

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents research findings obtained from classroom observations and in-depth interviews with four students who took the Academic Listening course. These research findings focus on the students' experiences during the implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)-based listening activities and are systematically organized based on the learning stages and themes that emerged from the data. The data presented in this chapter comes from interview narratives and field notes that describe the learning process, student responses, and interactions that occurred in the classroom.

A. Findings

The findings of this study present a reconstructed narrative of students' experiences in learning listening through Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). The data were collected through in-depth interviews and field notes from four participants (S1, S2, S3, and S4) who were involved in an IELTS simulation positioned as a critical incident. The findings are grouped into two major themes: the construction of students' experiences based on the stages of TBLT, and how they navigated challenges and meaningful moments in the learning process.

1. Narrative of Students' Experiences in Learning Listening through TBLT

Students' experiences are narrated chronologically following the tripartite structure of TBLT, namely the Pre-Task stage, Task Cycle, and Post-Task/Language Focus. Each stage triggered different affective, cognitive, and social responses from the participants according to the situational context they faced in the classroom.

a. Students' Experiences in the Pre-Task Stage

The Pre-Task stage in this IELTS simulation aims to prepare learners cognitively and linguistically and to reduce anxiety before facing the main task. The research findings show that the clarity of the lecturer's instructions is crucial, but its effectiveness depends on individual focus. S1 admitted that although the lecturer's instructions were very clear, she momentarily lost part of the explanation due to social interaction distractions with the friend next to her. S1 recounted her experience:

"in my opinion, when the lecturer explained and gave instructions for that listening part, the explanation was actually very clear and made me understand. However, the key is that I really had to focus on listening to his directions from the beginning. Sometimes, the problem arises when he is explaining; I happen to be chatting with the friend

next to me, so there are parts of the lecturer's explanation that are missed for a moment."

S1's strategy to overcome the missing information was to ask her friend first, before then trying to independently reconstruct or "guess" the lecturer's explanation. This was in contrast to S3, who showed a very structured cognitive readiness. Further interview data clarified the form of structured cognitive readiness demonstrated by S3 during the Pre-Task stage. S3 explained that her tendency to remain silent was a conscious choice to help her concentrate on understanding the questions and the lecturer's explanation. She preferred to focus on her own comprehension rather than responding verbally unless she felt confident about the question being discussed. She stated:

"I focus more on understanding the question and listening to the lecturer. I rarely answer questions directly, unless I have a specific understanding of what the question is asking. For example, if the lecturer asks about a particular word, only then will I answer. In essence, I focus on understanding the question myself."

Unlike S1 and S3, S2 focused her experience on emotional management through the arrangement of physical position or the dimension of place. S2 consciously chose to sit in the front row of the class to isolate herself from social distractions, as she felt disturbed by the behavior of friends in the back rows who often played on their

phones or chatted. By sitting in the front, S2 felt more confident and did not feel anxious when having to actively respond to the lecturer's questions during the brainstorming phase. S2 stated her reasons:

"The reason I was very enthusiastic about answering the lecturer's questions was that I noticed friends sitting in the back were often noisy, not listening, playing on their phones, and even sleeping. I was worried the lecturer felt unappreciated. Although I am naturally shy, sitting in the front made it so I didn't have to look back, so I didn't feel anxious when raising my hand to answer."

Meanwhile, S4 entered the class in a less-than-optimal physical condition due to being on a diet program and often skipping breakfast. Despite being hungry due to her dieting program, S4 still attempted to follow the brainstorming activity conducted by the lecturer before the main audio was played. Based on the interview data, her limited verbal participation during this stage did not indicate a lack of engagement, but rather reflected her way of conserving physical energy while remaining involved in the activity. She tended to participate in a less demanding manner, such as listening attentively, engaging in brief discussion with her peer, and making short notes related to the questions. This condition was described by S4 as follows:

"Before the audio was played, the lecturer discussed the questions. I tended to just listen while having a light discussion with my

friend next to me. I also wrote down my estimated answers next to the questions in preparation for the brainstorming phase.”



