

Efforts to Improve Students Listening Comprehension Skills through Classroom Action Research in English Class

Aah Wardah Qona'ah¹, Muhammad Aprianto Budie Nugroho²

Aah Wardah Qona'ah¹

English Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Kuningan, Indonesia

2004aahwardah@gmail.com

Muhammad Aprianto Budie Nugroho²

English Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Kuningan, Indonesia

muh.apriantobn@uniku.ac.id

Abstract

This classroom action research aimed to improve eighth-grade students' listening comprehension by implementing a structured cycle of listening practice supported by observation and practice questions. The study was conducted in ten cycles, each consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection. The participants were 39 students from Class VIII of a public junior high school in Kuningan. Data were collected through teacher observations, student performance on listening practice questions, and field notes. The interventions included the use of conversation texts, interactive listening tasks, vocabulary scaffolding, and guided practice questions designed to enhance students' ability to identify main ideas, specific information, and inferred meanings.

Keywords: *classroom action research, listening comprehension, observations, English language learning, junior high school students*

INTRODUCTION

Listening is one of the fundamental language skills that play an essential role in the process of learning English as a foreign language. For junior high school students, effective listening skills are necessary to understand spoken texts, follow classroom instructions, and participate in communicative activities. However, many students still experience difficulties in listening, such as recognizing key vocabulary, identifying the main idea, and understanding specific information in spoken passages. These challenges often result in low listening comprehension scores and reduce confidence when dealing with listening tasks.

Recent research support this blended approach. For example, Setiawati and Sutapa (2024) conducted a Classroom Action Research study using the "Learn English Listening App" with eighth-grade students, employing observations, pre and post-tests, and interviews: they found mixed results and noted the importance of scaffolding app use to maximize learning gains. In another study, Amelia, Tasnim, and Fardhani (2024) improved junior high school students' listening comprehension by using English songs in Classroom Action Research: their observations and tests showed significant improvements in both participation and

comprehension scores. Also, Akbar, Maral, and Wardah (2025) applied the “bottom-up technique” in a three cycle Classroom Action Research, collecting data via field notes, observation checklists, and listening tests: they reported that students’ ability to process vocabulary and understand spoken texts improved steadily.

Drawing on this evidence, the present study implements a ten-cycle Classroom Action research design. In each cycle, we use “direct classroom observations” to monitor student behavior (e.g., attention, strategy use, engagement) during listening tasks, paired with “structured practiced questions” that target different comprehension levels: identifying main ideas, details, and inference. Through these interventions, we aim not only to boost listening test scores, but also to enhance student engagement and metacognitive listening strategies.

The purpose of this research is threefold:

1. to increase students’ listening comprehension scores to improve their active involvement during listening tasks as seen through observational data
2. to improve their active involvement during listening tasks as seen through observational data
3. to develop a replicable model of listening instruction that can be used by English teachers in similar contexts, by integrating observation and practice questions into Classroom Action Research cycles, this study seeks to provide practical, evidence-based recommendations for teaching listening more effectively.

Background of the Study

Listening comprehension is a foundational receptive skill for language learning and a prerequisite for successful participation in classroom activities and real-world communication. Despite its importance, many junior-high EFL students show persistently low achievement in listening tasks: they miss specific details, fail to identify main ideas, and lack strategies to deal with unfamiliar vocabulary and rapid speech. These problems reduce academic performance and learners’ confidence in English. Educational research in recent years has therefore focused on practical classroom interventions to strengthen listening skills and learners’ engagement.

A number of recent Classroom Action Research (CAR) and quasi-experimental studies have explored different instructional aids and strategies. Some studies investigated mobile or web applications designed specifically for listening practice. For example, Setiawati and Sutapa (2024) evaluating a “Learn English Listening” app found mixed results: initial implementation did not automatically increase scores, highlighting that digital tools require careful scaffolding and teacher facilitation to be effective.

Other studies report positive gains from using authentic, enjoyable audio materials. Munawaroh (2024) research on integrating English songs and streaming audio (e.g., Spotify or selected pop songs) in listening instruction has shown substantial improvement in students’ listening scores and motivation when the activities are carefully designed and scaffolded across Classroom Action Research cycles. These studies suggest that musical and familiar audio can increase attention and retention, but they also emphasize the need for structured follow-up tasks (e.g., targeted questions) to turn exposure into comprehension gains.

Finally, Tawaerubun and Sasabone (2025) examining audio-visual media and new-style listening tasks have found that structured question formats such as 5W+1H, multiple choice items that target main idea/detail/inference, and scaffolded practice questions help students to

transfer listening exposure into measurable comprehension improvements. However, these studies also report variability in outcomes, often linked to differences in classroom implementation in monitoring (how well teachers observe and respond to student difficulties).

