

**The Effect of Using Blended Content-Based
Instruction (BCBI) to Enhance EFL University
Students' Oral Communication Skills**

by

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فاعلية استخدام التعلم المدمج القائم علي المحتوى في تنمية مهارات التواصل الشفهي لدارسي اللغة الإنجليزية بالمرحلة الجامعية

مستخلص البحث:

هدفت الدراسة إلي فحص فاعلية استخدام التعلم المدمج القائم علي المحتوى في تنمية مهارات التواصل الشفهي لدارسي اللغة الإنجليزية بالمرحلة الجامعية (المستوي المتوسط) بالجامعة الكندية الدولية. تبدأ الدراسة بمراجعة الأدبيات والدراسات المرتبطة بالتعلم المدمج، التعلم القائم علي المحتوى بالإضافة إلي مهارات التواصل الشفهي. من ناحية أخرى، صممت الباحثة إختبار تواصل شفهي. من ناحية أخرى، صممت الباحثة إختبار تواصل شفهي، مقياس متدرج لتقييم مهارات التواصل الشفهي والبرنامج المقترح. ثم قامت الباحثة بترشيح مجموعة عشوائية من طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية (المستوي المتوسط)، كلية إدارة الأعمال الإلكترونية بالجامعة الكندية الدولية (ن = ٣٠) للمشاركة في الدراسة والإنخراط في أنشطتها. تم تقديم المشاركين للأختبار القبلي والبعدي. ثم تم تحليل النتائج من الناحيتين الكمية والكيفية. و في النهاية أظهرت النتائج ان التعلم المدمج القائم علي المحتوى (BCBI) كان فعالاً للغاية في تعزيز التواصل الشفهي للطلاب.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التعلم المدمج، التعلم القائم علي المحتوى، التواصل الشفهي.

The Effect of Using Blended Content-Based Instruction (BCBI) to Enhance EFL University Students' Oral Communication Skills

Abstract

The study aimed to examine the effect of using blended content-based instruction (BCBI) to enhance EFL university students' oral communication skills. The study begins with a review of literature and previous studies dealing with blended content-based instruction (BCBI) and oral communication skills. The researcher prepared a list of oral performance components as a guide for the design of the instruments. The researcher also designed a pre/post oral communication test, a rubric as well as the proposed program. Then, she nominated a random group of the EFL university students (intermediate level) at Faculty of Business Technology (n= 30), Canadian International College (CIC) to participate in the study and get involved in its activities. The participants were submitted to a pre and posttest. Then, the results were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The results showed that blended content-based instruction (BCBI) was highly effective in enhancing EFL university students' oral communication skills.

Keywords: Blended Content-Based Instruction (BCBI), Oral Communication Skills.

Introduction

In today's business and education world, communication skills are considered major skills that EFL university students need to possess in order to secure suitable job opportunities. Most employers are concerned with employees' ability to communicate in group discussions, conduct meetings in public speaking, hold perfect control over what they say and master the art of speech. In this sense, oral communication skills are essential to boost morale and promote teamwork (Karim, 2016). Reversely, lack of proper oral communication skills is one of the reasons why employers are reluctant to hire job applicants.

Oral communication is when a communicator speaks and a receiver listens; it can be done face-to-face or through other tools like mobile phones or online meetings (Shah, 2021). Through oral communication, it is faster and easier to get feedback by observing non-verbal behavior, such as eye contact or facial expressions. Nonverbal communication is considered the way of delivering information and messages without words, such as facial expressions, gestures, eye contact, space between people, voice level, and the way people dress (Howard and Kathryn, 2018).

