

Enhancing Listening Skills Through Communicative Language Teaching Using Technology Based Media in Elementary School

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ABSTRACT

This community service program aimed to improve listening comprehension among fourth-grade students at SD Negeri 124385 Pematangsiantar through the integration of BBC Learning English audio and the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. The problem addressed was the limited use of authentic listening activities in classrooms. The program involved 19 students and was carried out in three phases: preparation, implementation, and evaluation. During the implementation, students participated in contextual listening tasks, vocabulary repetition, group analysis, and interactive question sessions. Rather than using formal tests, the evaluation focused on student engagement and response accuracy through observation. Results showed that 78.95% of students achieved strong listening performance. The findings suggest that integrating Communicative Language Teaching with accessible audio materials supports effective and affordable listening skill development in elementary classrooms.

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INTRODUCTION

Listening is a fundamental language skill that supports the development of speaking, reading, and writing. Without strong listening skills, learners cannot effectively acquire or apply the target language. In many Indonesian elementary schools, however, listening instruction receives minimal attention. English lessons often focus on reading and writing due to curriculum constraints and the limited availability of engaging auditory materials.

Brown (2007) emphasized that listening is the primary channel through which language input is received. Richards (2014) added that listening is an active process involving the simultaneous decoding of sounds, syntax, and meaning (Kartika et al., 2023; Simanjuntak et al., 2025). Field (2009) argued that effective listening instruction must present language in context, support gradual comprehension, and include repetition and real-life situations. Supporting this, Gilmore (2007) highlighted the value of authentic materials in helping learners adapt to natural language use. Despite this, many classrooms still rely heavily on textbooks and teacher-led instruction.

To address this issue, educators have begun integrating technology into English language teaching. Yuliana and Susanto (2021) found that using mobile-based audio materials improves student motivation and vocabulary retention. Likewise, Ningsih (2020) explained that digital audio resources enhance students' understanding by presenting clearer context and natural usage patterns (Hanif et al., 2023). These findings reinforce the value of accessible technology in developing listening comprehension.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) complements this approach well. It emphasizes meaningful interaction and learner participation. Harsono and Setiawan (2022) explained that CLT encourages students especially young learners to use language functionally, improving their confidence and engagement (Nasution et al., 2023). CLT moves the focus from form to function, aligning well with real-world communication goals.

The Indonesian government, through the Merdeka Curriculum, promotes the development of literacy skills including listening through contextual and project-based learning. The curriculum advocates student-centered instruction and real-life application of language. This community service program aligns with that vision, aiming to promote listening literacy through practical and communicative strategies tailored for public elementary schools.

At SD Negeri 124385 Pematangsiantar, it was observed that students lacked familiarity with structured listening activities and were hesitant to respond in English. To bridge this gap, the program incorporated BBC Learning English audio content, presented via mobile phones and speakers, combined with group-based communicative activities that encouraged peer interaction.

Thus, this community service program was designed to improve listening skills using authentic audio input and communicative methods that are effective and affordable. The program offers a model for supporting literacy development in low-resource classrooms, using relevant content and interactive techniques that can be replicated in other primary school contexts. Stems from the urgent need to improve elementary students' listening skills through accessible and relevant instructional practices. The growing importance of listening in literacy development—as emphasized in the Merdeka Curriculum necessitates a shift toward authentic, interactive classroom strategies. This program integrates Communicative Language Teaching with BBC Learning English audio materials to address both pedagogical and logistical challenges faced in public schools.

Therefore, the goals of this program are to:

1. Enhance students' listening comprehension through structured activities using BBC Learning English audio materials.
2. Apply Communicative Language Teaching to promote meaningful language use and student engagement.
3. Strengthen vocabulary retention and pronunciation through repetition and group discussion.
4. Increase student participation by implementing low-cost media and relatable daily topics.
5. Provide an alternative instructional model that can be replicated in other resource-limited schools.

