

Listening Skills Integration through the Interdisciplinary Approach in Elementary Schools: Teaching Techniques and Practical Recommendations

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Abstract

This research employed a systematic literature review (SLR) of seven international peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2020 and 2025. The literature search was conducted using the Scopus database keywords “listening skills” AND “elementary school” with inclusion criteria focusing on studies addressing listening skills, interdisciplinary learning, and elementary school contexts. Data were analyzed using thematic synthesis to identify instructional strategies, learning outcomes, and pedagogical implications. The findings indicate that listening skills play a fundamental role in language acquisition and require explicit instructional support and structured learning experiences to develop effectively. An interdisciplinary approach enhances listening skills by enabling students to learn language contextually through connections with other subjects such as science, art, and health. Instructional strategies including project-based learning, games, and gamification positively contribute to students’ motivation, collaboration, and critical thinking. The novelty of this study lies in synthesizing evidence on interdisciplinary listening instruction specifically in elementary education. Practically, the findings provide evidence-based guidance for teachers to design meaningful and participatory listening activities aligned with curriculum demands. This study highlights the relevance of integrating listening skills and elementary school contexts to improve language learning quality in the digital era.

Keywords: Elementary School; Listening Skills; Practical; Teaching Technique

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INTRODUCTION

Listening skills are a fundamental component of language acquisition and serve as the foundation for other language skills, including speaking, reading, and writing. In this study, *listening skills* are defined as learners’ ability to actively process, interpret, and respond to spoken language in meaningful contexts. This concept aligns with *oral literacy*, which refers to the capacity to understand and use spoken language for learning and communication, and *receptive skills*, which encompass listening as a primary mode of language input. From a classical perspective, oral input provides the initial foundation for understanding meaning before productive language skills develop, making listening a key factor in successful communication both inside and outside the classroom (Frazier & Brown, 2001). Empirical evidence

further reinforces this position. A meta-analysis of 46 studies involving 4,687 participants demonstrated that comprehension gains through listening were comparable to those achieved through reading when instructional conditions were aligned, indicating that oral input is a primary channel for constructing meaning in elementary education (Clinton-Lisell, 2022).

Evidence on instructional effectiveness also highlights the importance of structured listening instruction. A synthesis of educational research in the United Kingdom reported that oral language approaches emphasizing teacher–student and peer interactions resulted in an average of six months’ additional learning progress, particularly in reading comprehension, although the evidence base for isolated listening instruction remains limited compared to combined speaking and listening approaches (Education Endowment Foundation [EEF], 2025). These findings suggest that elementary classrooms need deliberately designed learning experiences, such as guided listening, vocabulary expansion, and structured questioning, to support meaningful listening development.

Within the Indonesian context, educational policy reflects similar priorities. The Independent Curriculum emphasizes strengthening foundational literacy skills, learning flexibility, and interdisciplinary project-based learning to support 21st-century competencies (Pusat Standar dan Kebijakan Pendidikan Kemendikbudristek, 2022). At the instructional level, lesson planning frameworks adapted from the Ministry of Education position receptive skills within structured stages of pre-listening, listening, and post-listening activities to facilitate comprehension transfer to other language skills (Implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka Using lesson planning frameworks critically to plan English lessons for Indonesian schools, 2024). However, despite these policy directions, research indicates that listening remains underemphasized in elementary classrooms. A systematic review of technology-based learning media revealed that audiovisual and interactive tools positively influence listening skills and student motivation, yet their integration remains inconsistent (Siregar et al., 2024).

Teachers continue to face significant challenges in implementing effective listening instruction. Inadequate age-appropriate teaching materials, limited teacher training, and insufficient learning resources contribute to passive listening practices and low student engagement (Putri & Winarni, 2025; Permana & Cunandar, 2024; Derlis et al., 2023). International evidence further indicates that listening is often perceived as a passive activity, despite research demonstrating that it is an active cognitive process requiring sustained mental and emotional engagement (Nuralisa et al., 2025). These challenges become more pronounced when listening activities are expected to be integrated across subjects, as teachers often encounter time constraints, curricular overload, and limited interdisciplinary coordination (Siregar et al., 2024).

