
Beyond 5W + 1H: Deconstructing 'The Jakarta Post' through Fruit-Based Mnemonic Strategy in Reading Classes

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Abstrak

This study addresses the pervasive issue of 'pedagogical fatigue' among undergraduate students when engaging with complex, authentic English journalistic texts. Specifically, it explores the deconstruction of The Jakarta Post through a novel intervention termed the 'Fruit-Based Mnemonic Strategy' (Gastro-phonetic approach). Employing a qualitative case study design, the research involved ten purposively selected students—identified as LYF, DUR, RWX, SLX, HWW, EUR, BTN, NEP, IDD, and IHY—who initially exhibited significant cognitive barriers and disengagement during reading tasks. The intervention was conducted over 16 intensive sessions, utilizing sensory-anchored acronyms (such as: Watermelon, into Hazelnut) to bridge the gap between abstract 5W + 1H elements and student comprehension. Data were gathered through a dual-instrument approach consisting of pre- and post-tests, alongside structured questionnaires to monitor psychological shifts. The findings reveal a notable improvement in linguistic competence, evidenced by a significant increasing in students' analytical depth and their ability to deconstruct causal relationships within complex news leads. Qualitatively, the gastro-phonetic strategy functioned as a affective scaffold, effectively was associated with a shift from disengagement toward greater cognitive engagement. The study concludes that sensory-based mnemonics offer a viable pedagogical alternative for educators seeking to improve literacy outcomes in tertiary English language teaching (ELT). These results suggest that integrating relatable, mnemonic anchors can mitigate learner fatigue and foster a more resilient academic identity in non-native English speakers.

Keywords: Fruit-Based Mnemonic, Gastro-Phonetic Homophones, Pedagogical Fatigue, Critical Literacy, The Jakarta Post, Tertiary EFL Reading.

A. INTRODUCTION

Understanding the authentic reading materials has become a critical capability for undergraduate students in the current context of English Language Teaching (ELT) for the level of higher education. Global literacy and critical discourse awareness may now be developed through navigating foreign news sites like *The Jakarta Post*; one of the daily English-language online newspaper in Indonesia, which is no longer just a language exercise (Ren *et al.*, 2024). The text of that online media for the news has provided first-year English department students with their first exposure to high-level academic and journalistic English, (Bo-ae, 2023) which is distinguished by extensive lexical information and intricate

grammatical patterns. However, there is frequently a substantial cognitive strain when moving from broad English to the analysis of such complex media. At this tertiary level, mastering reading comprehension takes more than just memorising language; it also calls for a methodical and captivating approach to breaking down complex information. In this case, bridging the gap between basic language ability and the demanding requirements of advanced academic enquiry requires building a strong foundation in media literacy through useful analytical frameworks (Smith *et al.*, 2021).

In the perspective of modern EFL learners, the classical analytical frameworks — for example: 5W + 1H (*Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How*) — have arguably become obsoleted and mechanically repetitive, despite the instructional importance of critical reading (Costuchen *et al.*, 2025). Applying this traditional technique frequently feels more like an administrative chore than an innovative cognitive breakthrough to many first-year English department students. That atop case, sometimes, known as the ‘*pedagogical fatigue*,’ arises when students view the enquiry process as a rigor, uninteresting rote-learning exercise. The conventional pattern of 5W + 1H frequently fails to elicit deep cognitive associations when examining complex journalistic prose, resulting in superficial comprehension when students just look for facts at the surface level without understanding the text's underlying complexities. As a result, that previous phenomena of mechanical method raise the ‘*affective filter*,’ according to Krashen in (Kruk, 2022) that shares, boredom and anxiety prevent the best possible intake of language material. In order to reduce students' psychological barriers and improve their analytical depth, it is imperative to revitalise this old heuristic into a more mnemonic-friendly and sensory-associative approach.

