

The Lecturers' Perception of the Implementation of Content-Based Instruction in Teaching English for Hospitality

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to explore the lecturers' perceptions on the implementation of Content-Based Instruction (CBI) in teaching English for hospitality at Poltekpar Makassar. Using a qualitative case study design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with two lecturers and eight students. The results show that the respondents consider CBI as an effective pedagogical strategy, which intertwines language learning with content and makes English instruction more meaningful and transferrable in their future professions within the hospitality industry. CBI also improves language skills along with content knowledge by integrating language instruction into subjects like cooking, customer service and tourism. This method, by engaging students in real-world tasks and practical assignments, fosters contextualized learning, enhances student involvement, and stimulates critical and communicative competence in the learners. Moreover, real-life context and interactive tasks used in class foster more in-depth learning as well as greater student motivation and have increased learners' confidence to produce in English. Thus, this study underlines CBI as an effective teaching method that equips learners with the language and the profession-relevant skills that are essential in the hospitality industry.

Keywords: Lecturers' perception, Content-Based Instruction, Hospitality, Tourism.

INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, English proficiency has emerged as an indispensable skill that individuals must possess to participate effectively in international communication across social, political, and commercial domains. As English continues to dominate as the global lingua franca, individuals who lack proficiency in the language often find themselves marginalized or unable to contribute meaningfully, particularly in professional settings. Recognizing this, the Indonesian Ministry of Education has undertaken numerous initiatives to enhance the nation's English proficiency; however, many of these efforts have fallen short of expectations, failing to produce the desired outcomes. One promising pedagogical approach that has gained attention in response

to this challenge is Content-Based Instruction (CBI). Unlike traditional language teaching methods that focus primarily on grammar and vocabulary, CBI emphasizes the integration of language learning with subject content, making language acquisition a natural by-product of mastering relevant material. By engaging with authentic materials and real-life topics—such as those found in the hospitality industry—CBI fosters a more meaningful and practical learning environment, encouraging the development of all four language skills: reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Scholars such as Richards and Rodgers (2001) and Stryker and Leaver (1989) have highlighted the effectiveness of CBI in enhancing linguistic competence through contextualized instruction, while also preparing learners for academic and professional demands.

Despite its proven success in various global contexts, especially in programs like CLIL and SIOP, research on the implementation and effectiveness of CBI within English as a Foreign Language (EFL) environments in Indonesia remains limited. Furthermore, while many studies have examined student outcomes in CBI settings, there is still a noticeable gap in the literature regarding lecturers' perceptions and practical experiences with CBI, particularly in vocational education institutions. This study seeks to address that gap by exploring how lecturers at Poltekpar Makassar perceive and implement CBI in teaching English for hospitality, thus contributing new insights into the applicability and challenges of this approach within the Indonesian EFL context.

Poltekpar Makassar, recognized as the only state-accredited tourism university in Eastern Indonesia, serves a pivotal role in equipping students for the dynamic demands of the hospitality and tourism industry. With English established as a global lingua franca, particularly in sectors such as tourism, hospitality, and international trade, English proficiency—especially in speaking—is a fundamental skill that students must master. Roles like tour guides, hotel receptionists, and hospitality managers require not only technical know-how but also effective communication in English to engage with international clients and stakeholders. As a result, Poltekpar Makassar's curriculum is designed to ensure students develop both foundational and industry-specific English skills. English for hospitality is not merely a supplementary subject; it is a core component that directly influences students' readiness for professional environments both locally and internationally.

In response to these educational needs, Content-Based Instruction (CBI) has emerged as a leading pedagogical approach for English language teaching at Poltekpar Makassar. CBI integrates language learning with professional content, allowing students to acquire English through real-world themes such as tourism operations, culinary arts, and customer service. This approach is particularly relevant for hospitality education, as it aligns language acquisition with vocational training, enabling students to practice English in meaningful, industry-related contexts. However, the implementation of CBI is shaped by a variety of factors, including the specific nature of English being taught (e.g., English for hospitality purposes) and the individual backgrounds of both lecturers and students. These include factors such as teaching experience, linguistic aptitude, motivation, and cultural context, all of which influence how CBI is delivered and received in the classroom. Therefore, understanding how lecturers perceive and navigate these variables is essential to evaluating the overall effectiveness of the approach.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative design with a case study approach. A case study involves an in-depth investigation of a single case or a number of cases within their real-life context and allows for a more detailed and nuanced exploration of complex phenomena, where understanding the specifics of a single situation can require qualitative analysis to provide insights into broader patterns and issues. Understanding the patterns of insights from cases is not easy without appropriate interpretation.

