



A Preliminary Study on Teacher's Voices: Their Problems in ELT and Content-Based Instruction (CBI)

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Introduction

Instructional approaches are essential tools for the learning process. The academic community must confirm that learning models fulfil their purpose of establishing effective teaching-learning processes. The instructional model is one of the main means used in the process of language teaching instruction. It makes the learning experience more meaningful for students (Dewey, 1997). The existence of the instructional model in the teaching process determines the quality of the teaching and learning. Through instructional models applied by the teacher, the students can acquire English abilities, not only to communicate, but also to use as a tool to comprehend the subject matter in school and in college. The instructional model needs to be presented to the students through a valuable activity that will help the classroom learning process. It can also help the teacher in meeting the students' needs in learning activities. It also improves the teacher's performance in the classroom. Therefore, in teaching the students how to comprehend fully the content, students should be assisted through the use of good instructional models, a much wider knowledge, valuable study and thinking skills, enhanced critical thinking abilities, and the promotion of the students' motivation and interest.

Indeed, teaching and learning English in EFL contexts such as this particular context is a challenging task for both teachers and learners, since English as a subject is provided parallel with content subjects that use English as a medium of instruction (EMI). This causes an urgent demand for a high level of English proficiency for students. Therefore, not only are communicative skills desired, but also English academic skills are a must. As a result, a teaching approach integrating both content and language teaching and learning as a content-based instruction (CBI) approach was selected to improve the students' integrated skills in the secondary level classroom.

Nadera (2015) expressed that teaching and learning English as a Second or Foreign Language has not been easy either for teachers or learners. Teachers face problems in the teaching process and learners also face difficulties in the learning process, so it is difficult to achieve communicative competence. Many factors cause these problems; some of them deal with the students' motivation and others the instructional

activity process. The problems are found in the learning activities process and the students' achievement in language skill subjects. The teachers have difficulty evaluating the students' competence and comprehension of the learning content which causes the students to face challenges in having a positive learning experience.

Researchers have reviewed the objective of the teaching of English in Indonesia and found that it is mainly to enable the students to use English for communication, both oral and written. This statement is mentioned in the policy of the educational system. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education (2006) reinforces specifically that the standard aim of teaching speaking and writing is to train the students to be able to express their thoughts meaningfully in real life, both orally and in writing. It supports increasing globalization in which content-based instruction becomes a central organizing principle in curriculum development, pedagogy, and assessment. Language teachers are increasingly required to understand the content when teaching language through content, and content teachers are increasingly asked to deliver their courses in English, potentially posing challenges to both their language level and their pedagogical tools. While secondary school students are expected to have good capability in language, the students are also expected to master the content of the subject matter.

In language teaching nowadays, several instructional methods have been developed by experts and researchers, such as the communicative language teaching approach. The practice of using the communicative approach can assist the learning process meaningfully, being useful and focused on student-centered classrooms (Berlin, 2005), if it is compared to language teaching in the 20th century. In 2000 in Indonesia, a comprehension-based approach was implemented and one of its orientations was content-based instruction (CBI). In recent years, content-based instruction has become increasingly popular as a means of developing aspects of cognitive, affective and psychomotor functions. CBI is a content-language integrated approach used to teach both content and language. It is an effective approach to teach secondary level students because the students can develop their language skills as well as gain access to new concepts through meaningful content by the implementation of CBI. In addition, it is effective way to motivate students to learn English with rich content.

Literature Review

There are numerous opinions stated about CBI. Brown (2007) has stated that CBI is a medium to convey informational content of interest and relevance to the learners. Similarly, Brinton, Snow, and Wesche (1989) listed a range of conditions which content-based language teaching should fulfil. The lists of conditions covered five items, they are; a) language teaching should be related to the eventual uses to which the learner will put the language, b) the use of informational content tends to increase the motivation of the language learner, c) effective teaching requires attention to prior knowledge, existing knowledge, the total academic environment, and the linguistic proficiency of the learner, d) language teaching should focus on contextualized language use rather than on sentence level usage and e) language learning is promoted by a focus on significant and relevant content from which learners can derive the cognitive structures that facilitate the acquisition of vocabulary and syntax as well as written and oral production.