An interdisciplinary approach, defined in this study as the intentional integration of knowledge, skills, and learning activities across subject areas to create meaningful learning experiences, offers a promising solution. Research such as the *Listen to Learn for Life (L3) Assessment Framework* conceptualizes listening as a skill shaped by educational, social, and health-related factors, emphasizing collaboration across disciplines (Mealings et al., 2023). Classroom-based studies further demonstrate that integrating listening with subjects such as science and art enhances student motivation, vocabulary development, conceptual understanding,

and reflective thinking (Ningsi & Hartono, 2025). From a theoretical perspective, this approach aligns with Vygotsky's social constructivism, which emphasizes learning through social interaction, scaffolding, and contextualized experiences within the Zone of Proximal Development (Wibowo et al., 2025; McLeod, 2024). Interdisciplinary and hands-on learning practices have also been shown to increase engagement and support active listening through collaborative projects and experiential learning (Filipe et al., 2024; Rehman et al., 2024).

Despite the growing body of literature on listening skills and interdisciplinary learning, a clear research gap remains. Existing studies tend to examine listening skills or interdisciplinary approaches separately, with limited synthesis focusing specifically on their integration at the elementary school level, particularly within the Indonesian context. Moreover, practical, evidence-based guidance that translates interdisciplinary listening research into actionable teaching strategies for elementary teachers remains scarce. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by systematically reviewing international research to identify effective teaching techniques and practical recommendations for integrating listening skills through an interdisciplinary approach in elementary school classrooms. By doing so, this research aims to contribute both theoretically and practically to improving listening instruction, an area that has often been overlooked in language education.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a systematic literature review (SLR) to synthesize research findings related to the integration of listening skills through an interdisciplinary approach in elementary school education. The SLR method was selected to ensure a transparent, systematic, and replicable process in identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing relevant empirical evidence. The literature search was conducted using the Scopus database, applying the keywords "listening skills" AND "elementary school". The initial search yielded 182 articles. Inclusion criteria were defined as follows: (1) peer-reviewed journal articles, (2) published between 2020 and 2025, (3) written in English, (4) focused on listening skills in educational contexts, and (5) relevant to elementary or primary education. Articles that were not accessible in full text, not journal-based, or not aligned with the research focus were excluded. Following title, abstract, and full-text screening, seven articles met the eligibility criteria and were included in the final synthesis. To ensure the credibility and methodological rigor of the included studies, quality appraisal was conducted using the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) Critical Appraisal Checklist, adjusted to the research design of each selected article. The appraisal focused on key criteria such as research clarity, methodological appropriateness, data collection procedures, and validity of findings. Only studies that met the minimum quality standards were retained for synthesis, thereby strengthening the reliability and depth of the review findings..