A qualitative approach is fundamental to this research because the focus is on gaining a rich, in-depth understanding of complex social phenomena within their natural setting, rather than generalizing findings to wider populations (Anderson & Arsenault, 2018). This study seeks to explore the subjective perceptions of the lecturers to the CBI implementation process. There were two lecturers investigated in this research regarding the implementation of CBI. Qualitative methods allow researchers to delve into the 'lived experiences' of participants, capturing nuances in their behaviours, actions, and perspectives within the specific environment of their classrooms at Poltekpar Makassar (Creswell, 2014). As Miles et al. (2014) suggest, this approach is adept at describing participants' experiences narratively, showing how issues relate to their lives in a local context.

The researcher used qualitative and thematic analysis to interpret the data. Thematic analysis is the best way to interpret data for a case study before analyzing the pattern into broader insights qualitatively. Thematic analysis is a research method used to identify and interpret patterns or themes in a data set; it often leads to new insights and understanding ([Boyatzis, 1998](#); [Elliott, 2018](#); [Thomas, 2006](#)). Users of thematic analysis develop core skills for conducting other kinds of qualitative analysis ([Braun & Clarke, 2006](#)).

FINDINGS

The research explored how English lecturers at Poltekpar Makassar perceive the use of Content-Based Instruction (CBI) in teaching English to hospitality students. The findings reveal that 2 lecturers generally view CBI as an effective approach that aligns well with the practical needs of hospitality students, helping them to develop both language proficiency and specific industry knowledge simultaneously. However, a lecturer expressed concerns about the additional time and effort required to prepare suitable content and materials for CBI, as well as the varying levels of student engagement with the method. The interview data which is presented below was gathered from two lecturers and the data were presented.

Content-Based Instruction as an Effective Approach

Some extracts from the interview with a lecturer are below:

Extract 1 (L1, 8/5/2023)

As far as I know, the idea of content English function, it is like an approach which integrated the language learning and content learning. So, it is like teaching language while going to specific topic. So, for example if we are talking about cooking. We might learn English for ingredients, cooking technique and recipes. But we are not just memorizing the words. We are actually cooking and discussing specific English. I think it is like learning by doing.

Based on the information provided in Extract 1, the lecturer 1 advocates for content-based instruction (CBI) as an effective approach to teaching English, particularly in specialized contexts. CBI integrates language learning with the study of specific topics, such as cooking, thereby enhancing both linguistic proficiency and content knowledge simultaneously. This approach emphasizes active learning methods, moving beyond mere memorization of vocabulary to engaging in real-world activities like cooking and participating in discussions related to the topic.

Furthermore, CBI underscores the importance of contextual learning, which involves acquiring language skills through practical, hands-on experiences and focused discussions on specific subjects. By immersing students in authentic contexts relevant to their field of study, CBI not only facilitates language acquisition but also deepens understanding of the subject matter. This integrated approach not only prepares students linguistically but also equips them with practical skills and knowledge applicable to their future endeavours in the respective field.

Extract 2 (L1, 8/5/2023)

Absolutely. I find CBI to be incredibly valuable for several reasons. Firstly, it effectively merges language and content learning, which is essential for our students. By integrating these two aspects, we can help students not only learn the language but also understand the subject or material more deeply.

Extract 3 (L2, 8/5/2023)

I really believe that CBI is useful because it brings together language and content learning in a way that just makes sense. It's not just about memorizing vocabulary; it's about using the language in real contexts. I've noticed that students are much more engaged when they're involved in practical activities. Plus, when we have meaningful discussions, it helps them understand the material better.

In essence, the two lecturers value CBI for its ability to merge language and content learning effectively, promote active engagement through practical activities, and foster contextual understanding through meaningful discussions and hands-on practice. This pedagogical approach aligns with the lecturer's goal of providing a comprehensive and engaging learning experience tailored to the specific needs and interests of their students.

CBI Emphasis on Contextual Learning

The extract below shows the lecturer's belief in the effectiveness of teaching English for specific purposes through contextualized instruction. The lecturer emphasizes that aligning language teaching with the students' fields, such as hospitality, ensures that the skills taught are directly relevant to their needs. By integrating subject-specific topics, students can acquire language proficiency that is practical and applicable in their professional careers.

Extract 4 (L1, 8/5/2023)

Well, I teach English for specific purposes and I think focusing on the teaching the language by providing the context is very helpful. I mean the language skills that I teach to my students will

match exactly to what my students need. So, they can learn from the topic from their own fields like hospitality or tourism. And I think it is very helpful for me and very useful for them.

This finding emphasizes the critical role of teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in fields such as hospitality and tourism, where language skills are directly relevant to students' future careers. The lecturer 1 asserts that focusing on contextualized learning aligns language instruction with the real-world demands students will face, enabling them to develop specialized competencies in areas like customer service, event planning, and tourism.

