

Enacting Content-Based Language Teaching in ESP Classroom for Reading Comprehension

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Abstract

This research aims to investigate how Content-Based Language Teaching (CBLT) was implemented and its contribution to enhancing learners' language skills in reading comprehension. The research was administered at an Indonesian private university. Drawing on the action research method. The statistical evidence showed that the mean score of the students in class A was 66.74; in class B; 64.29; in class C 65.71 and in class D 60.96 and the highest score in each category were 95 in class A; 96 in class B; 84 in class C and 90 in class D and the average score to pass the ESP course is 65. Cycle 2 was conducted from April 26th to 29th, 2023 at the same classes and schedule, and the results were; the mean score from those classes were 73.53 in class A, 73.47 in class B, 76.44 in class C, and 66.15 in class D. The research showed that there was significant satisfaction as perceived by the students regarding the implementation of CBLT for learning to read in the ESP classrooms. Future recommendations on the research related to the use of CBLT are discussed.

Keywords: *CBLT, ESP, Reading*

INTRODUCTION

Reading is considered a receptive skill that involves comprehending and interpreting written texts. It involves the complex cognitive process of decoding symbols to acquire meaning and is essential for both teachers and students as it helps to acquire new information and confirm or strengthen background knowledge. Renandya & Jacobs (2016) also acknowledge the significance of reading and assert that it plays a crucial role in the learning process. Thus, to foster these skills, teachers must provide guidance and encourage active student participation throughout the teaching and learning process.

Renandya & Jacobs (2016); Richards & Renandya (2002) and Brown & Lee (2015) asserts that the objective of language teaching is to foster "Communicative Competence" in learners and emphasizes proficiency in all four language skills. Brown further explains that CBLT is most accurately characterized as an approach rather than a method, and it has served as a basis for the development of numerous new approaches.

Content-Based Language Teaching (CBLT) can be succinctly described as the incorporation of language instruction within content-based learning, where language teaching revolves around significant content or subject matter, rather than the conventional emphasis on grammar, skills, or tasks Crandall (2012). CBLT has become a popular method for teaching foreign languages in the 21st century due to its reliance on second language acquisition theories and cognitive psychology research. This approach provides language learners with meaningful contexts to encounter understandable input and opportunities to engage in interactions using the target language to produce understandable output. Sociocultural approaches to second language learning have also lent additional support to CBLT Genç (2021).

That being said, lecturers have an important role to create better enjoyment for students to learn language through reading. Creating a favorable learning atmosphere in the classroom is vital in enhancing students' motivation and involvement, both of which are critical components of language acquisition. Thus, this research is aimed to investigate the how a CBLT be implemented and its contribution in enhancing learners' language skills in reading comprehension.

Reading has the important role for ESP learners especially in the academic context. Mohammadpur & Ghafournia (2015) stated that proficient reading skills are of utmost importance, particularly for university students, as they enable them to acquire essential information and expand their knowledge. Saville-Troike & Barto (2017) asserted that reading serves as the primary

means through which second language learners receive input and gain crucial exposure to connect with literature and various aspects of the second language culture.

Drawing from the findings of Progress's International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) data in 2011, it was revealed that Indonesian students demonstrate low levels of reading performance. In response to the concern regarding students' inadequate reading skills, Suryanto (2017) findings revealed that reading comprehension difficulties were attributed to issues rooted in culture, concerns related to English teaching and learning, and contextual factors. One of the factors linked to English teaching and learning concerns was the insufficient use of reading strategies during activities. Consequently, the research underscores the significance of prioritizing reading skills in language education, particularly for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in Indonesia.

Teaching English reading in Indonesia aims to improve the skills of learners who have been able to read in their first language and to understand the meaning of a written text Kusumawardhani & Suhendra (2018). However, in the university, especially in the ESP classroom, students initially were unable to read and predicting the meaning of a written text and often they found difficulties not only in pronouncing words but also to understand the meaning of the written text.

