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The use of guided imagery to improve listening comprehension skills of Grade 6 pupils

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ABSTRACT

The prevalent issue of inadequate listening comprehension skills in elementary education, especially in English language learning, underscores the need for innovative instructional methods. This study explored the effectiveness of guided imagery in improving the listening comprehension of sixth-grade students at San Rafael Elementary School. The research instruments' validity and reliability were confirmed using the Aiken's V coefficient method and Cronbach's alpha, with scores of 0.83 and 0.77, respectively. A quasi-experimental design was used, with 30 students practicing guided imagery (experimental group) and another 30 following traditional teaching methods (control group) Pre-test scores for both groups fell below K-12 expectations. However, post-test results showed the experimental group's mean score increased from 67.33 to 92.45, outperforming the control group's rise from 66.45 to 78.88. These findings highlight the significant impact of guided imagery on listening skills and recommend its integration into teaching practices to enhance educational outcomes across subjects.

Keywords: Auditory processing skills, English language learning, guided imagery, instructional strategies, listening comprehension

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INTRODUCTION

Listening comprehension is a crucial skill everyone must possess to understand the meaning of spoken words. It is vital in academics and everyday life (Alzamil, 2021). Meaningful conversations are facilitated by effective listening, enabling individuals to articulate their understanding of the information heard (Kriz et al., 2021). Strong listening comprehension skills empower individuals to convey information in their language accurately. Given its impact on language skills like speaking, reading, writing, and translating, it is essential to prioritize and emphasize listening comprehension in education (Ghafar et al., 2023).

Drossman et al. (2021), highlights that over forty percent of daily communication time is spent listening, emphasizing the significance of this skill. However, despite its importance, listening comprehension is often neglected in English language learning, posing a challenge for students. Teachers face the task of employing effective methods for listening exercises to enhance students' comprehension abilities. Belaid and Boucetta (2020), point out that primary school students struggle with listening comprehension due to limited emphasis on speaking and listening skills in educational materials, with a disproportionate focus on grammar, reading, and vocabulary. On the other hand, the limited emphasis on listening skills in educational materials may contribute to challenges in both listening and reading comprehension among primary school students (Paguyan and Taoc, 2022). Addressing this imbalance by integrating more speaking and listening activities into the curriculum could enhance students' overall language comprehension abilities.

Issues related to pronunciation further compound the challenges of listening comprehension (Drossman et al., 2021). Recognizing words with unfamiliar pronunciation requires students to decipher linguistic components, making the process intricate (Kilpatrick, 2020). Yenkimaleki et al. (2023), emphasize the need for students to identify linguistic parts and prosodic features like stress, weak forms, and intonation for effective comprehension. The real-time nature of oral passages adds complexity, demanding rapid processing for comprehension (Medina et al., 2020).

Despite its pivotal role, listening remains a relatively neglected skill in language teaching, with more emphasis on productive skills (Newton and Nation, 2020). The lack of attention in coursebooks and curricula further perpetuates this oversight (Scott and Husain, 2021). Our observations during Field Study 100 and 101 revealed a significant challenge in students' listening comprehension skills, indicating a broader issue in the educational system. De Guzman and De Vera (2018), support this, noting that elementary school pupils often face challenges in learning English due to age-related factors, lack of interest, and perceived difficulty.

Listening comprehension extends beyond educational settings, impacting communication in various aspects of life (Mulyadi et al., 2021). Effective listening is crucial for communicating with friends, family, and significant others (Lawson-Adams and Dickinson, 2021). In educational contexts, listening comprehension is a key determinant of academic performance (Çakir, 2018). It is not merely about hearing words but understanding, interpreting, and attributing meaning to the information received (Iskandarsyah Siregar and Sabrina, 2021)

As the educational landscape continues to evolve, recognizing the importance of listening comprehension as a foundational skill is imperative (Mulyadi et al., 2021). It influences academic performance and shapes communication dynamics in personal and professional spheres (Lawson-Adams and Dickinson, 2021). Moreover, the study underscores the urgency for educational institutions to prioritize listening comprehension in their curricula and teaching methodologies. By addressing the challenges observed in

primary schools, such as a lack of emphasis on listening and speaking skills (Belaid and Boucetta, 2020), educators can lay a strong foundation for students' language development.

