

## CHAPTER IV

### RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### A. Research Finding

The proposed review by the researcher in this research focused on identifying the anxiety factors affecting students in listening classes and the strategies they employed to overcome this anxiety. This qualitative approach adopted a descriptive method. Therefore, data observation and interviews with the research subjects were necessary. Before conducting the research at STEC "Student English Club," the researcher drafted an observation checklist and interview guidelines. The next step involved contacting the respondents to attend the listening classes for general monitoring through observation checklists and conducting semi-structured one-by-one interviews to obtain more in-depth information.

##### 1. The Research Finding of Observation

*Table 4. 1*

**Observation Checklist**

OBSERVATION CHECKLIST				
N O	ASPECT	Y E S	N O	DETAIL
1	Classroom Silence: Is the classroom atmosphere calm, or is there disruptive noise?		✓	The classroom was loud because there was a sound system outside the room and small mumbling noises from some other people.
2	Facial Expressions: Are there signs of tension or anxiety in the students' facial expressions?	✓		In the first session and session 2, the two students often frowned, linking their eyebrows, and anxious.
3	Body Posture: Does the students' body posture indicate tension or relaxation while listening?	✓		Three students had their ears carefully focused on the speaker. One was sitting relaxed, and the other was lying down.
4	Eye Contact: Do		✓	They only interacted

	students interact with the teacher or fellow students often? Are there signs of discomfort in maintaining eye contact?			with their tutor when they requested to repeat the audio. They were very relaxed when they looked at their friends. Sometimes, they had small discussions.
5	Level of Participation: Are students actively participating in listening activities or more passive?	✓		It went pretty well, as three out of five students were enthusiastic. However, during the answer-matching session, one student was daydreaming, causing them to lose focus and fall behind. Additionally, one student was already feeling tired, sleepy, and exhausted.
6	Response to Questions: Do students appear uncertain or confused when responding to questions from the material or fellow students?		✓	They were confused and nervous when a typo occurred in the answer text, and a mistake was made in the audio playback during session 2, but they immediately realized that it didn't fit the context. On the other hand, they were shocked that one of the audios lasted for 7 minutes.
7	Concentration: Do students maintain concentration well during listening sessions? Are there signs of distraction or anxiety?	✓		They put themselves in position with their ears focused on the speaker. However, after a while, some of them started using their mobile phones to access social media, reply to

				messages, and even eat snacks and drink.
8	Anxiety: Are there any signs of distress or anxiety?	✓		They showed gestures of sitting cross-legged, bowing their heads, furrowing their brows, squinting their eyes, glaring at the sound system/speaker, and drinking.
9	Accuracy: Are students accurate in grasping the conveyed information? Do they often misinterpret or ask for clarification?	✓		It was pretty noticeable that sometimes, they were confused by the pronunciation of the native speaker.
	Do they often misinterpret, ask for clarification, or seek guidance?		✓	Sometimes, they glanced at their friends'/other students' answer sheets to look for clues.
10	Social Interaction: Do students interact with fellow students during listening activities, being open or tending to withdraw?	✓		They were very welcome and showed no intention of being secretive or withdrawing.
11	Time Pressure: Do students show increased anxiety when listening within specific time constraints?	✓		There was a moment when they didn't get the point being made, so they immediately asked for it to be repeated. During session 2, in the third audio, they asked for it to be repeated thrice because of the pronunciation and

				accent speed. For the rest of the session, they only played the audio twice.
12	Active Listening Skills: Can students use active listening strategies such as asking questions or summarizing?	✓		They focused on listening to the audio while taking notes of their obtained points. Then, when something was unclear, they asked their friend for clarification/confirmation of the answer/point.
13	Emotional Response: Are significant emotional changes observed when students listen to complex material?	✓		They were surprised, shocked, laughed, tired, tense, focused, relaxed, and exhausted to cover their anxiousness.
14	Anxiety Coping Strategies: Do students use strategies to cope with stress, such as deep breathing or diverting attention?	✓		They positioned themselves near the sound system to hear, sat slightly leaning forward while looking at the question text, said " <i>bismillah</i> ," prayed, and read the questions before the audio was played.
15	Resource Utilization: Do students utilize additional resources like dictionaries or make notes during listening activities?	✓		They used the "note-taking" method.
16	Participation Level: Is there a comparison between students who actively participate		✓	3-4 students were actively engaged in the listening process and interacted with the material being

	and those who are more passive in terms of the observable level of anxiety?			presented. On the other hand, other students seemed indifferent, with expressions ranging from daydreaming to even appearing sleepy.
17	Effectiveness of Anxiety Coping Strategies: Do students using strategies to cope with anxiety appear calmer and more focused in listening?	✓		It was evident when they understood the point being made in the question. This was indicated by small gestures such as nodding or saying "yes" or "got it."
18	Focus Maintenance: Can students refocus well after experiencing disruptions or anxiety?	✓		They quickly closed their eyes or ignored the distractions by returning to the questions or the speaker.
19	Engagement in Discussion: Does the level of student engagement in discussions or group activities relate to the level of anxiety they experience?			Some students may have been active in the discussion because they are naturally more extroverted. Conversely, some students tended to be less involved in the discussion even though they did not experience significant anxiety.
20	Improvement from Session to Session: Are there noticeable improvements from one listening session to the next in managing anxiety and enhancing listening skills?		✓	Students consistently showed the same level of anxiety in each listening session. Furthermore, their listening skills and participation did not significantly improve from one session to the next.