CBLT emphasizes the shape and order of language based on the content being taught. This approach offers a different perspective on learning and provides students with the necessary skills to access specialized information published in English Stoller (2004). Additionally, CBLT creates numerous opportunities for students to practice using the language Muliati et al., (2022). This approach will be helpful to students not only to familiarize words and vocabularies also will help them to understand the written text.

Based on the aforementioned background and problems, the research formulated two research question:

1. How are the CBLT is implemented in the ESP Classroom for Reading Comprehension?
2. How significant are students' improvement in the teaching of CBLT in the ESP Classroom?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Content-based language teaching (CBLT), also known as content-based instruction (CBI), or content and language integrated learning (CLIL) is an educational approach that integrates language and content learning. According to Coyle et al., (2010) CLIL is a dual-focused approach that interweaves language and content, rather than focusing solely on one or the other. Dalton-Puffer (2011) describes CLIL as teaching curricular content through a foreign language to students in mainstream education. Escobar Urmeneta, (2019) adds that CLIL promotes a truly integrated approach to teaching and learning, with a dual focus on language and content, while also preserving the learner's first language(s) and cultural forms. Additionally, she notes that CLIL creates a space for implementing Halliday's triadic perspective on language learning by placing the language learning continuum at its core.

CBLT holds great significance in language instruction. It is an instructional approach that integrates language and content in teaching Snow (2017). It falls under the broader category of communicative language teaching (CLT) and emphasizes student-centered learning. In such classrooms, learners actively engage in the learning process and learn by doing. CBLT not only enhances students' English language proficiency but also equips them with the skills necessary for success in their respective fields. Consequently, it is considered an effective technique for teaching ESP, which focuses on domain-specific English learning Namaziandost et al., (2019).

Content-based language teaching (CBLT) has two key highlights. Firstly, CBLT integrates language instruction with subject content, in contrast to immersion approaches that rely solely on natural language acquisition. CBLT is informed by linguistic knowledge and considers language as a complex communicative activity. It incorporates this knowledge into its curriculum, emphasizing both language and content simultaneously. Secondly, CBLT recognizes the need for educational and linguistic support in content-focused classrooms to enhance the learning environment for second language learners. This acknowledges the importance of metalinguistic work in such settings, as research in second language acquisition demonstrates the desire to create meaning rather than solely focusing on language structure Brinton, 2012; Fathman & Kessler, 1992; Hashemifardnia et al., (2018).

The approach of CBLT provides language learners with the necessary conditions and opportunities to comprehend and produce meaningful output by interacting in the target language through negotiating the meaning in contextualized situations. Additionally, language learning becomes more meaningful and engaging as students are exposed to topics and subject matters they are interested in and need to learn about. Crandall, (2012) also suggests that CBLT

offers a natural context for the development of learning strategies and academic skills, such as note-taking, summarizing, paraphrasing, predicting, and confirming/disconfirming skills, through the use of relevant and motivating content.

Masduqi & Subiyanto (2021) believes that to foster effective reading skills and strategies, it is recommended that Indonesian researchers and teachers foster more supportive and self-directed EFL reading classes. Encouraging extensive reading alongside intensive reading within their classes is crucial for EFL educators. Further, Pranoto & Suprayogi (2020) in his research suggest that it is necessary to adjust the teaching of English based on the context Muliati et al., (2022)

METHOD

This research was based on the design of action research, which aims to address specific issues identified by students in a classroom. The classroom action research was employed to implement CBLT for reading instruction in an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classroom. The aim was to assist the lecturer in addressing the challenges encountered within the classroom setting. The participant of the research is the second semester student of Management study program at Universitas Bumigora. The participant of this research are only those students who are following the two meetings. This research consists of two cycles; planning, acting, observing, and reflecting with each cycle comprising two 80-minute meetings. A visual representation of the action research cycle, illustrating the stages of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting, can be found in Figure 1.

