

## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

### A. Research Background

The ability to listen (listening) in learning English as a foreign language (EFL) is an essential skill that often becomes a challenge for students. Listening is a critical aspect of effective communication but is usually neglected in language learning. Listening has frequently been thought of as a challenging skill. On the other hand, listening comprehension is an active process that allows listeners to form meaning.<sup>1</sup> Various factors, such as linguistic complexity, varying accents, native speakers' speaking speed, and the level of vocabulary and sentence structures used, make listening a difficult skill for many EFL learners to master.

One of the phenomena EFL students often face regarding listening skills is listening anxiety. Listening anxiety is an emotional condition characterized by feelings of anxiety, tension, and stress when having to listen to English. Based on Kössler, anxiety is a continuous and severe depression resulting from internal personal conflict.<sup>2</sup> This condition can hinder comprehension and cause difficulty processing the information heard. Studies show that listening anxiety affects academic performance and reduces students' motivation and confidence in using English.

STEC (Student English Club) is an active English language learning community unit among students where the phenomenon of listening anxiety is also found. STEC is an organization that aims to improve its members' English language skills through various practical activities such as discussions and soft skills training, especially listening skills. However, despite the support and facilities provided, some

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<sup>1</sup> Santi Prastiyowati, "Anxiety on Students' Listening Comprehension in University Malang," *English Language Teaching* 6, no. Vol. 6 No. 1 (2019): June 2019 (June 28, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.22219/celtic.v6i1.8758>.

<sup>2</sup> Esra Tayşi, "The Effect of Listening Attitude and Listening Anxiety on Listening Comprehension: A Regression Model," *Universal Journal of Educational Research* 7 (February 1, 2019): 356–64, <https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2019.070207>.

members still experience significant difficulties in their listening skills, identified as a result of listening anxiety.

In this research, several factors that contribute to listening anxiety will be explored. These factors include lack of exposure to authentic English, fear of mistakes, social pressure, and unsupportive teaching methods. Limited exposure to authentic English can cause students to feel unprepared and unconfident when interacting with native speakers. Fear of mistakes is also often a significant barrier, with students afraid of being ridiculed or criticized if they make mistakes when listening and responding in English. Social pressure also plays a vital role in listening anxiety. Students may feel anxious about being judged by peers or tutors in group study situations or when participating in club activities. Teaching methods that are less interactive and do not support the development of practical listening skills can also exacerbate this anxiety. Vogely stated that the listening material, lecturer, student, and other factors cause each student's anxiety about listening differently.<sup>3</sup>

To overcome listening anxiety, this research will also identify several strategies STEC participants apply in listening learning. These strategies include increased exposure to authentic listening materials, such as podcasts, watching films or videos in English, and conversing with native speakers. Structured, gradual listening practice can also help students improve their abilities gradually. Also, relaxation and stress management techniques, such as deep breathing and positive visualization, can help students reduce anxiety. Creating a supportive, stress-free learning environment is also crucial, where students feel supported and safe to learn and make mistakes without fear of criticism or ridicule. Oxford categorizes strategies into two main types: direct and indirect. Direct strategies encompass memory, cognitive, and

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<sup>3</sup> Vogely, A.J. (1998), Listening Comprehension Anxiety: Students' Reported Sources and Solutions. *Foreign Language Annals*, 31: 67-80. quoted in Ye Pan, "Analysis of Listening Anxiety in EFL Class," *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature* 4, no. 6 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.20431/2347-3134.0406002>.

compensation techniques, whereas indirect strategies involve metacognitive, affective, and social approaches.<sup>4</sup>

By focusing on the factors and resolution strategies for listening anxiety in listening learning, this research is expected to contribute significantly to developing more effective English teaching methods. The findings of this research are useful not only for EFL students but also for listening learning. Still, they can also be applied to other English language learning contexts, providing more comprehensive benefits for students and educational practitioners in improving listening skills and reducing listening anxiety.

