

Listening Skills that Affect the Reading Comprehension of Grade 2 Pupils in Selected Elementary Schools in Cabiao, Nueva Ecija

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Abstract	Article Info
<p>This study examined the correlation between listening skills and reading comprehension among Grade 2 pupils in selected elementary schools in Cabiao, Nueva Ecija. A descriptive quantitative design was employed, utilizing structured survey questionnaires to evaluate students' active listening, as well as comprehension and engagement. The results indicated that although students received "Very Good" ratings in active listening, this skill did not exhibit a significant correlation with their reading comprehension ($p = 0.190$). In contrast, comprehension and engagement demonstrated a significant correlation with reading comprehension ($p = 0.015$), indicating that pupils with higher levels of cognitive involvement in listening tasks achieved stronger reading outcomes. These findings emphasize that while active listening is important, comprehension and engagement are more critical determinants of reading competency development. The study enhances early literacy by highlighting the significance of teacher-directed, interactive listening techniques that stimulate cognitive processes. A planned initiative is in place to support learners who experience difficulties with listening comprehension and literacy.</p>	<p>Keywords: Listening Skills, Reading Comprehension, Active Listening, Comprehension, and Engagement</p>

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INTRODUCTION

Listening skills are essential for the language and literacy development of Grade 2 students. Effective listening contributes to vocabulary acquisition, phonological awareness, and comprehension of language structures, all of which are crucial for text decoding. Kim and Pilcher (2016) found that systematic listening activities improve reading outcomes; however, reading instruction frequently emphasizes decoding at the expense of listening, resulting in language development gaps (Kim, 2020). Poor listening comprehension can impede vocabulary development and overall reading achievement (Hogan, Adlof, & Alonzo, 2019), highlighting the necessity for focused listening instruction, particularly in early education. Environmental factors, ineffective teaching strategies, and low engagement impact listening and academic performance (Nurhayani, 2018).

The "Every Child a Reader" initiative (DepEd, 2019) seeks to enhance early literacy in the Philippines, particularly addressing the challenges faced by Grade 2 pupils in Cabiao, Nueva Ecija, who experience difficulties with listening that affect their reading comprehension (Pascual et al., 2022). The Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) assesses listening comprehension; however, its effectiveness is compromised by inconsistent application. The 2022 PISA results revealed a decrease in the Philippines' average reading score, dropping from 353 in 2018 to 347 in 2022, which may be associated with inadequate listening comprehension, essential for text understanding. This study addresses that gap by analyzing not only the overall relationship between listening skills and reading comprehension but also the distinct roles of active listening, as well as comprehension and engagement. The findings reveal that comprehension and engagement are significantly correlated with pupils' reading comprehension levels, while active listening alone is not. By isolating these components, this research uniquely contributes evidence that can guide teachers to prioritize interactive, cognitively engaging listening strategies to strengthen early literacy.

This research, conducted by a Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) student, emphasizes the importance of listening skills in academic achievement and literacy. Prospective educators can refine their teaching strategies and activities for early learners by examining the correlation between listening and reading comprehension, so enhancing literacy and long-term educational outcomes for second-grade pupils.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Listening is recognized as a crucial element of literacy, particularly with reading comprehension. Research demonstrates that listening enhances vocabulary acquisition, language processing, and higher-level comprehension skills (Kim, 2020; Hogan, Adlof, & Alonzo, 2019). Research indicates that listening encompasses both auditory perception and cognitive processes, such as attention, memory, and inference (Graham et al., 2016; Vandergrift & Goh, 2018). These findings establish listening as a crucial antecedent to reading development, especially in the initial grades.

In the Philippines, multilingual classrooms, inadequate access to excellent auditory resources, and overcrowded settings hinder the development of listening skills (Dela Cruz, 2017; Villanueva, 2018; Pascual, De Guzman, & Malab, 2022). Structured and interactive listening activities have been effective in improving comprehension, despite current challenges. Abad (2019) and Tien (2019) established that guided audio exercises and narrative listening markedly enhanced learners' reading proficiency. Moreover, global research highlights the effectiveness of digital instruments, scaffolding techniques, and multimedia platforms in improving understanding and engagement (Soleimani & Rahmanian, 2021; Yuanisa, 2022; Bloomfield et al., 2020).

Researchers differentiate among various dimensions of listening. Active listening fosters engagement and language development; however, it may not serve as an independent predictor of reading comprehension (Bautista, 2020; Ambubuyog, Castillo, & Lim, 2023). Comprehension and engagement have proven to be more significant predictors of reading success, facilitating learners' abilities to make inferences, expand vocabulary, and derive meaning from texts (Kim, 2023; Santos, 2019; Tarihoran, Heryatun, & Alawiah, 2024). This aligns with the present study, which found a significant correlation between comprehension and engagement and pupils' reading comprehension levels, underscoring the need for interactive, cognitively engaging listening interventions in early literacy programs.