The inadequate oral communication skills of non-native English speakers aroused a wide range of researchers worldwide to tackle this issue in their research. For example, Nasr (2021) conducted study using a pedagogical movie-based program in developing oral communication skills of faculty of education English majors in Egypt. In Philippines, Guzman and Jesus (2021) carried out a study to investigate non-intellective challenges in oral communication skills among grade 11 learners. In Palestine, Hassan (2019) conducted a study based on utilizing digital storytelling on developing oral communication skills for 5th grade students at Rafah Primary schools. It's worth mentioning that a wide range of

worldwide studies integrated technology into face-to-face classes to enhance students' language performance. Consequently, blended learning (BL) can be considered one of the flexible solutions to enable a lifelong learning process and enhance students' oral communication skills.

According to (Stein & Graham, 2014), blended learning (BL) is generally defined as the combination of the strengths and advantages of in-class face-to-face learning activities and web-based online learning to help learners become agents and owners of their learning process, create a more flexible learning environment, facilitating the practical training process, achieve deeper and meaningful learning levels, solve complex problems, and develop learners' professional communication skills. Furthermore, BL involves taking learning from mostly face to face, to mostly online, to a perfect 50-50 split (Johnson & Marsh, 2014; Tarnopolsky, 2013).

In fact, blended learning can be combined with other teaching approaches and methods to have a fruitful experience. For example, Alamri (2021) investigated the effect of using blended project-based learning on university students' behavioral intention and academic achievement in higher education. Also, Tsai & Tang, (2017) carried out a study to investigate university-students' Learning attitudes and problem-solving attitudes through using blended problem-based learning. One of the global approaches that can be regenerated again though blended learning resources is content-based instruction.

Content-based instruction (CBI) focuses not on the language itself, but rather on what is being taught through the language. In this sense, language is seen as a medium through which something new is learned (Arulselvi, 2016). Aspects of online videos that addresses a metaphoric meaning, discussions about current events and world cultures or even debates about general topics of interest are all valid content options (May & Van, 2017).

Within CBI, students are required to search for information, connect items, invest their prior knowledge to create new information, tackle a specific issue from different angles, work collaboratively to organize their thoughts, critique the information that they have gathered. Therefore, the main focus of teaching is more on content topics than grammar rules, vocabulary teaching, or decontextualized situations (Spender et al., 2018).

In 2019, Yu and Du implemented a blended learning model in content based EFL curriculum to improve EFL Chinese learners' language proficiency. Results showed that online and face-to-face activities encouraged learners to interact and collaborate with their peers via social network. However, to the researcher's best knowledge, no study in Egypt attempted to mix blended learning with content-based instruction in an EFL setting. It would be, therefore, beneficial to apply blended content-based instruction (BCBI) to enhance EFL university students' oral communication skills.

Context of the problem

Despite the importance of oral communication, a close look at the Egyptian EFL learners' oral communication skills reveals that they lack the fundamental abilities that can qualify them to use the English language appropriately and effectively in various contexts. According to the Egyptian context, students rely on the materials presented in textbooks with special attention given to reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary neglecting listening and speaking. Therefore, they are unable to express themselves or understand someone speaking English for a long Time.

According to the researcher's knowledge as a demonstrator at Canadian International College (CIC), EFL university students at faculty of business technology are promoted according to their grades in their "written" achievement tests. They do not practice language orally in real

contexts since it is not required in their exams. That also appears in the English language sections where they are supposed to give a whole presentation by using English only without using their mother tongue. As a result, students face many problems when trying to use language to communicate in real situations. In the same vein, students do not have the chance to practice oral communication in English due to the lack of programs that promote its skills. Most students listen to the lectures without active interaction, and they are passive receivers.

Pilot Study

Furthermore, the researcher conducted an oral communication test that was divided into two parts, the first part was a face-to-face test, and the second part was an online test, on a group of ٤٥ EFL first-year students, intermediate level (B1), at Faculty of Business Technology (Dual System), Canadian International College (CIC), Cape Breton University (CBU).