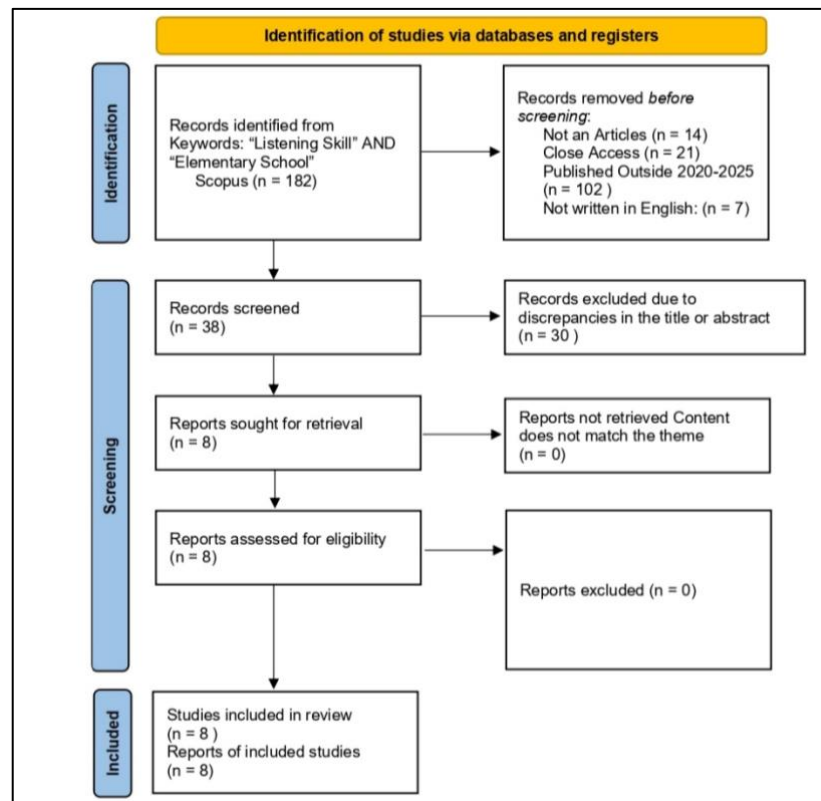


Figure 1. Prisma2020 Workflow

Data analysis was conducted through a systematic process of identification, categorization, and thematic synthesis. Relevant data were extracted manually from each article, including research objectives, methodological approaches, instructional strategies, learning outcomes, and implications for listening skills development. Coding was performed manually without the use of qualitative analysis software due to the limited number of selected studies and the focused scope of the review. Through iterative comparison and pattern identification, the analysis generated three overarching themes:

1. The role of explicit instructional strategies in developing listening skills,
2. The effectiveness of interdisciplinary learning in enhancing listening engagement and comprehension, and
3. Pedagogical implications and practical recommendations for elementary school teachers.

To enhance analytical rigor, cross-checking of extracted data and themes was conducted through peer review among the researchers, ensuring consistency in interpretation and minimizing subjective bias..

RESULT

The results of the seven articles analyzed point to a similar direction in efforts to improve listening skills at the elementary and secondary levels, although each study highlights a different context and approach. Overall, all studies confirm that listening skills do not develop naturally but require explicit, planned learning strategies integrated with both linguistic aspects and the social context of learning.

Table 1. Research synthesis results

Author (Year)	Location & Level	Approach / Intervention	Design & Sample	Measured Outcomes	Key Findings
(Zhou & Wu, 2023)	Beijing, China, Elementary (international students)	Integration of phonetics into elementary listening instruction	Quantitative study using WarpPLS; 13 teachers and 278 students	Pronunciation accuracy, teacher beliefs, student attitudes	Phonetics integration improved pronunciation and comprehension. Teacher beliefs and student attitudes moderated learning results.
(Mealing et al., 2023)	Sydney, Australia, Primary classrooms	Development of the L3 interdisciplinary framework combining education, health, and hearing sciences	Theoretical design from interdisciplinary scoping review	Listening, learning, wellbeing	Introduced the L3 Framework to assess classroom listening and wellbeing. Encouraged collaboration between education, speech, and health disciplines.
(Tekman & Yeniasir, 2023)	Cyprus – Elementary education	Play-based learning settings for language skills development	Mixed-method design; elementary students and teachers	Reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills	Play-based learning enhanced engagement and improved all four language skills, including listening. Promoted motivation and communicative competence.
(Vathanaoah, 2022)	Thailand – Secondary education (EFL)	Gamification approach using Winner English application	Quasi-experimental; large-scale sample of secondary students	Motivation, engagement, English performance	Gamification significantly improved motivation and performance. Students displayed greater persistence and interactive engagement in language learning.
(Musa et al., 2022)	Europe – Elementary students	Correlation between listening skills and interest in English learning	Quantitative correlation design	Listening proficiency, interest, and attitudes	Found a strong correlation between listening ability and students' interest in learning English. Students with higher listening skills showed more positive attitudes.
(Colognesi, 2023)	Belgium – Elementary schools	Teaching explicit listening strategies in primary education	Experimental classroom-based research	Listening comprehension and strategic awareness	Demonstrated that listening must be explicitly taught. Strategy-based instruction improved comprehension and active processing of oral texts.
(Alqarni & Alhram	Elementary school students in the	Integration of AI-based smart voice assistants into	Experimental – two focus group	Listening test scores, learning attitudes	Listening ability is a reliable predictor of engagement and interest. Active

elah, 2025)	Education Office in Belqarn Governorate	English language curricula at the elementary level	listening practice correlates with better classroom performance.
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Explicit Instruction and Cognitive Foundations of Listening Skills

The findings from the reviewed studies indicate that listening skills function as an active cognitive ability that requires explicit and structured instruction. Across the studies, listening development was consistently associated with deliberate teaching strategies that support learners' processing of spoken language rather than relying on passive exposure.