Methodology

This study explores the research design, findings, and practical applications of the demonstration method, focusing on listening skills and their effect on the reading comprehension of second-grade children. The process includes several key steps:

1. Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive design to examine the correlation between students' listening skills—specifically active listening, as well as comprehension and engagement—and their reading comprehension levels. This design facilitates systematic measurement of variables and the identification of patterns through structured survey questionnaires and existing assessment data.

2. Participants

The respondents were **114 Grade 2 pupils** from seven public elementary schools in Cabiao, Nueva Ecija, namely: Concepcion, Maligaya, San Fernando Sur, Jose Rico, San Roque, Cabiao Central, and Sta. Rita Elementary School. A **quota sampling technique** was employed, focusing on pupils identified under the “Oplan: Bawat Batang Kabyawenyo” Pre-Reading Assessment at the **Instructional and Frustration levels** of reading. This ensured that the study targeted learners most in need of literacy support.

3. Instruments

The primary tool for data collection was a researcher-developed questionnaire. The study comprised two components: (1) the demographic profile of the pupils, and (2) items assessing listening skills, specifically in active listening (*1. Demonstrates the ability to recall important information shared by the teacher.*, *2. Shows active listening skills during class sessions.* *3. Responds to questions after listening to the teacher's discussion.*), as well as comprehension and engagement (*1. Exhibits improved thinking when listening attentively.* *2. Shows an understanding of cause-and-effect relationships through listening.* *3. Participates in discussions after listening to a story.*). Responses were evaluated using a 5-point Likert scale, with options ranging from “Needs Improvement” to “Outstanding.”

The questionnaire was validated by Grade 2 teachers and master teachers who are specialists in English, leading to revisions of questionnaire to ensure both content and face validity. A pilot test involving 57 pupils confirmed the instrument's reliability, with Cronbach's Alpha scores of 0.825 for active listening and 0.831 for comprehension and engagement, both categorised as “Good.” The overall reliability score of 0.857 indicates internal consistency.

4. Data Gathering Procedure

Before data collection commenced, formal permissions were obtained from the Division of Nueva Ecija (Dr. Ronaldo A. Pozon, Superintendent, December 4, 2024), the District Supervisor (Dr. Noemi C. Sagcal, January 9, 2025), and all participating school principals. The research complied with ethical standards concerning child participants. Parental consent was obtained to ensure adherence to ethical standards. Data collection occurred in classroom environments, aided by teachers who administered questionnaires and observed student responses. The confidentiality of student data was maintained consistently, and responses were utilised exclusively for research purposes.

5. Data Analysis

The analysis employed suitable statistical methods. The weighted mean was calculated to assess the quality of respondents' listening skills and reading comprehension levels, while the Spearman Rho Correlation Coefficient was utilised to evaluate the strength and direction of the correlation between these two variables. P-value testing was employed to determine the statistical significance of the correlations at the 0.05 level. The findings indicated that active listening did not have a significant correlation with reading comprehension ($p = 0.190$), whereas comprehension and engagement exhibited a significant effect ($p = 0.015$).

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The study indicated that Grade 2 students exhibited excellent listening skills, achieving elevated scores in active listening (WM = 3.86) and comprehension and engagement (WM = 3.51). Correlation study indicated

that active listening was not a significant predictor of reading comprehension ($\rho = 0.226$, $p = 0.190$), but comprehension and engagement exhibited a significant correlation with reading success ($\rho = 0.572$, $p = 0.015$). These findings indicate that although active listening enhances attentiveness and memory retention, it may not directly result in increased reading comprehension without more profound cognitive engagement. Comprehension and engagement need that learners evaluate meaning, draw conclusions, and establish connections—abilities more closely associated with reading competency. This is consistent with Ambubuyog et al. (2023), who contended that active listening improves fundamental language domains but requires cognitive reinforcement to affect comprehension results. The findings emphasise that it is not merely listening, but listening with involvement and the construction of meaning, that significantly forecasts reading achievement.

CONCLUSION

Grade 2 pupils in Cabiao, Nueva Ecija demonstrated very good listening skills, with active listening rated highly. However, only comprehension and engagement showed a significant correlation with reading comprehension, while active listening alone did not. This indicates that while attentiveness supports learning, meaningful comprehension and sustained engagement are the key drivers of reading success.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Educators are urged to prioritize interactive strategies that augment understanding and involvement in the classroom. Engagement in activities such as think-pair-share, reflective questioning, guided storytelling with subsequent enquiries, and cause-effect games can facilitate students' concept integration and enhance their critical thinking abilities. To facilitate this, schools may collaborate with NGOs and higher education institutions to implement enduring literacy programs, encompassing reading clinics and volunteer tutoring, especially for children who persist in facing challenges with reading comprehension.

Additionally, a systematic Listening Comprehension Enhancement Programme should be integrated into weekly English lessons to provide regular practice. This programme may encompass interactive storytelling, guided listening sessions, and audio-based comprehension exercises designed for young learners. Future researchers are urged to investigate the impact of active listening in advanced grade levels and to utilise qualitative methodologies, including classroom observations and interviews, to obtain a more profound understanding of how listening behaviours affect reading comprehension.

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