21	Physical Signs: Are there physical signs such as cold sweat or trembling in students that may indicate anxiety?		✓	Everything seemed fine.
22	Use of Stress Management Strategies: Do students use stress management strategies like deep breathing or visualization to cope with anxiety or something else?	✓		In session 2, 1-2 students were using their phones (either checking/scrolling Instagram or just replying to messages); someone's arrival diverted their attention, and they ate meatballs, opened a drink, and went to the toilet without permission.
23	Do their expressions/behaviors appear different when they finish working?	✓		They were relieved and happy but then surprised because they were immediately corrected.
24	Do their expressions/behaviors change when they know the answer is true or false?	✓		They were very relieved and happy, and then they were surprised because the correction was done.
25	Reaction to Mistakes: Do students appear embarrassed or frustrated when they make mistakes in comprehension or pronunciation?		✓	They were not ashamed but disappointed, mainly when they initially chose an answer and then changed it, which was wrong. There were also mistakes or gaps in the English language writing.

Based on the observation checklist, the classroom atmosphere was disrupted by external noise and a particular



mix of student activities, such as using mobile phones, eating, and drinking. Despite this, most students actively participated in listening exercises, with a few appearing distracted or tired. Students also used a variety of strategies to deal with their anxiety, such as requesting audio replays, positioning themselves correctly, and taking notes on important information. However, students' listening ability and participation did not significantly improve from one session to the next, and some students still seemed to feel the same amount of nervousness during each listening session.

Furthermore, some students seemed to distract themselves by using their phones or engaging in other activities during the listening sessions. Nonetheless, most students were able to refocus after experiencing disruptions or anxiety. Students' reactions to mistakes varied, but generally, they seemed disappointed and eager to correct their errors. Although some aspects needed improvement, such as reducing distractions during listening sessions and managing emotional reactions like tension and disappointment when the answers were incorrect, the students participated well in the listening activities. They appeared relieved and happy after the sessions, indicating that, despite facing difficulties, they remained motivated to learn.<sup>1</sup>

The teaching of listening classes at STEC utilized a structured method to improve students' listening skills gradually. During the session, the class was divided into two parts, designed to measure and develop students' abilities effectively.

In the first part, students were given relatively easy listening questions. These questions were designed to introduce them to the types of questions and formats they would face and to build their confidence. This session served as a warm-up, helping students hone basic listening skills, such as recognizing keywords, understanding intonation, and capturing general information from the text they heard.

After completing the first session, the class continued to the second part, during which the difficulty level of the

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<sup>1</sup> Learning Observation at STEC, May 7, 2024.

listening questions increased. At this stage, students faced more complex questions that required in-depth understanding, inference abilities, and higher analytical skills. This second session aimed to challenge students and help them develop their listening skills to a more advanced level.

The results of this structured teaching method in listening classes at STEC showed that students were not only able to master the basics of listening but also capable of gradually facing greater challenges. This approach proved effective in helping students achieve optimal listening skills in accordance with the educational standards set by STEC.

## **2. The Research Finding of Interview**

In the interview data, the researcher found that out of the five students interviewed, four stated that they liked English. Their reasons varied, ranging from the belief that English opens up global communication opportunities, its simplicity in learning, interest in foreign cultures, and the influence of early education. Conversely, one student initially disliked English, but this interest developed during the COVID-19 pandemic. For more details, see the appendix.

### **a. Factors Contribute to EFL Students' Anxiety**

In this research finding, the researcher found the anxiety factor at STEC as EFL students based on an interview that had been conducted. According to the explanation above, Vogely proposed four types of factors that contribute to anxiety. There are four factors: the teacher, the student, the listening materials and procedure, and the other factor.<sup>2</sup> However, the researcher discovered all types of anxiety that affect EFL students' anxiety, as evidenced by the transcribed interviews.

Most students felt their tutor or teacher did not significantly influence their listening and learning process. Some students stated that their tutor or teacher was very helpful and made them feel relaxed. However,

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<sup>2</sup> Vogely, A.J. (1998), Listening Comprehension Anxiety: Students' Reported Sources and Solutions. *Foreign Language Annals*, 31: 67-80 quoted in Pan, "Analysis of Listening Anxiety in EFL Class."



the majority of students acknowledged experiencing difficulties in learning to listen. These difficulties were primarily caused by factors such as strong accents, the speed of the speaker, and external noises. They also felt anxious, especially when listening to difficult material for a limited time.

