

Enhancing ESP Maritime English Reading Comprehension Using Vocabulary Language Prediction

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ABSTRACT

As one of the world's maritime countries, Indonesia strives to provide maritime education and training in accordance with International Maritime Organization laws. One of these is the capacity to communicate in Maritime English, particularly reading comprehension, to attain a better understanding when gathering information and communicating at sea. Maritime higher education instructors are looking for the finest technique to boost students' reading comprehension by acquiring vocabulary before the major reading activity. The average score of students in the first semester from three departments, which are Electro Technical Officer, Nautical, and Technical Departments, revealed that the majority of students are at the low level. The average score suggested a significant improvement in the intermediate level after the Vocabulary Language Prediction (VLP) was implemented. It confirms that using the VLP technique can help pupils improve their reading comprehension.

Keywords: maritime English; reading comprehension; vocabulary language prediction.

INTRODUCTION

Because more of shipping companies require officers and crew to support international trade and the global economy's stability, there is a high demand for educational institutions to be sustainable, particularly in maritime education and training. Because of globalization, ships are quickly becoming the world's largest mode of transportation. The demand for expert sailors is increasing in tandem with shipping activities. Because of the multicultural crew from several countries, English has become the marine language. According to the European Commission, over the last 25 years, 80% of the world's ships have had bilingual and multicultural crews (Seafarers Centre, 1996). As a result of substantial impediments to comprehension and communication in the English language, a number of serious occurrences occurred, including misunderstandings about flying maneuvers and misinterpretations of local dialects and instructions (Seafarers Centre, 1996).

As a result, students in the maritime academy must modify their learning methods, particularly reading, in order to gain more information, knowledge, and experiences from the texts they read, but most of them had difficulty comprehending the texts due to unfamiliar vocabularies in the maritime English context. Maritime English (ME), which is used to communicate from ship-to-ship, ship-to-shore, or shore-to-ship trade in marine areas and enterprises, is the most distinct and distinctive language among other English for Specific Language (ESP) pieces worldwide. The terminology, phrasings, languages, truncations, and abbreviations are complicated and distant from standard general English. Its inclination is as directed by (Shipping and Freight Resource, 2019) as follows, "a seafarer is never at the front or the back of a ship; they are at the bow or the stern; they are never on the left or right side, but rather port or starboard; they are never in their bedroom or the kitchen, but they might be in their cabin or in the galley; a boat's speed isn't estimated in miles or kilometers each hour, yet rather in tangles; and a boat, obviously, is alluded frequently as she and not generally as it." Covering yourself in Marine English is also an essential necessity for marine cadets, crews, officer candidates, and trainee mariners before embarking.

As a result, when the cadets are studying at the maritime college, lecturers must make multiple efforts to increase their marine English reading comprehension. Teaching reading methods can dramatically increase pupils' reading comprehension success (Mistar et al., 2016). Readers can use the skills to make their reading more active, competent, and intentional (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). It has been established that reading comprehension tactics make it easier to understand the text. Good reading strategies are also said to involve predicting, forecasting, deducing, summarizing, analyzing, and assessing. Goundar (2015), in his study on literature, explained how learners must use numerous ways independently to expand their vocabulary in order to become successful language learners.

The VLP (Vocabulary Language Prediction) technique is used as a pre-reading activity to scaffold the primary reading activity. Vocabulary, Language, and Prediction (VLP) is an activity that combines vocabulary, language production, and prediction to prepare for reading comprehension according to Wood & Robinson (1983) which was repeated by Wiesendanger (2001). Using this method, students can build strong vocabulary skills. Prior to reading, students use the VLP approach to learn new vocabulary. Students strengthen their reading comprehension skills by predicting possible outcomes in the assigned reading selection. Furthermore, Day, Hamamatsu, and Komura (1991) conducted a study in Japan on guessing or primarily applying to a reading text (Goundar, 2015). This study's sample included 181 high school pupils and 397 university students. Both high school and university students were asked to take a quiz after reading a short narrative, and the findings were the same for both groups. 181 high school students and 397 university students made up the sample for this study. After reading a short narrative, both the high school and university students were required to take a quiz, and the results were the same for both groups. They both do well. Additionally, Fan (2020) asserted that learners' vocabulary mastery can be enhanced by using predicting or guessing strategies based on his research on Chinese learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). It also supported the premise that the entire process of learning English should involve vocabulary growth deliberately. The researchers want to use the Vocabulary Language Prediction (VLP) technique in the pre-reading activity, which supports the above descriptions. It is also suggested that VLP can be done for language learners at any level. As (Azizifar et al., 2015) says in their study in a high school in Iran, 'The pre-reading stage is a practical practice that helps students enhance their reading comprehension skills. In the pre-reading session, students will learn how to master the terminology used in the main reading exercise so that they can easily comprehend the text.. Goundar, (2015) defines in his literature study of Vocabulary Learning Strategy of English as Foreign Language (EFL) Learners that to attain high reading comprehension, English teachers must use a variety of tactics to help their pupils acquire vocabulary. The conclusion is that vocabulary acquisition mechanisms include metacognitive, cognitive, memory, and activation procedures. (Lotfi, 2017). Learners must use metacognitive skills to identify words for comprehension. The cognitive method then employs prediction or guessing using linguistics items. Furthermore, repetition and association are included in the memory technique. The final technique is activation, in which previously learned phrases are employed in varied settings. As a result, the purpose of this study is to determine whether vocabulary language prediction can improve students' marine English reading comprehension.