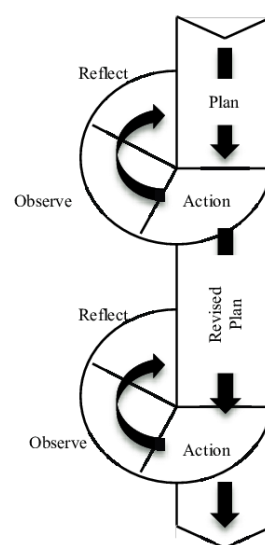


Figure 1. Action Research Cycle
Kemmis and Taggart (Kemmis, 2010)

This research was conducted by collecting data. First, the researcher developing teaching materials and teaching instructions, then invited other English lecturer from different department to assist the research. Secondly, the researcher conducting pre-test preceding the teaching of CBLT in the classroom accompanied by other English lecturer to do observation. Third, the researcher discussed the result of the teaching and observation with other lecturers then develop better teaching and instructions of CBLT in cycle 2. Lastly, the researcher teaching CBLT for reading in cycle 2 with better instructions after given several feedbacks by other lecturers. Then, at the end of the teaching the researcher conducting the post-test.

The researcher teaching CBLT for reading at the second semester of management study programs since all four classes were taking the English II and the four classes where the researcher was assigned to teach for the whole semester. The pivotal questions was the implementation of the teaching CBLT in the ESP classroom for reading comprehension, the teaching of CBLT was implemented in two cycles and the significant improvement on students in the teaching of CBLT in reading.

The analysis of the data were quantitative. First, the pre-test and post-test were in the forms of reading comprehension test and the result of the pre-test and post-test were in the forms of students score which then analysed descriptively using the SPSS 26. Then, after finding out the results, the researcher continued to see the significant improvement of the students using paired sample t-test. The data of this research were all students' score who participated in the two cycle of the teaching.

FINDINGS

This section outlines the result of the teaching of CBLT in ESP Classroom for reading comprehension. The researcher draw the results of the research in two tables; the result of teaching CBLT and the significant improvement of the students in reading comprehension.

The result of CBLT in ESP Classroom

This section present the data of students pre-test and post-test in the teaching of CBLT in ESP classroom for reading comprehension. The researcher teaching CBLT in four classes of management study programs using two cycles. The teaching results draw in the table below:

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics*

Class	Test	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD.
A	Pretest	39	49	95	72.05.00	11.388
	Posttest	39	65	95	81.08.00	9.410
B	Pretest	43	50	95	68.65	11.723
	Posttest	43	60	95	78.65	9.683
C	Pretest	46	50	84	67.04.00	9.063
	Posttest	46	65	94	78.17.00	8.070
D	Pretest	41	50	90	66.49.00	11.261
	Posttest	41	65	95	77.44.00	7.877

The table presents statistical data on the pretest and posttest scores of students in four different classes after teaching English using CBLT in an ESP classroom for reading comprehension. The pretest scores represent the students' initial proficiency levels, while the posttest scores show their performance after the teaching of CBLT. Class A had the highest average pretest score (72.05) and showing significant improvement in their average posttest score (81.08), with a reduced standard deviation. This suggests that the students in Class A, though initially more proficient, still benefited from the teaching using CBLT, and their scores became more consistent. Similar patterns were observed in Classes B, C, and D, where the students also showed improvements in their posttest scores with reduced standard deviations, indicating the effectiveness of the CBLT approach across different proficiency levels.

The significant improvement of the students

This section draws the students' significant improvement after the researcher teaching CBLT in ESP classroom for reading comprehension. The table below illustrate the overall results of four classes:

Table 2. *Paired Sample t-test*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pretest – Posttest A	-9.026	3.572	.572	-15.778	38	.000
Pretest – Posttest B	-10.000	3.836	.585	-17.095	42	.000
Pretest – Posttest C	-11.130	2.344	.346	-32.208	45	.000
Pretest – Posttest D	-10.951	4.444	.694	-15.780	40	.000