Snow and Brinton (1988) stated that the activities of a content-based language course can stimulate students to think and learn in the target language by requiring them to synthesize information from the content-area lectures and readings. The content of information which are synthesized in the CBI approach are supported by authentic materials which students discuss and write about. Similarly, Grabe and Stoller (1997) have argued that in a content-based approach, the activities of the language class are specific to the content of the subject matter being taught, and are used to stimulate students to think and learn through the use of the target language. Students are also exposed to study skills and learn academic tasks. They added that CBI tends towards student-centered classroom activities. The students have opportunities to study specific content on a theme or topic. Students' involvement in topic and activity selection can be

increased. CBI has the potential to be developed by structuring content, language, and strategy instruction or learning, to create a good content learning classroom environment. So, CBI is regarded as an influential approach in English learning and called a global approach to foreign language education (Leaver & Stryker, 1997).

In line with the nature of CBI, Richard (2006) believes that CBI is the best done by using content as the booster of classroom activities and linked with all of the different dimensions of communicative competence including grammatical competence and content knowledge. In Richard's view, the content refers to the information or subject matter that is learned and communicated through language rather than the language used to convey the information. Therefore, the selection of content is very important. Content must be suitable to the students' proficiency levels. The content can be course books, texts, skills, functions, and so on. Content provides a coherent framework that can be used to link and develop all language skills. Therefore, CBI is something which better reflects students' needs for learning a second or foreign language. That is why people who learn a language can be more successful when the language is used as a means of acquiring information.

Additionally, Lyster (2017) called CBI, by other names and acronyms, including Content-Based Language Teaching (CBLT), an instructional approach in which nonlinguistic curricular content such as geography or science is taught to students through the medium of a language that they are learning as an additional language. CBLT promotes target language development by incorporating a focus on theme-based content with the students' content knowledge. The goal of the class is to assist students to improve their second language competence within specific topic areas.

Content-based language teaching (CBLT) or content-based instruction (CBI) includes noticing a context related to content and drawing students' attention to problematic second language (L2) features highlighted through typographical enhancement. Awareness means students engage in some degree of metalinguistic reflection, so they become more aware of the pattern. Guided practice means students are pushed to use the features in a meaningful, yet controlled, context with feedback in order to develop automaticity and accuracy. Autonomous practice is applied in a context related to content, and students are encouraged to use the language features in more open-ended ways to develop fluency, motivation, and confidence.

Teachers can integrate content and language in spontaneous ways through an instructional sequence. It is started by a primary focus on content during the noticing phase, then extended to language during the awareness and guided practice phase. Finally, during the autonomous practice phase, the primary instructional focus is on the content which also served as the starting point. Focus on language in the awareness phase and the guided phase might be best suited to the language class, while the greater focus on content during the noticing phase and autonomous phase might be suited to content areas. This is fairly easy for teachers to do if they teach both language and subject matter classes. Therefore, it is supposed to make content and language objectives become interdependent in order to strengthen the students' attention between content and language in depth of processing. As a result, the content and language terms help the students to connect more to the language through the use of cognitively engaging and meaningful academic content.

The previous explanations about CBI programs typically place primary emphasis on content knowledge and strategic competence in language use. CBI is suitable for facilitating the development of cognitive skills and the four language skills while focusing on the content of the materials, so that it keeps the students meaningfully engaged in language use. In other words, this approach can develop second language skills and academic subjects simultaneously. As Long (1999) believes, the language learning and subject knowledge learning should be combined.

Richards and Rodgers (1986) believe that content-based teaching is a teaching method which emphasizes content information learning. The primary focus of teaching should transform the language teaching itself to learning through the subject knowledge to gain information. It can be summarized as an innovative step to move from traditional language teaching methods that aim to integrate language points

and specific content material. Therefore, it can be concluded that CBI facilitates second language in an academic background.

Similarly, the view of Gordon (2007) is that applying this approach obtains significant gains both in the students' content learning and in language development. One of Gordon's ideas is to design and implement content-based instruction by grouping experiential, powerful, and communicative activities. By combining language instruction with content instruction, this benefits students particularly at the intermediate level. This research describes some of the content-based instruction activities for secondary schools that were utilized by the researcher, the learning problems encountered by the teachers and the teachers' initial insight on content-based instruction approach.

