Listen-In: A Micro Language Planning Programme to Enhance Listening Proficiency for SPM 1119/4

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ABSTRACT

LISTEN-IN is a micro-level language planning program that has a specific intent to connect Malaysia's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) reforms, and an ongoing problem of students' listening proficiency in the SPM 1119/4 English assessment. Built on research about digital media and context-sensitive interventions, LISTEN-IN is based on findings that the conventional listening pedagogy does not ready students cognitively-threatened, high-stakes assessments. Based on the research surrounding language planning (Cooper, 1989; Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997), and this researcher's own knowledge of SLA theory (Krashen, Anderson, Vygotsky), it is a six-week program that combines CEFR-aligned tasks, digital content, and strategical instruction that combines CEFR-aligned tasks and selected digital micro-content and focused strategy instruction. The program incorporates acquisition, corpus, and prestige planning for Malaysia's diversity. Additionally, the program will also use bilingual scaffolding, differentiated learning experiences, and culturally appropriate materials to embrace the socioeconomic diversity of Malaysia. Mixed-methods evaluation, drawing on Kirkpatrick's Four Levels, will also track learner development and program success. Initial pilot data indicates there will be 12–14% improvement in listening comprehension, student involvement and confidence will improve, and reduction in teacher preparation time. The program aim is to adapt global best-practice approaches to digital micro-learning and listening pedagogy to approach macro-level policy to equitable classroom practices and enhance learners' ability to interact with real-world English audio.

Keywords: language planning; listening proficiency; CEFR; digital micro-learning; bilingual scaffolding

INTRODUCTION

In Malaysian classrooms, listening continues to be the least taught skill despite its inclusion in the CEFR guided SPM 1119/4 paper. There are no models available for teachers to apply CEFR listening descriptors for true purposes (Hamid et al., 2025). There are similar situations in other parts of the region, for example, Thai undergraduate students report comprehension issues stemming from very limited exposure and lack of strategy instruction (Rungsinanont, 2024) while Indonesian teachers discuss inconsistencies between the policies and teaching practices (Hamid, et al.,2025). New digital tools, primarily TikTok, are gaining traction for self-directed listening —learning experiences (Fauziah & Pratolo, 025). Yet, dedicated, classroom-ready approaches with localized standards aligned with local curriculum are rare. LISTEN-IN intends to do just this, through scaffolded listening exercises, metacognitive strategies and micro-learning approaches that reflect Malaysia's multilingual classrooms. The purpose is to reposition listening as an engaging, assessable skill which can be measured along with curriculum standards and students' reality.

Problem Statement

Listening instruction continues to be frail due to unqualified teacher training, poorly specified curricular models, and students lacking participation (Hamid et al., 2025). Many similar barriers exist across ASEAN. In Thailand, students struggle to comprehend from the small amount of input they listen to and little opportunity for scaffolded support (Rungsinanont, 2024). Indonesia sees CEFR descriptors sometimes only superficially adopted, lacking any intention to align to practices in the classroom settings (Hamid et al., 2025). While platforms like TikTok provide meaningful input opportunities, few interventions systematically utilize them within CEFR-aligned

instruction (Fauziah & Pratolo, 2025). More generally, digital technology has increased listening proficiency when combined with pedagogical strategies scaffolded to enhance listening strategies (Kostikova et al, 2021). Yet, it is rare to find practice-ready solutions. LISTEN-IN works to fill this void by integrating CEFR descriptors, with bilingual, micro-learning sequences that will scaffold students listening in multilingual classrooms.

Objectives

1. To develop students' ability to extract gist and key details from a variety of spoken texts
2. To train students in strategic listening behaviours such as predicting, note-taking, and summarising
3. To improve students' listening stamina and focus during extended auditory task
4. To build learners' confidence and competence in performing well in SPM-format listening assessments

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION & METHODOLOGY

LISTEN-IN is a micro-level language planning initiative designed to operationalise Malaysia's CEFR-aligned English curriculum, with a specific focus on listening skills for the SPM 1119/4 paper. LISTEN-IN has been developed, in part, to address the disparity between national education reform and classroom realities (Teh, 2025; Husain, 2024) by re-contextualising listening from a passive behaviour to strategic and cognitively demanding behaviour using micro-learning, strategy instruction, and equity pedagogy.

