Content-Based Instruction

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Abstract: *English language teaching is taught at different faculties of Paktia University. Here different ages students are set in larger classes so teacher cannot work with each student face to face. The main aim is to contextualize the foreign language teaching and learning at different faculties for specific purposes. Content based Instruction (CBI) is examined for language and particular content integration. The result revealed that Content Based Instruction (CBI) approach is useful to integrate environmental issues with grammar and communicative uses of the language. Students feel a stronger and real connection between the language they are learning and the context of a particular subject. This article reflects upon content based instruction (CBI).*

Keywords: CBI, Content, instruction, model and integration of content and language

1. Introduction

It is clear that all learners neither learn language for the same purpose nor they do learn at the same way [6]. Students response to various stimuli such as pictures, sounds music, movement, etc. some students are stimulated into learning more than other [15]. Language teaching for specific purposes delivers knowledge with respect to the requirements and prepares language learning materials based on the necessity and interest of the learners.

CBI is an approach of teaching for specific purpose. CBI is totally a language program, and it integrates the language learning with learning of particular subject contents. The contents may have different themes [12].

Furthermore, the article reports CBI's distinctive characteristics and its main models. Furthermore, it presents some strengths and challenges of content based instruction.

2. Background

Content Based Instruction (CBI) is prepared in the mid-1980s with the publication of Bernard Mohan's work, language and content. Mohan described his work as an investigation in which the "learning of language and subject matter can be accomplished" [11]. A program applied CBI and its principles in a way to adopt foreign students to scholar systems so the students can attend regular academic classes in second language. Through this way, students learnt language and required content [6]. It is clear that the idea of teaching language on content is not new one. St. Augustine pointed out "Once things are known knowledge of words follows… we can't hope to learn words we do not know unless we have grasped their meaning. This is achieved by listening to the words, but by getting to know the things signified" [5].

In USA, CBI was planned for non-English language speakers in public schools. Students were put in regular English language learning classes with English native speakers; some of English Language Learners neither mastered content nor English language. In other words, when students studied English first, their academic content study was delayed. In order to prevent both problems, teachers taught academic subjects, such as literature, math, history etc. at the same time they taught language that is relevant to that content. Thus the language becomes the medium for learning of particular content [11].

3. Discussion

3.1 Content Based Instruction

Throughout history, educators have chosen different approaches and methods to achieve better learning outcomes. In each method, some new techniques and sets of new principles have been implemented to teach the students [6].

CBI is one of different methods which focused on teaching language inside meaningful context, real context and using authentic materials as literary text. So, learners interested and get involved to learn target language from context as a tool for learning language through context.

Larsen and Anderson [12] noted two versions of communication approach: strong version and weak version. Strong version declares that language is acquired through communication. This version asserts to use English to learn it. Weak version is defined as learning to use English [13]. Thus, Content Based learning belongs to the strong version [12].

Most people rely on the traditional methods of language instruction, such as Grammar translation method, direct method etc. which focused on translation, memorization and other aspects of language. CBI is adapted to method which focuses on content rather than language. However, the goal of instruction is language learning. The language becomes a tool for learning new structure, vocabulary, idioms and phrases in a meaningful way because the words are presented within the context of the content. It helps students to make logical connection between different words, ideas and items. The supporters of CBI believe that approach is most effective method for language acquisition.

Richard & Rodfers Chorager declared that CBI is centered on content; nevertheless, that the goal of this approach is to develop both language and academic skills. In other words, it focuses on content in contrast to other methods that emphasis on language [9].

CBI is a teaching approach for academic and specific purposes. It is not completely a language program, but instead it is integration of language learning and learning of some other content. The content can be themes of particular subject [12]. Content is academic subject matter [5]. It clears that language learning and content subject will be learnt at same the time. Academic subjects provide natural content for language study [12]. In Europe content, the name for the same instructional approach is Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). For years, language courses have treated content relevant to a selected profession or tutorial discipline, for examples, the content of language course for Construction Engineering is totally different from one for personal computer technicians. This can be typically taught as teaching a language for specific functions. In a tutorial setting it would be referred to as teaching language for educational purpose [12].

Alkhateeb [14] pointed out that Content based teaching is differed from old-style of language classes because language came second to the content. In other words, the course runs dealing with the current issues of fiction writing, through which learners study language and a particular subject content. It is significant to mention that English ends up as subordinate to the material.

In CBI both acquisition and learning take places. Subject Content presents actual language of native speakers to learners to know diverse words, idioms, phrases, clauses and sentences. Alkhateeb [14] pointed out that CBI is a teaching method that focuses on language learning through learning other subjects.