1) Teacher Factor

*“I will be terrified if the lecturer is very serious, so fear prevents it from focusing due to fear of making mistakes.”*<sup>3</sup> Based on the statement, a tutor/teacher who looks strict can increase students' anxiety levels. It was due to students' fear of making mistakes when learning to listen; when they saw their tutor or teacher as strict, they tended to be terrified of making mistakes. She feared the tutor or teacher may correct or criticize her if she made a mistake. After that, regarding distractions to focus, stress brought on by a strict tutor or teacher might cause students to lose focus when learning to listen. She became overly focused on her fear of making mistakes, making it hard to comprehend the underlying material. On the other hand, four students did not mention that the teacher/tutor was a factor in their anxiety. Instead, the teacher was a beneficial indicator in their listening learning by appropriate steps.

2) Student Factor

*“Yes, when one's condition is tired of sleepiness. That's what makes it uncomfortable.”*<sup>4</sup>

An important factor affecting understanding of listening is the physical and mental state of the students themselves. Findings from the interview showed that one respondent, SAA stated that exhaustion and sleepiness made listening activities uncomfortable. It showed that internal factors such as being tired affect students' concentration ability. This fatigue causes discomfort and inhibits their ability to process the listening information effectively.

<sup>3</sup> SPV, Interview conducted by the researcher, May 13, 2024.

<sup>4</sup> SAA, Interview conducted by the researcher, May 10, 2024.

*“Sometimes, my thoughts frequently fly when I’m listening and fatigued”*.<sup>5</sup> This statement indicates that there is anxiety in listening, which may be caused by internal factors of the student, and other students agree with that. This expression indicates difficulty staying focused on what is being heard. This can result from worry, discomfort, or lack of confidence in your listening abilities. The combination of these factors, fatigue and sleepiness, contributed to the overall difficulty and anxiety that students experienced in the listening comprehension task.

### 3) Listening Materials and Process

Listening to materials and the process factor is almost always a main problem for students as EFL at STEC. Vogely said that this factor could be due to the level of complexity of the listening material, the content and speed, and the material's repetition.<sup>6</sup> In the case above, the students at STEC went through it. In this case, the fourth student said, *“Yes, especially when the material is difficult to understand.”*<sup>7</sup>

SPV also felt that material was a factor of anxiety, *“If the material is difficult/the audio is a long like a speech, it becomes anxious because it is difficult to remember the content of the audio.”*<sup>8</sup>

Other cases included significant factors, as mentioned in the following statement by the second student (VHH).

*The material itself is often a key factor for me. Because of the speaker's fast speech, I have difficulties understanding the speaker's words. If the information being listened to includes foreign words or a speaker with a strong accent, I may become worried and have problems understanding.”*<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> VHH, Interview conducted by the researcher, May 13, 2024.

<sup>6</sup> Vogely, A.J. (1998), Listening Comprehension Anxiety: Students' Reported Sources and Solutions. Foreign Language Annals, 31: 67-80. quoted in Pan, “Analysis of Listening Anxiety in EFL Class.”

<sup>7</sup> SAA, Interview conducted by the researcher.

<sup>8</sup> SPV, Interview conducted by the researcher, May 13, 2024.

<sup>9</sup> VHH, Interview conducted by the researcher, May 13, 2024.

PBAP added, *It can be a struggle for me to listen to English audio with a strong accent, such as a British accent. And if I'm anxious, it's about academic topics, such as interview materials or daily activity material, especially with the addition of many speakers in the audio and speaking at the same time with their accents that may differ, so it's like, 'Oh my, who should I focus on first?'*<sup>10</sup>

As well as the fifth student (AIUA) also mentioned concern about understanding this topic,

*The difficult thing that causes anxiety thing is when I don't know the vocabulary that I haven't heard before, and they babble, even though the audio is not very clear, and it's only played a few times.*<sup>11</sup>

Based on the above, the average difficulties and everyday experiences felt by the five students when listening to unfamiliar vocabulary, the speed of speech, long audio, and accents. Indeed, these were things that students could not predict, no matter how much they were informed about the theme of the material or audio they would be exposed to or learn. VHH, PBAP, and SAA said that they had difficulty listening to materials that used foreign vocabulary or too fast accents. This often led to anxiety and difficulty understanding the material being presented. From the statement of the third respondent (PBAP), it can be seen that the British accent is an example of a strong accent that causes difficulty. Respondents reported that the accent made it difficult to understand academic contexts such as interviews or everyday activities with native speakers since the themes were rarely encountered daily. In addition, the variation of accents among speakers in the audio also complicated the comprehension process. This was compounded when they did not have the opportunity to find the key points from the audio or learning material.

<sup>10</sup> PBAP, Interview conducted by the researcher, May 10, 2024.