Based on acquisition planning theory (Cooper, 1989; Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997) LISTEN-IN is presented as a six-week micro-level intervention comprised of 12 instructional sessions with 2 sessions per week, with each session lasting 45-minutes. Each session consists of:

• Authentically, short-form digital audio-Visual materials (e.g TikTok-style or BBC microclips)
• Explicitly trained listening strategies (predicting, note-taking, summarising)
• Bilingual scaffolding to support multi-tiered learners
• CEFR B1 level tasks that mirror the SPM 1119/4 paper

Principles for the pedagogical model addressed Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis, Swain's (1995) Output Hypothesis, Anderson's (2008) Cognitive Model of Listening, and Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory to ensure that cognitive engagement, comprehensible input, collaborative engagement, and productive output are interwoven throughout the lesson.

Instructional Design and Weekly Structure

Each week of LISTEN-IN targets a core SPM listening task:

Week	Session Focus	Targeted SPM Section	Listening Skills Developed
1	Clip Catchers	Part 1 – Dialogues	Gist, speaker intention, short-turn recognition
2	Real Talk Recaps	Part 2 – Monologues	Note-taking, summarising, lexical decoding
3	Voice Match	Part 3 – Speaker Matching	Tone, opinion, attitude discrimination
4	Note & Fill	Part 4 – Gap-Fill	Cloze prediction, spelling, vocabulary-in-context
5	SPM Simulation I	Full paper (mock)	Exam fluency, stamina, anxiety reduction
6	SPM Simulation II + Review	Full paper + peer reflection	Metacognitive awareness, oral summarisation

Every session is organized into four phases, as follows:

1. Pre-Listening: Vocabulary previews, visuals, and prediction activities (billed with bilingual scaffolding)
2. While-Listening: Two listenings simulating the SPM 1119/4 task sequencing, either using authentic or curated micro-content

3. Post-Listening: Peer discussion, oral summary, and guided reflection using listening journals
4. Strategy Coaching: Explicit coaching of strategies for listening, with reference to the CEFR descriptors and SLA literature.

This multimodal, interactive structure utilizes Anderson's (2008) sequencing of listening development from bottom-up (phoneme, lexeme, syntax) to top-down (schema activation, inferencing) listening processes.

Development Process

CEFR-trained educators co-design LISTEN-IN, building from curriculum standards, SPM 1119/4 rubrics, and CEFR B1 listening descriptors. Weekly task sequences were mapped to CEFR subskills, and scaffolded with bilingual support and metacognitive strategies. The program design prioritised digital accessibility, classroom implement ability and matching CEFR performance bands.

METHODOLOGY

LISTEN IN utilizes a quasi-experimental mixed-method evaluation design with five intact Form 4 classes (N = 140 students) from a mid-resource Malaysian secondary school. The intervention was implemented over six weeks, using 12 sessions, each for 45 minutes. There was no control group because ethically access to the intervention was an issue of fair treatment.

Policy–Curriculum Mapping

To operationalise CEFR reforms in classroom practice, each LISTEN-IN task aligns with specific B1 descriptors:

Week	Activity	CEFR B1 Descriptor Mapped
Week 1	Clip Catchers	Can understand the main points in clear standard speech on familiar matters
Week 2	Real Talk Recaps	Can follow straightforward factual information and identify key details
Week 3	Voice Match	Can identify speaker tone, emotion, and opinions in conversations
Week 4	Note & Fill	Can catch specific details in structured input (e.g., instructions, explanations)
Week 5	SPM Simulation I	Can sustain attention over extended listening tasks
Week 6	Reflection & Review	Can summarise orally and reflect on task effectiveness using metacognitive strategies