Concerning to the prior passage, the use of mnemonic-based strategies is a possible alternative for improving reading retention and engagement in order to overcome the pedagogical standstill linked to standard analytical procedures (Lallali, 2024). Based on the cognitive psychology, associative learning improves the way the human brain receives information; especially when abstract ideas are connected to well-known, tangible sensory experiences (Makransky & Petersen, 2021). One of the matters, it is the acoustic encoding, which stores information according to its phonetic sound, is a key component of long-term memory retrieval in the field of linguistics. Learners are able to lessen the cognitive burden necessary to deconstruct complicated journalistic writings by bridging the gap between familiar lexical elements and sophisticated interrogative structures through the use of near-homophones. The students are able to ‘*anchor*’ their comprehension of textual 5W + 1H elements to more approachable and vivid mental imagery. This turns a purely mechanical enquiry into a multimodal cognitive experience (Abdelaziz, 2020). Therefore, using a *gastro-phonetic*; which means the dual-process of cognitive retrieval where phonetic homophones of fruits act as sensory anchors to lower the affective filter approach to revitalise the 5W + 1H framework not only streamlines the analytical process, but also fosters a more engaging and less daunting learning environment for first-year EFL students.

Within this study, it embeds a novel teaching method called the ‘*Fruit-Based Mnemonic*’ strategy in conducting to the acknowledged need for a more captivating analytical framework (Ejaz & Oyibo, 2024). By replacing abstract interrogative phrases with near-homophones drawn from common fruits and nuts, this educational innovation remodifies the old-fashioned 5W + 1H enquiry. In particular, the method turns ‘*What*’ into ‘*Watermelon*’, ‘*Where*’ into ‘*Pear*’, ‘*When*’ into ‘*Orange*’, ‘*Why*’ into ‘*White-plum*’, ‘*Who*’ to ‘*Huckleberry*, and ‘*How*’ into ‘*Hazelnut*’ in order to answer the most intricate questions (Dixon *et al.*, 2023). This *gastro-phonetic* mapping lowers the psychological gap between the learner and the text by acting as a memory anchor in addition to being a linguistic play on words.

Students are urged to visualise the information they are looking for in *The Jakarta*

Post's dense reporting by using that aforementioned sensory-rich associations. As seen in one of the traditional 5W + 1H questions, 'What' identifies 'Watermelon', it represents the extraction of a news story's significant, central substance. The goal of this reinvented heuristic is to break down the 'boredom barrier' in reading the text; giving first-year English department students a more systematic and intuitive way to synthesize information while expanding their thematic vocabulary.

While mnemonic devices have been widely investigated in second/foreign language reading instruction, existing approaches remain concentrated in a narrow range of modalities. Visual mnemonics, such as image-based keyword associations, have been shown to support vocabulary retention but are reported to be less effective for processing multi-clause, information-dense journalistic texts (Nation, 2024). Similarly, the keyword method (Sarioğlu & Karatepe, 2024) primarily targets lexical-level recall rather than higher-order analytical tasks such as identifying causal relationships or synthesising complex news leads. Acronym-based mnemonics, though useful for sequencing procedural steps, have been critiqued for reinforcing surface-level, rote retrieval rather than deep cognitive engagement — a limitation that mirrors the mechanical application of the conventional 5W + 1H heuristic discussed earlier (Dolmacı & Sarıgöz, 2024). What remains underexplored is the use of auditory-associative, sensory-anchored mnemonics — specifically phonetic homophones drawn from everyday, culturally familiar referents — as a means of simultaneously lowering affective barriers and scaffolding analytical depth in tertiary EFL reading. By evaluating the efficacy of the "*Fruit-Based Mnemonic*" technique among first-year English department students, this study addresses this gap, offering a sensory-associative alternative that extends beyond the visual and lexical focus of prior mnemonic research toward the affective and analytical dimensions of authentic journalistic text comprehension.

This study aims to give empirical evidence on how reviving the 'archaic' of 5W + 1H framework through a sensory-phonetic approach is able to reduce boredom and improve the quality of textual synthesis by recording the experiences of ten participants. In the end, it is anticipated that the results would offer a new viewpoint on the creation of materials in English Language Teaching (ELT), providing a workable and replicable model for teachers who want to create a more lively and less daunting reading environment in higher education.