Figure 4.1 Situation of the Pre-Task Stage

b. Students' Experiences during the Task Cycle

The Task Cycle stage is the core of the TBLT experience, where students interact directly with high cognitive loads triggered by the IELTS audio. S1's experience during the audio playback was dominated by anxiety that manifested physically. She was often seen looking down, holding her head, and constantly moving her legs as a reflex of restlessness due to the difficulty of catching answers from the native speakers' accent. S1 described her physical restlessness:

"The main cause is that the speaker in the audio uses a British English accent. For me, the British accent sounds 'closed' and the pronunciation is a bit complicated. Regarding my body language, if you see me suddenly holding my head in class, it's a sign that a part was

missed while I was listening. As for my leg movement that looks like a reflex, it actually shows a feeling of restlessness."

S3 also showed similar physical behavior by holding her head and moving her legs under the table. However, S3 interpreted it not as pure anxiety, but as an unconscious reflex while thinking very hard or due to boredom from having to sit still for a long time. S3 applied a smart information processing strategy by using the time when explanatory sentences were spoken to weigh and immediately write down answers before moving to the next question. S3 explained her physical reflex:

"Regarding my movement of often holding my head, it seems to be an unconscious reflex. I'm not aware that I do that when I'm thinking hard. As for the legs constantly moving under the table, it's because I'm the type of person who can't sit still for hours. Honestly, I get a bit bored (bete) if I'm told to sit still continuously."

The most contrasting experience was felt by S4, where physiological barriers overcame her cognitive focus. As a commuting student traveling a long distance from Banjarbaru to Banjarmasin, fatigue and sleepiness made her lose concentration in the middle of the task. After trying to focus and feeling that most of the questions had been answered, S4 finally decided to sleep for a while on the classroom desk. S4 recounted that moment:

"After I tried to focus on listening to the audio and felt most of the numbers were almost answered, I put my head on the table. It felt so dizzy. So I thought, 'Let me try to sleep for a bit,' and the rest I'll leave to my friend if there's audio that's unclear or needs repetition later."



Figure 4.2 Participant S4 during the Academic Listening Test

c. Experiences in the Post-Task Stage

The Post-Task (or Language Focus) stage is a moment for students to reflect on, correct, and analyze the language that emerged during the task. Experiences at this stage were dominated by self-reflection, emotional evaluation, and social decision-making. Students used this phase to cross-check their answers with the lecturer and evaluate their personal performance throughout the IELTS simulation.

S1 showed intense emotional expressions during the answer-checking session, characterized by feelings of disappointment and annoyance. She realized during the discussion that her initial instincts

were often correct, yet she had changed her answers due to a lack of self-confidence. This moment of reflection highlighted how her anxiety during the task directly impacted her decision-making process. S1 expressed her disappointment:

"I felt disappointed, Sis, because I realized the answer I heard was actually correct, but I felt 'gemas' (annoyed) because I changed it to the wrong one before the checking session... it's just annoying because my original answer was already right. Because I was hesitant, I felt like I couldn't answer the questions from the audio properly."

S2, despite demonstrating a very confident (confident) attitude by volunteering to write answers on the whiteboard, revealed a different internal reality. in her personal reflection, she stated that she was deeply dissatisfied with her performance. She felt that her listening ability was still insufficient because she still relied on the second audio playback for verification, whereas in a real IELTS test, the audio is only played once. S2 reflected on her performance:

"Honestly, I feel like my ability is still lacking. I should have finished answering and cross-checking during the first audio playback, without relying on the second one. I realize that in the Real Test, the audio is only played once. I feel very dissatisfied with my performance."

in contrast to the visible enthusiasm of S2, S3 demonstrated a unique social strategy by choosing not to immediately volunteer.

Although she was capable and understood the material, S3 intentionally stepped back to give the "stage" to classmates who were usually quiet. She wanted them to feel appreciated and empowered in the classroom, only stepping in as a last resort if no one else could answer. S3 explained her social dimension:

"The reason I didn't immediately volunteer during the answer discussion was not because I couldn't do it, but I wanted to give other friends a chance to try. I wanted the friends who are usually quiet to get the 'stage'. When the lecturer pointed to them, I saw they felt happy because they had the chance. So I chose to stay quiet to give them space."