<sup>11</sup> AIUA, Interview conducted by the researcher, May 10, 2024.

In listening sessions, the material presented cannot be repeated as often as the students desired; this causes anxiety since they fear they cannot capture the information well. Respondents also highlighted the time constraints in processing information, which increased concerns. If the material obtained cannot be repeated or only has a few chances, students feel tense when asked to respond immediately to listening comprehension. Without enough time to process the information or related questions, students can become anxious because of difficulty understanding the meaning.

#### 4) Other Factors

In addition to those mentioned above, many situations might cause listeners' anxiety. In this case, all respondents noted that anxiety during listening could be exacerbated by environmental factors that cause discomfort and hinder comprehension. Environmental noise, such as other students' conversations, traffic sounds, or even the hum of air conditioning, can make it difficult to concentrate on audio material.<sup>12</sup> Additionally, the physical setting of listening activities plays a significant role. Uncomfortable seating, unpleasant odors, or inadequate lighting can add to discomfort and make it harder to focus. Here are some experiences shared by the students.

VHH, PBAP, and AIUA stated clearly that room noise was an obstacle to learning.

*“Sometimes, I have a hard time because there are a lot of noises from outside that interfere.”<sup>13</sup>*

*“And that is often difficult to control when the surroundings of the learning room are noisy.”<sup>14</sup>*

*“I find it difficult to concentrate, especially when the surrounding environment is very noisy.”<sup>15</sup>*

<sup>12</sup> “Noise in Schools,” SVANTEK - Sound and Vibration (blog), accessed May 16, 2024, <https://svantek.com/academy/noise-in-schools/>.

<sup>13</sup> VHH, Interview conducted by the researcher, May 13, 2024.

<sup>14</sup> PBAP, Interview conducted by the researcher, May 10, 2024.

<sup>15</sup> AIUA, Interview conducted by the researcher, May 10, 2024.

The interview statements reveal a significant issue with external noise interference during listening activities. Several students highlighted that noises from outside the classroom created a challenging environment for concentrating on listening tasks. This external noise disrupted their ability to focus, making it difficult for them to engage fully with the presented material. The consistency in these responses underscores the importance of a controlled and quiet learning environment for effective listening comprehension.

In addition to noise, physical discomfort due to seating arrangements also emerged as a notable concern. SAA mentioned that an uncomfortable position hinders their focus. *“An uncomfortable position seat that makes me not focus.”*<sup>16</sup>

This suggested that the physical setup of the learning space can directly impact students' ability to concentrate. Comfortable seating is essential to maintaining attention and minimizing distractions, enabling students to absorb and process auditory information better.

Certain situations, such as tests, could increase anxiety when listening to material. *“In situations such as final test and midterm test, it makes me very depressed and absolutely cannot open cellphones.”*<sup>17</sup> This statement described a situation where a student was facing final and mid-semester exams. The student felt very pressured and were prohibited from opening their phones. In a situation like this, the student may feel very stressed because she cannot access additional resources or help from their phone. She felt anxious about being unable to review material or find answers to difficult questions. So, prohibiting the use of mobile phones also adds stress to the student, as she feels disconnected from the outside world and may feel she has no control over her exam situation.

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<sup>16</sup> SAA, Interview conducted by the researcher, May 10, 2024.

<sup>17</sup> SPV, Interview conducted by the researcher, May 13, 2024.



b. The Listening Strategies Used by The Students to Overcome Anxiety in Learning Listening

1) Direct Strategies

a) Cognitive Strategies

The researcher only collected a few statements from the students, but they all consistently showed how to employ cognitive strategies to improve their listening skills. Refer to the attached appendix for more information.

The research results showed that students identified various strategies to improve their listening skills in English.

VHH stated, *“The way to learn listening is to listen to a lot of audio material in English, for example, from songs, podcasts, or movies.”*<sup>18</sup>

SAA agrees and adds a strategy for guessing the audio content: *“Of course, practice. Often listen to native talks, speeches, and music, then guess yourself about the content of that audio.”*<sup>19</sup>

PBAP also utilized a similar strategy. However, the difference was that she chose relaxing sounds. *“Practice listening to English songs or audio so the discussion is not too serious.”*<sup>20</sup>

In contrast with the PBAP plan, the fifth student (AIUA) chose more challenging audio to develop his listening skills. *“Frequently learn listening to know the pronunciation of vocabulary in English and listen to audio that has a crowded conversation situation, making it easier in the next listening learning.”*<sup>21</sup>

Based on that, respondents (VHH, PBAP, SAA, AIUA) listened to many audio materials in English, such as songs, podcasts, or films. They emphasized the importance of practicing in relaxing situations, such as listening to songs or

<sup>18</sup> VHH, Interview conducted by the researcher, May 13, 2024.

<sup>19</sup> SAA, Interview conducted by the researcher, May 10, 2024.