Taken together, the recent literature shows (1) a range of promising classroom strategies (apps, songs, AV media), (2) the value of teaching both bottom-up and top-down skills (3) the critical importance of teacher scaffolding and structured practice questions to convert listening exposure into comprehension gains. What remains under-explored is a clearly documented Classroom Action Research model that explicitly combines “systematic classroom observations” (to capture engagement, strategy use, and on task behavior) with “iterative, targeted practice questions” (to train main idea, detail, and inference skills) across cycles. This gap motivates the present Classroom Action Research study: by pairing observation checklists and reflective field notes with carefully sequenced practice questions, the research aims to produce a replicable classroom model that yields both score improvements and observable changes in student listening behavior.

Research Questions

1. What problems in students' listening comprehension can be identified through initial observations?
2. How does the implementation of practice questions in each Classroom Action Research cycle affect students' listening comprehension scores?
3. What improvements in student behavior and participation can be observed after each Classroom Action Research cycle?

Research Objectives

1. To identify students' listening comprehension difficulties through initial classroom observations
2. To improve students' listening comprehension through the use of structured practiced questions during the Classroom Action Research cycles
3. To evaluate the improvement in students' listening comprehension across each Classroom Action Research cycle

Research Method Research Design

This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach based on the model proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), which consists of four main stages: Planning, Action, Observation, and Reflection. The purpose of using Classroom Action Research was to improve students listening comprehension through continuous cycles of implementation and revision.

The research was conducted in multiple cycles where each cycle involved listening activities supported by observations and structured practice questions. The results of each cycle were analyzed and used to modify teaching strategies to achieve continuous improvement in students' listening performance.

Research Setting and Participants

The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 7 Kuningan during the 2025/2026 academic year. The participants were 39 eighth-grade students with mixed English proficiency levels. The selection was based on the researcher's role as the English teacher for the class, making the setting appropriate for action research.

Research Procedures

The implementation followed the recurring cycle format:

Table 1.1 Classroom Action Research Procedures

Stage	Description
Planning	Identifying listening problems, preparing lesson plans, materials, practice questions, and observation tools.
Action	Conducting listening activities using visual listening and guiding students in answering practice questions.
Observation	Monitoring student participation, engagement, and performance using observation checklists and field notes.
Reflection	Evaluating test results and observational data to determine necessary modifications for the next cycle.

This cycle was repeated until notable improvement in listening comprehension and classroom behavior was achieved.

Instruments of Data Collection

To obtain valid and comprehensive data, the following instruments were used:

1. Observation Checklist

Used to record student engagement, attention, behavior, and participation during listening activities.

2. Field Notes

Used to document classroom atmosphere, challenges experienced by students and teacher reflections.

3. Listening Tests (Practice Questions)

Administered at the end of each cycle to measure listening comprehension progress. The test items included main idea, specific information, and inference questions.

Data Analysis Technique Qualitative Data

Observational notes, checklists, and student reflections were analyzed using content and thematic

analysis to identify patterns of student engagement, behavior, and challenges.

Findings and Discussion Findings

This Classroom Action Research was carried out in multiple cycles with the aim of improving students' listening comprehension through observations and structured practice questions. The findings are presented below:

1.1 Pre-Cycle Results

Before the intervention, a diagnostic listening test was administered. The results showed that most students had difficulty identifying the main idea and specific information from the visual listening. The mean score was 45.7, which was below the school's Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM) of 76. Observational data indicated that many students were passive, lacked confidence, and were easily distracted during listening activities.

1.2 Observational Checklist

Cycle	Dominant Observed Aspect						Description of Students' Learning Behavior
		1	2	3	4	5	
Pre-Cycle	-						Students' showed low attention, low confidence, and passive participation during listening activities
Cycle 1	Learning Behavior and Attitude				✓		Students showed improved motivation and attention, although comprehension was still limited
Cycle 2	Post-Listening Engagement			✓			Students began to participate in discussions and shared answers, but confidence remain unstable
Cycle 3	While-Listening Participation		✓				Students paid more attention to the audio and followed instructions, although overall focus was still low
Cycle 4	Learning Behavior and Attitude				✓		Students demonstrated better focus and positive interaction with peers
Cycle 5	Post-Listening Engagement			✓			Students actively

							discussed answers and revised their work, despite fluctuating motivation
Cycle 6	Learning Behavior and Attitude				✓		Students showed increased attention and motivation, and listening comprehension began to improve
Cycle 7	Post-Listening Engagement			✓			Students were more confident in sharing answers and reflecting on listening difficulties
Cycle 8	Learning Behavior and Attitude				✓		Students maintained focus, collaborated effectively, and showed consistent motivation
Cycle 9	Learning Behavior and Attitude				✓		Students demonstrated high engagement, strong attention, and improved confidence
Cycle 10	Learning Behavior and Attitude				✓		Students showed stable positive learning behavior, high attention, and confidence in listening