The test was based on the common European framework of reference for languages (CEFR), intermediate level (B1). Also, the researcher used a rubric to identify students' problems. The researcher measured the students' ability to provide concise feedback, listen critically, use of proper body movements, use of intonation, use of various fillers and their ability to speak coherently and persuasively. The results showed a general lack of the learners' oral communication as follows:

- 92% of the EFL students could not listen critically. They kept saying “I don't know”, “I don't understand the speaker” to respond to a hypothetical question while others left some questions empty.
- 90% of the EFL students could not be able to use body language properly during the face-to-face test. Some of them kept reading from their notes or looking at the floor.

- 88% of the EFL students could not be able to use fillers while expressing their thoughts. They kept saying “and”, “eee” and “aaa”.
- 86% of the EFL students had intonation problems. Some students kept pausing while moving from one idea to another.

Statement of the problem

The EFL first-year students (intermediate level) at Faculty of Business Technology, Canadian International College (CIC), Cape Breton University (CBU) have some points of marked weaknesses in oral communication skills. Therefore, the researcher suggested blended content-based instruction (BCBI) as an effective context in which students could practice the English language in an interactive and collaborative way, which could be reflected on their English oral communication skills.

Study Questions

In order to tackle this problem, the study attempted to answer the following questions:

What is the Effect of Using Blended Content-Based Instruction (BCBI) to Enhance EFL university students' Oral Communication Skills?

To answer the above main question, the following sub-questions were also answered:

1. What are the oral communication skills that EFL university students need to enhance?
2. What are the features of the proposed program based on blended content-based instruction (BCBI) to enhance EFL university students' oral communication skills?
3. To what extent will blended content-based instruction (BCBI) enhance EFL university students' oral communication skills?

4. How far will EFL university students be satisfied with the proposed program based on blended content-based instruction in enhancing their oral communication skills?

Aim of the Study

This study aimed at enhancing EFL university students' oral communication skills at Faculty of Business Technology, Canadian International College (CIC), Cape Breton University (CBU) through using blended content-based instruction (BCBI).

Significance of the Study

It was expected that the study would be of benefit to:

EFL university students: They were expected to benefit and enhance their oral communication skills and level through using some blended content-based instruction activities in learning.

EFL curriculum developers and designers: They were expected to put the results of the study into consideration when they design EFL curricula as they will be provided with some BCBI activities which can be included in future curricula.

EFL researchers: The study provided EFL researchers with a theoretical foundation as well as recommendations for further research.

Study Hypothesis

The study attempted to verify the following hypotheses:

- 1- There would be a statistically significant difference at the significance level of 0.05 between the mean scores between the mean scores of the study participants on the pre and post-tests in overall oral communication skills in favor of the post-test.
- 2- There would be a statistically significant difference at the significance level of 0.05 between the mean scores of the study participants on the

pre and post-tests in each of the oral communication sub-skills in favor of the post-administration.

- 3- Study participants would be satisfied with the proposed program based on blended content-based instruction.

Delimitations of the Study

The study was delimited to:

1. A group of 30 first year EFL university students (intermediate level) at Faculty of Business Technology, Canadian International College (CIC), Cairo, Egypt.
2. Some Oral communication components necessary and appropriate for the study participants and some blended content-based instruction activities which are appropriate for the study participants.

Review of literature and related studies

The Philosophy Underpinning Content-Based Instruction (CBI) in Education

In CBI, learning is never meant memorization and learning does not happen by externally imposed content. Within this framework, students can acquire the content area of the subject matter with comprehensible input, and simultaneously increase their language skills. In this sense, the focus of the teaching is on authentic and meaningful input, not on the grammatical form to achieve the goal of language skills improvement.

In addition, Tarnopolsky (2012) maintains that the CBI concept is supported by the constructivist theory to explain the learning process. This means that CBI recognizes language as a negotiated act which requires conscious involvement on the part of its practitioners. In CBI, learning is considered a dynamic and ongoing process whereby feedback, social interactions, students' life experiences, active participation play important roles.

According to Ansawi & Pang (2017) another theory that is closely related to CBI is the socio-cultural learning theory in which learners are described as active knowledge constructors with their own learning environment to generate a diversity of creative ideas. In this sense, students work together to solve a particular problem delivered in an authentic content through the processes of brainstorming, ideas discussion, composing, reviewing, and editing (Trung, 2021).