<sup>20</sup> PBAP, Interview conducted by the researcher, May 10, 2024.

<sup>21</sup> AIUA, Interview conducted by the researcher, May 10, 2024.



audio that was not too serious. This strategy aimed to familiarize themselves with various accents, speaking speeds, and conversational situations.

SPV said, “*Maybe it's my vocabulary knowledge.*”<sup>22</sup> One of the strategies mentioned is increasing vocabulary knowledge. This shows that understanding vocabulary is the key to understanding audio in English.

Respondents also highlighted the importance of active practice in improving listening skills. Students often listen to native speakers, including speeches, music, and other audio materials, while trying to guess the content of the audio. This exercise helps students improve their understanding of vocabulary pronunciation in English and deal with various conversational situations, including busy situations. Thus, these cognitive strategies can help improve students' listening skills in English.

#### b) Compensation Strategy

Based on the findings, two respondents used compensatory strategies when listening to less clear audio material. “*Yes, I have, because sometimes the audio is unclear, but I understand the material.*” said PBAP.”<sup>23</sup> The statement illustrated how the respondent used compensation strategies by trying to understand the material, even though the audio provided was unclear.

On the other hand, SAA had a way of doing it. “*When a word is unclear in the audio, I determine its meaning based on the preceding and following words.*”<sup>24</sup> When SAA found an unclear word in the audio recording, she identified it based on the previous and following words. This strategy illustrates that students use the context around an obscure word to guess the actual word.

<sup>22</sup> SPV, Interview conducted by the researcher, May 13, 2024.

<sup>23</sup> PBAP, Interview conducted by the researcher, May 10, 2024.

<sup>24</sup> SAA, Interview conducted by the researcher, May 10, 2024.

It demonstrated the student's ability to use context to understand the text, even when it was unclear in the audio recording.

In addition, PBAP's statement also highlights the importance of compensation strategies in improving material understanding. Even though the audio provided was unclear, she could still understand the material's content.

## 2) Indirect Strategy

### a) Metacognitive Strategy

This research reveals that students employ various metacognitive strategies when facing listening exams.

*“Read the question before the audio is played, then in the first audio playback, I focus on understanding first while writing the vocabulary that I heard, and then in the next playback, I just identified the points.”*<sup>25</sup> She used one strategy: reading the questions before playing the audio. Then, they concentrate on understanding the audio on the first playback while writing down everything they hear. They then determined the audio's important points on repeated replays. This strategy allowed students to be more focused and understand the audio material effectively.

Furthermore, the researcher revealed that the student overcame listening anxiety with thorough preparation. *“I overcome anxiety in listening by dividing time to prepare well, including listening to audio in everyday English to get used to the ears, and before listening, I will usually prepare stationery to transcribe audio”*.<sup>26</sup> She consistently listened to English audio daily to familiarize herself with the dialect. Before the audio began, they prepared writing materials to transcribe it, allowing them to concentrate more on highlighting essential details. Thus, thorough preparation

<sup>25</sup> SPV, Interview conducted by the researcher, May 13, 2014.

<sup>26</sup> VHH, Interview conducted by the researcher, May 13, 2024.

increased their confidence and decreased anxiety while listening to audio material.

The research also found that one student used physical relaxation strategies to cope with exam anxiety. *“Sometimes I eat candy that tastes sweet, but often I have to position myself comfortably, and that can relax me, and sometimes I have to sit down with a little crouch, and then my hands are on the hair/top of the forehead.”*<sup>27</sup> She admitted to often feeling anxious but used strategies such as eating sweets to feel calmer. Additionally, they created a comfortable and relaxed environment by adjusting their sitting position and touching specific body parts, such as their forehead or hair. These strategies help her feel calmer and more focused during listening exams.

#### b) Affective Strategy

This research aimed to identify students' affective strategies to manage their emotions before learning sessions.

*“Deep inhale, exhale, and close my eyes for a moment.”*<sup>28</sup> There were also example strategies by VHH.

*“The way I do this is to breathe in and affirm myself before the learning session. In addition, sometimes it helps to relax me more.”*<sup>29</sup>

The research findings revealed that deep breathing and positive affirmations are commonly used strategies. Before starting a learning session, students take deep breaths and speak positive affirmations to themselves. This helps them feel calmer and more confident before engaging in learning activities.

Additionally, PBAP used additional strategies, such as creating unclear drawings or absurdly scribbling on paper. *“Scribble or draw*

<sup>27</sup> AIUA, Interview conducted by the researcher, May 10, 2024.

<sup>28</sup> SPV, Interview conducted by the researcher, May 13, 2024.

<sup>29</sup> VHH, Interview conducted by the researcher, May 13, 2024.

*absurd lines or marks on paper.*”<sup>30</sup> Although seemingly unrelated to learning, this activity helped the student release stress and enhance their focus during learning sessions.