By aligning language instruction with students' specific needs, the lecturer bridges the gap between academic learning and practical application. This context-based approach enhances student motivation and engagement, as learners can see the immediate relevance of their studies. Additionally, it fosters a more focused teaching process, resulting in effective and impactful lessons. Ultimately, this finding underscores the necessity of aligning language instruction with students' fields of study, thereby enhancing their professional readiness and ensuring that the language skills acquired are applicable in their careers.

CBI Address Students' Needs

In the extracts below reveal that content-based instruction need to address students' need.

Extract 5 (L1, 8/5/2023)

I teach English for specific purposes, so I think content based on instructions is profit because it is relevant to the need of my students. And instead of learning English, we study topic for own field like business and I think in this way, they are learning English that is useful for their future jobs.

Extract 6 (L2, 8/5/2023)

...I really believe that focusing on context makes a huge difference. Teaching English that are directly related to the hospitality, my students can learn how to communicate effectively in real-world situations they'll face in their careers. For example, we cover topics like customer service, menu descriptions, and event planning, which are all relevant to their future jobs. It's great because they can see how the language applies to their field.

Based on these extracts, in teaching English for specific purposes, lecturer 1 and lecturer 2 emphasize the importance of tailoring English language instruction to meet the specific needs of their students. This approach ensures that students learn topics that are directly relevant and beneficial to their respective fields of study, such as hospitality. Both lecturers advocate for the application of Content-Based Instruction (CBI) in English language learning, particularly for specialized contexts like hospitality studies. CBI not only integrates language learning with subject matter content but also ensures that students acquire language skills that are immediately applicable in their future careers.

Moreover, in the context discussed in Extract 6, the lecturer 2 underscores the advantages of CBI by highlighting its direct relevance to students' professional aspirations. By immersing students in content that mirrors real-world scenarios and challenges they may encounter in their future roles, CBI not only enhances language proficiency but also equips students with practical

knowledge and skills that are crucial for success in their chosen field. This pedagogical approach thus serves to align language learning objectives with the specific career needs of students, fostering a more purposeful and effective educational experience.

In conclusion, the findings underscore the necessity of adapting English language instruction to the specific needs of students in specialized fields such as hospitality. By implementing Content-Based Instruction (CBI), lecturers effectively integrate language learning with relevant subject matter, ensuring that students acquire practical language skills applicable to their future careers. This approach not only enhances language proficiency but also immerses students in real-world scenarios, equipping them with the knowledge and skills essential for success in their chosen professions. Ultimately, CBI aligns educational objectives with students' career aspirations, fostering a more meaningful and impactful learning experience.

The Diverse English Skill Levels of the Students are Challenging

The challenges in the implementation of CBI in teaching are presented in the extract below.

Extract 7 (L1, 8/5/2023)

The challenges, well, in my class. Not all students have the same skill level. Some students might be fluent in English which means they are ready to talk about the concept in the context I provides easily. But there are also some other students who are still struggling with basic English skills. And I think it might be challenging because it can hinder the process of teaching and learning itself because I need to focus on both of them with different skill level.

Based extract, one of the challenges the lecturer 1 encounters revolve around the diverse skill levels among students. While some are proficient in English and can easily engage with the concepts presented within the given context, others struggle with basic English skills. This variation in proficiency levels presents a significant challenge as it requires me to effectively address the needs of both groups during the teaching and learning process.

For those who are fluent in English, the lecturer 1 aims to deepen their understanding by exploring complex topics and fostering nuanced discussions that encourage critical thinking and application of knowledge. Conversely, for students who are still developing their English skills, the lecturer's focus is on ensuring they grasp foundational concepts. This involves using instructional strategies that scaffold their learning, provide necessary support, and gradually build their confidence and proficiency.

Navigating these differing skill levels necessitates a flexible approach to instruction. A lecturer must continuously assess students' progress and adjust their teaching methods accordingly to maintain engagement and promote learning outcomes across the spectrum of abilities. By accommodating these diverse learning needs, a lecturer strives to create an inclusive classroom environment where every student could succeed and progress at their own pace.

Extract 8 (L1, 8/5/2023)

Well, related to the problem I mention previously, the way I handle this is by giving different levels of supports and guidance. For example, I provide extra explanation or extra example for students who need to be more helpful to understand the material. And for those are more

advanced or who have higher level skill, I can offer more challenging task, challenging activities to keep them engaged and moving forward.

Based on the extract, some way lecturer 1 manages the challenge in implementing CBI is by offering differentiated levels of support and guidance tailored to students' varying skill levels. For those who require additional assistance in understanding the material, the lecturer provides extra explanations and supplementary examples to ensure clarity and enhance comprehension.

CBI effectively prepares students for real-world communication challenges in their future careers. However, both lecturers also face challenges, such as the need for substantial preparation and the difficulty in consistently engaging students, especially when the content does not resonate with their immediate experiences. This indicates a balance between the potential benefits of CBI and the practical challenges of its implementation, reflecting the need for ongoing support and training to enhance its effectiveness.

