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Indonesian EFL Students' Anxiety Factors and Solutions for Listening Comprehension: Multiple Case Study

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Abstract

Students' anxiousness affects the EFL listening process. Listening anxiety is also an aspect that may impact a foreign language student's success or failure in listening comprehension. Therefore, this study aimed to ascertain the factors that lead to students' listening anxiety and the strategies lecturers use to alleviate it. Multiple qualitative case study was the method used in the study. Twenty-one undergraduate students enrolled in a listening class and three lecturers, from three universities in Palembang, Indonesia, participated in this study. Data collection methods included interviews and observation. The results of thematic analysis of qualitative data revealed four factors contributed to students' anxiety when listening: 1) lack of listening skills; 2) lack of attention; 3) mood; and 4) classroom environment. Meanwhile, the lecturers were committed to implementing strategies that alleviate students' listening anxiety. These strategies included: 1) preparing students for listening activities, 2)

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exposing them to a variety of authentic listening materials, and 3) improving the learning environment. The research findings imply that the lecturers who taught listening class have observed that each student experienced anxiety while listening due to specific factors. As a result, they have begun to devise suitable teaching strategies to foster a more enjoyable learning experience in listening classes, thereby enhancing student comfort and engagement.

Keywords: EFL students, listening anxiety, listening comprehension, teachers' listening strategy.

1. INTRODUCTION

Listening holds significant value not only in everyday situations but also within classroom environments. The common belief among individuals is that the ability to write and speak in a secondary language indicates language proficiency. Nevertheless, with proficient listening skills, effective communication is attainable (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016; Latupono & Nikijuluw, 2022). Listening occupies a significant position in the learning process, as it constitutes one of the four fundamental skills in language acquisition. While reading, speaking, and writing are undoubtedly crucial skills for developing language proficiency, it is widely acknowledged that listening plays a primary role in achieving language expertise. Listening stimulates an individual's consciousness of language, representing a receptive skill typically among the earliest to emerge during human development (He & Chen, 2017). Developing the skill of actively listening to the target language has been shown to enhance one's proficiency in that language.

Additionally, listening comprehension ability is the capacity to listen attentively, which is of utmost importance to comprehend and receive coherent feedback on verbal communication expressed by others. Listening comprehension holds great significance in the language classroom as it is a crucial input source for the learner. The initiation of learning is contingent upon the comprehension of input at an appropriate level (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). The auditory stimulus is a driving force rather than a hindrance to engaging and acquiring knowledge (Ahmadi, 2016; Utomo et al., 2019). When studying a second or foreign language, it is vital to build listening comprehension (Alzamil, 2021). Students with solid listening comprehension will quickly grasp the information, knowledge, and concepts conveyed by the sources they listened to.

Due to the increased concentration and attention required to comprehend the information, listening was often regarded as the most difficult language skill for foreign language students in particular settings of the language classroom due to the sophisticated process (Alzamil, 2021). One of the affective factors that make it harder to listen is anxiety, which is commonly known to take students' focus away from the listening process (Liu, 2016). Thus, listening comprehension anxiety refers to the distress experienced when individuals engage in the act of comprehending a foreign language through auditory means (Liu, 2016; Wang & Cha, 2019).

There are many studies that focus on listening anxiety both at the secondary school level and at the tertiary level. Many scholars have researched the anxiety

experienced by high school students in educational environments when listening to English as a foreign language (EFL). First, the study by [Majunggi and Halim \(2021\)](#) aimed to investigate listening anxiety among high school language learners, along with the underlying factors contributing to their anxieties regarding listening comprehension. Next, the study by [Guswita and Sugirin \(2021\)](#) aimed to investigate the factors contributing to listening anxiety in an English language classroom among high school students. Finally, the study conducted by [Arslan \(2017\)](#) examined the relationship between anxiety over listening and beliefs regarding academic self-efficacy. Based on the findings of these previous studies, it can be inferred that listening anxiety is prevalent among high school students. This anxiety is influenced by various aspects, such as classroom environments, personal characteristics, and textual features. The provided information holds significant relevance to the ongoing research on the factors that influence listening anxiety. Moreover, the aforementioned research has provided us with the insight that a notable constraint exists in the form of a lack of comprehensive investigation into the fundamental elements that contribute to students' listening anxiety. Ultimately, a dearth of data exists about the behavior of students who encounter anxiety during listening exercises, as well as the strategies utilized by teachers to effectively help anxious students within the classroom.