Zhou and Wu (2023) reported that the integration of phonetic instruction within elementary listening lessons significantly improved students' pronunciation accuracy and listening comprehension. Their findings demonstrated that attention to phonological elements, such as sound recognition and pronunciation patterns, facilitated learners' ability to decode and interpret spoken input more effectively. The study also revealed that teacher beliefs and students' attitudes played a moderating role in learning outcomes, indicating that instructional effectiveness varied depending on classroom interaction dynamics and learner engagement.

Similarly, Colognesi (2023) found that listening skills did not develop automatically without targeted instructional support. The study showed that students who received explicit instruction in listening strategies demonstrated improved listening comprehension and greater strategic awareness during listening tasks. These strategies enabled learners to actively process spoken texts by focusing on key information, monitoring understanding, and engaging cognitively with auditory input. In contrast, students who lacked structured guidance experienced difficulties in comprehending spoken messages effectively.

In addition, Musa et al. (2022) identified a strong positive relationship between listening proficiency and students' interest and attitudes toward learning English. The findings indicated that students with higher listening abilities tended to exhibit more positive learning attitudes and greater engagement during listening activities. This relationship suggests that improved listening competence is closely associated with learners' affective responses to language learning..

Interdisciplinary and Contextual Approaches to Listening Development

The findings from the selected studies indicate that listening skills are effectively developed when learning activities are integrated across disciplines and situated within meaningful contexts. The reviewed studies demonstrate that interdisciplinary learning environments support students' engagement with listening tasks by connecting spoken language to broader learning experiences beyond language instruction alone.

Mealings et al. (2023) introduced the Listen to Learn for Life (L3) Assessment Framework, which conceptualizes listening as a process influenced by multiple interconnected factors, including educational practices, classroom conditions, and learner well-being. The findings highlighted that listening performance is shaped by environmental and contextual elements such as classroom acoustics, social interaction, and emotional comfort. The framework emphasized collaboration across education, health, and hearing sciences to better understand

how students listen and learn in real classroom settings, particularly those characterized by complexity and disruption.

In a complementary context, Tekman and Yeniasır (2023) examined the impact of play-based learning settings on the development of language skills at the elementary level. Their findings showed that play-based activities contributed to improvements in listening skills alongside reading, writing, and speaking. Students demonstrated increased engagement and communicative participation during listening activities embedded in play contexts. The study indicated that when listening tasks were integrated into interactive and experiential learning environments, students were more actively involved in processing spoken language and responding to instructional input.

Across these studies, listening development was consistently associated with contextualized learning experiences that extended beyond isolated listening exercises. The findings suggest that interdisciplinary approaches enable students to engage with spoken language in authentic learning situations, supporting comprehension through connections between listening activities and broader classroom experiences.

Technology-Enhanced and Motivational Strategies in Listening Instruction

The findings from the reviewed studies indicate that technology-enhanced instructional strategies play a significant role in supporting listening skill development by increasing student motivation, engagement, and active participation. The studies highlight how digital tools and interactive learning environments influence learners' listening performance and attitudes toward listening activities.

Vathanalaoha (2022) examined the implementation of a gamification-based learning approach using the Winner English application. The findings demonstrated that gamified listening activities significantly improved students' motivation and engagement in language learning. Students showed increased persistence, active involvement, and willingness to participate in listening tasks when game elements such as rewards, challenges, and progress indicators were incorporated. The study also reported improvements in overall English performance, indicating that listening activities embedded in gamified environments supported sustained learner attention and interaction.

Similarly, Alqarni and Alhramelah (2025) investigated the integration of AI-based smart voice assistants into elementary-level English language curricula. Their findings revealed that the use of voice-assisted technology positively influenced students' listening test scores and learning attitudes. The study found that listening ability was a reliable predictor of student engagement and interest, and that frequent exposure to interactive listening practice through AI-supported tools was associated with improved classroom performance. Students demonstrated greater responsiveness and active listening behavior when interacting with voice-based digital media.

From the existing findings, it can be concluded that technology-enhanced listening instruction was consistently associated with increased learner motivation and engagement. The findings indicate that digital and interactive tools provide supportive learning environments in which students actively engage with listening

tasks, contributing to improved listening performance and positive learning attitudes.