							tasks
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	-------

Table 1.2 Summary of Students’ Observation Results Across Cycles

Rating Description

- 5 – Very Good
- 4 – Good
- 3 – Fair
- 2 – Poor
- 1 – Very Poor

1.3 Field Notes

According to Moleong (2019), field notes in qualitative research are crucial records of the researcher's journey, capturing detailed observations, participant actions, spoken words, gestures, and personal subjective responses during data collection (interviews, observations).

Field Notes Summary (Based on Moleong, 2019)

Based on the descriptive field notes, classroom observations revealed a gradual improvement in students’ listening engagement and classroom atmosphere across the action research cycles. In the early cycles, students showed limited attention, low confidence, and difficulty understanding listening materials. Participation during listening and post-listening activities, was relatively passive, and classroom interaction was not yet conducive to effective learning. As the cycles progressed, students became more attentive, followed listening instructions more consistently, and participated more actively in discussions. In the final cycles, students demonstrated sustained focus, positive peer interaction, and increased confidence in completing listening tasks.

The reflective field notes indicated that instructional adjustments played a significant role in addressing students’ listening difficulties. Reflection on early observations led to the provision of additional scaffolding, motivation, and clearer listening guidance in subsequent cycles. These reflective actions contributed to improved classroom management, increased student engagement, and more effective listening practice. By the final cycles, students showed more stable learning behavior and improved listening comprehension, suggesting that the reflective process- central to Classroom Action Research as proposed by Moleong (2019) supported continuous improvement in both teaching practice and student learning outcomes.

1.4 Cycle Results

In the early cycles (Cycles 1-3) students’ listening comprehension was still relatively low, and many students had difficulty identifying key information from the listening materials. Classroom observation indicated limited attention and low participation during listening activities. Although slightimprovement was observed, the majority of students had not yet achieved the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM).

In the middle cycles (cycles 4-7) students showed noticeable improvement in listening comprehension and learning behavior. Students became more attentive, followed listening

instructions more consistently, and actively participated in post listening discussions. The average listening score increased steadily, and the number of students achieving the KKM also improved.

In the final cycles (Cycles 8-10), students demonstrated stable and significant improvement in listening comprehension. Most students achieved score above the KKM, and classroom observations revealed sustained focus, positive interaction, and increased confidence in completing listening tasks. These results indicate that the instructional adjustments implemented throughout the action research cycles were effective in improving students' listening comprehension.

Discussion

The findings of this Classroom Action Research demonstrate that structured listening practice supported by systematic observation and reflective teaching adjustments contributed to meaningful improvement in students' listening comprehension and learning behavior. The discussion focuses on how and why these improvements occur by examining students' engagement during listening activities and linking the results to established listening comprehension theories.

One major finding is the improvement in post listening engagement, where students increasingly participated in discussions, shared answers, reflected on listening difficulties and revised their work. This improvement indicates the development of metacognitive awareness, which is essential for effective listening. Vandergrift (2018) emphasizes that successful listeners actively reflect on their comprehension and strategies rather than relying solely on exposure to audio input. The post-listening phase in this study provided opportunities for students to process meaning collaboratively and evaluate their understanding, thereby strengthening comprehension.

Another important improvement was observed in while listening-participation. Although students initially struggled to focus and identify key information, repeated exposure to structured listening tasks helped them develop better listening discipline. According to Rost (2011), listening comprehension involves real-time cognitive processing that requires sustained practice. The gradual improvement across cycles supports Brown (2014) assertion that listening skills develop progressively through repeated and guided practice, not instant mastery. Overall, the discussion confirms that behavioral engagement and listening achievement are closely related. Observation data provided insights into students' challenges, while structured practice questions reinforced key listening strategies such as predicting meaning, identifying keywords, and using context clues. The integration of observation, reflection, and structured practice created a supportive learning environment that facilitated both cognitive and affective growth.

Conclusion

This Classroom Action Research aimed to improve eighth-grade students' listening comprehension through repeated listening practice supported by observation and structured practice questions. The results across ten cycles demonstrate a clear improvement in students' listening performance, learning behavior, and classroom engagement compared to the pre-cycle condition.

At the beginning of the study, students showed low listening achievement, limited focus, and low confidence. However, through continuous cycles of planning, action, observation, and reflection, students gradually developed better listening strategies, increased attention, and more positive learning attitudes. Although performance fluctuated in some cycles, the overall trend showed consistent improvement, particularly in the later cycles.