The study acknowledges the multifaceted nature of listening comprehension, which involves linguistic components, pronunciation challenges, and prosodic features (Saraswaty, 2018). Enhancing listening skills should encompass these aspects, providing a comprehensive approach to skill development. The proposed guided imagery intervention offers a unique avenue to engage students' imagination and improve their comprehension abilities. It recognizes that listening is not merely a passive activity but an active process that requires mental processing and interpretation (Abdul Malik, 2024). Educators can create a more dynamic and effective learning environment by integrating innovative methods like guided imagery.

In the San Rafael Integrated School context, a recognized need is to investigate effective strategies for enhancing listening comprehension skills. Acknowledging the need for prior studies in the institution, it becomes imperative to identify issues in learning and comprehending new words. To address this gap, the objective of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of guided imagery as an intervention strategy for enhancing the listening comprehension skills of Grade 6 students at San Rafael Integrated School by providing pre-test and post test to both control and experimental group. Ultimately, this study aspires to propose mechanisms for improving listening comprehension, thereby contributing to the academic growth and development of students.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Description of study area

The study was conducted at San Rafael Integrated School, particularly the Grade VI pupils of the School Year 2023-2024. The intervention or data collection from the respondents was done in one week, with two sessions, and only on days and times that the grade six advisers agreed to. Further, the study was conducted from March to May 2024. The research setting was at San Rafael Integrated School, located at Sitio Tagadao, Brgy. San Rafael, Cateel, Davao Oriental.

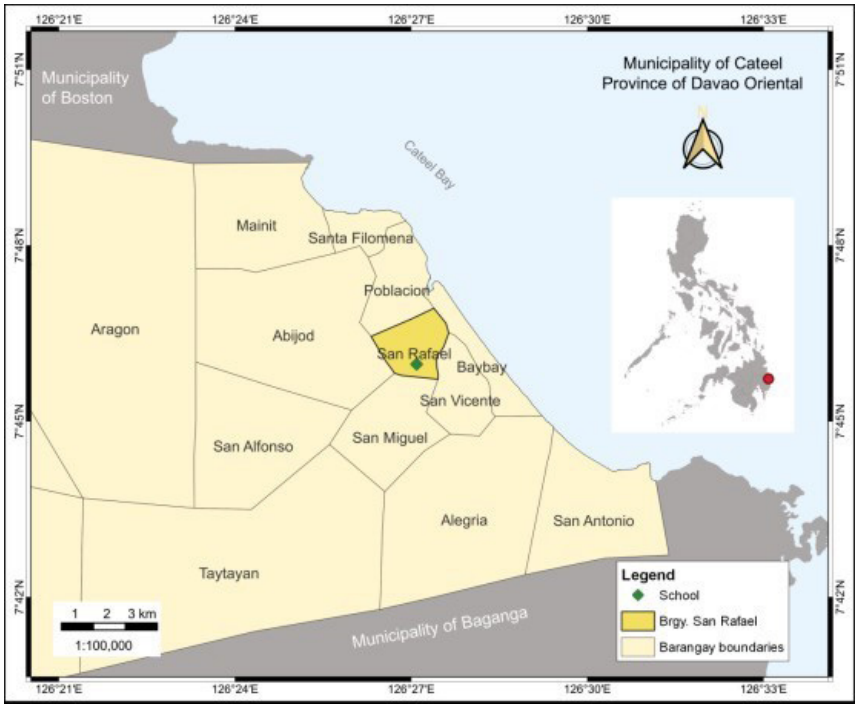

Figure 4. Map showing San Rafael Integrated School (SRIS).

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Figure 5. Photo documentation during data collection (A and B).

Research design

This study employed a quasi-experimental design with a control group and an experimental group to demonstrate the effectiveness of the intervention. The appropriateness of this design lies in its ability to establish a cause-and-effect relationship between the intervention (guided imagery) and the outcome (listening comprehension skills) (Siedlecki, 2020). The design was particularly suitable for this context, as it allowed for the comparison of outcomes between groups, ensuring a systematic approach to assessing the intervention's impact despite real-world constraints such as the non-random assignment of participants. By utilizing this design, the study ensured reliable and valid results, offering actionable insights into improving listening comprehension in educational settings.

Research instrument

In this research, the researchers utilized a 30-item researcher-made questionnaire. The questionnaire has two test types, type A and type B, where each type consists of 15 items. The questionnaire was subjected to thorough testing to ensure accuracy and reliability. These thorough tests prove that our tool can correctly and reliably measure participants' learning, making it a valuable and trustworthy tool for educational studies. Meanwhile, the questionnaire's content aligned with the learning competency based on the K-12 curriculum, particularly noting relevant information from text heard.