B. METHOD

The research was conducted by a systematic pedagogical intervention spanning 16 sessions within a single academic semester, structured into three distinct phases to ensure methodological rigor. The three steps, they are: a preliminary assessment was performed to establish a baseline, where students were tasked with deconstructing authentic news articles from *The Jakarta Post* using conventional 5W + 1H heuristics, documenting the prevalence of 'pedagogical fatigue' and cognitive barriers. This was followed by the core intervention phase, where the *gastro-phonetic* strategy was introduced, training students to utilize *fruit-based* mnemonic anchors—such as *Watermelon* (What), *White-plum* (Why), and *Hazelnut* (How)—to lower their affective filters and transform passive reading into an active, sensory-mapped inquiry process. The procedure concluded with a final evaluation phase, involving a comprehensive post-test to measure the significance of the cognitive shift and the increase in analytical depth compared to the initial baseline data.

This research employed a qualitative case study design with an embedded quantitative component (Cheeli, 2023), selected for its capacity to provide an in-depth exploration of individual learning behaviors while allowing systematic documentation of performance shifts across the intervention period. Within this framework, pre- and post-intervention scores served a descriptive and illustrative function—complementing, rather than substituting, the study's primary focus on the qualitative depth of participants' cognitive and affective

experiences. The study focused on ten undergraduate students (n=10) from the English Department, who were purposively selected due to their documented disengagement when interacting with authentic journalistic materials. To maintain strict ethical standards and ensure anonymity, each participant was assigned a unique three-letter code (e.g., LYF, DUR, RWX). This design allowed for a comprehensive examination of the cognitive and affective shifts occurring within these specific individuals throughout the 16-session intervention, treating numerical score changes as one of several data sources that, together with qualitative accounts, illuminate the depth of participants' learning trajectories.

Table 1. Profile of Research Participants (n=10)

No.	Participant Code	Gender	Academic Level	Initial Observation
1.	LYF	F	Undergraduate (Year 1)	High pedagogical fatigue; but limited analytical depth.
2.	DUR	F	Undergraduate (Year 1)	Difficulty in deconstructing 5W + 1H elements; unstructured and unorganized
3.	RWX	F	Undergraduate (Year 1)	Cognitive barriers when reading <i>The Jakarta Post</i> .
4.	SLX	F	Undergraduate (Year 1)	Low engagement with authentic news texts.
5.	HWW	F	Undergraduate (Year 1)	Passive reading habits; high level of boredom.
6.	EUR	F	Undergraduate (Year 1)	Struggle with complex English in the matter of vocabulary in journalistics.
7.	BTN	F	Undergraduate (Year 1)	Fragmented understanding of news context.
8.	NEP	F	Undergraduate (Year 1)	High anxiety during preliminary assessment.
9.	JMM	M	Undergraduate (Year 1)	Limited ability to identify causal relationships.
10.	RST	M	Undergraduate (Year 1)	Significant fatigue in long-form reading tasks.

The data collection was carried out at the Faculty of Communication and Language, English Literature Study Program, University of Bina Sarana Informatika, Jakarta, Indonesia; providing a representative academic environment for first-year undergraduate students. The study was conducted over the course of a full academic semester, spanning from September 2025 to March 2026. This timeframe was strategically selected to cover 16 comprehensive sessions, allowing for a longitudinal observation of the students' transition from initial pedagogical fatigue to the successful adoption of the *fruit-based* mnemonic strategy. By situating the research within this specific institutional and temporal framework, the study captured the authentic academic challenges and cognitive developments inherent in the early stages of tertiary English language acquisition.

To strengthen the trustworthiness of the findings, data were gathered through a dual-instrument approach comprising structured assessment tests and questionnaires, complemented by triangulation and member checking to enhance credibility (Mirhosseini &

Pearson, 2024). Pre- and post-tests were administered to descriptively illustrate shifts in students' ability to deconstruct journalistic texts from *The Jakarta Post* following the gastro-phonetic intervention (Trang & Barrot, 2023), focusing on causal analysis depth and 5W + 1H identification accuracy. Likert-scale and open-ended questionnaires captured students' psychological responses, with open-ended items cross-validating score patterns through participants' own accounts. Preliminary interpretations were shared with a subset of participants for member checking, while field notes maintained throughout the 16 sessions served as an audit trail, supporting the dependability and confirmability of the analytic process.