Furthermore, the research revealed that these affective strategies vary among individuals. While most students used deep breathing and positive affirmations, some preferred to engage in creative activities such as creating unclear drawings or absurdly scribbling on paper. This indicates that individuals had different ways of managing their emotions before learning.

## B. Discussion

This research included two essential points that can answer the research question. Below is the explanation:

### 1. Factors Contribute to EFL Students' Anxiety in Learning Listening

From the observation and interview data conducted, several factors were found that cause anxiety in EFL students in the process of learning to listen. The students experienced all of these factors: teacher factor, student factor, listening materials and process, and other factors.<sup>31</sup>

First, there was the teacher factor. Research has shown that the attitudes and behaviours of the tutor or teacher can influence anxiety levels when learning to listen. A tutor or teacher who is too critical, stern, or intimidating can make students feel afraid and anxious when participating in listening activities. For example, if a tutor or teacher criticizes students' mistakes too often or provides unconstructive feedback, this can increase students' anxiety levels. Students may become afraid of making mistakes and worry about negative evaluations from the lecturer, making it difficult to focus and concentrate when listening. The research by Wang stated that teachers' attentive behavior had

<sup>30</sup> PBAP, Interview conducted by the researcher, May 10, 2024.

<sup>31</sup> Vogely, A.J. (1998), Listening Comprehension Anxiety: Students' Reported Sources and Solutions. *Foreign Language Annals*, 31: 67-80. quoted in Pan, "Analysis of Listening Anxiety in EFL Class."

a direct and significant negative impact on anxiety about learning English as a foreign language (EFL). This study also shows that learning engagement and English learning strategies mediate this relationship.<sup>32</sup> The tutor or teacher who inspires confidence provides constructive feedback and creates a supportive learning environment, which can help reduce students' listening anxiety. A positive and supportive environment will make students feel more comfortable participating in listening activities, thereby improving their listening skills

Second, student factors include their own physical and mental conditions. Conditions such as fatigue and sleepiness can make listening uncomfortable and hinder their ability to concentrate. This becomes more difficult when they have to understand difficult material within a specific time limit. During the observation, students showed tired and frightened gestures while the listening lesson progressed. Several other students also showed tired faces, even though they concentrated on listening to the audio being played. According to Tarigan, in listening, a student should concentrate as well as possible on understanding what speakers are saying and listen well; listeners should not only physically but also psychologically in good condition,<sup>33</sup>

Third, material factors and the listening process were the main problems for EFL students at STEC. The gap between the level of complexity of listening material, content, speaker speed, and repetition of material is often a cause of anxiety for students. Material that is too technical or heavy, fast speaking speed, repetition of material, and the use of unfamiliar foreign vocabulary or accents are the main challenges faced by students. This is seen when the audio

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<sup>32</sup> Dongmei Wang, "The Relationship between Teacher Care Behavior and EFL Learning Anxiety: The Chain Mediation Effect of Learning Engagement and Learning Strategies," *Frontiers in Psychology* 14 (November 3, 2023): 1279025, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1279025>.

<sup>33</sup> Syarifuddin Dollah and Geminastiti Sakkir, *Student Problems and Strategies in Learning Listening Comprehension* (Penerbit P4I, 2024), <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=3B4MEQAAQBAJ&lpg=PA1&ots=jQu31L7PSN&dq=student%20factors%20affecting%20EFL%20listening%20anxiety%3A&lr&hl=id&pg=PR3#v=onepage&q&f=true>. p. 25-26.



displays a British accent for a long time. Their ability to understand the material effectively is often impaired by these factors, and it can increase their anxiety levels. Out of 97 students surveyed, 54.6% experienced high levels of listening anxiety, 18.5% had moderate levels, and 26.8% had low levels. The primary factors contributing to this anxiety included difficulties in listening skills, particularly the inability to cope with fast speech and a wide range of vocabulary.<sup>34</sup>

Fourth, other factors include situations that can reduce anxiety during the listening process. These factors included environmental disturbances, such as distractions outside the room, uncomfortable sitting, and a less supportive learning environment. Environmental noise from an uncomfortable sitting position can disturb students' concentration and make it difficult for them to engage fully in the material presented. These findings support the results of other research, which show that physical conditions, such as when there is noise inside or outside the classroom, disturb students' attention during the listening process. Students also feel anxious if the classroom is too hot, which can divert their focus from the audio they are listening to.<sup>35</sup>

## 2. The Listening Strategies Used by The Students of STEC “Student English Club” to Overcome Anxiety in Learning Listening

Only two strategies were used that refer to direct strategies, namely cognitive strategy and compensation strategy. According to research, students tend to utilize cognitive strategies based on the Oxford theory of cognitive strategies: These strategies are used by learners to produce new language and understand how it works, such as

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<sup>34</sup> Arini Nurul Hidayati et al., “Foreign Language Listening Anxiety in an Academic Listening Class,” *J-SHMIC: Journal of English for Academic* 7, no. 2 (August 28, 2020): 1–9, [https://doi.org/10.25299/jshmic.2020.vol7\(2\).5241](https://doi.org/10.25299/jshmic.2020.vol7(2).5241).