Numerous research investigations have been undertaken regarding foreign language anxiety among tertiary-level students, particularly those learning English as a foreign language ([Dalman, 2016](#); [Prastiyowati, 2019](#); [Subekti, 2018](#); [Sumalinog, 2018](#); [Wang & Cha, 2019](#)). First, [Dalman \(2016\)](#) conducted a study to examine the relationship between listening anxiety, listening strategies, and listening proficiency among Iranian EFL university students. Moreover, the study conducted by [Wang and Cha \(2019\)](#) aimed to investigate the effects of foreign language listening anxiety factors on the listening proficiency of low and high-proficient EFL listeners. According to [Prastiyowati \(2019\)](#), the heightened level of anxiety experienced by students can impede their language proficiency. Furthermore, [Sumalinog \(2018\)](#) investigated the anxiety levels of students, the factors contributing to the emergence of anxiety and the coping mechanisms students employed to manage their anxiety. Finally, [Subekti \(2018\)](#) conducted a study to explore Indonesian tertiary students' perspectives on the implications and determinants of foreign language anxiety. Based on the aforementioned research findings, it can be deduced that the focus of these investigations was on students at the tertiary level. Specifically, the studies aimed to examine the extent of listening anxiety among these students, its impact on their language proficiency, the underlying elements contributing to this anxiety, and the strategies employed by students to mitigate their anxious feelings. However, there has been a lack of study investigating particular strategies employed by lecturers to mitigate their students' anxiety in the context of listening comprehension.

Various scholars have also conducted studies that center on foreign language anxiety among students in English education departments. [Iftanti and Prastyo \(2021\)](#) described the various types of anxiety and their underlying causes experienced by fifth-semester EFL students during their listening classes in an English education department. [Maulidiyah \(2017\)](#) conducted a study to determine the degree of listening anxiety experienced by students in an English education department. Finally, [Shawfani et al. \(2020\)](#) discovered that students experienced anxiety due to personal factors, resulting in high anxiety levels during advanced listening classes.

The research studies previously mentioned focus on listening anxiety in EFL classes experienced by high school and university-level students. That research concentrated on exploring the level of listening anxiety, its effect on students' language performance, the factors that caused it, and students' strategies to overcome their anxiety.

Even though there was an investigation focusing on anxiety among students in English education departments during listening tasks, the research was conducted in advanced listening courses offered in the fifth semester (Subekti, 2018). Moreover, the previous research studies have not focused on what strategies have been applied by listening teachers or lecturers to overcome student anxiety in listening. To the best of our knowledge, there have been no scholarly investigations into listening anxiety among novice students enrolled in introductory listening courses in an English education department. Thus, the researchers were interested in conducting research that focused on two research questions:

1. What factors contribute to listening anxiety among English Department undergraduate students enrolled in the introductory listening class?
2. What strategies do the lecturers use to alleviate the listening anxiety among their students in the introductory listening class of the English Education Department?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, the researchers elaborate on some reviews of research studies related to the three aspects: 1) EFL listening anxiety, 2) causes of EFL listening anxiety, and 3) reducing students' listening anxiety.

2.1 EFL Listening Anxiety

According to Brunfaut and Revesz (2015), several factors related to the attributes of the listening task and the listener have been proven to be determinants of listening complexity. Several factors related to listening tasks have been examined in the research, including input variables, task procedures, cognitive factors, and affective factors such as anxiety.

Anxiety is a critical element affecting language learning. Oteir and Al-Otaibi (2019) mentioned that anxiety is a crucial emotional filter determining both language acquisition success and failure. Anxious students exhibit emotional responses such as academic stress, defensiveness, or impoliteness. It seems to be prone to play an inactive part in class events. As a result, these students cannot employ appropriate learning strategies (Mazo, 2015). Listening anxiety is a significant learner variable influencing language acquisition. However, despite its importance, Serraj (2015) considered listening anxiety among the most under-recognized types of anxiety.

Oteir and Al-Otaibi (2019) classified anxiety into two categories based on its severity; facilitating (mild anxiety) and debilitating (high anxiety). Students who experience low anxiety (facilitating anxiety) will be more attentive, apply information and tactics, and comprehend effectively in listening class. Conversely, students experiencing high levels of anxiety (debilitating anxiety) may encounter challenges in maintaining focus, comprehending auditory information, and interpreting the material presented by speakers. However, if students' anxiety levels are too low, they will also

experience negative consequences. This will cause people to lose focus while listening (Avcı, 2017). Thus, the anxiety level of each student will have a varied influence on their listening performance.