For Class A, the paired sample t-test resulted in a t-value of -9.026 with 38 degrees of freedom (df) and a significance level (p-value) of .000 (highly significant). The mean difference between the pretest and posttest scores was -15.778, indicating a significant improvement in student performance after the teaching using CBLT for reading. For Class B,

the paired sample t-test resulted in a t-value of -10.000 with 42 degrees of freedom (df) and a significance level (p-value) of .000 (highly significant). The mean difference between the pretest and posttest scores was -17.095, again indicating a significant improvement in student performance after the teaching using CBLT for reading. For Class C, the paired sample t-test resulted in a t-value of -11.130 with 45 degrees of freedom (df) and a significance level (p-value) of .000 (highly significant). The mean difference between the pretest and posttest scores was -32.208, once more indicating a significant improvement in student performance after the teaching using CBLT for reading. For Class D, the paired sample t-test resulted in a t-value of -10.951 with 40 degrees of freedom (df) and a significance level (p-value) of .000 (highly significant). The mean difference between the pretest and posttest scores was -15.780, once again indicating a significant improvement in student performance after the teaching using CBLT for reading.

Overall, the results of the paired sample t-tests show that the improvement in posttest scores compared to pretest scores is statistically significant for all four classes (A, B, C, D). The negative sign of the t-values indicates that the posttest scores were higher than the pretest scores on average, consistent with the descriptive analysis we performed earlier. The highly significant p-values ($p < .001$) indicate that the likelihood of obtaining such large mean differences between pretest and posttest scores due to chance alone is extremely low. Therefore, the teaching of CBLT for reading in ESP classroom to each class has led to a significant improvement in student performance across the board.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study is to implement the teaching of CBLT in ESP classroom for reading comprehension and to see how significant students' improvement on the results. To see its holistic effectiveness, the teaching was implemented in two cycles at four classes and the participants are the students who are joined in the two cycles. Since, the researcher was the lecturer itself, it is easier to organize the classes.

Regarding the first objective, as illustrated in Table. 1 it is clearly indicated that the teaching of CBLT for reading appears to have been effective in all four classes, as the average posttest scores increased compared to the pretest scores. The findings were relevant to some researchers who also saw the effectiveness of using CBLT in the ESP Classroom especially for reading comprehension Amiri & Fatemi (2014; Surayyo Yarkulovna (2023). They claimed that through CBLT, language acquisition is enhanced, emphasizing meaningful and relevant content over form, making it highly effective for delivering English for General Purposes

(EGP) courses, as well as an equally efficient organizing principle for English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses.

Regarding the second research objectives, the results of the paired sample t-tests show that the improvement in posttest scores compared to pretest scores is statistically significant for all four classes and the negative sign of the t-values indicates that the posttest scores were higher than the pretest. It is implied that the teaching of CBLT in ESP Classroom for reading comprehension is not only effective but also it is significant to improve students reading comprehension this finding was in accordance with Muliati, Dollah, et al., (2022); Namaziandost et al., (2019). CBLT is proven to be more influential to students when it comes to achieving students academic results also it is well worth pursuing and well worth improving in the teaching of ESP in classroom.

Comparatively, other research observed and implemented the teaching of CBLT is to see its implementation and its effectiveness to students achievement results and also finding out the effectivity of CBLT compared to other teaching method, such GTM (Grammar Translation Method) Amiri & Fatemi, (2014); Muliati et al., (2022); Surayyo Yarkulovna, (2023); Suryanto, (2017). This research is limited to improve the quality of teaching through implementing the CBLT within the teaching of Reading in ESP classroom that limited to certain content material and conducted in two cycles.

Conclusion

The present study was designed to teach English using CBLT in the ESP classroom to measure and evaluate the impact of the teaching CBLT on students' reading comprehension. Further, to see its significance to students, the statistical data analysis shows that the teaching of CBLT in the ESP classroom was highly effective and leading to significant improvements in student performance. Though, the outcome was impressive, the limitation on the research were in the involvement of the lecturers to discussed with, and the participation in each class was vary due to different level of understanding to each, therefore, the approach of the teaching adjusted in every class.

These findings have broader implications, suggesting the potential applicability of CBLT in various language teaching contexts, and can contribute to improved language proficiency and subject comprehension in ESP education. Therefore, this study suggests the future study could focus on investigating students' preferences and perspectives regarding CBLT in the ESP classroom. This study would delve into students' experiences, motivation,

and satisfaction with this teaching approach, aiming to gain a deeper understanding of how CBLT aligns with their learning needs and preferences.

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