Data analysis followed a systematic thematic (Naeem *et al.*, 2023) and comparative approach to evaluate the efficacy of the *gastro-phonetic* strategy across the 16-session intervention. Quantitative results from the pre-test and post-test were analyzed through comparative scoring to measure the students' progress in identifying 5W + 1H elements. Concurrently, qualitative data from the open-ended questionnaires were processed using thematic analysis, involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing to categorize the students' psychological shifts from pedagogical fatigue to active cognitive engagement. This dual-analysis technique allowed for the triangulation of performance metrics and student perceptions, ensuring that the final conclusions regarding the *fruit-based* mnemonic strategy were both statistically evident and contextually rich.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Following the use of the '*Fruit-Based Mnemonic*' technique, there was a noticeable change in both analytical performance and psychological involvement, according to the data collected from the 10 first-year English department students. The empirical evidence in this section demonstrates how the shift from the conventional 5W + 1H framework to a gastro-phonetic associative model—using identifiers like *Watermelon*, *Pear*, *Orange*, *White-plum*, *Huckleberry*, and *Hazelnut*—effectively addressed the prevalent '*pedagogical fatigue*'. The findings can be divided into two main categories: first, a notable decrease in the students' affective filter, resulting in a more lively and less daunting reading experience; and second, a significant improvement in informational accuracy and argumentative depth when dissecting *The Jakarta Post*'s reportage.

These results are interpreted via the lenses of auditory encoding and cognitive load theory in the discussion that follows, showing how sensory-rich mnemonics can revitalise a '*obsolete*' heuristic into a sophisticated instrument for critical literacy at the tertiary level. This study shows that phonetic anchoring and language familiarity are essential for promoting advanced understanding in EFL learners by comparing the fragmented pre-intervention outputs with the full post-intervention synthesis.

1. Initial Conditions (Pre-Intervention)

The 10 first-year students exhibited a recurrent pattern of '*pedagogical fatigue*' during the pre-intervention phase. The participants' outputs were marked by superficiality and linguistic repetition when they were required to dissect articles from *The Jakarta Post* using the traditional 5W + 1H framework. Eight out of ten students had considerable difficulty understanding the '*Why*' and '*How*' components, according to data collected from their initial workbooks. They frequently gave disjointed, one-sentence answers that only repeated the headlines. For example, Participant 7 (P7) completely omitted the causal analysis, and

Participant 4 (P4) merely named the principal actor without providing any additional details. This suggests that the students' academic boredom and disengagement were caused by the abstract nature of traditional interrogatives, which failed to pique the cognitive interest necessary for tertiary-level reading.

2. Strategy Implementation (The Intervention Phase)

The *Fruit-Based* Mnemonic was introduced by the researcher as a *gastro-phonetic* bridge during the intervention period. When abstract questions were swapped out for sensory anchors, the classroom environment clearly changed. For instance, using the image of a *Watermelon*—which has a meaty core (primary information) and a thick skin (context)—to describe ‘*What*’ gave the students a concrete mental map. When *White-plum* for ‘*Why*’ and *Hazelnut* for ‘*How*’ were introduced, people immediately became curious. Observation notes from this session showed that students started to classify material more intuitively, navigating the news stories' rich vocabulary by using the fruits' phonetic similarity as a retrieval cue.

3. Comparative Output (Post-Intervention)

The quality of the students' news deconstruction showed a significant change in the post-intervention phase. The participants demonstrated a greater level of analytical precision while synthesising articles from *The Jakarta Post* after internalising the *Fruit-Based* Mnemonic technique. The extension of their argumentative synthesis showed the biggest gain; the mnemonic-driven outputs grew to an average of 95 words per part, indicating a more sophisticated comprehension of the text, whereas the pre-intervention summaries averaged only 45 words per section. For instance, the shift from ‘*Why*’ to ‘*White-plum*’ encouraged the students to look for the ‘*pulp*,’ or the fundamental logic, underlying a news story, going beyond superficial explanations.

Additionally, the participants were able to explain the procedural intricacies of the reportage that they had previously overlooked thanks to the use of *Hazelnut* for ‘*How*’. The ten participants were able to retrieve complicated language by using the sensory-phonetic anchors, which led to more correct and structurally coherent responses. According to this empirical shift, first-year students were able to handle high-density lexical content with greater confidence and depth because the gastro-phonetic link offered a stable cognitive framework.