METHOD

The implementation method for this community service activity employed a descriptive qualitative approach. The program was conducted at SD Negeri 124385 Pematangsiantar in May 2025 and involved 19 fourth-grade students as the main participants. This method involved collaboration between the implementation team and the school as the community partner. The stages of implementation were divided into three structured phases: preparation, implementation, and evaluation. Each phase was designed to ensure the success of the listening skills enhancement program through structured learning and contextual media.

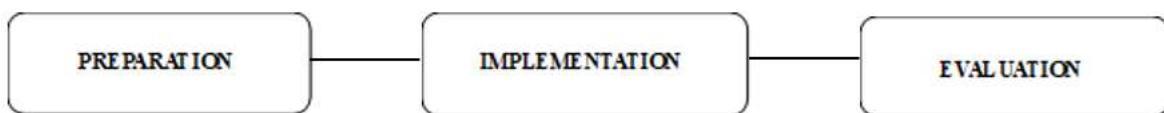


Figure 1. Procedures in Conducting the Community Service Program

Phase 1: Preparation

This preparatory phase served as the foundational stage prior to implementation. Its purpose was to ensure that all administrative, technical, and pedagogical elements were in place and aligned with the program's objectives. The following steps were taken:

1. Coordination with the School Partner

The implementation team initiated coordination with the headmaster and the fourth-grade classroom teacher at SD Negeri 124385 Pematangsiantar. The discussions included scheduling the activity, assessing

student needs, and agreeing on the technical aspects of student involvement. The activity was planned not to disrupt the school's academic schedule.

2. Lesson Design and Goal Setting

The activity was designed using the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, focusing on the development of students' listening comprehension through interactive and participatory learning. The team developed a learning scenario integrating authentic audio, vocabulary exploration, pronunciation drills, and group-based language interaction.

3. Selection and Adaptation of Materials

The listening material was selected from BBC Learning English, particularly a topic on "Daily Activities." The audio was chosen due to its clear pronunciation, familiar vocabulary, and accessible structure suitable for young learners. A supporting vocabulary list was also prepared to guide the session.

4. Media and Equipment Preparation

To ensure smooth implementation, the following media and tools were prepared:

- a) Mobile phone and portable speaker for playing the audio,
- b) Attendance list and student observation sheets,
- c) Whiteboard and markers for visual aids during the session,
- d) Documentation devices such as smartphone cameras,
- e) Backup internet access in case online retrieval was necessary.

5. Development of Instruments and Supporting Documents

Several supporting documents were created to aid in evaluation and reporting:

- a) Student engagement observation rubrics,
- b) Documentation templates for photo records,
- c) Reflection notes for post-activity review.

By completing these steps in Phase 1, the team established a clear structure for implementation and ensured effective collaboration with the school partner. This foundational phase contributed to a smoother, more impactful execution of the learning activities.

Phase 2: Implementation

In this phase, the instructional model that had been carefully planned was applied in a real classroom environment. The implementation process referred to the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) framework, which emphasizes interaction, meaningful use of language, and learner engagement. CLT does not focus merely on accuracy, but more on fluency, student-centered learning, and contextual communication. According to Harmer (2007), implementation in language learning should allow learners to develop language skills by experiencing the language in use, not just learning about the language.

In this context, implementation activities were carefully designed to simulate real-world language use. Listening was treated not as a passive activity, but as an active skill requiring learners to comprehend, interpret, and respond based on context. The use of BBC Learning English as the primary listening source offered authentic exposure to native-like speech and helped students engage with meaningful language input.

The activities during implementation were divided into six steps, each structured to build upon the previous and reinforce students' listening comprehension, vocabulary development, and oral response ability. The step-by-step procedure is explained below:

Step 1: Opening and Ice Breaking

The activity began with greetings and introductions between the facilitators and the students. The teacher created a relaxed atmosphere by asking simple, relatable questions such as:

- a) "What did you do after school yesterday?"
- b) "Did anyone help their parents cook this morning?"

This warm-up stage aimed to build rapport, activate prior knowledge, and introduce the theme of daily activities in a natural context.