Furthermore, Narinasamy et al. (2013) maintain that the goals of CBI can be linked to the foundation of the progressivism theory of education which is based on the idea that students are considered as active players, work collaboratively through real-life activities to solve problems. Also, progressive education considers that learning should be organized around the learners with consideration of abilities, interests in a democratic education system which is revealed the collaborative nature of successful CBI (Nazir & Lam, 2009).

Social constructivism is apparent in CBI that emphasizes the collaborative nature of learning under the guidance of a facilitator or in collaboration with other students. Social constructivism encourages students to share ideas, ask questions, analyze information, provide feedback, and construct new meaning to solve problems in classrooms, schools, and eventually in society. In this sense, learning concepts are transmitted by means of language, interpreted, and understood by experience and interactions within a cultural setting (Akpan et al., 2020).

It can be concluded that social constructivism is apparent in CBI in which students are encouraged to search for information from different sources, re-evaluate information, develop very valuable thinking skills to become more independent and confident through authentic content and tasks.

Content-Based Instruction (CBI)

Douglas (2017) maintained that students learn a foreign language more successfully when they use the language as a means of communication rather than as an end in itself. In CBI, content is considered a resource that enables students to reflect upon their personal experiences, ask questions, learn the art of listening to each other, share their ideas and view a specific source from different angles so that they become more self-reliant and confident (Shibata, 2019). Consequently, students' motivation increases when they learn about something that interests them.

In the same vein, Leaver & Stryker (1989) clarified that communicative competence (CC) is acquired within CBI framework. Oral communication can be enhanced by providing comprehensible source materials, such as pictures, podcasts, online chats, videos, and newspapers so that students can use the target language to fulfil a real purpose, solve problems, take information from different sources and work collaboratively to evaluate information (Peachey, 2021).

Blended Content-Based Instruction (BCBI)

Blending is more than just replicating onsite activities in online environments. The aim of any effort towards blended learning should be flexible, providing a clear path through resources, activities, and assessments with explicit guidance each step of the way. Blended courses provide the opportunity for teachers and students to mix the best of inside and online learning to create a new learning environment for their students.

Students in a face-to-face course may have limited opportunities to engage with every one of their classmates, and the face-to-face environment itself may inhibit some students from participating. Online environments can go hand in hand with face-to-face classes, facilitate class discussions, maximize the amount of students' interaction, enhance their engagement

with the subject matter and provide motivational benefits from the increased social interaction (Stein & Graham, 2014).

Also, teachers can create effective activities to share the learning content with their students inside and outside the classroom, such as Live chats, infographics, podcasts, instant messaging, blogs and forums, applications, wikis, journals, and webinars. The utilization of the different learning platforms by teachers helps students for meaningful learning outcomes via planned and flexible online and face-to-face environment (Saleh & Khader, 2016). As a result, teachers should be facilitators and guide their students' learning; this change is very useful for students to increase their learning.

Oral Communication Skills in EFL

Being able to communicate effectively is a much sought-after skill by employers in today's globalized work contexts. Communication enables someone to comprehend what another person conveys. However, due to a lack of linguistic resources and poor strategic and sociolinguistic competence, the intended message may not be transmitted correctly, leading to communication breakdown. In oral communication (OC), speakers and listeners might share the same interest, yet it is difficult for them to communicate successfully using English.

Oral communication (OC) can be defined as the process of exchanging information, from one person to another through verbal and non-verbal methods using a specific language (Shehata,2019). OC can take many forms, ranging from informal conversation that occurs spontaneously, to participation in formal meetings. OC involves not only verbal communication but also paralinguistic features such as tone of voice, stress, and intonation. If students do not learn how to be communicate adequately, they may get demotivated and lose interest in learning English language.