Methods

This study employed qualitative descriptive research conducted in the secondary level classroom in Parepare, Indonesia. The teachers were chosen as subjects of this investigation. The sampling procedure used by researchers was purposive sampling. This study is a preliminary investigation to obtain potential information for further research. The data were collected through a questionnaire and class observation. The questionnaire was created based on recommendations from Dörnyei (2003). This questionnaire aimed to investigate the teachers' experiences in the teaching and learning process including their problems during teaching and learning activities in the classroom. The questionnaire also attempted to discover the teachers' preliminary perspectives toward content-based instruction (CBI). Afterwards, class observations were conducted to obtain information about the model of instructional activities and learning strategies used in the classroom, particularly in the speaking and writing classes. The data collected from class observations was analyzed qualitatively. Eight English teachers participated in this study. They were teaching in different secondary schools in Parepare in Indonesia. The data from English teachers were obtained through questionnaires. While, the data from class observations were gathered during writing and speaking classes. Twenty students were enrolled in the English class. In this sense, the researchers observed the learning context of the English subject. The indicators during the class observation used was focused on four main aspects such as the students' learning styles, the class organization, the use of English learning materials, and the integration of activities.

Results and Discussions

The results of the questionnaire distributed to the teachers indicated that the students' language skills, particularly speaking and writing performance are mostly categorized as fair; 75% of the students have fair competence in speaking skills and 25% of the students have poor competence in writing skills. This data was obtained from teacher responses to the questionnaire on their students' productive skills level. Results can be seen in Table 1.

TABLE 1
Teachers' Perspectives toward the Students' Productive Skills Performance

No	Language Skills	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor	Total
1	Speaking	-	10%	75%	-	15%	100%
2	Writing	15%	20%	20%	25%	20%	100%

The data in Table 1 showed that most English teachers viewed their students' performance in language skills as low particularly in speaking and writing. This is further evidenced by the fact that a small minority of students was categorized as high performance in English productive skills.

Seventy-five percent (75%) of the secondary teachers stated that they seldom integrate content and language in their English instructional activities. Similarly, most of the teachers stated that the students' motivation is categorized as unsatisfactory, which is shown by the teachers' opinion of their students' motivation. Approximately 87.5% had low motivation. The teachers also said that it was difficult to facilitate their students' learning with meaningful and comprehensible input, process, and output. This data related to teachers' voices on classroom atmosphere, the integration of content and language, students' motivation, students' learning styles, facilitation of meaningful input, process and output as well as recommendations of appropriate and effective learning activities. Table 2 shows the percentage of teachers' views on those aspects.

TABLE 2
The Teachers' Voices on Classroom Atmosphere Aspects

No	Statement	Always	Seldom	Never	Yes	No	High	Middle	Low
1	Integrating content and language	25%	75%						
2	Motivation							12.5%	87.5%
3	Learning Style							37.5%	62.5%
4	Facilitating meaningful input, process and output.	25%	62.5%	12.5%					
5	Recommending appropriate learning activities				100%				

Table 2 data confirmed that the teachers as respondents highly recommended the researcher to design appropriate learning activities. This recommendation supported the work of Snow and Brinton (1988) who asserted that a good instructional activity can be designed through a content-based instruction approach.

Additionally, the teachers gave their responses about their teaching experiences. The teachers had been practicing their profession as teachers for more than six years on average. They also expressed their experience and problems in the instructional process. English teachers (62.5%) had difficulties in designing language learning tasks that are linguistically, cognitively, and affectively engaging. They need innovative and creative steps in arranging teaching materials and activities.

TABLE 3
Teachers' Perspectives on their Teaching Experience

No	Statement	Never	Sometimes	Often
1	I design language learning tasks that are linguistically, cognitively, and affectively engaging.	-	(62.5%)	(37.5)
2	I arrange my lessons in such a way so that the students can have more success experiences in my class.	-	(25%)	(75%)
3	I focus more on promoting the students' speaking skill.	-	(87.5%)	(12.5%)
4	I focus more on promoting the students' writing skill.	-	(75%)	(25%)
5	I use language learning materials that are relevant and interesting.	-	(37.5%)	(62.5%)
6	I encourage the students to participate actively in the classroom.	-	(12.5%)	(87.5%)
7	I promote cooperation rather than competition in my class.	-	(12.5%)	(75%)
8	I am active to give feedback on their speaking and writing performance.	-	(75%)	(25%)
9	I use comprehensible language so that every student, including the less proficient learners can follow my lesson and participate fully in my class.	-	(12.5%)	(87.5%)
10	I regularly highlight the values of language learning.	-	(62.5%)	(37.5%)

It was found that teachers merely give the students materials taken from textbooks without integrating them with valuable resources such as web-based and authentic materials. Similarly, in their teaching method they mostly use cooperative learning and contextual teaching and learning, which indicates that they have applied good teaching methods. Nevertheless, they did not design it very well into meaningful and interesting learning activities. Even among them, they still apply very traditional teaching methods

such as explanation. Thus, the students' level of engagement in the classroom is still low. Hence, one of the learning activities which can potentially empower the students' activeness and interaction in English class is applying learning instruction using content-based instruction (Richards, 2006).