2.2 Causes of EFL Listening Anxiety

Many studies have been undertaken to establish the causes of EFL students' fear of listening comprehension (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016; Guswita & Sugirin, 2021; Oteir & Al-Otaibi, 2019; Serraj, 2015). To begin with, most teachers continue teaching in the conventional classroom setting. Teachers must be aware of their students' current state in class to give them relevant listening content. Teachers must also understand how to educate and motivate students to learn (Pan, 2016). Besides, students' lack of experience with listening activities and a deficiency in the English language contribute significantly to their worry over listening comprehension (Guswita & Sugirin, 2021; Serraj, 2015). Additionally, the speaker's pace, lack of clarity, the quality of the listening audio, and lack of visualization could enhance students' listening anxiety (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016; Oteir & Al-Otaibi, 2019).

Additionally, it was discovered that the textual features, personal factors, and process-related aspects were the primary sources of listening comprehension anxiety. (Pan, 2016; Wang & Cha, 2019). According to Pan's (2016) findings, personal factors significantly impact the levels of listening anxiety experienced by students. Firstly, students with lower levels of listening comprehension are associated with higher anxiety levels. Secondly, the level of self-efficacy is a determining factor in both the degree of emergency experienced and the individual's response to anxiety. Thirdly, the student learning habit is a significant factor. A significant number of individuals who are acquiring a new language exhibit limited enthusiasm toward the act of listening. They infrequently engage in listening exercises outside of the classroom setting and require additional incentives within the instructional environment, which impedes their ability to improve their listening proficiency. The motivation for students' achievement plays a crucial role in their experience of listening anxiety.

Another study found that most students felt nervous because they frequently lost focus when the spoken material was excessively long (Otair & Aziz, 2017). Finally, another issue that contributes to students' concern about listening is time constraints. Students may experience anxiety due to the limited time allotted to answer all listening questions, as they must answer all questions within this time constraint (Guswita & Sugirin, 2021).

2.3 Reducing Students' Listening Anxiety

English language instructors can implement various strategies to alleviate listening anxiety among students. One approach, among others, involves enhancing students' engagement in the learning process. The instructional content must be conveyed through a pedagogical approach that fosters an optimal learning environment, engendering heightened student engagement and participation during classroom discourse. Furthermore, it is vital to acknowledge the significance of providing unconditional positive regard toward students' potential to enhance their foreign language listening proficiency. By assigning a positive value to students' efforts to enhance their listening skills, it is anticipated that a favorable learning

environment will be established, increasing students' self-efficacy and reducing their anxiety (Avci, 2017).

Meanwhile, Pan (2016) suggested ways to reduce students' listening anxiety; by overcoming listeners' psychological barriers, choosing proper listening material, and creating a vibrant atmosphere in EFL classes to cultivate learners' listening strategies (Pan, 2016). According to Oteir and Al-Otaibi (2019), students' listening strategies should be activated. The first aspect pertains to metacognition, encompassing the cognitive learning processes' planning, management, and regulation. Cognitive strategies refer to problem-solving approaches that learners utilize to manipulate their learning tasks and expedite skill acquisition. The social-affective strategies pertain to the techniques listeners utilize to collaborate with their peers, intending to reduce their anxiety levels and confirm their comprehension.

3. METHODS

The qualitative method was used to understand the causes of listening comprehension anxiety and lecturers' strategies in helping students with their listening anxiety. Qualitative research extracts information about individuals' emotions, perceptions, and beliefs (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In the meanwhile, this study used a multiple-case study approach. A *multiple case study* is case study research that uses many issues or cases in one study. Through these multiple case studies, researchers can provide access or broad opportunities to examine the cases under study in depth, detail, and intensively and comprehensively (Cohen et al., 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Hennink et al., 2020; Leavy, 2017). The primary reason for doing a multiple qualitative case study was because it is an ideal approach for examining instructors' and students' daily behavior in the classroom and describing the phenomena that occur to teachers during the teaching and learning process.

3.1 Participants

This study was carried out at three English education departments at three universities in Palembang, Indonesia. By having an access three different context studies, the data could represent more comprehensive point of view. This investigation employed a purposive sampling technique and a convenience case strategy. Convenience studies depict locations, or person researchers may conveniently reach and gather data from (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The research settings and participants were chosen because they were easily accessed to conduct the research and collect the data.