S4 appeared much more relaxed and less pressured during the Post-Task session compared to the earlier stages. Despite her performance being affected by her physical state, leading her to sleep during a portion of the task cycle, she engaged in lighthearted discussion with her seatmate. She viewed her ability to answer some questions correctly

after waking up as a small success in navigating her physiological challenges.



Figure 4.3 Discussion Session

2. How Students Navigate Challenges, Meaningful Moments, and Learning Processes in TBLT-Based Listening

Beyond the chronological narratives, the findings also reveal general patterns of challenges, significant moments, and adaptive strategies used by students to navigate the demands of TBLT-based listening tasks.

a. Challenges in Task-Based Listening Learning

The challenges faced by students were primarily linguistic, affective, and physiological, all of which were intertwined during the TBLT process. The analysis of the research audio and field notes reveals that the most prominent linguistic barrier was the specific phonological features of the British accent. Participants, particularly S1 and S4, struggled with non-rhoticity (the omission of the /r/ sound at the end of words) and glottal stops, which made the auditory input sound 'closed' or 'swallowed'. S1 manifested this struggle through physical

restlessness, such as holding her head and constantly moving her legs. Meanwhile, S4 experienced physiological collapse where fatigue and hunger overcame her cognitive focus, leading her to sleep during the task cycle to conserve energy.

The most significant linguistic challenge was the British English accent used in the IELTS simulation, which was perceived as "closed" and too fast for the ears of EFL students. S4 described her shock response to the audio's speed through spontaneous laughter, which was actually a manifestation of her confusion and cognitive overload. S4 explained her laughter reaction:

"Because the speech was quite fast and used a British accent, considering this was an IELTS test, my friend and I reflexively laughed. That laughter was actually a form of shock and confusion, like 'Huh? What was that? What did that person say?'. "

in addition to language barriers, physiological challenges such as hunger due to skipping breakfast and physical exhaustion from long-distance commuting were significant external factors. S4 admitted that she frequently lost focus due to dizziness, proving that TBLT tasks demand substantial physical energy alongside cognitive abilities. S1 also struggled with debilitating anxiety, which made her feel incapable of processing audio input effectively despite the clarity of the initial instructions.

b. Meaningful Moments and Students' Reflections

Meaningful moments in this study emerged when students realized the importance of social support systems and metacognitive strategies. For S4, the open collaboration with her seatmate, whom she had known for a long time, became a "lifesaving" moment when she experienced physical exhaustion. Her peer played a significant role by providing peer scaffolding during the task. Rather than indicating dependency, the act of verifying answers reflects a social strategy in which S4 utilized external support to validate her comprehension after experiencing a cognitive interruption caused by physical fatigue.

"Fortunately, my friend is very open. We have been in the same school since junior and senior high school, so she is not stingy with her knowledge. I didn't need to persuade her or try hard to ask for answers. Whether it was her or me, we were both open if we wanted to see each other's answers."

For S1, the meaningful moment occurred when the audio was repeated up to three times, providing her with mental composure and the opportunity to complete missed answers. S1 and S3 also concluded that the habit of listening to English audio through TikTok, movies, or songs outside the classroom was a determining factor in their success in understanding academic material. These reflections indicate that students view the learning process as an integration of physical readiness,

emotional stability, and the accumulation of past experiences. S3 provided her reflective advice:

"My advice for friends is that physical preparation is very important. First, breakfast is mandatory because listening requires great energy to focus. Second, get enough sleep. Third, this is technical but important, clean your ears before class so that your hearing is maximized."

c. Learning Process as an Integrated Experience

This study found that the process of learning listening is not merely a linguistic activity but an integrated experience involving physical readiness and daily habits. S3 and S4 emphasized that physical preparation, such as breakfast and sufficient sleep, is mandatory before a listening class. Furthermore, all participants recognized that their self-efficacy was shaped by their habits of listening to English audio outside of class hours. S3 provided her reflective advice:

"My advice for friends is that physical preparation is very important. First, breakfast is mandatory because listening requires great energy to focus. Second, get enough sleep. Third, this is technical but important, clean your ears before class so that your hearing is maximized."