METHODS

This study is a Classroom Action Research (CAR) aiming to determine the effectiveness of an innovative teaching strategy in improving students' hard and soft skills.. Latief (2019) argued CAR has the potential to improve the quality of teaching and learning for both teachers and students.. Latief (2019) also the technique of CAR's cycles is stated as planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. When one cycle is inadequate to meet the success requirements, the cycle must be repeated with some changes to the strategy's implementation.. Furthermore, the CAR's cycles which are conducted by (Indriyanti & Prasetyo, 2018) employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) using four steps or activities stated in figure 1.

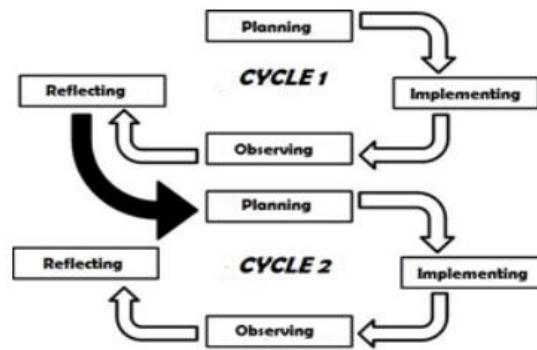


Figure 1. Classroom Action Research Cycles (Indriyanti & Prasetyo, 2018)

The subject of this study is the first semester students in Nautical Department, Technical Departement, and Electro Technical Officer (ETO) Departement in a maritime Polytechnic in Surabaya, Indonesia. There are 20 students in each group. Then the total students from three departments are 60 (sixty) students. The students have been studying maritime English for three months since they started their study in this polytechnic, yet they still have difficulty comprehending what they are reading. The preliminary analysis of their reading comprehension score reveals that they are still below the minimum standard in the Marlins test, which is the English language proficiency licenced test for seafarers from United Kingdom. Their English achievement in reading section was taken from the pre-test before implementing the VLP strategy. The average score was 50 (fifty) while the minimum standard is 70 (seventy).

The CAR in this study was carried out in two cycles. Each was completed in a single meeting. The first cycle had four activities: planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting. The planning of the lecture is the first activity in the first cycle. This activity involved organizing the learning tools and equipment required for the research, including the marine English reading comprehension pre-test, lesson plan, Vocabulary Language Prediction worksheet, and observation sheet. The second activity was to apply vocabulary, oral production, and word prediction tasks in meetings one, two, and three. The third observation is the review of the prediction and terminology. The final action in the first cycle was a reflection of all the other activities.

Furthermore, the second cycle was held immediately following the first. This cycle's activities included updating the strategy, arranging the updated lesson plan, and generating a revised VLP worksheet. Following that, there will be four meetings for implementation and observation of vocabulary, oral production, word prediction, reviewing, and post-test activities. Finally, the reflecting activity was carried out after all of the activities in the second cycle had been completed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The planning activities kicked off the activities in cycle one. By preparing a lesson plan and research instruments to collect information, the preparation was a VLP technique to improve the students' marine English reading comprehension. The success criterion was also set, which is 75 (seventy-five). Following that are the implementation activities. The 60 pupils, 20 from each of three classes, were divided into four groups. Then, one group of five pupils is formed. As a result, the total number of groupings was 12. The lecturer showed the presentation on the projector screen with the text title "A Day of a Cadet on a Cargo Ship". At that point, the lecturer inquired about their thoughts on those words and then listed some probable words on the white board. The VLP worksheet containing the closed-test text was then handed to each group. The test consisted of filling in the blanks with the proper word or phrases from the book, and students were required to write the similar meaning as well as the opposing term on the white board. If they still had problems, the English - English Dictionary was utilized to provide word meanings in English. In this activity, the lecturer-researcher can gather the qualitative data by observing the students. Most of the students hesitated to answer and write the answer on board. They were reluctant to ask questions also during this activity. In the next

meeting on oral language, the students learned the English words, phrases, and sentences for the exact pronunciation. Then, in the following meeting on prediction, all groups were asked to make predictions based on their prior knowledge. The lecturer-researcher typed their responses on the computer and displayed them on the projector so that all students were able to see them. The reading aloud, highlighting, noting and other activities as the reading comprehension strategies were done in this activity. The next meeting was the observation activity. The qualitative data showed that 12 students (20%) showed the ignorance in the learning session while implementing the vocabulary lesson in meeting one. The second meeting, the students showed better performance because only 6 students (10%) were not engaged in the lesson. In the third meeting, most of the students participated and engaged in the word prediction activity. Just two students in the different groups (1.2 %) seemed unengaged in the lesson. The last activity in the cycle one was the reflection of all activities which had been done.