Lecturers as interview participants were selected based on the following criteria; 1) the lecturer is a permanent lecturer, 2) the lecturer teaches listening to first-year students in an English education department, and 3) the lecturer is willing to be observed in their class. Three experienced lecturers in teaching the listening class to first-year students in an English education department volunteered to participate.

Moreover, students as the interviewees were chosen from the English education departments of the three universities. The cohort consisted of first-year students. The students were enrolled in the introductory level of a listening course, commonly referred to as Basic Listening. Because the course is at the introductory level, the

students exhibit a comparatively limited level of proficiency. They still need to utilize the necessary skills to comprehend spoken language.

The students were asked to complete the 20-item Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS) utilized by Liu and Xu (2021) to select the interview participants. The FLLAS was used to classify the students based on their listening anxiety levels. The FLLAS items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, with options ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Each option was assigned a value of 1-5, respectively. The three levels of listening anxiety are as follows; low (with a score range of 20-46), medium (with a score of 47-83), and high (with a score of 84-100).

The majority of students exhibited a moderate anxiety level, as indicated by their responses to the FLLAS. The data from the first university revealed that out of 30 students, one had a low anxiety level, two had a high anxiety level, and the remaining 27 students had a medium anxiety level. Then, the data from the second university revealed that out of 30 students, one had a low anxiety level, one had a high anxiety level, and the remaining 28 students had a medium anxiety level. The data from the third university revealed that one student out of 29 had a low anxiety level, one had a high anxiety level, and the remaining 27 had a medium anxiety level. Thus, 21 students, consisting of three with low anxiety, 15 with moderate anxiety, and three with high anxiety levels, were selected as interview participants. The selection of 21 interviewees was based on the fact that 20 to 50 participants are the optimal number of interviewees for obtaining in-depth information (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

All participants signed the consent form to ensure that the participant’s rights were protected. The choice to participate in this study was made solely voluntarily. The participants’ identities were anonymized through the use of aliases in order to safeguard their confidentiality (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Hennink et al., 2020). We utilized L1, L2 and L3 (for the lecturers). We also used SL1 to SL3 for low-anxiety students, SM1 to SM15 for moderate-anxiety students, and SH1 to SH3 for high-anxiety students.

3.2 Instruments

Interviews and observations were conducted to collect data. The interviews were semi-structured and one-on-one (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The interview was conducted with 21 students to investigate the factors contributing to students’ listening anxiety and with three lecturers from three universities who frequently teach listening to first-year students of the English education departments to explore their strategies to alleviate the factors that caused students’ listening anxiety. The interviews were conducted in person and recorded using a recording application from a smartphone.

Interview guidelines were used by the researchers in conducting the interviews for around thirty minutes. To explore the factors that cause students to become anxious in listening, the researchers asked some interview questions:

- 1) What were the emotions you experienced during listening classes?
- 2) Did you feel anxious every time you attended the listening class?
- 3) What specific circumstances elicited feelings of anxiety or relaxation in the context of listening class? and
- 4) What were the determinants that contributed to the feelings you were experiencing?

Additionally, to investigate the lecturers' strategies in alleviating their students' listening anxiety, the researchers asked some interview questions:

- 1) Did you know your students probably experienced anxiety during your listening class?
- 2) Did you plan your teaching activities by considering the anxious students?
- 3) What teaching strategies have you planned to reduce your students' listening anxiety?

Meanwhile, the observation was also conducted using observation guidelines to observe students' behavior exhibited during the listening process, how students interacted with their lecturers, and how they engaged with other students and to investigate the lecturers' methods for overcoming their students' anxiety throughout the listening process. The observation was in the form of non-participatory observation, that is the researcher performs observations without participating in the observed activity (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Hennink et al., 2020; Leavy, 2017; Miles et al., 2018).

3.3 Data Analysis

The qualitative data analysis was conducted using Thematic Analysis or Coding Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2020; Creswell & Poth, 2018). At the outset, the researchers fully immersed themselves in the data obtained from the interviews and observations. The procedure of familiarizing oneself with the data encompassed a comprehensive examination of interview transcripts via iterative perusal and attentive auditory engagement with the recorded interviews. Familiarizing oneself with the data was also accomplished by scrutinizing observation fieldnotes and reviewing recorded videos that portrayed the listening activities of students. The researchers utilized note-taking to document significant findings while reviewing interview transcripts and observation videos.