Communicative Competence in EFL

The main target behind communicative competence is orienting various situations of communication that is based on knowledge and personal experience, building contacts with people, dealing with the surrounding circumstances to interact with others in today's globalized world, building interpersonal relations and conditions of social surroundings in terms of the following competencies:

Discourse Competence (DC): Discourse Competence (DC) is an integral part of the communicative competence of a foreign language that is responsible for the coherence and cohesion of a text. DC refers to language use in social contexts whether formal or informal.

- a. **Grammatical Competence:** Grammatical competence means that speakers know the rules of the language which include vocabulary, sentence formation, pronunciation, spelling and linguistic semantics (Dagmara, 2012). In other words, it is the linguistic ability to use the knowledge of the rules and system of language.
- b. **Sociolinguistics Competence (SC):** Without this ability even the most perfectly grammatical utterances can convey a different meaning from what the speaker is really intended to say.
- c. **Strategic Competence (also known as communication strategies):** Communication strategies (CSs) refer to the ability to know when and how to take the floor, how to overcome difficult situations, how to keep a conversation going, how to clear up communication breakdown as well as comprehension problems (Negoescu et al., 2019).

Research Design

- The study used a mixed-method design. The university students' oral communication skills during the experimentation were analyzed

using the quantitative methods, as well as the qualitative analysis of the results, which provided more validity to the program.

- At the end of experimentation, the researcher investigated the effect of using blended content-based instruction (BCBI) on enhancing the EFL university students' oral communication skills and compared the results gained by the pre/posttest.

Participants

The present study targeted EFL university students at Faculty of Business Technology, Canadian International College (CIC), Cape Breton University. The research group was derived from first year students, (intermediate level) at Faculty of Business Technology, and their ages ranged from 18 to 20 years old. In fact, 30 EFL university students were randomly selected to participate in the present research after being introduced to the research and its objectives, and what they will be supposed to do during the program.

Instruments of the Study

Oral Communication Skills Checklist

The list was composed of four main oral communication skills that were provided by a brief description of each component. a rating scale including three alternatives: very important, important, less important which answer the question: is the oral communication skill suitable for first year EFL university students (intermediate level) at Faculty of Business technology?

The Oral Communication Skills Scoring Rubric

The rubric consists of four criteria and each criterion has four rating scales which represents four main oral communication, including strategic competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, and paralinguistic competence.

The Oral Communication Skills Pre/posttest

The pre /posttests were given to the research group of first year EFL university students (intermediate level) at Faculty of Business Technology, Canadian International College (CIC). Students were tested at the beginning of the program to identify their level. Furthermore, the tests were scored using the above rubric. At the end of experimentation, the group was taken again the same oral communication test to prove the effect of using the blended content-based instruction to enhance their oral communication.

The EFL University Students' Online Survey

It was divided into two parts (satisfaction questionnaire and course reflection of oral communication skills). The first part was students' self-assessment of oral communication through asking them multiple questions that reflected their progression of oral communication throughout the program. The second part was the course reflection in which students were given several questions and they were free to answer and assess the different course components, such as course content, given activities, required assignments and instructor's performance.

Implementation of the Program

Throughout the program of (BCBI), the EFL university students were given **11 sessions** to enhance their EFL oral communication skills. The researcher met the EFL university students two times per week (Face-to-face and online) and every session was followed by several online activities to practice English language. In other words, the researcher provided students with every day online activities to maximize students' learning time, urge them to practice English language as much as possible and tackle every topic from a different lens. It is worth mentioning that each face-to-face session lasted for three hours while each online session lasted for four hours as well.

The first session of the program was an orientation session in which the researcher tried to introduce the whole program to the EFL first year students (intermediate level) at Faculty of Business Technology, Canadian International College (CIC). There were various online administrations used throughout the program, such as Jitsi Meet video conference, Edpuzzle.com, Uquiz.com, Nearpod.com, Padlet.com, Jamboard.com, WhatsApp, and YouTube.