<sup>35</sup> Annisa Astrid et al., “Indonesian EFL Students’ Anxiety Factors and Solutions for Listening Comprehension: Multiple Case Study,” *Studies in English Language and Education* 11 (January 31, 2024): 41–58, <https://doi.org/10.24815/siele.v11i1.30976>.



practicing, receiving and sending messages, analyzing, highlighting, summarizing, and translating.<sup>36</sup>

**Practicing.** The research revealed that all students considered regular practice crucial for enhancing their listening skills in English. They actively engaged with various media, such as songs, podcasts, films, and speeches, to deepen their understanding. In addition to regular practice, students emphasized the importance of active engagement. This included listening to native speakers' words, such as speeches and conversations, and attempting to guess the content of audio materials. All students in this research employed a naturalist approach to practice involving repetition. This approach helped improve their pronunciation, expand their vocabulary, and handle diverse communicative situations more confidently.

**Receiving and Sending Messages.** The study showed that students utilized diverse audio sources and listened to various types of English audio, including songs, podcasts, and films, significantly enhancing their listening skills. Some students opted for less formal and more relaxing materials to reduce pressure and improve comfort while learning to listen. Students also employed context to understand unclear words in audio recordings. They learned to analyze words before and after unfamiliar ones to infer their meanings.

**Analyzing and Reasoning.** Some students employed an active analysis approach to audio materials. They attempted to predict audio content and identified key points from the conversations they listened to. This helped them develop critical listening skills and understand broader contexts.

**Creating Structure for Input and Output.** During listening sessions, some students used note-taking as a strategy. They jotted down key points from the audio they heard, which helped them understand and retain the information presented. By taking notes, they could also seek clarification or confirmation from their peers if something was unclear. Students also recognized that expanding their

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<sup>36</sup> Dawood, "Direct Language Learning Strategies in EFL."

vocabulary was crucial for understanding English audio recordings better. A broader vocabulary helped them identify and comprehend words more effectively in various listening situations.

By employing these strategies, students reduced anxiety in listening practice and enjoyed learning English through diverse media and consistent practice. Overall, the cognitive strategies used by students in this research show that they actively seek ways to improve their listening skills through various forms of media and consistent practice. This strategy helps reduce anxiety and allows them to enjoy learning English by listening more. The research by Hadijah supported this research by stating that the learners dominantly applied cognitive strategies, and 77% of the students had run the strategies in their listening activities more frequently.<sup>37</sup>

The main reason learners employed most of this cognitive strategy was that listening is a skill rather than a comprehension because “Cognitive strategies are PRACTical for language learning.”<sup>38</sup> Therefore, practicing is the quickest and easiest way to develop a skill.

In the context of using a direct strategy, some respondents used a compensation strategy by trying to understand the material, even though the audio provided was unclear. This suggests that despite difficulties accessing information directly via audio, the individual is still trying to understand the material using alternative strategies. Based on the responses by students who are improving their listening TOEFL scores, all participants used the compensation strategy, which can help them answer listening TOEFL questions.<sup>39</sup> Salam affirmed that the student who used compensatory strategies—such as making educated

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<sup>37</sup> Sitti Hadijah and Shalawati Shalawati, “Listening Comprehension Strategies Applied by English Language Learners,” *ELT-Lectura* 5, no. 1 (February 20, 2018): 38–47, <https://doi.org/10.31849/elt-lectura.v5i1.1074>.

<sup>38</sup> Rebecca L Oxford, *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know* (Boston: Heinle & Heinle Publishers, 1990), p.43.

<sup>39</sup> Agung Wicaksono et al., “Improving Listening Toefl Score Viewed from Students’ Listening Strategies,” *Prosiding SEMDIKJAR (Seminar Nasional Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran)* 5 (August 4, 2022): 949–57.

guesses about the meaning of words by taking into account context, accent, and pronunciation of the subject—did not experience as many challenges as other students in her batch.<sup>40</sup> That is why a compensation strategy can help their listening learning, reduce their anxiety and master listening skills.

As Oxford has explained, it can use clues such as searching for and using language-based instructions (the target language that the learner already knows, from the learner's own language or another language) and using instructions that are not language-based (knowledge, context, situation, personal relationship topics, or general world knowledge) to guess the meaning of what is heard in the target language, without complete knowledge of the vocabulary, grammar.<sup>41</sup>

In the context of these findings, flexible thinking ability is demonstrated by the respondent's ability to use compensatory strategies. This also shows that when facing obstacles in the learning process, individuals can find alternative ways to overcome them and still achieve their learning goals.