DISCUSSION

The results of this Systematic Literature Review identified seven studies divided into two main approaches: empirical and conceptual. The empirical approach focuses on the practice and application listening skills in elementary schools through learning strategies, digital media, and contextual learning experiences.

Integration of Listening Skills in the Context of Elementary Learning

The findings across the reviewed studies indicate that listening skills development in elementary education is consistently associated with explicit instructional practices; however, the nature and focus of these practices vary across contexts and research designs. Zhou and Wu (2023) emphasized phonetic integration as a central instructional component, demonstrating that attention to sound recognition and pronunciation significantly improved listening comprehension. In contrast, Colognesi (2023) focused on metacognitive listening strategies, showing that students benefited from structured guidance in predicting content, identifying key information, and monitoring comprehension. Although both studies reported positive outcomes, they differed in instructional emphasis, phonological processing in one case and strategic cognitive processing in the other, suggesting that listening development may occur through multiple instructional pathways.

Differences in outcomes can also be observed in the role of affective factors. While Zhou and Wu (2023) identified teacher beliefs and student attitudes as moderating variables influencing learning effectiveness, Musa et al. (2022) reported a strong correlation between listening proficiency and students' interest and attitudes toward learning English. These findings indicate that affective variables may function either as influencing factors within instructional processes or as outcomes associated with listening competence, depending on the research focus and methodological approach. Quantitative correlational evidence (Musa et al., 2022) highlights the relational nature of listening skills and learner motivation, whereas experimental and instructional studies (Zhou & Wu, 2023; Colognesi, 2023) emphasize instructional design as the primary driver of improvement.

Despite the overall positive direction of findings, the studies also reveal variability in the mechanisms through which listening skills are developed. Colognesi (2023) reported that without explicit strategy instruction, many students struggled to process spoken texts effectively, indicating limitations in implicit or exposure-based listening practices. Conversely, Zhou and Wu (2023) demonstrated that targeted phonetic instruction could mitigate comprehension difficulties, particularly in multilingual learning environments. These differences suggest that the effectiveness of listening instruction may depend on contextual factors such as learners' linguistic backgrounds, instructional goals, and teacher expertise.

Taken together, the findings show that listening skills development is not supported by a single uniform approach. Instead, variations across studies highlight that instructional focus, learner characteristics, and classroom dynamics contribute to differing outcomes. While all studies report improvements in listening-related measures, the pathways leading to these outcomes differ, underscoring the need to

consider both cognitive and affective dimensions when interpreting listening instruction in elementary education..

Integration of Listening Skills in the Context of Elementary Learning

The findings from the reviewed studies indicate that interdisciplinary approaches support listening skill development through different mechanisms and emphases. Mealings et al. (2023) approached listening development from a systemic and environmental perspective, proposing the Listen to Learn for Life (L3) Framework to examine how listening is influenced by classroom conditions, learner well-being, and interdisciplinary collaboration. Their findings highlighted that listening performance is shaped not only by instructional content but also by contextual factors such as classroom acoustics, social interaction, and emotional support. This approach emphasizes assessment and environmental optimization as key components in understanding listening development.

In contrast, Tekman and Yeniasır (2023) focused on instructional practices within interdisciplinary learning settings, particularly play-based activities that integrate listening with other language skills. Their findings showed that students participating in play-based learning demonstrated improvements across multiple language domains, including listening. Unlike the framework-oriented approach of Mealings et al. (2023), this study emphasized classroom-level instructional design, where active participation, peer interaction, and experiential learning contributed directly to students' listening engagement and comprehension.

Despite both studies supporting the effectiveness of interdisciplinary learning, they differ in terms of outcome focus and scope. Mealings et al. (2023) primarily addressed listening in relation to learning conditions and student well-being, rather than isolated gains in listening performance. Meanwhile, Tekman and Yeniasır (2023) reported direct improvements in language skill outcomes, including listening, as a result of specific pedagogical interventions. These differences suggest that interdisciplinary approaches may influence listening development either indirectly, through improvements in learning environments, or directly, through instructional activities embedded in classroom practice.

