

## Applicability of Qualitative Research Design in Content-Based English Language Teaching

FAUZIA RAHMAN

**Abstract.** This paper presents a description of the methodology used in this study in order to provide an understanding of how the research on the applicability of qualitative research design in content-based English language teaching was conducted. It includes the research design applied in this study, instruments used to obtain the data, a description of how these instruments are designed, piloted and administered. The truthfulness of the study is also described by clarifying the validity and reliability. This paper explains the sample and the ways how the collected data was processed and reported. Research design can be defined as the work plan that specifies the type of data to be collected to answer the research questions and the methods needed to collect such data. In short, it means the structure plan of the study. Qualitative research is the most common research design in the study of teaching processes and practices. Communication-based instruction models that incorporate the teaching of English language structures and language conventions through purposeful application and comprehension of content lessons are appropriate and encouraged. The cognitive progression from practical to theoretical thinking provides meaningful constructs for concept learning. The research that supports effective instructional approaches for English language learners advocates learning from experiential activities to build a knowledge base for abstract thought. Researchers support helping students conceptualise new information through the use of concrete materials, embedding language objectives in content learning, and graphically organising the thought processes. If English language learners can receive the tools for learning, then there should also be opportunities to succeed in school by learning adequate study skills along with language and content instruction.

**Keywords :** Communication; instruction; qualitative research; language acquisition; corrective feedback.

Communication-based instruction is designed to parallel the way children acquire their first language. Krashen's (1982) "acquisition-learning hypothesis" (39) holds that infants acquire language sub-consciously rather than cognitively learning the language. While learning content in a second language, students need instructional approaches that allow them to interact with and construct meaning from lessons presented in class. Language is the medium for learning and communicating important subject matter. Communication-based instruction can be an effective tool for providing English language learners access to content area learning. For students learning in the language rather than about the language, effective communication is interactive, authentic, and meaningful, with ample opportunities to hear and

respond in the target language and to get feedback from native speakers, the teacher, instructional assistants, volunteers, and other English language learners.

In this paper, an attempt has been made to use Qualitative Research which is the most common research design in the study of teaching processes and practices to evaluate the relevance of content-based language teaching. The present paper is largely based on qualitative and quantitative methods of collecting data. This type of research design enables researchers to study a sample in depth. The qualitative research design of this study is represented in adopting the open-ended interview and classroom observation checklist (non-structural part) in collecting the data from the sample study. It tries to analyse the ideas, strategies and practices of English language teachers of Indian schools to discover how these practices optimise the education of English language learners in subject matter instructions. As students begin to acquire higher proficiencies in English language, teacher-student interactions need to gradually model more complexities in language structure. This provides the opportunity for English language learners to engage in content learning through the process of creative construction. The methodology of observation helps the researcher to collect detailed data about the sample being studied in its natural context. This type of the observation generates broad data.

The paper deals with the Observation (a research data collection instrument) which helps the researcher to collect detailed data about the sample being studied in its natural context. It has also been found that using the observation as a data collection instrument in the field of classroom research has gained increased attention in recent times. In other words, the observation was chosen to check to what extent teachers' beliefs (approaches) expressed in the questionnaire that the linguistic diversity of English language learners has important implications for the design of programmes intended to address the range of levels of English language learners' oral fluency, literacy skills, and cognitive growth and the interview are actually present in their classroom practice.

It also includes the Interview Pilot study in which the researcher aims to be familiar with the procedures, means needed to do the interview, time, the way of questioning and checking reliability and validity of items. This paper gives a sample of research that was gathered from English teachers of the schools of Gaya (Bihar) and it also found that now a days there is a shortage of English teachers because most of the teachers teach other classes (first and third classes). Forty teachers (representing 83.33% of the total number of teachers in Gaya) answered the questionnaire and the ten who were chosen randomly from the forty representing five different schools faced the interview and observation. This chapter presented strategies and ideas to optimize the education of English language learners in subject matter instruction through the discussion of four key instructional dimensions.

