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AFFECTIVE REACTIONS TO AI IN LISTENING LESSONS: STRESS, CONFIDENCE, AND ENJOYMENT

Baxramova Malika Muzaffarovna
Urgench State Pedagogical Institute

Abstract: *This article explores the affective (emotional) reactions that learners experience in AI-assisted listening lessons, particularly focusing on stress, confidence, and enjoyment. The study reveals that while artificial intelligence technologies provide pedagogical benefits such as real-time feedback and personalized learning, they may also increase psychological pressure, especially among students unfamiliar with digital platforms. At the same time, AI can foster self-confidence through adaptive tasks and nonjudgmental automated responses, allowing learners to improve at their own pace. Interactive and gamified AI tools contribute to making listening lessons more engaging and effective. In this way, AI influences learners not only cognitively but also emotionally—either positively or negatively—depending on its implementation. The article presents concrete examples of these reactions and offers recommendations for optimizing the use of AI in language learning to ensure both academic success and emotional well-being.*

Keywords :*artificial intelligence, affective reactions, stress, confidence, enjoyment, listening lessons, language learning, AI technologies, digital education, language skills, gamification, digital platforms.*

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become an increasingly prominent feature in language learning environments, particularly in listening lessons where real-time speech recognition, personalized feedback, and adaptive audio inputs are utilized. While AI-assisted instruction provides notable educational benefits, it also elicits complex emotional reactions in learners, notably stress, confidence, and enjoyment. These affective responses play a critical role in shaping students' learning outcomes, motivation, and overall experience with technology-mediated education.

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Learners often experience stress when interacting with AI in listening lessons due to several factors. First, the presence of an intelligent system evaluating one's comprehension can trigger performance anxiety, especially when learners are aware that their responses are being monitored or scored by an algorithm. The precision and immediacy of AI feedback, while pedagogically beneficial, may heighten this stress by exposing even minor comprehension errors. Additionally, learners unfamiliar with digital learning platforms may struggle with interface navigation or technical glitches, further increasing their cognitive and emotional burden. In some cases, the synthetic nature of AI-generated voices or accents may cause difficulty in processing, especially for learners accustomed to more traditional, human-led instruction.

Conversely, AI tools can enhance learners' confidence under certain conditions. When appropriately calibrated to match the proficiency level of learners, AI-based systems offer consistent and nonjudgmental feedback, which can encourage experimentation and risk-taking in language practice. For example, automated speech recognition systems that allow repeated listening or offer immediate translation enable learners to correct their mistakes autonomously. This promotes a sense of self-efficacy, as students feel more in control of their learning process. Moreover, learners may perceive AI as an impartial and tireless tutor, especially in contrast to the fear of being judged by a human instructor or peers. In this way, AI can serve as a safe space for building listening proficiency through practice and error correction without social stigma.

Enjoyment is another important affective component that AI can either foster or inhibit depending on its design and implementation. Many learners appreciate the interactive features and gamified elements that AI-integrated platforms provide. Tools that simulate conversational exchanges, provide immediate praise for correct answers, or adapt the difficulty level based on learner progress can make listening lessons more engaging and enjoyable. Additionally, AI offers variety in audio content, from podcasts and dialogues to simulated real-life scenarios, which can cater to learners' interests and learning styles. This diversity not only maintains

learners' attention but also increases their intrinsic motivation to engage with listening materials over longer periods.

However, enjoyment may be diminished if the AI tools are too repetitive, overly complex, or culturally misaligned with learners' expectations. If learners perceive the AI as mechanical, unresponsive, or devoid of human warmth, it may reduce emotional connection to the content. Similarly, over-reliance on AI without human mediation may limit opportunities for authentic communication, peer collaboration, and affective support, which are essential for holistic language learning.

Affective reactions to AI in listening lessons are also influenced by learners' individual differences, such as personality, prior experiences with technology, language proficiency, and learning goals. For instance, tech-savvy learners or those with strong auditory processing skills may experience less stress and greater enjoyment, while others may find AI tools intimidating or demotivating. Cultural attitudes toward technology and education also shape learners' expectations and openness to AI-based instruction.

To maximize the positive affective outcomes of AI in listening lessons, educators and developers must consider the emotional dimensions of language learning. Designing user-friendly interfaces, providing clear guidance on how to use AI tools, incorporating elements of personalization, and maintaining a balance between technology and human interaction are crucial strategies. Moreover, collecting learner feedback on their emotional responses to AI tools can inform continuous improvements and ensure that such technologies support not only cognitive development but also emotional well-being.

In conclusion, AI in listening lessons elicits a spectrum of affective reactions—stress, confidence, and enjoyment—that significantly influence the learning process. While AI offers numerous pedagogical advantages, its emotional impact should not be overlooked. A thoughtful, learner-centered approach to AI integration can help harness its full potential while mitigating negative emotions and fostering a more supportive and enjoyable language learning environment.

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