Potential Findings and Commercialisation

Pilot Outcomes

Quantitative data were collected using parallel-form listening assessments adapted from the official SPM 1119/4 listening paper. These were scored with CEFR B1-aligned rubrics. Pre-test mean was M = 56.2 (SD = 9.1), post-test mean was M = 64.3 (SD = 8.4), showing a mean gain of 8.1 points (≈14.4% improvement). A paired-sample t-test indicated this was statistically significant: $t(139) = 9.57$, $p < .001$. The effect size (Cohen's d) was 0.68, representing a medium-to-large effect. A 95% confidence interval for the mean difference was [6.4, 9.7], confirming the reliability of this improvement.

Qualitative Reflections

Qualitative data were collected via student listening journals (n = 140), two student focus groups (n = 12), and three semi-structured teacher interviews. These were analysed thematically. Emergent codes included increased strategy awareness, metacognitive reflection, and engagement. For instance, a student noted:

Students highlighted greater confidence and strategy use:

"TikTok clips made it feel less like an exam and more like learning I understand." **(Student R27)**
"I liked explaining to my friend after. It made me more sure I really got it." **(Student L03)**

Teachers observed improvements in both learner engagement and classroom efficiency:

"The bilingual scaffolds helped even my weakest students join in." **(Teacher A)**

Teacher prep time reduced by ~30%, from 3.2 to 2.2 hours per week, due to pre-structured lesson materials. Survey results indicated rising student engagement and confidence across six weeks, with Likert scores increasing from M = 3.9 to 4.5 and confidence ratings from M = 3.2 to 4.4.

"With the facilitator guide and ready materials, I spent less time planning and more time observing learning." **(Teacher C)**

Engagement metrics, tracked through weekly Likert surveys, revealed:

- **Engagement score increase**: M = 3.9 to 4.5 (on 5-point scale)
- **Perceived competence**: M = 3.2 to 4.4
  These upward trends align with theories of task-based motivation and metacognitive development.

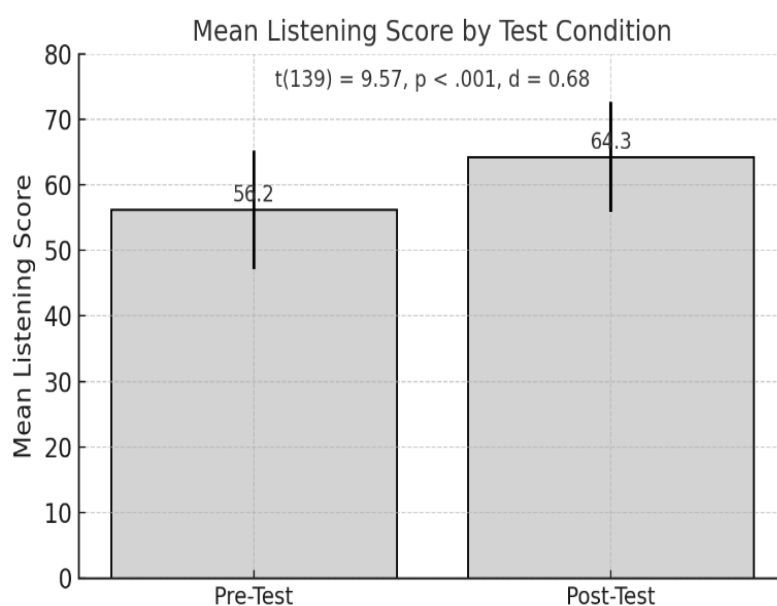**Figure 1:** Mean Listening Scores Before and After LISTEN-IN Intervention ($N = 140$)