Data collection

The researchers first secured ethical clearance from the appropriate institutional review board to ensure adherence to ethical standards and the protection of participants' rights. Following this, permission was obtained from the school head and grade advisers at San Rafael Integrated

School to conduct the study, ensuring that all relevant stakeholders were informed and supportive. School,

which has only two Grade 6 sections. These sections served as the experimental and control groups. To assign these groups, the researchers used a coin toss. This method was chosen for its simplicity and fairness, ensuring an unbiased way of determining which section would participate as the experimental group and which as the control group. The experimental group (30 respondents) received the guided imagery intervention, while the control group (30 respondents) followed the regular classroom activities without the intervention. Both groups underwent pre-tests and post-tests to measure and compare their listening comprehension skills. This approach allowed the researchers to evaluate the effectiveness of the guided imagery method in improving students' listening comprehension.

The respondents then completed a pre-test accompanied by a consent form that detailed the study's objectives, procedures, and participants' rights. They were instructed to fill out the consent form with their name and signature to confirm their willingness to participate. After administering the pre-test, the researchers collected the completed questionnaires to ensure all data were accounted for before proceeding.

The control group received instruction using the conventional method of teaching listening comprehension skills, which involved traditional strategies like direct instruction and rote memorization. In contrast, the experimental group was taught using the guided imagery method, an innovative approach aimed at enhancing listening comprehension skills by encouraging visualization and engagement with the material.

Following the instructional phase, both groups were administered a post-test to evaluate their progress and understanding of listening comprehension. After the post-test, the researchers carefully collected the completed questionnaires and secured them in an envelope to maintain confidentiality and the integrity of the data. Finally, the gathered data were submitted to a research statistician for analysis, ensuring that appropriate statistical methods were applied to derive meaningful conclusions from the study.

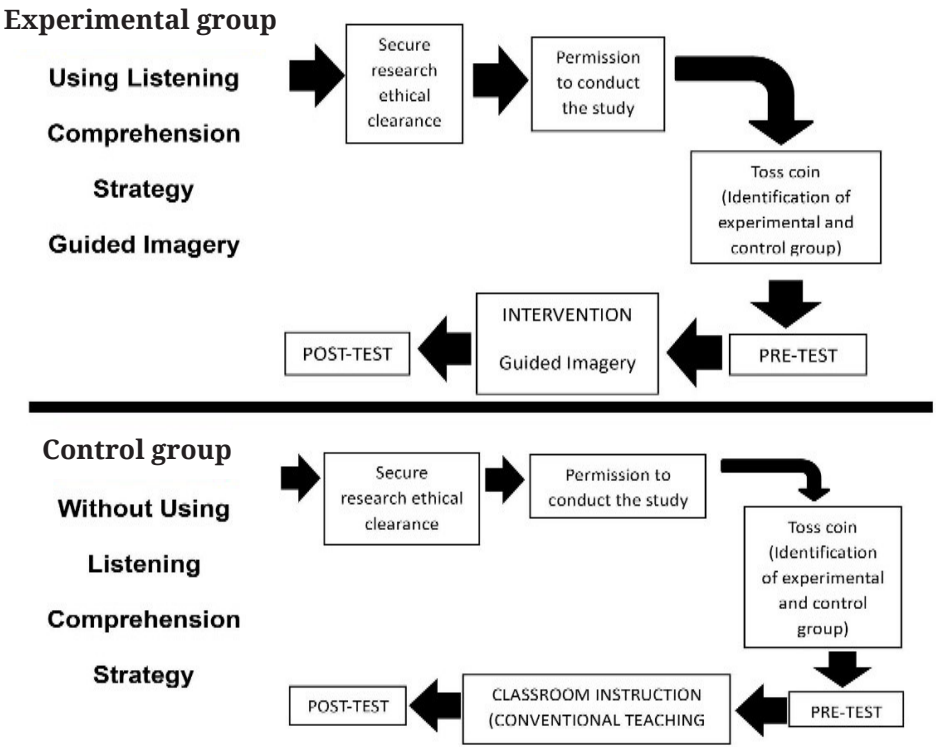

Figure 6. The instructional phase of both experimental group and control group.