Furthermore, the researchers proceeded to generate codes during the subsequent phase of their thematic analysis. The subsequent research stage entails methodically examining the amassed information executed via coding. Codes designate a particular data characteristic relevant to the study's aims. This study aims to examine the factors contributing to students' anxiety during listening activities and the strategies utilized by the lecturers to mitigate this anxiety.

Finally, the researchers performed a thematic analysis by organizing the codes into potential themes and consolidating all relevant coded data excerpts under the identified themes. The researchers thoroughly examined and generated a document for every determined theme.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Factors Contributing to Students' Listening Anxiety

Following an analysis of the data gathered through observation and interview, four themes that emphasized the factors that led to students' listening anxiety emerged; 1) lack of listening skills; 2) lack of attention; 3) mood; and 4) classroom environment. The themes were detailed as follows:

4.1.1 Lack of listening skills

From the interview results, the information was obtained that basically, the students with low, moderate and high anxiety levels would be very nervous if they could not answer a question in listening. Thus, one factor that causes students' nervousness is the lack of listening skills. According to the interview data, most students would be worried if they could not locate the answers to listening questions. For example, one of the students, SH3, confirmed that:

- (1) I was apprehensive when I was required to listen to a lengthy listening text and then answer the question that the answer must be interpreted immediately. This was because I needed to familiarize myself with the meaning of every word in the spoken text. This made me uneasy, so my focus was disturbed, and I could not respond to the questions given. (SH3, personal communication, 2021)

Other students reported needing assistance to maintain concentration when responding to numerous questions related to a lengthy spoken text. One of the students, SM3 mentioned that:

- (2) I quickly became worried when I was required to answer questions from lengthy spoken texts because I was required to concentrate on the complete text and to respond to specific questions related to the text. When I attempted to respond to the question, I instantly forgot the listening material I had just listened to. (SM3, personal communication, 2021)

In line with the information gathered during the interview, based on the observation findings, it was determined that all lecturers solely delivered listening through audio and asked students to answer listening questions individually. Then, the lecturers just checked the answer together with the students and introduced the students to new words linked to the listening material. However, the students still needed help answering questions from the lengthy spoken text.

4.1.2 Lack of attention

According to the interview data, most students with low, moderate and high anxiety level regularly became worried when listening due to losing attention throughout the listening tasks. They stated that they felt nervous when they lost their focus, particularly when they could not grasp the meaning of a certain word or sentence. For example, one of the students, SM5, stated,

- (3) At times, I felt frightened when I lost focus. It occurred because I often interpreted the words as I listened to them one by one. It frequently left me perplexed by one or two unfamiliar terms. As a result, I lost my concentration and could not get the message completely. (SM5, personal communication, 2021)

Other students conveyed similar emotions, stating that they experienced anxiety when participating in listening activities, resulting in diminished attention and concentration. In keeping with the interview results, it was observed that many students did not appear to be paying attention to the spoken text delivered through audio. They were preoccupied with observing their friends' responses while the audio played. Furthermore, because the lecturer was not paying attention to them, they could copy the answers from other students.

4.1.3 Mood

Based on the interview data, it was discovered that mood could influence students' anxiety during the listening activities. One of the students, SL1, stated that she found it difficult to follow the listening class when she was not in a good mood. Additionally, she acknowledged that her negative mood might predispose her to anxiety. She explained in the interview:

- (4) The first thing that might make me worried was my mood, particularly when I had a lot of ideas or a personal problem. Whenever I was in a bad mood, it naturally increased my worry and impaired my attention. (SL1, personal communication, 2021)

4.1.4 Classroom environment

According to the observations and interviews, it was discovered that classroom conditions such as noise and uncomfortable temperature might cause certain students to become anxious. According to the interview data, several students were likely to suffer anxiety when there was a disturbance within or outside the classroom. They found it difficult to concentrate on the native speaker tones in the audio. For instance, one of the students, SM9, stated:

- (5) Noisy classroom settings, whether within or outside of the classroom, might make me anxious. It was tough for me to focus on and grasp what the native speakers were saying in the audio. (SM9, personal communication, 2021)

Meanwhile, two other students, SL2 and SH2, expressed similar sentiments that a number of students may experience anxiety in the event of a disruption occurring either within or outside of the classroom.