CBI is a second language teaching approach and teaching is organized tune with the content or information that students can acquire, disregarding to linguistics and the variety of syllabus [9]. In CBI, the language is used as the medium for teaching the content [11]. From content learning, students will achieve language learning objectives [14].

Alkhateeb [14] stated that CBI is an approach rather than a method; there are not specific techniques or activities that are associated with it. Teaching activities and materials are selected according to the level of the program. CBI can help teachers to prepare learning environment according to students' interest and needs within comprehensible and meaningful content [5], [14].

CBI requires a professional language instructor, the instructors who can prepare motivational atmosphere inside classroom. Moreover, instructor needs to choose and adapt authentic materials for the classroom to scaffold the students' linguistics in content learning [10].

The effective use of this instruction method requires the teachers to identify authentic materials. There are two ways to suggest the authenticity of the materials. One is to use native language instruction materials; the other refers to newspapers, magazine, articles and E-resources. It has to be mention that these materials are not produced for the purpose of language teaching [5]. An effective task to best process teaching and learning is to combine language and subject content an appropriate way in which the content matter is a bridge for learning the target language. Integrating of various subjects let to design flexible classes to adapt content and arrangement of other curriculum themes.

CBI is students' centered learning embraces cooperative learning, project work, case study, problem solving, learning based interactive and zone of proximal development (ZPD), constructivism etc. The process of language acquisition is more efficient and learning of language through the process of acquisition is more motivated. The students will be motivated when worth learning materials are taught to them. Therefore, CBI is learner centered rather than teacher centered.

3.2 Models of content based instruction:

At beginning CBI was used for specific purposes in English programs, lastly, the approach has been wide spread and extended to other settings as well. CBI learning is not only the disclosure of the instructor's input but also through peer input and interaction among the students and students-teacher. Following are the models of CBI.

(a) The Adjunct Model: this model is used by ESL instructors. The goal of this model class is to prepare learners for mainstream classes where they will participate at advanced English or they will join with native English learners.

(b) The Theme Based Model: this model of learning taught by EFL teachers who created content materials according to the needs and interest of their students. Task Based instruction and English for specific purposes are both the examples of CBI [14]. Theme based instruction should cover around social, historical, math, natural science, and geographical themes. Through this, the theme based model mention some strategies to produce good result [3].

(c) The Sheltered Model: It is used for high level of learning where the aim of the instruction is to support students to study the same content materials that are for native speaker. Through the sheltered model of CBI, learners are given assistance to scaffold students to comprehend particular subject in target language.

Sheltered model of CBI is co-teaching; two or more teachers instruct students. One is the language expert and while other is expert of content. In co-teaching teachers will work as a team. They focus on all aspects of language and related subject. The result of co-teaching will become more comprehensible to listen and read and outcome of the learning will also be productive to speak and write. The content specialists will aware students about specific content to contextualize learning and have information about the relevant subject. Thus, by the use of shelter model students

will improve their learning strategy to learn key vocabulary, grammatical structures and its usages.

There is a close connection between specialists of language and particular subject. The CBI has two objectives: first, to motivate students to learn and, secondly, to allow students to develop them [6].

3.3 Strengths and Challenges of CBI

1) Strengths
a) Using of content of a language to practice correctly as native speakers.
b) Through the combination of particular subject content and language, the learning of a language is more interesting and motivational.
c) CBI offers a wide educational knowledge to learners in different topics taught.
d) It helps students to develop valuable study skills such as note taking, summarizing and extracting key information from texts.
e) Developing cooperative skills, particularly in a cluster work, which can have great social value.
f) CBI helps learner to use English for specific Academic purpose.
g) CBI uses different sources to get more suitable information for learning.
h) CBI produces learner with ability to lead group.

2) Challenges
a) Lack of authentic resources arises as one of the focal limitation for content based lesson [6].
b) Overuse of target language may be a problem in some portions of the lesson.
c) Discovery of the sources of information and texts that lower levels identify can be problematic.

4. Conclusion

CBI is a language Method that integrates language learning with learning of particular subject content. CBI is one among different methods of language learning which focuses on teaching language inside meaningful context.

Two versions (strong and weak) of CBI are recommended by Freeman & Anderson [12]. Learning of the language and content will take place simultaneously as a result of CBI. Academic subjects provide natural content for language study.
Through content based learning approach both acquisition and learning take places. Context presents actual language of native speakers to learners' diverse words, idioms, phrases, clauses and sentences.

The objective of content-based education is therefore to improve linguistic and academic skills. This approach helps trainers prepare materials based on students' interests and needs.

There are two ways to suggest authenticity. One is the use of teaching materials in the mother tongue; the other is the use of non-instructive material such as newspapers, magazine articles and other multimedia materials.

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