The students of the Islamic English Club experienced some factors that affected their speaking performance, namely fear of making mistakes, lack of confidence, social anxiety, and communication apprehension. Their lack of English skills built their fear and made them have low self-esteem. Consequently, they experienced numerous speaking problems, including linguistic error, communication apprehension, as well as speaking anxiety. Students also required a strategy to help them relax when anxiety gripped them during the performance, and the Islamic English club uses several strategies to improve students' speaking performance, which could be seen in terms of religious, memory, cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. In conclusion, it can be affirmed that those strategies could help students increase their confidence in speaking English.<sup>5</sup>

Based on the above problems, the researcher is interested in finding out what English Students face the problem of listening anxiety as EFL Learners, especially students at STEC "Students English Club," and which strategies are effective for overcoming anxiety on the research *"Students' Listening Anxiety as EFL Learners: Factors and Strategies for Solution"*.

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<sup>4</sup> Rebecca Oxford, "Language Learning Styles and Strategies: An Overview," January 1, 2001, 1–25.

<sup>5</sup> Nur Hayati and Taranindya Zulhi Amalia, "Enhancing Speaking Strategies for Improving Students' Performance: A Best Practice at an Islamic English Club," 2023.

## **B. The Scope of The Research**

This research focuses on the sources of students' anxiety in learning English as perceived by five students at STEC “Student English Club” of State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Kudus).

## **C. The Research Question**

Based on the previous, the researcher develops the following research question:

1. What factors contribute to STEC students' anxiety about learning listening?
2. What listening strategies do the students of STEC use to overcome anxiety about listening?

## **D. The Research Objective**

The study concentrated on investigating the factors contributing to participants' listening anxiety and the strategies they employed to alleviate it. The topic of students' listening anxiety in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners is paramount in language learning research. Listening comprehension plays a crucial role in language acquisition, and this section aims to provide an overview of the factors and strategies related to listening anxiety in EFL learners to learn how students' opinions on anxiety and calm in learning listening alter depending on the form of the problem above. Understanding the causes and consequences of listening anxiety can help educators and researchers develop effective ways to address this issue and enhance students' language learning experience. By exploring various factors and strategies, this study contributes to the field of EFL education and provides valuable insights into mitigating listening anxiety.

## **E. The Significance of the Research**

The researcher develops the research results to help EFL students, the researcher, and the institution. The importance of the study can be outlined as follows:

1. Theoretical Benefit

The researcher aims for the study's findings to furnish readers with supplementary insights, specifically regarding

anxiety factors and students' coping strategies in learning listening skills. Making it more engaging is expected to enhance the appeal of learning all English skills, particularly listening.

## 2. Practical Benefits

### a) The EFL (English Foreign Language) Students.

The researcher anticipates that this study will benefit EFL students by providing effective strategies to overcome anxiety-related challenges and enhance their understanding of listening skills. Afterward, this research aims to make learning more enjoyable and rewarding for students.

### b) The Researcher

The researcher expects this study to offer valuable insights for readers, relevant information for learners, and a point of reference for future research endeavors. The researcher hopes that the outcomes will be advantageous for forthcoming researchers.

### c) The Institute

The researcher aims for the conclusions drawn from this study to be advantageous and to contribute positively to academic journals and institutions.

## F. Organisation of Thesis

To understand the problems discussed in this study, the researcher describes them globally as follows, in the order of chapters I to V:

### 1. Initial Section

This initial section consists of a title page, an approval sheet, a statement of work originality, an abstract, a motto, an Arabic-Latin translation guide, an acknowledgment, a preface, a table of contents, a list of tables, and a list of figures.

### 2. Content Section

The content section includes: This section contains an outline consisting of five chapters; between chapter one and the other chapters, which are interconnected because they are a unified whole, the five chapters are part of the following:

**CHAPTER I: Introduction**

It contains the research background, the research focus, the research questions, the research objectives, the research significance, and the organization of the thesis.

**CHAPTER II: Review of literature**

It contains the theoretical description, literature review, previous related studies, and conceptual framework.

**CHAPTER III: Research Methods**

This chapter contains the research design, the research participant and setting, the research instrument and data collection technique, the research data validity, the data analysis technique, and research ethical considerations.

**CHAPTER VI: The Research Findings and Discussion**

It contains the research results and discussion

**CHAPTER V: Conclusions and Suggestions**

It contains a conclusion and suggestions.