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Data analysis

Content validity. The content validity of the assessment tool was evaluated using Aiken's V coefficient, a statistical measure that gauges the level of agreement among experts about the relevance of each item to the learning objectives, its necessity, and the overall quality of the items. In this study, the Aiken's V coefficient was calculated to be 0.83, indicating a strong level of validity. This high score suggests that the tool was well-aligned with the intended learning objectives and effectively relevant for evaluating the participants' knowledge and skills, as supported by Serici and Bond (2014).

Reliability. The reliability of the tool was measured using Cronbach's alpha, a common method for assessing internal consistency. The tool achieved a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.77, reflecting high reliability. This score indicates that the tool consistently measured its intended constructs across various items and participants. The strong reliability suggests that the tool was stable and yielded trustworthy results, which is crucial for ensuring that the data collected accurately represents the participants' learning achievements, as noted by Ahdika (2017).

Mean. This statistical instrument was used to determine (1) the average of pre-test achievement between the control group and the experimental group and (2) the average of post-test test score achievement between the control group and the experimental group. The result was interpreted based on the grading scale with its corresponding interpretation:

Table 1. K-12 grading scale and interpretation.

Grading scale	Interpretation
90-100	Outstanding
85-89	Very satisfactory
80-84	Satisfactory
75-79	Fairly satisfactory
75 Below	Did not meet expectations

Independent sample t-test. This statistical tool was used to (3) determine the significant difference in the pre-test mean scores among students between the control group and experimental group and the mean scores of post-test test score achievement among students between the control group and experimental group.

RESULTS

The pre-test scores for listening comprehension skills revealed that neither the control group (66.45%) nor the experimental group (67.33%) met expectations, indicating a need for improvement in listening skills among the respondents. The standard deviations for the groups were 3.73 for the control group and 3.80 for the experimental group. These values suggest that while the scores varied somewhat within each group, they were relatively close to the mean, indicating that most students performed similarly in their listening comprehension abilities. This consistency implies that both groups faced similar challenges in comprehension, highlighting the necessity for effective interventions to enhance these skills.

Table 2. Pre-test scores between the control and experimental groups.

Group	Total score	SD	Mean	Grade percentage	Remarks
Control	30	3.73	9.87	66.45	Did not meet expectations
Experimental	30	3.80	10.40	67.33	Did not meet expectations

The results from Table 3 indicate a significant difference between the pre-test scores of the control and experimental groups. The t-value of -13.847 and a p-value of 0.000 suggest that the difference in scores is statistically significant. This means that, despite both groups starting with low listening comprehension skills, the experimental group had a notably better performance, highlighting the need for further investigation into the underlying factors contributing to this disparity. The low standard deviation indicates that the scores within the control group were relatively consistent, with most students performing similarly, but it also points to a potential lack of effective strategies in their instruction.

Table 3. Mean comparison between pre-test scores of control and experimental group.

Group	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Control Experimental	17.33 25.47	1.79 2.67	-13.85	0.000	Pre-test scores between the two groups differ significantly

After completing two sessions, the results in Table 4 demonstrate a notable difference in listening comprehension skills between the control and experimental groups. The control group, which received traditional teaching methods, achieved a grade percentage of 78.88, categorized as "Fairly satisfactory," with a standard deviation of 1.79. This low standard deviation indicates that most students' scores were closely clustered around the mean, suggesting a relatively uniform level of understanding within this group. In contrast, the experimental group, which utilized guided imagery interventions, attained a grade percentage 92.45, classified as "Outstanding," with a standard deviation of 2.67. This higher standard deviation implies a broader range of scores, indicating that while many students performed exceptionally well, there was also some variation in performance. Overall, these findings highlight the effectiveness of guided imagery in significantly improving listening comprehension skills compared to traditional methods.

Table 4. Level of post-test scores between the control and experimental groups.

Group	Mean	SD	Mean	Grade percentage	Remarks
Control Experimental	30 30	1.79 2.67	17.33 25.47	78.88 92.45	Fairly satisfactory Outstanding

The results presented in Table 5 illustrate a significant difference in the post-test scores between the control and experimental groups. The control group achieved a mean score of 17.33, with a standard deviation of 1.79, indicating a consistent level of performance among its members. In contrast, the experimental group, which underwent guided imagery interventions, obtained a mean score of 25.47, with a standard deviation of 2.67. The t-value of -13.85 and a p-value of 0.000 confirm that the differences in post-test scores are statistically significant. This evidence strongly suggests that the guided imagery approach was effective in enhancing listening comprehension skills, leading to better performance in the experimental group compared to the traditional methods employed in the control group.