The variation in findings may also be attributed to differences in research design and educational context. The theoretical and framework-based nature of the L3 study contrasts with the mixed-method classroom-based design employed by Tekman and Yeniasır (2023). Additionally, differences in educational settings and student characteristics may have contributed to the observed variation in listening-related outcomes. Overall, while both studies highlight the value of interdisciplinary approaches, the pathways through which listening skills are developed differ, indicating that interdisciplinary integration does not produce uniform outcomes but operates through multiple contextual and instructional factors..

Pedagogical Implications and Practical Recommendations for Elementary School Teachers

The findings from Vathanalaoha (2022) and Tekman and Yeniasır (2023) indicate that pedagogical strategies emphasizing student engagement play an important role in supporting listening skill development; however, the nature and impact of these

strategies differ across instructional contexts. Vathanalaoha (2022) focused on a technology-based gamification approach, demonstrating that the use of digital game elements increased students' motivation, engagement, and persistence during listening activities. The findings suggest that listening improvement in this context was closely associated with heightened learner interaction and sustained attention facilitated by reward systems and competitive elements.

In contrast, Tekman and Yeniasır (2023) examined play-based learning within classroom settings, emphasizing face-to-face interaction and collaborative activities. Their findings showed improvements in listening comprehension alongside other language skills, with gains attributed to active participation, peer communication, and experiential learning. Unlike the gamification approach, which relied on digital platforms, play-based learning emphasized social interaction and physical engagement as primary mechanisms supporting listening development.

Despite both studies reporting positive outcomes, differences in instructional focus reveal variations in how listening skills are supported. Vathanalaoha (2022) highlighted motivation and engagement as central outcomes linked to listening practice, whereas Tekman and Yeniasır (2023) reported broader language skill improvements embedded within interactive learning activities. These variations suggest that technology-enhanced and play-based strategies may influence listening development through distinct pathways, either by increasing individual motivation or by fostering collaborative learning experiences.

The findings also imply contextual limitations related to instructional implementation. Technology-based gamification approaches may depend on access to digital resources and learner familiarity with technology, while play-based learning requires sufficient classroom time and teacher facilitation skills. These differences indicate that the effectiveness of pedagogical strategies for listening instruction may vary depending on resource availability, classroom conditions, and instructional design. Overall, the reviewed studies demonstrate that while innovative pedagogical approaches can enhance listening skills, their outcomes are shaped by contextual and practical factors that influence how listening activities are enacted in elementary classrooms.

Limitations of the Study

Despite the systematic approach employed in this study, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the systematic literature review was limited to articles retrieved from a single database (Scopus), which may have excluded relevant studies indexed in other academic databases. Second, the number of studies included in the final synthesis was relatively small, which may limit the generalizability of the findings across diverse educational contexts. Third, the reviewed studies varied in research design, educational settings, and outcome measures, making direct comparison challenging and potentially contributing to variability in reported results. In addition, the quality appraisal process relied on the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) checklist, which, while ensuring methodological rigor, may not fully capture contextual nuances across different study designs. Finally, data coding and thematic analysis were conducted manually, which may introduce a degree of researcher subjectivity despite efforts to maintain analytical consistency through cross-checking among researchers. These limitations suggest that the findings should be interpreted with caution and highlight the need for future studies

to include broader databases, larger samples, and more standardized analytical frameworks.

CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review of seven international studies indicates that listening skills development in elementary education is most effective when supported by explicit instructional strategies, interdisciplinary learning contexts, and engagement-oriented pedagogical approaches. Across the reviewed studies, three consistent patterns emerged: (1) explicit instruction focusing on phonological and metacognitive strategies produced the most stable improvements in listening comprehension; (2) interdisciplinary approaches enhanced listening development by situating listening activities within meaningful and contextual learning environments, although outcomes varied depending on instructional focus and classroom conditions; and (3) technology-enhanced and play-based strategies increased student motivation and engagement, with variability influenced by resource availability and instructional design. The strongest consistency was found in studies emphasizing structured and explicit listening instruction, while greater variability appeared in interdisciplinary and technology-based implementations. Scientifically, this review contributes a synthesized framework that categorizes effective listening instruction approaches in elementary education. Practically, the findings highlight the need for evidence-based guidance to support teachers in designing listening instruction that is explicit, contextually integrated, and responsive to classroom conditions.

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