Figure 2: Engagement & Confidence Ratings Over 6 Weeks
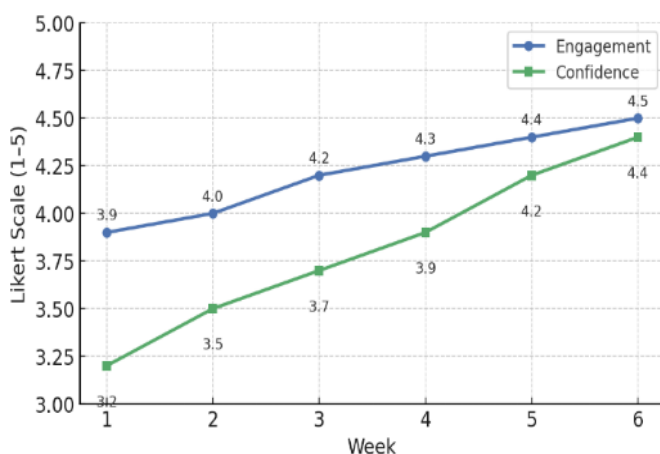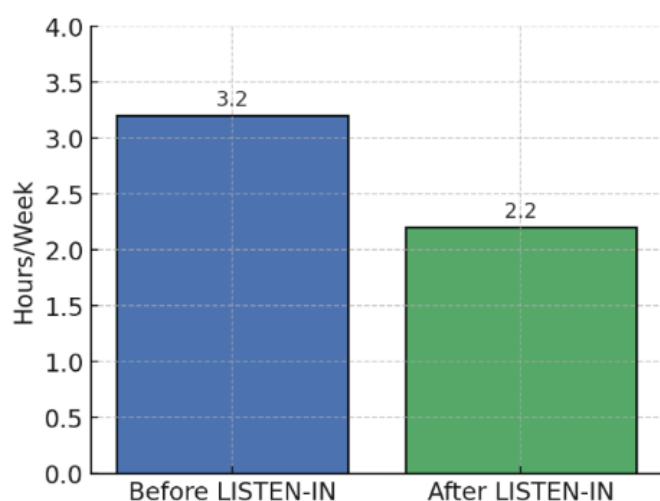

Figure 3: Weekly Teacher Preparation Time (Before vs After LISTEN-IN)

~31.25% reduction in preparation time

Scalability & Sustainability

The impact of LISTEN-IN and its affordable design, present a plausible model for wider adoption. The program would:

- Align with Malaysia's CEFR policy requirements and the SPM 1119/4 paper
- Be appropriate for under-resourced schools in urban, suburban, and rural areas
- Utilize simply cell phone, speakers, and paper journals

Commercialisation Pathways:

- Teacher training workshops or online CPD modules
- Curated micro-content libraries and listening rubrics available for licensing
- Part of district-level English language improvement plansCollaboration with EdTech platforms or NGOs

Regional Scalability: Given the CEFR reform challenges evident in Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam (Hamid, 2025), LISTEN-IN would be amenable to localized bilingual scaffolds, teacher training, and CEFR-informed micro-content.

NOVELTY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Uniqueness of Listen-in is Not The Promise of Complete Originality But the Unique Blending of Existing, Evidence-Based Approaches-Cerf Alignment, Micro-Learning, Strategy-Based Instruction, And Bilingual Scaffolding-Into a Integrated, Classroom-Based, Tested Program. It Also Contextualises for Malaysia's Multilingual And Resource Varied Education System, Thus Filling the Macro-Micro Policy Gap In A Replicable, Equity-Based Way.

Future Iterations of Listen-In Could Be Longitudinal and Assess Listening Gains Throughout Entire School Years, and Transfer Effects Among Speaking and Writing Skills. Interdisciplinary Adaptations (E.G., Science Listening, Civic Community Documentaries) For Developing Content Language Integration May Be Beneficial. Regional Comparative Studies Across Asean (E.G. Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore) To Examine the Scalability and Cultural Responsiveness Of Listen-In In Multilingual Education Systems Facing Similar Cerf Alignment Issues May Be Possible.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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