It also suggests as to how teachers could effectively manage the complexity of skill, content, and English language development instruction and also make this instruction accessible to English language learners? In the present study the researcher conducted the observation from the back of the classroom to observe how communication-based instruction can be an effective tool for providing English language learners access to content area learning. The researcher attempted to observe,

- whether sheltered language strategies allow students to develop knowledge of subject matter areas through their English language.
- whether through these strategies, teachers ensure that lessons are comprehensible to learners of different English language proficiency levels and also provide English language development.

Monitoring a student's degree of complexity in the use of the English language is another way of measuring progress in English language acquisition through communication-based instruction. The interview has become an important data collection instrument in educational research. The method of the structured interview was used in the present research to establish whether English language learners are benefited from language modeling and reinforcement of linguistic structures through peer interaction in the classroom or not. The interview helped the researcher to establish whether students then have the opportunity to learn the target language in a natural communicative setting through the use of authentic and meaningful language. If at all possible, native speakers and English language learners need the opportunity to participate jointly in content learning through team teaching situations in which student groups are integrated for instruction. 'Language goals' address learning the precise vocabulary words and sentence patterns needed to communicate content. Achieving 'general skill goals' means attaining study skills that promote both language and content learning. English language learners need to use language in purposeful contexts as a means to learn content. Classroom lessons incorporate the use of the English language to communicate content standards and follow-up activities. English language learners need to be exposed to both sides of the knowledge framework. English language learners can augment their comprehension in subject matter instruction by learning to select and apply graphic organisers to construct meaning in content learning. Communicative-based instruction models that incorporate the teaching of English language structures and language conventions through purposeful application and comprehension of content lessons are appropriate and encouraged. The research that supports effective instructional approaches for English language learners advocates learning from experiential activities to build a knowledge base for abstract thought. Researchers support helping students conceptualise new information through the use of concrete materials, embedding language objectives in content learning, and graphically organising the thought processes. If English language

learners can receive the tools for learning, then there should also be opportunities to succeed in school by learning adequate study skills along with language and content instruction.

Therefore, planning and implementation of more effective strategies are needed to assist students in developing the language and academics of the content area. The degree of complexity of academic demands continues to escalate as linguistic and cognitive accountability are set for English language learners by state norms and standards. Curricular materials must align selections and lessons to state frameworks and continue to increase the rigour of academic complexity regardless of the students' level of English proficiency or knowledge of content background. For many English language learners, content instruction is now a moving target of opportunities for curricular access and success in school.

Indeed, the paper presents various elements woven through content learning can increase mastery of expository texts inclusive of subject vocabulary development, presentation of text features, strategies for comprehension, and cognitive thinking skills. Communication-based instruction models that incorporate the teaching of English language structures and language conventions through purposeful application and comprehension of content lessons are appropriate and encouraged. The cognitive progression from practical to theoretical thinking provides meaningful constructs for concept learning. The research that supports effective instructional approaches for English language learners advocates learning from experiential activities to build a knowledge base for abstract thought. If English language learners can receive the tools for learning, then there should also be opportunities to succeed in school by learning adequate study skills along with language and content instruction. The paper defines the structure plan of the study and how the qualitative research is the most common research design in the study of teaching processes and practices. It aims to collect data or describe things in a non-numerical way. However, non numerical data of qualitative research can be changed into numerical ones by way of classification and categorisation. It helped in answering the questions whether direct and indirect modeling of English language structures and conventions with corrective feedback can and should be included in communication-based instruction through directed lessons or not. This paper also includes quantitative research as it enables the researcher to easily and economically collect measurable numerical information about large numbers of participants. It has the advantages of objectivity, generalizability and numbers. The paper has included the concept of "Triangulation" because the present research has engaged and employed the multi-method approach design for the present study and the multi-method approach design is referred to as triangulation. Using a single method in collecting data has many limitations and might be insufficient to provide adequate and accurate research results. Consequently, triangulation helps researchers to assure completeness and confirmation of research findings and results. Qualitative research

design can be defined as the research that aims to study a phenomenon in its natural and social contexts. Qualitative research as defined by Denzin and Lincoln (2005) means a “situated activity” (3) conducted in a natural setting that focuses on the observer/researcher in the complex historical field. It is appropriate when attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them.