In addition, WhatsApp was used as a part of the program in which the students uploaded their daily records. These records included daily life conversations, such as making short stories, talking about their daily routine, and expressing their own views concerning various topics related to the program. The link of the WhatsApp group class is:

<https://chat.whatsapp.com/FWz94BIqS8D21Iquya4Ti>

In the same vein, Jitsi Meet online platform played an effective role throughout the whole program. It created an authentic and online classroom freely without any need for signing up or using emails. Furthermore, Jitsi Meet also allows students to spend lots of time freely without any limits.

The researcher also made use of a new online and interactive application "Edpuzzle.com" which is based on interactive videos. Edpuzzle is a web-based e-Learning application allowing users to select a video and customize it by editing, recording their own audio, and adding quiz questions. Besides, the researcher created another classroom for the first-year students on EdPuzzle.com so that they can watch the videos and upload their voice notes. This is the link of EdPuzzle.com class and the passcode:

<https://edpuzzle.com/open/pozpawi>

Passcode: pozpawi

In the same vein, the researcher invested Uquiz.com to create online quizzes to enhance students critical listening skills. Uquiz is a free online quiz maker through which instructors can add pictures, videos, and blogs to create innovative and interactive quizzes on several topics. Nearpod is

another interactive classroom tool that the researcher used to engage students by adding interactive activities to the lessons like polls, pictures, puzzles and graphic organizers.

Results

Results are presented in terms of the study hypotheses.

Testing the First Hypothesis

In order to verify this hypothesis, the paired-samples t-test was used to detect the significance of differences between the pre and post-administration.

Table 1: t-test Results for the Significance of Differences between the Participants' Mean Scores on the Pre and Post Oral Communication Test as a Whole

performance	mean		Std. Deviation		t- test value	Sig.	Effect size (η^2)
	pre	post	pre	post			
Overall score of the oral communication skills	17.03	38.57	3.77	2.16	28.420	0.00	0.965

Table 1 clarifies that the participants' mean scores in the post administration of the oral communication test as a whole were higher than their mean scores in the pre administration. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the study participants on pre and posttest administrations concerning oral communication skills as a whole in favor of the posttest scores.

Testing the Second Hypothesis

In order to verify this hypothesis, the paired-samples t-test was used to detect the significance of differences between the pre- and post-administration. Table 2 illustrates this:

Table 2: t-test Results for the Significance of Differences between the Participants' mean scores on the pre and post administration of the test in each oral communication skill. The test was conducted on a group of first year EFL university students (n=30) with (16) degrees of freedom.

Skills	mean		Std. Deviation		t- test value	Sig.	Effect size (η^2)
	pre	post	pre	post			
Strategic competence	8.03	17.57	1.99	1.63	20.429	0.000	0.935
Sociolinguistic competence	2.97	7.00	0.91	0.85	18.587	0.000	0.923
Discourse competence	3.17	7.13	0.95	0.86	17.448	0.000	0.913
Paralinguistic competence	2.87	6.87	0.78	0.58	20.234	0.000	0.934

Table 2 clarifies that participants' mean scores on the pre and post administration of the test in each oral communication skill were higher than their mean scores in the pre administration. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the study participants on pre and posttest administrations concerning each oral communication skill in favor of the posttest scores.

Testing the Third Hypothesis

The values of the arithmetic averages that were reached from the study are presented as follows:

Table 3: The descriptive statistics of the participants' overall evaluation of the blended content-based instruction program. The number of participants is 27 male and female EFL university students.