Additionally, it was shown that the majority of students were prone to anxiety when the temperature in the classroom was high. It made them difficult to concentrate. As a result, it was difficult for them to learn the material. SM1, one of the students, stated in the interview:

- (6) For me, the classroom environment significantly affected my anxiousness. For instance, when the room was hot, it made it difficult for me to concentrate. As a result, I was likely to experience anxiety due to my lack of attention and inability to grasp the information. (SM1, personal communication, 2021)

Meanwhile, the other students with low, moderate and high anxiety levels expressed a similar point that majority of students exhibited susceptibility to anxiety in instances where the classroom temperature exceeded optimal levels.

Furthermore, the result of the data analysis show that the students found it difficult to listen if their seating location was in the corner of the room or distant from the loudspeaker. This circumstance would make them feel nervous. For instance, one of the students mentioned:

- (7) The thing that made me uneasy in listening was when I sat in the corner of the room that was distant from the loudspeaker. (SM6, personal communication, 2021)

Meanwhile, other students with low, moderate and high anxiety level notably also expressed the same feeling that they experienced difficulty in listening when they sat at a considerable distance from the loudspeaker.

Likewise, the observational data show that the students who sat in the corner displayed nervous reactions, such as having pale faces and shifting their seating posture. Moreover, the observational data reveal that while the class was not particularly chaotic while the audio was being played, certain students frequently had nervous behaviors, such as altering their seating position, which was extremely disruptive to other students' focus. This also occurred when the lecturer requested that they had to complete the listening task. Additionally, it was discovered that another noisy situation originated outside the classroom. It occurred due to some students passing by the class while chatting or laughing loudly. It annoyed some students who were focusing on their listening to the spoken text delivered from the audio. Finally, it was discovered that the room was extremely hot, which occurred when the light was turned off. This extreme heat may impair students' ability to concentrate.

4.2 Strategies Used by the Lecturers to Alleviate Students' Listening Anxiety in Listening Activities

4.2.1 Preparing students for listening activities

According to the data acquired from interviews with the lecturers, they claimed that before students listened to the audio, the lecturers prepared them for the listening task to lower their anxiety, using three techniques. The lecturers began the class by introducing the students to basic vocabulary and language aspects related to the listening material. The lecturers then engaged the students in a discussion about the vocabulary related to the listening content. Finally, the lecturers conducted a session for questions and answers. Those three techniques were used to prepare the students to listen to the audio content. It is believed that by acquiring many vocabulary items, the students could understand the meaning of the words used by the speakers and reduce their nervousness during the listening.

Based on the observation, the lecturers provided their students with keywords or terminologies linked to what they would hear in the listening material. In the interview, the lecturers confirmed that they could understand the listening material more efficiently by providing their students with the target vocabulary. Additionally, it may assist their students in becoming comfortable with the vocabulary used in the listening material and may indirectly alleviate their listening anxiety. For instance, one of the lecturers, L2, mentioned that:

- (8) In order to alleviate students' nervousness when listening, I have attempted to help my students by identifying new terms and subjects in the listening material. Before the students listened to the audio associated with the listening material, I presented some vocabulary and keywords to help them activate their vocabulary and make it simpler to interpret the spoken language. (L2, personal communication, 2021)

Additionally, the interview revealed that the lecturers highlighted the vocabulary to boost students' motivation. Exploring basic terminology with the students may help them build their confidence and lessen their fear when responding to the listening questions. For instance, one of the lecturers, L1, explained:

- (9) By addressing certain vocabulary associated with the listening content before the students listened to the audio, the students could answer all the listening questions properly. Students were able to focus on and understand the speakers' message. As a result, this aided students in overcoming their listening anxiety. (L1, personal communication, 2021)

4.2.2 Exposing students to a variety of authentic listening materials

According to the data gathered during the interview with the lecturers, they were aware of their students' listening discomfort. The observation found that the lecturers have assisted their students in overcoming their fear of listening. The lecturers provided additional learning materials in the form of authentic listening materials. In the interview session, the lecturers acknowledged that these authentic resources might assist students in getting used to listening to the pronunciation and accents of native speakers. It is predicted that once students have been accustomed to listening to native speakers' pronunciation and accent, they will be able to comprehend the message delivered by the speakers in the listening audio.