4. Data Visualization (Comparative Analysis Table)

The following table highlights the major changes seen among the ten participants in order to give a clear empirical comparison of the students' performance. The data compares the mnemonic-driven outputs (post-intervention) with the conventional 5W + 1H responses (pre-intervention), emphasising both the quality of synthesis and the breadth of information.

Table 2. Comparative Analysis of Students' Argumentative Synthesis *Before* and *After* the *Fruit-Based* Mnemonic Intervention

No.	Analytical Dimension	Pre-Intervention (Traditional 5W + 1H)	Post-Intervention (<i>Fruit-Based</i> Mnemonic)	Observed Shift
1	Identification (Who/What/Where)	Fundamental-level; often missed secondary actors or context.	Comprehensive; identified 'fleshy' details (<i>Watermelon & Huckleberry</i>).	High accuracy in context mapping.
2	Temporal Context (When)	Literal and brief (e.g., just the date/time).	Associative and linked to sequence of events (<i>Orange</i>).	Improved chronological awareness.
3	Causal Analysis (Why)	Minimalist; 1-sentence responses; often skipped.	Deep and reflective; sought the 'pulp' of the issue (<i>White-plum</i>).	Has been increased in argumentative depth.
4	Procedural Synthesis (How)	Fragmented; struggled with lexical density.	Detailed and methodical; explained complexities (<i>Hazelnut</i>).	Enhanced structural coherence.
5	Engagement Level	High pedagogical fatigue; lexical repetition.	High cognitive curiosity; sensory-phonetic recall.	Transition from boredom to active literacy.

5. Psychological and Behavioural Responses

The application of the *Fruit-Based* Mnemonic caused a significant change in the students' psychological and behavioural involvement in addition to the quantifiable cognitive benefits. A significant degree of '*pedagogical fatigue*,' as seen by passive silence, numerous interruptions, and a mechanical '*copy-paste*' approach to *The Jakarta Post* articles, was noted by researchers during the pre-intervention phase. Nonetheless, the classroom environment got noticeably livelier during the intervention. The students' '*affective filter*' was lowered by the inclusion of gastro-phonetic anchors, particularly the use of whimsical yet structured identifiers like '*watermelon*' and '*hazelnut*.' This was demonstrated by the fact that nine out of ten participants started impromptu peer discussions in which they debated the news content using the fruit names as a shorthand. The students felt '*less intimidated*' by the sophisticated terminology since they had a '*sensory map*' to rely on, according to interview excerpts and reflective notes. The shift from academic ennui to cognitive curiosity indicates that the mnemonic technique not only enhanced reading

abilities but also reinstated the students' self-assurance in handling complex, real-world English texts.

Discussion

1. The Role of *Gastro-Phonetic* Anchors in Vocabulary Retrieval

The mechanism of auditory encoding and phonetic anchoring is presumably responsible for the notable improvement in the pupils' capacity to dissect intricate news narratives. In this study, 'gastro-phonetic' homophones—familiar fruit names that have phonetic similarities with the target inquiries—were used in place of the abstract interrogatives of the 5W + 1H framework (Alghamdi, 2021). For example, the participants received a consistent cognitive retrieval signal when they switched from 'Why' to 'White-plum' and 'How' to 'Hazelnut.' According to (Pachalski, 2026)\, the notion of acoustic encoding states that when knowledge is connected to well-known auditory stimuli, it is more efficiently retained and retrieved. The method successfully avoided the 'lexical blockage' that first-year students frequently have when confronted with the complex language of *The Jakarta Post* by connecting challenging academic assignments to sensory-rich nouns like watermelon and huckleberry. Students were able to concentrate more on the depth of the response and less on the anxiety of the question because of the phonetic similarity, which served as a 'bridge.' As a result, the fruit-based mnemonic functioned as an effective vocabulary retrieval tool, converting the decoding process from a demanding academic task into a natural, associative cognitive mapping (Salehi & Kiani, 2021). Theoretically, this finding extends acoustic encoding beyond its conventional application to isolated vocabulary items. So, it is defined that, phonetic anchoring can also operate at the level of discourse-analytical categories—such as interrogative functions in journalistic inquiry—rather than single lexical units alone.