DISCUSSIONS

The lecturer strongly supports the use of CBI as an effective approach to teaching English, particularly in specialized contexts such as hospitality. This perception aligns with existing literature that emphasizes the effectiveness of CBI in vocational and professional education settings, where language learning is closely tied to content that is directly relevant to students' future careers (Natsir & Saragih, 2022). By advocating for CBI, the lecturer recognizes the value of integrating language skills with subject-specific content, thereby facilitating more meaningful and contextually appropriate learning experiences.

The lecturer places a strong emphasis on tailoring English instruction to meet the specific needs of hospitality students. This approach reflects a core principle of CBI: the adaptation of teaching methods to fit the learners' context and professional requirements. According to (Amat et al., 2022), customized language instruction that considers the unique needs of the students can lead to better engagement and improved learning outcomes. The lecturer's focus on relevance ensures that students see the practical application of their language skills, enhancing both motivation and retention. Arulselvi (2016) also showed in his research that Content-Based Instruction (CBI) is more effective than traditional approaches in enhancing learners' academic achievement. The study's findings suggest that CBI can be effectively applied to students of diverse abilities and can be easily integrated into existing instruction without requiring additional time or effort from the teacher.

The lecturer highlights the advantages of CBI by pointing out its direct relevance to the students' professional field. This finding underscores the importance of using content that resonates with students' future career paths, a key advantage of CBI identified by (Marcu, 2022). When students see a clear connection between what they are learning and their future professional needs, they are more likely to be motivated and engaged in the learning process. This relevance also helps students acquire not only language skills but also content knowledge critical to their careers in hospitality.

In implementing CBI, the lecturer mostly prepares before coming to the classroom. This preparation phase is crucial for effective CBI, as it involves selecting appropriate content, designing relevant activities, and aligning learning objectives with professional competencies.

The emphasis on preparation reflects best practices in CBI, where careful planning is needed to create meaningful content and ensure that language learning is embedded in the subject matter.

The lecturer employs strategies such as giving a brief overview of the topic to spark students' interest and curiosity, and regularly seeks feedback from students about the lessons. These practices align with student-centered teaching methods, which are central to CBI. By actively involving students in the learning process and adapting instruction based on their feedback, the lecturer creates a dynamic and responsive learning environment. This approach is supported by (Juraev & Sobirov, 2017), who found that regular feedback loops enhance both student engagement and learning outcomes in content-based instruction.

The lecturer identifies several challenges in implementing CBI, particularly the varying skill levels and knowledge among students. This finding highlights a common issue in CBI, where diverse student abilities can make it difficult to ensure that all students benefit equally from the instruction (Arulselvi, 2016). The need for additional support for students who are lagging behind suggests that while CBI can be highly effective, it also requires differentiated instruction and scaffolding to meet the needs of all learners. This supports the argument that CBI requires flexibility and adaptability from educators to address the diverse needs of their students.

The findings suggest that while the lecturer perceives CBI as a highly beneficial approach for teaching English within the context of hospitality, its successful implementation demands more than just an understanding of the methodology. It requires thorough preparation, consistent efforts to maintain student engagement, and the ability to adapt instruction to accommodate varying levels of language proficiency among students. These findings carry significant implications for teacher training and professional development, emphasizing the importance of equipping educators with the skills to design differentiated instruction and implement inclusive teaching strategies tailored to diverse classroom needs in CBI contexts.

CONCLUSIONS

The lecturer's perception of Content-Based Instruction (CBI) as an effective pedagogical approach, particularly in specialized educational contexts like hospitality, reflects a deep understanding of modern language teaching principles. By championing CBI, the lecturer not only aligns with contemporary literature that highlights the significance of vocationally relevant language instruction (Natsir & Saragih, 2022) but also reinforces the pedagogical shift toward contextualized learning. The lecturer's commitment to aligning English instruction with the specific needs of hospitality students ensures that learners are not only developing language proficiency but also acquiring content knowledge crucial to their future professions. This integration fosters a more immersive and relevant learning experience, motivating students through clear, practical applications of the language. The belief that English teaching should be tailored to the unique demands of the hospitality industry echoes the principles of Amat et al. (2022), who argued that context-driven, need-based language instruction significantly enhances student engagement and learning outcomes.

Despite the perceived effectiveness of CBI, the lecturer acknowledges significant challenges, particularly the diversity of students' language proficiency and content knowledge levels. This issue, frequently reported in CBI literature (Arulselvi, 2016), emphasizes the importance of differentiated instruction to meet the varied needs of learners. The need for additional support

systems, scaffolding techniques, and individualized attention highlights the demanding nature of implementing CBI effectively.

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