

# Improving Year 5 Pupils' Listening Comprehension Skill Using Graphic Organiser

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**Abstract** – There is a contention that the exam-centric education system in Malaysia, prioritizing reading and writing over speaking and listening has resulted in a disregard for teaching listening skills in Malaysian classrooms. This action research specifically aims to enhance the listening comprehension abilities of Year 5 pupils by employing graphic organisers for identifying main ideas and supporting details. Initial findings reveal challenges among pupils in recognizing main ideas and supporting details during listening activities. Consequently, graphic organisers serve as effective pedagogical tools in facilitating the identification process. The study involved six Year 5 pupils from a primary school in Kuching, Sarawak. This research was conducted through a structured intervention by employing data collection method through document analysis, observation, field notes and semi-structured interview. To obtain data validity, qualitative and quantitative data as well as data triangulation has been used. Results indicate an improvement in pupils' post-test scores compared to pre-test scores, along with enhanced knowledge in listening comprehension and increased engagement in learning. This affirms the efficacy of graphic organisers as an instructional strategy for advancing listening comprehension skills to the participants, providing valuable implications for English language educators and positively impacting teaching and learning quality.

**Keywords**- Graphic Organiser, Listening Comprehension Skill, Main Idea, Supporting Details

## I. INTRODUCTION

English is taught as a secondary language in Malaysia, where it is an obligatory subject in the formal classroom setting. Students are required to acquire proficiency in English as a second language, starting at the primary level and continuing through the secondary and tertiary levels. With the advent of globalization, the importance of English has grown significantly, as it is recognized as a global language. The English language encompasses four essential skills: listening, speaking, writing, and reading, each of which complements and depends on the others. As Christopher (2016) suggests, the acquisition of linguistic skills, encompassing these four sets of abilities, assists learners in effectively using language, both in spoken and written forms, as a means of communication. Consequently, any deficiency in one aspect of these skills will directly impact the other three, as they are interrelated.

According to Brown (1983), listening comprehension can be defined as the ability to understand what one hears. Meanwhile, Dirven and Oakeshott-Taylor (1984) in

(Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016) have described listening comprehension as the result of teaching methods that pertain to specific aspects of understanding speech, spoken language, speech recognition, and speech perception. Additionally, Rost (2002) views listening comprehension as an interactive process in which listeners actively construct meaning. This is achieved through the discrimination of sounds, prior knowledge, grammatical structures, stress and intonation, and various linguistic or non-linguistic cues. Listening comprehension skill is further categorized into two subskills, namely microskills and macroskills.

## II. FOCUS OF THE STUDY

According to Brown (2001), in order for students to participate effectively in class, they must have good listening comprehension skill. This is extremely important for second language learners. Reflecting back my teaching experiences, I noticed that listening task has the most problem compare to the other language skills. Many pupils struggle with listening comprehension activities because they cannot recall what they have just heard. In this research, the focus of this study is to improve pupils' listening comprehension skill in identifying main idea and supporting details.

To improve pupils' listening comprehension skill in identifying the main idea and supporting details, a metacognitive strategy is employed. The use of graphic organizers is one such strategy that serve as tools for representing knowledge and understanding. Various types of graphic organizers exist, with conceptual organizers being the chosen type for this research. Conceptual organizers assist in illustrating how a central concept is supported by facts, evidence, and characteristics. This choice also takes practicality into account, as graphic organizers are user-friendly and easily manageable, especially given that many pupils are familiar with concept mapping tools like I-THINK.

Thus, the focus of this research is to improve pupils' listening comprehension skill specifically in identifying main idea and supporting details using graphic organiser among Year 5 pupils in one of a school in Kuching, Sarawak. This research is specially designed for Year 5 pupils because at this stage, the pupils are expected to be able to achieve the learning objectives as stated in the Dokumen Standard Kurikulum dan Pentaksiran (DSKP) for English Year 5. However, in this research only certain objectives are selected as Figure 1 below.