Figure 2. Introduction by Tria Joys Siburian, a student majoring in English education

Step 2: Vocabulary Exploration and Pronunciation Practice

Students' responses during the ice-breaking session were recorded on the whiteboard in both Indonesian and English. For example:

Bahasa Indonesia	English Equivalent
Makan malam	Have dinner
Membantu ibu	Help my mother
Bermain dengan teman	Play with friends

The teacher led a pronunciation drill, asking students to repeat each word multiple times. This activity supported vocabulary retention and accurate pronunciation, which are essential for effective listening and speaking.



Figure 3. The teacher guiding students through English vocabulary and pronunciation on the board

Step 3: Group Division and Task Orientation

Students were divided into four groups, with 4–5 students per group. The teacher explained the main tasks:

- Listen to an English audio about daily routines.
- Write down key information heard from the audio.
- Formulate at least three questions based on the audio content.
- Ask and answer questions between groups in English.

The teacher also explained that the audio would come from BBC Learning English and contain simple dialogue suitable for elementary learners.



Figure 4. Students discussing answers in groups while listening attentively to the BBC audio

Step 4: Audio Playback and Guided Listening

The BBC Learning English audio was played twice using a mobile phone and a portable speaker.

- First playback: Students listened to grasp the general idea of the content.
- Second playback: Students listened more carefully to note specific details.

Afterward, each group collaborated to write relevant questions based on what they heard. Examples include:

- 1) “What time does the boy wake up?”
- 2) “Where does the girl go after lunch?”
- 3) “Does he play football in the evening?”



Figure 5. Listening practice session with authentic audio material

Step 5: Group Interaction and Question Exchange

Each group took turns asking their questions to other groups. The responding groups answered based on their understanding of the audio. The teacher provided support and corrective feedback where needed, ensuring that the focus remained on communication, not perfection.

This phase also helped improve the students' ability to infer meaning, listen for details, and speak confidently in front of their peers.



Figure 6. Question-and-answer session between groups during the interactive listening simulation

Step 6: Oral Interpretation and Personal Reflection

To close the session, students were asked to explain parts of the audio in their own words. Some students also reflected by connecting the content to their own lives, saying things like:

- "I also help my mom cook like the girl in the audio."
- "I play with my brother after school, too."

This step emphasized meaningful connection, real-life relevance, and self-expression in English.

This structured implementation not only exposed students to authentic listening input but also fostered collaborative skills, critical thinking, and real-time language use. It aligned fully with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), promoting fluency through functional and meaningful interaction.

Phase 3: Evaluation

This phase aimed to evaluate student engagement and the effectiveness of the learning process using a qualitative and non-statistical approach, which is appropriate for primary school contexts. The evaluation was focused on the learning process rather than testing outcomes, in line with the goals of community service-based learning programs.

The evaluation activities were conducted through direct observation by the classroom teacher and the implementation team. Observations were made during the implementation phase to assess the students' level of participation and response. The tools used included:

- 1) Observation Sheets to track student involvement in listening, discussion, and group work.
- 2) Attendance Lists to confirm student participation.
- 3) Activity Checklists to monitor how students completed tasks such as answering questions, vocabulary usage, and pronunciation.
- 4) Photo Documentation to support visual analysis of student engagement and classroom dynamics.

The evaluation focused on the following aspects:

- a) students' ability to understand the audio content,
- b) use of relevant vocabulary,
- c) collaboration in groups,
- d) willingness to speak and respond orally, and
- e) overall engagement in the learning activity.

This evaluation ensured that learning was not only implemented but also reflected upon. It provided meaningful insights into how students participated and responded, which would later support the analysis in the results and discussion section.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this community service activity are presented in three phases: preparation, implementation, and evaluation. Each phase highlights the activities conducted and the outcomes observed in the field, especially regarding students' listening skill development and engagement.

Phase 1: Preparation

In the preparation stage, all planned activities were carried out smoothly and on time. The coordination between the implementation team and the school ran effectively, enabling a mutual understanding of the goals and technical aspects of the program. All teaching aids such as mobile phones, speakers, attendance sheets, and observation forms were fully prepared.

