ownership of maximum value from pre-classwork. Metacognitive strategy instruction may include pre-listening prediction tasks, guided monitoring checklists, and post-listening reflection journals.

3. Developing Self-Efficacy

Instructors should create pre-class assignments such that they give students early experiences of mastery in order to achieve the highest gains in motivation in flipped learning. Starting with manageable input builds confidence, and that lowers anxiety in completing more difficult work in class.

4. Leveraging Multimodality

Flipped learning must be making optimal use of technology affordances to deliver multimodal input (e.g., image, video, caption). Such input cues minimize uncertainty, ease understanding, and reduce fear of sole auditory input. This can be implemented through captioned videos, visual organizers, and gesture-rich instruction that strengthen dual coding without overwhelming learners.

5. Establishing Supportive Classroom Culture

Flipped designs reverse the classroom dynamics, reserving time for interaction. Such interaction has to occur in a psychologically safe learning environment where mistakes are made ordinary as part of learning and not punished as failure.

Short of it, flipped pedagogy has to be designed anxiety-sensitively, not just technologically sophisticated.

Research Implications: Building a Conditional Evidence Base

The theoretical framework also points research into a variety of future avenues.

1. Testing the Conditional Model

Future empirical studies should test not only whether flipped learning reduces FLLA but also through which mechanisms and why it does so. Experimental and longitudinal study designs can assess the possible mediating variables including task difficulty, learner autonomy, and self-efficacy.

Thus, future studies can test the following hypotheses:

H1: Flipped learning considerably reduces listening anxiety if pre-class input is scaffolded to the level of the learners' proficiency.

H2: Learner autonomy partially mediates the effect of flipped learning on the reduction of listening anxiety.

H3: Multimodal redundancy above optimal levels induces higher cognitive load and moderates the anxiety-reduction effect.

H4: Cultural orientation (collectivist or individualist) moderates learners' affective responses to flipped listening tasks.

2. Mixed-Methods Approaches

Quantitative questionnaires of low anxiety levels have to be complemented by qualitative interviews and class observations, which reflect the subtle aspects (e.g., how multimodal cues are used by students or peer conversation affects stress).

3. Cross-Cultural Comparisons

Due to the fact that culture taints learners' responses to inverted pedagogy, cross-cultural comparative studies between collectivist and individualist cultures would shed light on how sociocultural environments affect outcomes.

4. Technology and Equity Issues

More research is needed in the impact of digital divides on students' ability to benefit from flipped learning. More research can seek to determine if low-access students report higher anxiety levels when requested to complete pre-class online activities.

5. Integration with Overall Language Skills

This study is listening-based, and anxiety is not skill-based. Subsequent research can explore whether flipped pedagogy decreases speaking, reading, or writing anxiety, and if it has gains across skills.

Broader Educational Significance

Beyond the borders of language pedagogy as a discipline, this study responds to common premises regarding pedagogy and technology in reducing students' anxiety. With greater emerging generative AI, distance learning, and virtual learning environments remapping classrooms, the issue is not implementing new technology but doing it in human-scale and psychology-sensitive manner.

Flipped learning, if done intentionally with regard for the psyche of students, is just like that: it does not employ technology to replace teachers but to redefine spaces of learning in a manner that learners will be safer, more competent, and more masterful. The class goes beyond learning languages into other areas of study where mastery is rendered impossible by fear, e.g., math, science, public speaking.

Limitations

This is a theoretical article without original empirical data. The proposed model requires systematic empirical validation across diverse cultural and educational contexts. Therefore, its generalizability remains tentative until tested in controlled experimental and longitudinal studies.

Conclusion

In this article, Foreign Language Listening Anxiety theory has been strengthened further through placing flipped learning in a multi-theory and condition-sensitive context. Drawing on Cognitive Load Theory, Affective Filter Hypothesis, Social Cognitive Theory, Schema Theory, Metacognitive Models, and Multimodal Input Processing, flipped pedagogy has been found to decrease listening anxiety through different channels: decreasing cognitive load, decreasing affective filter, increasing self-efficacy, triggering prior knowledge, fostering metacognitive knowledge, and providing multimodal support.

The empirical summary also concluded that although most research confirms such advantages, the effect is not uniform. Flipped learning reduces anxiety only when specific design, student, and context conditions are met—like proper scaffolding of the input, teacher facilitation, student control, and pervasive technology. Under other circumstances, flipped models may offer more understanding without a reduction in anxiety, or even an increase. This highlights the necessity to transcend the exceedingly simplistic portrayals of flipped pedagogy as an unqualified good, to that of a conditional model of effectiveness.

Methodologically, the study in the current research utilized a theoretical synthesis strategy, combining certain frameworks and empirical evidence into a single combination. The methodology generated explanatory richness and predictive ability through demonstration of possibility of theoretical syntheses of contradictions in literature. The conceptual framework generated guides the construction of hypotheses that will guide future empirical studies on the mechanisms and limitations of flipped learning in mitigating FLLA.

Implications are threefold. Theoretical, the study redefine listening anxiety as a multi-dimensional construct beyond affective delimitation and which must be approached at the interplay of cognition, affect, motivation, and sociocultural context. Pedagogical, it provides classroom-appropriate strategies for anxiety-sensitive flipped learning that pushes teachers to scaffold input, facilitate self-efficacy, and create safe classroom environments. To gain knowledge, it requires condition-specific studies

that are more than the simple flipped vs. traditional types of analyses, but rather seek the mediators and moderators of efficacy.

Finally, this article contributes to an even broader educational charge: designing learning spaces that not just maximize performance but eliminate psychological barriers to participation. Effectively implemented, flipped learning demonstrates how pedagogy can harness technology for human use—turning the classroom from a place of fear and uncertainty to one of assurance, preparedness, and growth.

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