2. understand with support the main idea of longer simple texts on a range of familiar topics.
3. understand with support specific information and details of longer simple texts on a range of familiar topics.

Figure 1. Extract of Objectives for Listening in Year 5

### III. OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTION

#### Research Objectives

1. To improve Year 5 pupils' listening comprehension skill in identifying main idea and supporting details using graphic organisers.
2. To improve my teaching practice in Year 5 pupils' listening comprehension skill in identifying main idea and supporting details.

#### Research Questions

1. How does the use of graphic organiser improve Year 5 pupils' listening comprehension skill in identifying main idea and supporting details?
2. How does the use of graphic organiser help me to improve my teaching practice in Year 5 pupils' listening comprehension skill in identifying main idea and supporting details?

### IV. PARTICIPANTS OF THE STUDY

Six pupils were selected to be the research participants. These Year 5 pupils, comprising an equal mix of three boys and three girls, were all enrolled in SK Bahagia, located in the Padawan area. They were specifically chosen due to their struggles with the English language, evident in their limited comprehension of spoken and written English, as well as their poor performance in English listening tasks within the classroom context. The other research participant would be myself, as I am the one who conducted the lesson and intervention for my research, with the help of an English teacher who taught the class of the pupils that I have chosen as the observer. Table 1 shows the research participants' profile.

TABLE 1: RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS PROFILE

Participants (pseudonym)	Age	Gender	Proficiency	Pre-test score (%)
Vallen	11	Male	Low	11
Bella	11	Female	Low	33
Shah	11	Male	Low	11
Liya	11	Female	Low	33
Diane	11	Female	Low	33
Ruel	11	Male	Low	11

Adapted from Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah Bahasa Ingeris Sekolah Kebangsaan Dokumen Standard Kuriukulum Dan Prestatasi Tahun 5

### V. RESEARCH PROCEDURE

#### Implementation of Action

As the foundation of my research process, the model that I adapted in this action research is Classroom Action Research Spiral Model developed by Kemmis and McTaggart. This spiral or cyclical action research constituted four components which are Reflect - Plan - Act- Observe. The fieldnotes and interview results from my research were analysed qualitatively by using thematic analysis whereas the test scores for pre-test and post-test were analysed using quantitative data analysis. Based on my fieldnotes and interview transcript, several themes were emerged from the data. Firstly, I identified the important keywords or codes. Then, I categorised these codes into different categories. Based on the categories, I was able to identify two emerging themes. Table 2 shows the identified themes in the interview transcripts with the research participants, as well note taken from field notes.

TABLE 2: THEMATIC QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS RESULT

CODES	CATEGORIES	THEME
Remember and can state the rules	Pupils' understanding on listening comprehension skill in identifying main idea and supporting details	Knowledge improvement
Able to give their own example	Pupils' application of knowledge on listening comprehension skill in identifying main idea and supporting details	
Actively asking questions	Pupils' participation	Pupils' engagement
Show interest	Pupils' positive feedback	

#### Data Collection Method

During the implementation of the intervention in Cycle 1, I introduced the use of graphic organiser a learning tools when conducting a listening comprehension activity, specifically in identifying main idea and supporting details. During the lesson, three different audios were played three times each, and the pupils need to listen and wrote down the main idea and supporting details that they have listened to on a graphic organiser board. The graphic organiser board consists of several categories which are main idea and supporting details. The pupils need to write down at least three supporting details from the audio. The pupils need to write on a card, with different shape that categorise main idea and supporting details. The card is laminated; thus, they can write and erase it easily using a whiteboard marker. With the help of blue tack attached on the back of the card, the pupils need to arrange what they have wrote into a conceptual map, which lies on the graphic organiser board. After completing the task, I gave a consolidation worksheet to each pupil, which consists of questions based on the audio played. By referring to the graphic organiser board, it acts

as a guidance for them to answer the questions. Additionally, I also conducted interviews with the research participants. A semi-structured interview was used, which included aspects of an unstructured and a structured interview. I was able to arrange my approach more freely in this interview style. Based on their understanding of how the intervention was used, questions were created. In order to learn more about the accomplishments of the participants, interviewees included the English teacher.