Students had little prior experience with structured listening activities. Therefore, the selection of simple and slow-paced audio from BBC Learning English proved to be an appropriate match for their level. The vocabulary lists prepared in advance also helped scaffold their understanding and reduced their anxiety about encountering unfamiliar words. This stage provided the necessary foundation to ensure that the implementation would run smoothly, both technically and pedagogically. It also allowed the team to align the learning objectives with students' real-world contexts.

Phase 2: Implementation

The implementation was conducted in a classroom setting involving 19 fourth-grade students. The activity began with an ice-breaking session, which successfully built a relaxed and interactive atmosphere. Students were eager to share their daily routines, which formed the vocabulary basis for the listening tasks.

When the BBC Learning English audio was played, students showed a high level of curiosity. During the first playback, they listened attentively. On the second playback, they actively took notes and discussed in groups. Each group generated questions related to the content and engaged in cross-group question-and-answer sessions.

Examples of student-generated questions:

- a) "What time does she wake up?"
- b) "Does he help his mom in the evening?"

The oral simulation task further encouraged students to speak English spontaneously. Many students made connections between the audio content and their daily lives, such as "I also play football after school," showing not only comprehension but also personal reflection.

This phase demonstrated that the combination of CLT and audio-based media increased student interaction, reduced hesitation to speak English, and made listening more meaningful.

Phase 3: Evaluation

During the evaluation, observations were conducted to assess students' participation and comprehension. Based on observation sheets and activity checklists:

- a. 78.95% of students showed active engagement and appropriate responses.
- b. Most students were able to answer questions correctly based on the audio.
- c. Group discussions were lively, and students encouraged each other to participate.
- d. Vocabulary usage and pronunciation improved compared to the beginning of the session.

The documentation also revealed high levels of student concentration and enjoyment during the session. Students responded well to authentic listening materials, and their confidence increased during oral responses.

These results support the idea that integrating authentic audio with communicative techniques is an effective way to improve listening comprehension at the elementary level. It aligns with Harmer (2007) and Richards (2014), who emphasize that language learning must involve real input and meaningful interaction, especially in early education settings.

Phase 4: Challenges in Implementing

Although the program was implemented successfully, several challenges were encountered during the process. One of the main issues was limited vocabulary among students. Many students struggled to understand the audio because they were unfamiliar with several English terms related to daily routines.

In addition, some students showed low confidence in speaking, especially when asked to express answers in front of their peers. This was partly due to limited prior experience in interactive English lessons. Another challenge was classroom management, students were easily distracted or began making noise during the group discussion phase, which sometimes reduced focus.

Technically, although the school supported the use of audio media, there were minor disturbances such as inconsistent internet connection when accessing online materials, and low speaker volume, which affected the clarity of the audio for students seated at the back of the class.

Phase 5: Steps to Overcome the Challenges

To address the vocabulary issue, the teacher prepared a vocabulary list on the whiteboard before playing the audio. Students practiced reading and pronouncing the words several times, helping them become familiar with the terms in advance.

To build student confidence in speaking, the facilitator applied a non-threatening atmosphere, emphasizing that mistakes were acceptable and part of the learning process. Students were encouraged to speak in pairs first, then share in groups, and finally participate in full-class discussion.

To manage classroom noise and maintain order, the teacher implemented clear time limits and group roles (such as note-taker and speaker), which helped maintain structure and accountability. Students were also praised and rewarded with verbal encouragement to boost motivation.

Technical issues were anticipated by pre-downloading audio files and conducting equipment checks before class. The speaker was positioned at the center of the room to ensure audibility for all students.

These strategies helped create a more supportive, interactive, and technically smooth learning environment for all participants.



Figure 7. Group photo taken after the activity with students of Grade IV class at SD Negeri 124385 Pematangsiantar

CONCLUSION

This community service program effectively improved the listening skills of fourth-grade students through the use of BBC Learning English audio and the Communicative Language Teaching approach. Students became more engaged, confident, and responsive during listening tasks. Despite challenges like limited vocabulary and low speaking confidence, these were addressed through visual aids and group activities. The program demonstrated that communicative, media-supported instruction can be successfully applied in primary schools to support early English literacy, especially in listening comprehension.

Thank You Note

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