Item	V. satisfied		satisfied		undecided		Dis Sat.		V. Dis Sat.		Mean	Percent (R II)	Result
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
1	21	70.0	6	20.0	*	**,	*	**,	*	**,	4.78	95.6	V. satisfied
2	17	56.7	10	33.3	*	**,	*	**,	*	**,	4.63	92.6	V. satisfied
3	23	76.7	4	13.3	*	**,	*	**,	*	**,	4.85	97	V. satisfied
4	23	76.7	4	13.3	*	**,	*	**,	*	**,	4.85	97	V. satisfied
5	24	80.0	3	10.0	*	**,	*	**,	*	**,	4.89	97.8	V. satisfied
6	21	70.0	6	20.0	*	**,	*	**,	*	**,	4.78	95.6	V. satisfied
7	23	76.7	4	13.3	*	**,	*	**,	*	**,	4.85	97	V. satisfied
8	23	76.7	4	13.3	*	**,	*	**,	*	**,	4.85	97	V. satisfied
9	18	60.0	9	30.0	*	**,	*	**,	*	**,	4.67	93.4	V. satisfied
10	22	73.3	5	16.7	*	**,	*	**,	*	**,	4.81	96.2	V. satisfied
11	22	73.3	5	16.7	*	**,	*	**,	*	**,	4.81	96.2	V. satisfied
12	23	76.7	4	13.3	*	**,	*	**,	*	**,	4.85	97	V. satisfied
13	22	73.3	5	16.7	*	**,	*	**,	*	**,	4.81	96.2	V. satisfied
14	22	73.3	5	16.7	*	**,	*	**,	*	**,	4.81	96.2	V. satisfied
15	21	70.0	6	20.0	*	**,	*	**,	*	**,	4.78	95.6	V. satisfied
16	24	80.0	3	10.0	*	**,	*	**,	*	**,	4.89	97.8	V. satisfied
17	23	76.7	4	13.3	*	**,	*	**,	*	**,	4.85	97	V. satisfied
18	23	76.7	4	13.3	*	**,	*	**,	*	**,	4.85	97	V. satisfied
19	21	70.0	6	20.0	*	**,	*	**,	*	**,	4.78	95.6	V. satisfied
The general direction of the questionnaire as a whole											4.81	96.2	V. satisfied

It can be concluded that participants are satisfied with the proposed program based on blended content-based instruction (BCBI) in enhancing EFL university students' oral communication skills.

Qualitative analysis regarding the targeted oral communication competencies

Strategic Competence

BCBI gave students the sense of responsibility towards their autonomy and effectively engaged students in a process whereby two or more of them attempted to work collaboratively to solve a problems by sharing the understanding to come to a solution and reflecting their knowledge and skills to reach that solution instead of just working alone.

Sociolinguistic Competence

In fact, SC empowers learners to co-construct new paradigms through communication and helps foreign language learners achieve a greater understanding of the nature of language along with the understanding of the nature of society.

Discourse Competence

Throughout the BCBI activities, the EFL university students' capacity to express themselves coherently and organize their thoughts were greatly apparent. Students started to feel confident and tried to overcome their fear of making mistakes and tried to avoid repetition of unnecessary words during giving presentations. They also provided a rationale for their opinions without using gaps or pauses.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the present study, the following conclusions could be stated:

- Using BCBI was remarkably effective in enhancing EFL university students' oral communication skills. This was obvious after conducting

the post oral communication test. In addition, it was clear through the EFL university students' gradual development throughout the experimentation.

- Considering students' needs and interests enhanced the learning process. It also confirmed that all students were engaged in BCBI which contained active learning, constructivism, and inquiry-based learning, as they felt that their learning is authentic, effective, and practical.

Recommendations

Based on the reached results and conclusions, the study recommends the following:

- More opportunities to practice oral communication skills should be provided to the EFL university students.
- The present study may be replicated on a larger sample that belongs to different faculties and universities.
- Teachers/ instructors should pay much attention to enhance oral communication skills through BCBI as an integral language component that students themselves seek to enhance.

Suggestions for Further Research

Researchers may consider the following suggestions to investigate the adequacy of utilizing BCBI for further research:

1. Conducting a communication strategy training program to improve young learners' listening and speaking skills.
2. Investigating the effect of applying blended content-based instruction (BCBI) in different faculties on improving EFL university students' critical thinking skills.
3. Exploring the relationship between EFL university students' continuous participation in blended content-based instruction and affective variables such as motivation, cooperation, self-esteem, self-confidence, autonomy, and self-efficacy.

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