Data Analysis Method

To analyse my collected data, I used a mixed method analysis. The type of qualitative data analysis that will be used in this action research is qualitative content and thematic analysis. According to Altinay and Paraskevas (2008), this type of qualitative analysis is appointed to interpret all data by taking into consideration the key themes that is related to the research focus, objectives and questions. The fieldnotes and interview results from my research were analysed qualitatively by using thematic analysis whereas the test scores for pre-test and post-test were analysed using quantitative data analysis. Lastly, for data sampling, analysis of the pre-test and post-test included in the study was conducted. This analysis aimed to ascertain whether pupils' understanding had improved or remained consistent.

**VI. FINDINGS**

Research Question 1

How does the use of graphic organiser improve Year 5 pupils' listening comprehension skill in identifying main idea and supporting details?

Based on the analysis of pupils' work, it became evident that the utilization of the graphic organiser is able to improve pupil's listening comprehension skill in identifying main idea and supporting details. This progress was noticeable when examining their performance from pre-test, post-test 1 and post-test 2. Besides, through the interview with the pupils, analysis that has been done were able to prove this statement too. Referring to Bloom's Taxonomy, the pupils were able to achieved up until to the third level which starts from knowledge, understanding and application. On top of that, the pupils were able to give example about a main idea with at least three supporting details.

To assess the effectiveness of the modified intervention in Cycle 2, another post-test was administered to the pupils. The results indicated that all of the pupils were able to score more than the passing mark, which was 50% after the implementation. Their post-test results were converted into percentages. The results of pre-test and post-test is calculated as a percentage. Table 3 shows a comparison of the students' test score

**TABLE 3: COMPARISON OF TEST SCORES PRE AND POST-TEST**

	Marks			Differences (%)
	Pre-test (%)	Post-test 1 (%)	Post-test 2 (%)	
Vallen	11	44	78	34
Bella	22	33	100	67
Liya	11	33	89	56
Shah	11	44	89	45
Ruel	22	56	100	44
Diane	11	44	78	34
Min	15	42	89	47

In the pre-test, all students are considered fail, thus there is no students who achieved an Excellent grade (80% - 100%). The highest grade achieved was Less satisfactory (20% - 39%) in the pre-test while the rest belong to Poor (0%-19%). However, there was an increasing percentage of the pre-test and post-test by 89%. This proves that the use of graphic organiser improved pupils listening comprehension skill in identifying main idea and supporting details. It can also be seen in the percentage of post-test which reached 100% passing grade. It is proved that the method of introducing the English language vocabulary using pictures is an effective method. Figure 2 shows pupils' achievement marks in the pre-test and post-test in the grading scale.

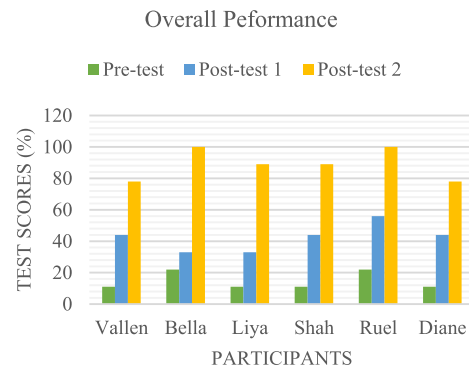


Figure 2. Pupils' achievement marks in the pre-test and post-test in the grading scale

Research Question 2

How does the use of graphic organiser help me to improve my teaching practice in Year 5 pupils' listening comprehension skill in identifying main idea and supporting details?