S4 added regarding out-of-class habits:

"Accustom your ears to hearing English through songs, movies, or TikTok content. Personally, since I was a child, I have enjoyed watching Western films, so fortunately, my ears do not feel too foreign when receiving this listening material."

B. Discussion

This discussion section aims to interpret the narrative findings by linking them to the theoretical framework of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), listening strategies, and affective responses. The researcher employs the Three-Dimensional Space Narrative Structure by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) to dissect how students' experiences are shaped by the dimensions of interaction (personal-social), continuity (past-present), and situation (place). This analysis focuses on how the IELTS simulation tasks triggered cognitive loads and emotional fluctuations as recorded in the students' lived stories.

1. Students' Narrative of Experiences in Learning Listening through TBLT

Students' experiences are continuously narrated through the interaction between the instructional demands of TBLT and their internal responses. Willis (1996) outlines the TBLT framework into three main phases: Pre-task, Task Cycle, and Language Focus. The findings indicate that each phase triggers different responses, reflecting the dimension of temporality where students' feelings evolve from preparation to evaluation.

a. Experiences in the Pre-Task Stage

The findings indicate that the effectiveness of the Pre-Task stage heavily relies on students' autonomy in conditioning their spatial and psychological readiness to minimize mental load. This was evident in the contrasting strategies employed by the participants. While S3 strictly limited verbal participation to maintain her internal focus, S4 engaged in "light discussion" and noted down estimated answers.

Analyzing this through Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) dimension of sociality, S4's action serves as a form of initial social scaffolding to validate her understanding with peers. In contrast, S3 demonstrated a form of cognitive independence, prioritizing internal stability over social interaction. This aligns with Dörnyei's (2005) view that emotion plays a central role in how learners interpret the classroom space to maintain focus. Therefore, the researcher argues that the Pre-task stage is not merely a passive instructional phase, but a dynamic space where students actively negotiate their survival strategies before the cognitive load peaks in the Task Cycle.

b. Experiences during the Task Cycle

The Task Cycle represents the core of the TBLT experience, where students interact directly with the transient nature of the IELTS audio. The high cognitive load experienced by the participants was

intensified by specific phonological features of the British accent used in the IELTS audio. In particular, the non-rhotic nature of Received Pronunciation, in which the /r/ sound is not articulated at the end of words (for instance, car pronounced as /kɑ:/), differs markedly from the rhotic American accent more familiar to Indonesian EFL learners. In addition, the presence of glottal stops and unfamiliar intonation patterns disrupted the decoding process, leading S1 to perceive the speaker's voice as 'closed' or 'swallowed'. These phonological barriers increased processing demands and subsequently triggered debilitating anxiety, which was manifested through physical responses such as restless leg movements. As noted by Brown (2007), anxiety of this type interferes with performance because learners must divide their mental resources between processing auditory input and managing emotional tension.

Conversely, the case of S4 offers a unique perspective on how physiological barriers (fatigue and hunger) can override cognitive focus. Her decision to disengage (sleep) after reaching her limit, and her use of laughter when facing difficult questions, should be interpreted as affective strategies. Drawing on Oxford's (2011) strategic framework, these behaviors, though detrimental to test scores, function as defense mechanisms to regulate emotional stability when the task demands exceed physical resources. The researcher posits that this behavior reflects self-regulation under physiological constraint rather than a lack of

learner engagement. When the cognitive demands of the listening task exceeded S4's physical capacity due to hunger and fatigue, she managed her remaining energy by briefly disengaging from the task to prevent total cognitive breakdown. This form of physical resource management allowed her to regain sufficient focus to participate again during the answer verification stage, instead of forcing continued processing under an unsustainable physiological condition.