Integrating language skills is one of many ways to achieve good proficiency in language learning. However, the results of the questionnaire show that teachers sometimes just focus on one language skill in their teaching processes. 87.5% of teachers agreed with this experience. Only 12.5% of the teachers said they often integrate the four basic language skills in a learning situation. One essential thing which should be crucial and urgent to be improved is that teachers are not active in giving feedback on the students' language performance in the classroom. The teachers' responses show that 75% are not regularly maximizing their opportunities for feedback and reinforcement on what the students' have done in English class. As reinforced by Brinton, Snow and Wesche (1989), English language learning using integrated language skills is demonstrated in the CBI approach.

The last section of the questionnaire asked for the teachers' preliminary perspectives on CBI. The majority of the English teachers (87.5%) stated that they do not really recognize CBI. The remaining teachers (12.5%) said that they had never heard of CBI before. They had little insight about the term "content-based instruction" and never apply this method. It is shown in the questionnaire feedback that some of the respondents chose "neutral" on fifteen statements in the questionnaire. Seventy-five (75%) percent of the teachers agree that CBI can improve the students' communication skills, while 62.5% believe that CBI is effective for changing the students' learning styles. Fifty percent of the teachers agree with the statement that CBI is designed to give the students second language instruction in content and language, and it is an important approach in language education. In addition, 25% of the teachers strongly agree that CBI develops the students' awareness in some contexts. This indicates that the teachers need more professional development and a deeper knowledge about CBI. Also, amongst the 25% of the teachers who chose "neutral" if the evaluation process is based on language skills and other statements, they have limited knowledge about this method, whether the nature of CBI, the principles of CBI, or characteristics of CBI. These findings inspired the researchers to further explore the development of CBI in Parepare, Indonesia. The researchers believed that CBI is effective in enhancing the students' English language achievement as eminent scholars like Richards and Rodgers (1986) and Gordon (2007) have stated. The data related to the teachers' initial insights on the content-based instruction approach can be found in Table 4.

TABLE 4
The Teachers' Initial Insight on CBI Approach

No	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Developing an increased awareness of the language demands of their subject materials.	25%	62.5%	12.5%	-	-
2	Developing teaching materials that engage learners.	37.5%	50%	12.5%	-	-
3	Supporting their content and language learning.	25%	75%	-	-	-
4	CBI is a significant approach in language education.	37.5%	37.5%	25%	-	-
5	CBI is designed to give the students second language instruction in content and language.	37.5%	50%	12.5%	-	-
6	CBI is beneficial for improving the students' motivation and interest.	37.5%	37%	25%	-	-
7	CBI is able to change the students' learning style.	12.5%	62.5%	25%	-	-
8	Improving the skills of students' communication.	25%	75%	-	-	-
9	Teaching materials must be authentic.	25%	75%	-	-	-
10	Language learning is the main priority.	12.5%	87.5%	-	-	-
11	The evaluation process is based on the language skills.	25%	50%	25%	-	-
12	The teachers should select the subject matter that will be integrated.	25%	75%	-	-	-
13	CBI uses two or more instructional languages.	12.5%	50%	37.5%	-	-
14	Applying cooperative learning principles.	25%	75%	-	-	-
15	Knowledge is displayed in writing form and orally.	37.5%	62.5%	-	-	-

Conclusion

This preliminary investigation found that most students perform poorly in speaking and writing. This is perhaps due to the fact that they have low motivation for learning and unsatisfactory learning styles. Teachers need to extend their knowledge and insights concerning instructional processes and activities. They expected to get valuable information of learning process such as meaningful learning input, appropriate instructional activity process, and targeted learning outcomes. This valuable information related to the English teaching and learning process assisted them to improve the quality of their instructional process. In addition, the teachers' perceptions reveal that they agree on some basic concepts of CBI, such as their teaching materials should be authentic, activate cooperative learning principles, provide students with second language instruction, use two or more instructional languages, design language learning tasks that are linguistically, cognitively and affectively engaging, and select and integrate appropriate subject matter. These findings will serve to support the exploration of the value of CBI at the secondary school level classroom in this context.

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