2. Mitigating Pedagogical Boredom through Sensory Mnemonics

The participants' reduced 'pedagogical fatigue' is directly related to the decrease in the affective filter, a psychological concept originally advanced by Krashen (Al-Amri, 2025). When given real journalistic texts in a regular EFL reading classroom, first-year students frequently experience a 'mental block' because *The Jakarta Post's* high lexical density can cause anxiety and disinterest. The researcher successfully converted a high-stakes academic task into a low-stress, enjoyable cognitive exercise by integrating sensory-rich mnemonics like *Watermelon*, *Pear*, and *White-plum*. These identifiers of 'gastro-phonetic' quality gave the pupils a feeling of linguistic familiarity, which reduced their stress levels and promoted 'cognitive curiosity.' The students perceived the fruit-based anchors as an interactive challenge rather than the 5W + 1H structure as a mechanical obligation. This change from passive receipt to active exploration implies that sensory mnemonics reset the student's emotional reaction to the learning material rather than merely simplifying the text. As a result, the technique effectively restored the students' motivation and maintained their focus throughout the deconstruction process by reducing the boredom and intimidation that come with difficult reading assignments (Derakhshan *et al.*, 2024). Pedagogically, this suggests that affective barriers in tertiary EFL reading instruction may need to be addressed prior to, or alongside, cognitive-analytical training—positioning affective-sensory scaffolding as a precondition for, rather than a byproduct of, effective reading comprehension pedagogy.

3. Enhancing Critical Literacy in Tertiary Education

The application of the Fruit-Based Mnemonic technique acts as a stimulant to improve critical literacy in students at the postsecondary level. English language competency in a university setting needs to advance beyond simple understanding to a

complex synthesis of knowledge. The ten participants were urged to conduct a more thorough 'interrogation' of the journalistic material by shifting from a mechanical 5W + 1H method to a sensory-anchored one (Hashim, 2025). For example, using watermelon as a metaphor for the '*fleshy*' heart of a news item encouraged pupils to differentiate between central points and supporting information. Additionally, because students had to explain the underlying socio-political causes and procedural ramifications of the events recounted, the use of White-plum and Hazelnut necessitated a shift from literal translation to critical inquiry when reading *The Jakarta Post*. This implies that the mnemonic technique enables first-year students to navigate the intricacies of authentic English media through an analytical lens, offered via a concrete cognitive scaffold. Consequently, the *Fruit-Based Mnemonic* functions as a pedagogical intervention that develops the *Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)* required for academic achievement in higher education, rather than merely serving as a memory aid (Fenyi & Jones-Mensah, 2022). Practically, these findings offer EFL instructors a transferable design principle—rather than a fixed vocabulary list—wherein any set of culturally familiar, phonetically proximate referents (not necessarily fruits) can be mapped onto analytical frameworks to scaffold critical reading, provided instructors select referents with clear phonetic salience for their specific learner population.

D. CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that the implementation of the *Fruit-Based Mnemonic* strategy effectively mitigates 'pedagogical fatigue' and enhances critical literacy among first-year English department students. By substituting the abstract 5W + 1H framework with *gastro-phonetic* anchors—*Watermelon, Pear, Orange, White-plum, Huckleberry, and Hazelnut*—the participants showed a significant improvement in both informational accuracy and argumentative depth when deconstructing *The Jakarta Post*. The findings suggest that sensory-rich mnemonics serve as a vital cognitive scaffold that lowers the students' affective filter, transforming a high-stakes academic task into an engaging and intuitive learning experience.

While this research is limited by its small sample size of ten participants in a specific Indonesian university context, the qualitative shifts in student engagement provide a compelling case for the integration of creative mnemonics in tertiary-level reading courses. Future research is encouraged to explore the longitudinal effects of this strategy across diverse linguistic backgrounds and larger cohorts. Ultimately, this pedagogical intervention proves that even the most 'obsolete' heuristics can be revitalized through innovative, sensory-anchored approaches, fostering a more vibrant and analytically rigorous generation of EFL learners.

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