Table 5. Mean comparison of the post-test scores between the control and experimental groups.

Group	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Control Experimental	17.33 25.47	1.79 2.67	-13.85	0.000	Post-test scores between the two groups differ significantly

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DISCUSSIONS

The pre-test scores indicated that both the control and experimental groups had low levels of listening comprehension skills, failing to meet expectations. This suggests that students lacked the necessary preparation and strategies to engage effectively with listening tasks. A lack of prior training or exposure to effective listening techniques can significantly hinder performance (Milliner and Dimoski, 2024). Factors such as cognitive overload (Chen et al., 2020), absence of visual aids (Sadoski and Paivio, 2013), and the need for alignment between assessment content and students' (Loughlin et al., 2021) likely contributed to the low scores observed. Addressing these aspects through targeted interventions could be vital for improving listening comprehension skills and overall academic performance (Baker et al., 2020).

In their research, Cueva and Susada (2024), highlighted that visual learning plays a crucial role in enhancing student performance, particularly when using tangible and interactive tools. As Moreno and Susada (2024), noted, reducing cognitive strain is a key factor in enhancing students' learning experiences and improving their academic outcomes. When students encounter complex tasks, such as solving mathematical problems involving area, the cognitive load can become overwhelming, especially if the concepts are abstract or not immediately clear. By simplifying the process and making learning more manageable, educators can help students focus their cognitive resources on understanding the core ideas rather than getting bogged down by unnecessary complexity.

The comparison of pre-test scores revealed a significant difference, with the experimental group demonstrating slightly higher scores than the control group. This indicates that even in the absence of guided imagery, some inherent differences in processing or prior knowledge existed (Chen et al., 2020). However, the low scores across both groups highlight a pressing need for instructional strategies that accommodate diverse learning styles and cognitive processes (Langcuyan et al., 2024). The findings align with research by Rost (2019) and Nushi and Orouji (2020), which underscores that effective listening comprehension is critical for academic success and can be hindered by a lack of adequate preparation.

Post-test results showcased a significant improvement, particularly in the experimental group that utilized guided imagery. This group achieved outstanding levels of listening comprehension, whereas the control group reached only a fairly satisfactory level. Such results affirm the effectiveness of guided imagery as a teaching intervention, which facilitates retention and deeper understanding of auditory information (Christensen, 2020). This shift is corroborated by Li (2023), who note that listening is fundamental to language development and communication, suggesting that enhancing listening skills can positively impact other learning domains.

The substantial difference in post-test scores further underscores the efficacy of the guided imagery intervention. The experimental group not only outperformed the control group but also experienced a remarkable increase in mean scores, indicating the potential of dual coding theory in education (Bachtiar and Irasuti, 2024). By integrating visual and auditory modalities, guided imagery can enhance cognitive engagement and facilitate memory recall (Shaju, 2022). This aligns with Lawson-Adams and Dickinson (2021), who emphasize the importance of activating both verbal and nonverbal systems to improve comprehension. The results highlight the necessity for educators to adopt diverse instructional approaches that cater to individual learning preferences, ultimately fostering improved listening comprehension skills among (Langcuyan et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

The study's results underscore the importance of guided imagery to enhance

listening comprehension of students. The teachers can expose the learners to varying tools and teaching interventions like guided imagery to enhance listening comprehension skills since the pre-test scores of the two groups did not meet the expectations. As observed with the pre-test scores of the two groups, they did not differ significantly, meaning the learners from both groups have the same level of skills in terms of their listening comprehension. Hence, the teachers can do thorough, proper assessments of the learners' listening comprehension skills, including the learners' learning background and learning interests, and this can be done through formative tests to identify the level of knowledge and skills and do proper diagnosis and monitoring of learning.

Although the post-test scores of the control group were fairly satisfactory, the scores of the experimental group showed they excelled more. The findings suggest that integrating guided imagery effectively enhanced students' comprehension and retention of auditory information. Thus, this study recommended that the teachers may introduce guided imagery to the learners to enhance listening comprehension.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization, R.A and J.B; methodology, R.A and J.B; software, R.A and J.B; validation, R.A, J.B and J.L.D; formal analysis, R.A, J.B and J.L.D; demonstration, R.A and J.B; resources, data curation, R.A and J.B; writing-original draft preparation, R.A and J.B; writing-review editing, J.L.D; visualization, J.L.D; supervision, J.L.D; project administration, R.A, J.B and J.L.D;funding acquisition, R.A. and J.B.

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