On the other hand, only two strategies that refer to indirect strategy are metacognitive strategy and affective strategy. This research found that students used various metacognitive strategies to overcome anxiety when facing listening tests. One strategy they use is to read the question before the audio plays. The same thing that Oxford says is that figuring out the purpose of listening is made easier by understanding the kind of speech being used by reading aloud from a written text.<sup>42</sup> They then focused on understanding the audio during the first playback while noting the vocabulary they heard. Next, during subsequent

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<sup>40</sup> Urai Salam, Sukarti, and Zainal Arifin, "An Analysis of Learning Styles and Learning Strategies Used by a Successful Language Learner," *JET (Journal of English Teaching)* 6, no. 2 (June 26, 2020): 111–21, <https://doi.org/10.33541/jet.v6i2.1734>.

<sup>41</sup> Oxford, *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know* (Boston: Heinle & Heinle Publishers, 1990), p.49-50.

<sup>42</sup> Oxford, *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know* (Boston: Heinle & Heinle Publishers, 1990), p.158.

playback, they identified key points from the audio. This strategy helped them become more focused and effective in understanding audio content.

In addition, the research also showed that students overcome anxiety during listening exams with thorough preparation. This strategy involves previewing the basic principles and/or material (including new vocabulary) for an upcoming language activity and linking these with what the learners already know.<sup>43</sup> They consistently listen to audio in English in everyday life to get to know the language. Before the exam, they also prepare writing tools to transcribe the audio, allowing them to focus more on recording important information. Thus, thorough preparation helps them feel more confident and reduces anxiety during the listening exam. This research

The research also found that some students use physical relaxation strategies to overcome test anxiety. They admitted they often felt anxious but used techniques such as eating candy to feel calmer. Additionally, they created a comfortable and relaxed environment by adjusting their sitting position and touching certain body parts, such as their forehead or hair. These strategies help them feel calmer and more focused during the listening exam.

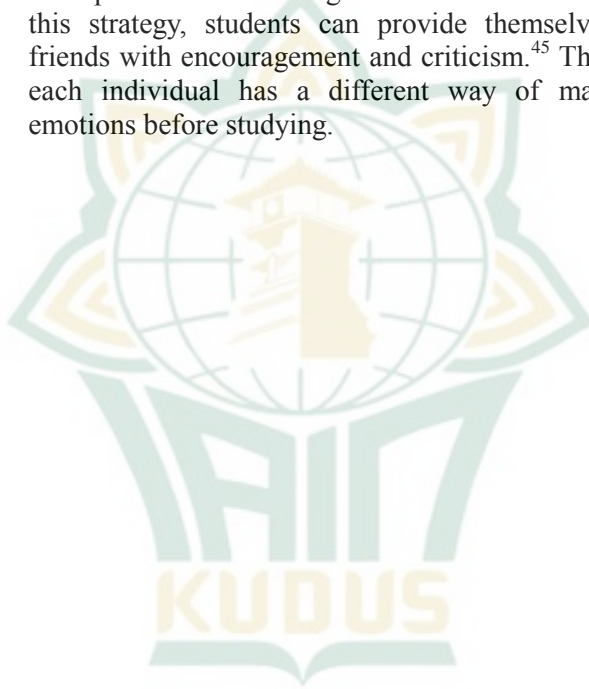
Research results on deep breathing techniques and positive affirmations showed that one of the strategies commonly used by students was the affective strategy. According to scientific bio-feedback, these techniques are all effective anxiety reducers.<sup>44</sup> Before starting a study session, students take deep breaths and say positive affirmations to themselves. This helps them feel calmer and more confident before engaging in learning activities. Some students also use additional strategies, such as making unclear/absurd drawings or scribbling on paper in unusual ways. Even though they may seem unrelated to learning, these activities can help students reduce stress and increase their focus during study sessions.

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<sup>43</sup> Oxford, *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know* (Boston: Heinle & Heinle Publishers, 1990)., p.152.

<sup>44</sup> Oxford, *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know* (Boston: Heinle & Heinle Publishers, 1990)., p. 164.

Furthermore, this research also found that the use of these affective strategies varies between individuals. While most students use deep breathing techniques and positive affirmations, some prefer to engage in creative activities such as making obscure drawings or doodling on paper absurdly. Affective strategies, including "Relaxing before listening to English recordings" and "Practicing English with other students", were shown to be employed by EFL students to improve their listening skills and reduce anxiety. Using this strategy, students can provide themselves and their friends with encouragement and criticism.<sup>45</sup> This shows that each individual has a different way of managing their emotions before studying.



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<sup>45</sup> Sweethsy Awinindia, "Metacognitive, Cognitive, and Socio-Affective Strategies Used By English First Language Students in Academic Listening Course," *Lensa: Kajian Kebahasaan, Kesusastraan, Dan Budaya* 13, no. 1 (June 29, 2023): 151, <https://doi.org/10.26714/lensa.13.1.2023.151-168>.