In the observation, it was found that the lecturers have employed a variety of authentic listening materials to assist their students in overcoming their listening anxiety while teaching listening skills. The lecturers provided the students with the listening material in their textbooks and occasionally included additional authentic online listening material. For instance, one of the lecturers, L3, stated:

- (10) In order to assist students with their listening anxiety, I provided a variety of real listening materials so that they could quickly recognize the words or phrases. I usually used a video projector to address speakers' articulation and accents so that students could distinguish among the several varieties of accents typically used by native speakers. When they could readily comprehend the message conveyed by native speakers in the audio, it helped them alleviate some of the strain associated with listening. (L3, personal communication, 2021)

Meanwhile, other lecturers have expressed a comparable viewpoint that they have provided their students with a diverse range of authentic listening resources.

4.2.3 Improving the listening environment

According to the interviews with the lecturers, they believed that the comfort level in the classroom affected students' nervousness during the listening. Essentially, the lecturers have recognized that the best listening environment is completely insulated. Indeed, the university already operates a language institute with a soundproof room for conducting listening activities. However, due to limited time and shift availability, the majority of lecturers conducted listening learning activities in class. However, because the classroom is essentially not an ideal environment, they attempted to make it conducive to listening. For example, one of the lecturers, L2 confirmed:

- (11) One of my difficulties in teaching listening is ensuring the room is conducive to learning. This is due to the limited language laboratory facility. When I did not have the opportunity to teach in a class with adequate facilities, I always tried to make the class atmosphere conducive to the listening process. This was done to keep the students' concentration from breaking and they did not get nervous due to the noise. (L2, personal communication, 2021)

According to observations, the lecturer would prepare the class for the listening process by arranging the chairs in rows and selecting the student's seating positions before starting the listening process. Additionally, the lecturer appropriately positions the audio listening location to ensure students can hear the audio clearly. However, unexpected obstacles, such as noises outside the classroom, could not always be completely avoided.

5. DISCUSSION

In this section the researchers discuss two main points based on the two research questions of the study. It covers factors contributing to students' listening anxiety and strategies used by the lecturers to alleviate students' listening anxiety in listening activities.

5.1 Factors Contributing to Students' Listening Anxiety

Teaching listening comprehension is a critical component of teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL). While listening is a receptive skill that entails processing the messages provided by what others say (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016), listening comprehension is the most challenging of the four language abilities for EFL learners. According to Sumalinog (2018), listening is a multifaceted cognitive activity involving receptive, productive, and interpretative cognition elements. This perspective on listening comprises accurately listening to spoken texts, assembling perceptually separate units of sound into words and sentences, and understanding the speaker's projected purpose. This situation can be explained by the fact that listeners must receive the message in a foreign language, decode it, and immediately comprehend it in a meaningful context. Consequently, it is not difficult to imagine them encountering various obstacles, such as grasping the dialogues' main ideas in context and thus suffering from anxiety. Dalman (2016) confirmed that the listening process often produces tension for learners because they need to engage in interpersonal and interpretative communication styles in which they must actively participate. As a result, students' anxiousness has impacted their listening comprehension.

One of the factors contributing to students' listening anxiety found in this study is a lack of listening skills. Most students indicated they were concerned when required to answer numerous questions quickly following a lengthy spoken text. This finding was consistent with Badrasawi et al. (2020), who discovered that many students experience anxiety and fear when unable to comprehend the spoken text.

Additionally, several research studies revealed that most students experienced anxiety when the spoken material was excessively long (Otair & Aziz, 2017; Wang & Cha, 2019). Indeed, it was discovered that lecturers presented students with language associated with the spoken text they heard. Still, the students do need the ability to respond to listening items. Hamada (2015) mentioned that five distinct steps had been identified for effectively responding to questions related to listening comprehension. First, students should scrutinize the images and language to identify pertinent information. Second, students should pay attention to significant expressions or statements. Third, students should deduce suitable responses based on the given

context. Fourth, students should choose and make the appropriate response. Fifth, students should evaluate the questions that have not been addressed.

The other aspect that contributed to students' listening anxiety, as shown in this study, was that the majority of students had anxiety during the listening activities due to a loss of attention. Other studies revealed that most students were concerned because they frequently lost focus and could not retain focus when the spoken text was too lengthy (Otair & Aziz, 2017; Prastiyowati, 2019; Subekti, 2018). The majority of the students reported that they had unpleasant feelings due to their diverted attention throughout the listening process.

Additionally, this study revealed that mood might affect students' anxiousness during the listening process. The mood relates to the human emotions felt in specific situations. Mustafina et al. (2020) observed that negative emotions or low moods might deleteriously affect students' ability to study since they develop apathy toward the learning activity. As a result, it was shown that mood was the critical factor determining anxious sensations during the listening process.