This study enabled the researcher to get minute and detailed descriptions of the sample being studied. It also attempted to validate general belief that English learners need formal feedback, if they are to learn the language and that merging content instruction with English language development usually truncates the amount of time devoted to learning the second language. They believe that sheltered instruction was also examined. The qualitative research design was also used to know whether it usually includes or not adequate English development in the context of writing and as to what effect this phenomenon has on student writing. The written conventions of the target language should be linked to oral communication and content through daily language lessons in writing, spelling and grammar that are connected to the related readings of the content curriculum not taught as isolated and unrelated skills connecting daily language lessons to related reading succeeds in linking written language conventions to oral communication and content by demonstrating for English language learners the way in which writers use literary devices such as figures of speech, similes, idiomatic expressions, metaphors, imagery, analogies and the prosodic features (rhythm, intonation and phrasing) of the dialect. The readings help demonstrate the use of grammatical structures and spelling conventions across genres of literature and expose English language learner to new vocabulary development in context rather than in isolated word lists that have no meaning or connections to their word. In content instruction it is important for students to learn the structures of the English language in order to interpret the work of related readings across of English language learners to succeed in “content” learning has to do with how well they can infer meaning, draw conclusions, learn terminology, analyse problems and synthesise information from various sources which means they need to transfer and apply reading and language conventions across the curriculum. Students make gains in language acquisition by interacting with speakers of the English language in meaningful contexts and their English language oral fluency increases as they begin to respond and sustain communication in the target language just as accuracy in reading and writing develops with daily involvement in purposeful application. When language is regarded as a medium of learning it offers a context for communications, the thinking process in the subject matter without the need to translate content.

Qualitative data is the kind of data that is mostly used in a textual form (words, phrases and sentences) i.e. non-numerical is usually obtained from open ended item. In this paper the qualitative data is obtained from the interview.

Qualitative data analysis can be defined as a set of processes and procedures by which data is transformed from non numerical form into a numerical form by coding, sorting, categorisation and identifying themes. Jorgensen clarifies how qualitative data analysis occurs :

The researcher sorted and shifted them, searching for types classes sequences, processes, patterns or whole. The aim of this process was to assemble or reconstruct the data in a meaningful or comprehensible fashion. (Jorgensen 1989:107)

The steps of qualitative data analysis are explained in detail in the following ways:

- **Step One**  
Checking the answers of the interviewees for completeness and number.
- **Step Two**  
The answers were read and grouped together. In other words answers of questions No. 1 were put together and so on for to her answers.
- **Step Three**  
For the purposes of coding answers, they were typed in a word processor for clarity and control (cut, paste, coloring, font sizes etc.)
- **Step Four**  
Once the answers were typed in the word processor it was easy for the researcher to use cut and paste and colour coding techniques to organise and group similar responses, repetitions and highlight the relevant data through the use of colours, highlights different font sizes as well as different fonts.
- **Step Five**  
Once the answers were grouped they had to be labeled by descriptive words, categories and sub-categories next to them in order to know what the answer was about. Once the answers were coded, categories and sub-categories were established and grouped together as themes. It is worth mentioning that this step was one with the help of another Ph. D. student for the purpose of checking validity of the obtained themes.
- **Step Six**  
Once themes were identified they were again coded with numbers and analysed by Microsoft Excel 2007 and statistical package for social science (SPSS V 15.0). Finally frequencies and percentages were presented in pie and bar graphs.

Thus, an attempt has been made in this paper to use qualitative research which is the most common research design in the study of teaching processes and practices to evaluate the relevance of content-based language teaching.

**Fauzia Rahman**

M.A. (Linguistics)

Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh

**Works Cited**

- Denzin and Lincoln. "Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research".  
N.K Denzin & Y.S Lincoln (eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*  
(2nd ed) . Thousand Oaks, C.A : Sage, 2005.
- Krashen, S. *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning*. University of  
California : Pergamum Press, 1982.
- Jorgensen. *Participant Observation: A Methodology for Human Studies*.  
London: Sage, 1989.