In conclusion, the study confirms that a cycle based Classroom Action Research approach allows

teachers to respond flexibly to students' needs and improve listening instruction systematically. The integration of observation, reflection, and structured practice questions not only improved students' listening comprehension but also fostered positive learning behaviors essential for long-term language development.

Recommendations

Drawing from the findings of this classroom action research various suggestions are offered for educators, educational institutions and upcoming researchers to aid the enhancement of students' listening comprehension abilities.

1. For English Teachers

Educators are advised to maintain the use of repeated listening exercises accompanied by activities, like gap- filling multiple-choice queries and brief answer responses to assist learners in improving decoding and comprehension abilities.

It is advised to use listening resources such, as conversations, brief narratives, classroom directives and audio- centered exercises to keep students interested and avoid listening exhaustion.

Prompt feedback must be regularly given to assist students in spotting mistakes and enhancing their precision, in understanding spoken language.

2. For Students

Learners are advised to engage in listening to English beyond the classroom by utilizing accessible materials, like English songs, instructional videos and brief online listening activities.

Learners ought to engage during listening tasks by posing questions seeking clarification of meanings and joining in group conversations.

3. For School Administrators

Educational institutions ought to offer listening devices, like speakers, language lab assistance or digital audio materials to enhance the efficiency of listening education.

Workshops, for growth concentrating on listening techniques and contemporary teaching methods ought to be offered to assist educators.

4. Recommendations for Curriculum Developers

The results of this study indicate that systematic and frequent listening exercises significantly enhance understanding. Consequently curriculum designers ought to reevaluate the existing proportion of listening tasks in courses and guarantee that listening is regarded as more, than just an additional skill.

Listening ought to be combined with language abilities, in a purposeful and task-oriented manner. For instance:

- Listening linked to speaking activities (role-play after audio)
- Listening linked to reading tasks (audio followed by text comparison)

- Listening linked to writing tasks (writing a summary or response)

Curriculum frameworks ought to arrange listening activities starting with supported (teacher-led) tasks progressing to independent listening exercises enabling students to steadily gain independence.

5. Recommendations for Parents and Guardians

Parents also impact students' language growth by offering encouragement and chances beyond the school setting. They should back students by enabling them to engage with media at home like films, songs or children's English shows ideally with subtitles at first then without, as their skills advance.

Parents ought to recognize students' effort in addition, to exam results. Support builds confidence, which frequently plays a role in succeeding at language learning.

6. Recommendations for Policy Makers

Decision makers at the district or national level ought to increase the focus, on listening within English language proficiency objectives. Listening skills are seldom evaluated in exams, which might lead educators to neglect listening teaching.

Educational policy should therefore:

- Include listening comprehension in standardized assessments
- Provide funding for listening resource development
- Support public-school technology upgrades
- Encourage research-driven instructional models

Integrating listening assessment at policy level will promote systemic attention to listening development across schools.

7. Recommendations for Future Researchers

Additional studies could investigate the effects of listening strategies (including top-down approaches, metacognitive techniques or technology-assisted listening) to evaluate their relative effectiveness.

Researchers may also investigate long-term retention of listening comprehension skills to determine whether improvements remain stable beyond the classroom action cycles.

References

Akbar R. H., Sofian, & Wardah (2025) *Improving Students Listening Comprehension by Using Bottom-Up Technique*

Amelia, M. D. N., Tasnim, & Fardhani, (2024). *The use of English song to improve listening comprehension Achievement*

Brown, H. D. (2014). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy (4th*

ed.). Pearson Education

Faridah, F., Kusumaningtiyas, & Setyaningrum, R. R. (2025). *Improving students' listening comprehension through English Fairy Tales YouTube channel*. *Edutama*, 2 (1), 38-48

Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (1988). *The Action Research Planner*, (3rd edition) Victoria (Australia), Deakin University Press.

Moleong, L. J. (2019). *Qualitative Research Methodology*. PT Remaja Rosdakarya Bandung.

Munawaroh F. S (2024) *Improving Students Listening Skill through English Song Using Spotify Application in MTS Baitul Arqom Balung Jember*

Rost, M. (2011). *Teaching and researching listening* (2nd ed.). Pearson Education

Setiawati, S., & Sutapa G. Y., (2024) *Improving students' listening comprehension through Learn English Listening App: A classroom action research*. *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris*, 13 (1) 229-246

Tawaerubun M. H., & Sasabone (2025) *Improving news listening comprehension using the 5W+1H Learning Method*

Vandergrift, L. (2018). *Listening comprehension in second language learning*. *Language Teaching*, 51 (1), 1-25