The classroom setting also made learners uncomfortable while listening in this research. Sure, students felt anxious when there was noise inside or outside the classroom, as it interfered with their attention throughout the listening process. Additionally, a classroom with a high temperature was a cause of fear for students since it may divert someone's focus away from the audio. This finding corroborated those of other researchers who discovered that students frequently felt anxious as a result of their physical circumstances, such as an overly hot or cold room, an overly noisy room, a room with deficient oxygen, or a room that was too small and cramped, as well as improperly arranged seats and listening audio (Majunggi & Abdul Halim, 2021; Oteir & Al-Otaibi, 2019).

It can be inferred that although listening is a receptive skill, students admitted that they could become anxious when they have to follow the stages of listening activities. To summarize, the factors that cause anxiety are personal factors of the students, such as loss of attention, mood, and lack of listening skills. In addition, other contributing factors can be their teachers, the way they teach, and the listening environment. Listening teachers are expected to be aware of these factors to be able to plan listening lessons better.

5.2 Strategies Used by the Lecturers to Alleviate Students' Listening Anxiety in Listening Activities

It was discovered that one technique the lecturers used to relieve students' anxiety about listening was to prepare them for listening tasks. According to Avci (2017), teachers focusing on listening skills should prepare to deliver instructional content using a pedagogical approach to promoting an ideal learning environment. This approach should encourage increased student engagement and participation during classroom discussions. By providing students with adequate preparation for listening tasks, they are likely to experience an increase in confidence, reducing listening-related anxiety. The significance of adequately preparing students for listening tasks is consistent with dos Santos et al. (2018) findings, which contended that educators must foster students' confidence in their listening abilities to equip them for forthcoming listening tasks.

Furthermore, the lecturer also used the method of exposing students to a variety of authentic listening resources. Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016) asserted that listening tasks should be adjusted to meet the needs of individual students, and lecturers should use authentic listening materials that assist students in interpreting native speakers' utterances. As a result, incorporating a variety of additional references can assist students in developing their listening skills and overcoming their listening anxiety. Indeed, according to Dalman (2016), listening material serves as the foundation of a teacher's pedagogy and plays a crucial role in fostering students' learning engagement while reducing their anxiety levels. The use of suitable listening materials can significantly reduce learners' apprehension and anxiety while simultaneously fostering a sense of confidence in their learning abilities.

Finally, one strategy used by the lecturers to alleviate the anxiety of their students was to condition the listening environment effectively, notably by teaching in a language laboratory. However, if it was unavailable, the lecturers tried to condition the audio so all students could hear it well. It follows what was found by Pan (2016), who discovered that students felt anxious when the voice quality was low, resulting in the sounds being misheard, where the quality of the audio system may affect the comprehension of students in listening (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). Further, conditioning the seating arrangement and minimizing noises that interfere with the listening process by conditioning the listening atmosphere properly are expected to make students able to concentrate on the listening process because, as Saba and Noreen (2020) claimed, one factor affecting students' listening comprehension is their inability to concentrate.

Thus, English language teachers can employ diverse teaching strategies to mitigate listening anxiety among their students. One strategy, among others, entails augmenting students' involvement in the listening process. The listening material should be delivered using strategies that increase student involvement and contribution during in-class discussions.

6. CONCLUSION

According to the research findings, four factors are associated with students' listening anxiety: 1) a lack of listening skills, 2) lack of attention, 3) mood, and 4) classroom setting. This study's findings also revealed that lecturers were devoted to applying strategies to reduce students' listening anxiety as follows: 1) preparing students for listening activities; 2) providing students with a choice of authentic listening resources; and 3) enhancing the learning environment for listening skills.

It can be implied from the multiple case studies that students with different levels of anxiety in listening recognize that classroom conditions affect their anxiety in learning. Students with low anxiety levels also become anxious when learning conditions were not conducive, and this influences their listening comprehension achievement. In addition, from the three lecturers that were interviewed and observed during their listening learning process, it can be concluded that they were aware of their students had anxiety that could affect their listening performance. Therefore, these lecturers have used various strategies that they applied in their teaching process to anticipate their students' anxiety.

Finally, the present study is subject to certain limitations owing to the restricted sample size of participants. Therefore, it is recommended that future researchers conduct a comprehensive study with a broader range of research participants, encompassing individuals from diverse backgrounds across various universities to obtain more comprehensive perspectives. Further investigation is also required to explore discrepancies in perspectives on foreign language listening anxiety between educators and learners.

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