In response to the second research question, I have improved my teaching practice in Year 5 pupils' listening comprehension skill in identifying main idea and supporting details by changing my monotonous lesson to fun learning session. I often used traditional method to carry out a listening task to the Year 5 pupils before the use of graphic organiser in identifying main idea and supporting details was developed and introduced. Usually, the lesson conducted by me is by playing the audio provided in the English Plus 1 textbook, then they need to

answer questions in the textbook. Pupils usually guess the answer without thinking critically, and they barely jotting down any notes to guide them upon completing the task. Fun learning session can be seen as the graphic organiser promotes visual appeal to help pupils foster their ability in identifying main idea and supporting details. In my intervention, there are three categories in the graphic organiser that needed to be completed by the pupils which are main idea, supporting details and a title. However, if the pupils were able to guess the title for audio, it would be a bonus for them, as it was not emphasis in this research. Using graphic organizers is a useful way to teach idea organization in to improve listening comprehension skill in identifying main idea and supporting details. Graphic organizers can make information easier to understand, especially for young second language learner. They facilitate more participatory learning among students and make it simpler for them to find knowledge when needed. According to Rengganis Siwi Amumpuni (2014), graphic organisers are useful for more than just improving pupils' understanding. Creating a visual map out of a large number of facts, knowledge, or ideas encourages a better comprehension and insight into the subject matter.

## VII. REFLECTION AND CONCLUSION

While conducting this Action Research, I realized the importance of listening comprehension skill in identifying main idea and supporting details to ensure that the pupils as it will influence the effectiveness of communication and knowledge competence among my Year 5 pupils. Listening is frequently misconceived as an inherent ability obtained passively through exposure to language, even though individuals exhibit variations in their listening proficiency. Contrary to this belief, listening is a skill that requires intentional learning and acquisition. It is critical for students to acquire listening comprehension abilities in order to recognize key concepts and illustrative details.

My teaching practice in Year 5 pupils' listening comprehension skill in identifying main idea and supporting details has also gradually improved. Initially, my instructional style leaned towards a monotonous delivery, which often left students disengaged and struggling to grasp the nuances of the material. Thus, this type of teaching and learning need some improvement in order to create an enjoyable learning experience for the pupils. The use of graphic organiser as the intervention provided engaging tools like mind maps and charts, which also gave them a disciplined framework for understanding core ideas and supporting information. In addition to reviving the classroom environment, the change from a routinely boring lecture to engaging, interactive lessons improved pupils' comprehension and retention of important concepts, making the learning process more pleasurable and unforgettable.

## VIII. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER ACTION

Upon the implementation of this research, the pupils have shown improvement in their listening comprehension skill. However, there are some significant suggestions that

could be conducted for further action. I would like to explore the use of graphic organiser to improve on the other listening comprehension like summarization which involves distilling the major ideas and important aspects of spoken text into a clear, succinct summary as well as sequencing the concepts, events, or information offered in the listening material in a logical or chronological order. Kalmamatova et al. (2020) defines a graphic organiser as a teaching tool that helps pupils organize and structure ideas and information so they may more easily connect them to other ideas that are connected.

Next, I would like to digitalise the graphic organiser board to create a user-friendly intervention. I have yet to explore how to make online application so that the pupils can access the intervention anywhere and anytime without being limited to some hands-on material. This will incorporate the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) which align with the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning. Baz (2018) stated that the education sector has witnessed a significant shift towards digital learning. If it is created digitally and gamified, unique reward system can be included too. As a result of competing with their peers or other classmates, the pupils are extrinsically motivated to do the activities correctly. Therefore, a playful learning atmosphere where students are having fun while learning is possible. This research has also entirely changed my perspective as a professional teacher who used to think that the teaching listening comprehension is easy as it sounds. The experiences that I have gained throughout this research act as a mirror and a window for me to reflect on the problems critically and evaluate these problems from different perspectives. All in all, it is hoped that the other educators will benefit from my Action Research for the improvement of their teaching and pupils' learning.

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