c. Experiences in the Post-Task / Language Focus Stage

The Post-Task or Language Focus stage provides space for students to perform self-reflection on their performance. S1's experience of feeling "annoyed" (*gemas*) for changing a correct answer to an incorrect one aligns with Krashen's (1985) Affective Filter Hypothesis, where self-doubt blocks students' abilities despite adequate linguistic capacity. These moments of perceived failure felt by S1 and S2 become a "Reference Point" in their narratives to evaluate their progress temporally, as explained by Nation and Newton (2020). Meanwhile, S3's action of choosing silence to give the "stage" to passive peers shows the maturity of the social dimension in her learning narrative, supporting Noroozi et al.'s (2025) view that peer interaction plays a key role in classroom reflection. Thus, the researcher emphasizes that the Post-Task stage functions as a checkpoint where students reconstruct their

experience from merely "doing the task" into a metacognitive awareness of their own abilities.

2. How Students Navigate Challenges, Meaningful Moments, and the Learning Process

The second research question focuses on how learners navigate emerging difficulties, analyzed through their strategies and reflections on the support system provided in the class. The students' experience of academic listening is significantly shaped by their emotional and physiological self-regulation. For instance, S1's tendency to change correct answers due to self-doubt illustrates how anxiety impairs decision-making despite having adequate linguistic capacity. S4's laughter and temporary withdrawal (sleeping) also serve as defense mechanisms against overwhelming cognitive loads. This phenomenon aligns with Krashen's (1985) Affective Filter Hypothesis, which posits that high levels of anxiety or physical exhaustion can block the brain from processing input effectively. Furthermore, according to Clandinin and Connelly (2000), these experiences are not isolated but are tied to the dimension of 'Place' (the high-stakes classroom) and 'Sociality' (the need for peer support), emphasizing that learning is a holistic struggle rather than a purely cognitive one.

a. Navigating Linguistic and Physiological Challenges

Findings show that learning barriers are not only linguistic (accent and speed) but also physiological, such as the hunger and

sleepiness experienced by S4. S4 navigated these challenges through the social dimension by performing open collaboration with her seatmate, an action consistent with Noroozi et al.'s (2025) view that social support functions as compensation when individual ability is hindered by internal factors. Additionally, S1's dependence on audio repetition confirms that the tasks in this class adopt a "Weak Version" of TBLT according to Littlewood (2004). The scaffolding support from the lecturer in the form of audio repetition provides a safety net for students with high affective filters. Therefore, the researcher concludes that navigation in listening learning is not a solitary act but a form of continuous negotiation between students' personal needs and the available instructional support.

b. Learning Strategies and Meaningful Moments

Meaningful moments for participants were often triggered by awareness of the listening strategies they applied, such as the note-taking strategy S4 performed. Reviewing the dimension of Temporality (continuity) from Dewey (1938), S3's and S4's current experiences are strongly influenced by their past habits of frequently listening to English audio through movies or TikTok content. This proves Clandin in and Connelly's (2000) notion that human experience is not an isolated event but a continuation of an individual's personal history. These past experiences build the self-efficacy that helps them persist despite facing

heavy IELTS tasks. Based on this, the researcher emphasizes that students do not enter the TBLT classroom as "blank slates" but bring an accumulation of experiences that dictate how they interpret and complete academic tasks.

c. Learning as an Integrated Experience

Overall, these findings validate the definition of student experience from Dewey (1938) and Clandin in and Connelly (2000) as a dynamic interaction between the individual and their environment. Students explicitly highlighted that physical readiness (sleep and breakfast) is closely intertwined with mental readiness, supporting Oxford's (2017) view that learning involves the mind, emotions, and physical conditions holistically. The ability to manage internal anxiety while dealing with external pressure from the IELTS simulation shows that listening is a multi-dimensional struggle. Therefore, the researcher concludes that the students' lived experience in TBLT listening is a complex interplay between personal dimensions (anxiety/physical management), social dimensions (peer/lecturer support), and place (simulation pressure), all of which mutually influence one another.