The same steps as in cycle one were repeated in cycle two. The first activity is planning, which includes the same VLP strategy preparation to help students enhance their marine English reading comprehension. Then, as the second activity in cycle two, the implementation activities were completed. The 60 pupils were divided into 12 groups. Then, one group of five pupils is formed. As a result, the total number of groupings was 12. The presentation was shown on the projector screen with the sentence "One hand for the ship, one hand for yourself" by the lecturer.

The lecturer then began to type some words and phrases linked to the title, allowing the students to continue creating a list of possible words and phrases on the whiteboard. The lecturer-researcher increased students' grasp of the terms by recalling earlier knowledge of anything related to the words. After all of the students had participated in the lesson, the lecturer distributed the VLP worksheet to them. Following that, in the following oral language meeting, the students learnt the English words, phrases, and sentences for precise pronunciation, while the lecturer reminded them of this practice from the previous cycle. The teacher used prefixes, phonetic sounds, and word categories to introduce new vocabulary to the pupils in this session. The pupils' responses to each question were properly documented and recorded in their workbooks. Students were not permitted to use their dictionaries throughout this activity.

Then, at the subsequent prediction conference, all groups were asked to offer predictions based on their prior knowledge. The lecturer-researcher entered their comments on the computer and projected them so that all pupils could see them. This practice included reading aloud, underlining, noting, and other reading comprehension skills. The following meeting was an observation activity. According to the qualitative data, four students (2.4%) shown ignorance during the learning session when applying the vocabulary lesson in meeting one of cycle two. The pupils performed better in the second meeting since only three students (1.8%) were not engaged in the lesson. The majority of the students participated and engaged in the word prediction game during the third meeting. Only one kid in each group (0.6%) appeared disinterested in the session. The final activity in cycle two was a reflection on all of the previous activities. The summary of the implementation of VLP in this CAR is described in the table 1.

TABLE 1. The Summary of VLP in Maritime English Comprehension Activities

Steps	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
Planning	VLP	VLP
Implementing	60 students in three classes were divided into 4 groups in each class	60 students in three classes were divided into 5 groups in each class
Observing	Meeting 1 - Some students were reluctant to announce their responses in the front of the class - The students required longer time to think and discuss with	Meeting 1 - Most students showed enthusiasm when announcing their responses in the front of the class - The students were able to find the meaning of the words and phrases in Maritime

	their groups to find the meaning of the words and phrases in Maritime English • Most of the students produced grammatical errors	English in the time limit given by the lecturer. • Only a few students produced grammatical errors
	Meeting 2 • Some of the students showed their motivation with less confidence in producing the oral English words and phrases in Maritime English	Meeting 2 • Most of the students showed their motivation with more confidence in producing the oral English words and phrases in Maritime English
	Meeting 3 Reading Comprehension • Three-quarter or nine groups gave the correct answers but their words patterns were not in appropriate structures.	Meeting 3 Reading Comprehension • Almost all groups gave the correct answers. Eventhough their words patterns were various but the main ideas for the answer were clear and concised.
	Meeting 4 Evaluation test Students' average score was 65	Meeting 4 Evaluation test Students' average score was 80
Reflecting	• Some students were reluctant to participate actively in all activities • The students showed lack of confidence in announcing their answers and depended heavily on the dictionary and the lecturer. • The students' teamworks seemed unsolid since they had not adapted to solve the problems together in Maritime English lesson	• Most students were motivated in participating in all activities • The students showed more confidence in announcing their answers independently. • The students' teamworks grew stronger and showed active discussion to solve the problems together in Maritime English lesson
Average Evaluation Score	65	80

From the table above, the difference was recognized from the average evaluation scores between Cycle 1 and Cycle 2. In the first cycle, the average score of the students was only 65 (sixty-five), but in the second cycle, it showed a significant improvement which gained 80 (eighty). It showed that pre-reading was usefull to increase the reading comprehension of the students. Furthermore, the VLP approach was used as a pre-reading practice before beginning the major reading activity. According to the findings of this study, performing the pre-reading exercise improved students' reading comprehension. The main reading activity's vocabulary was covered in the pre-reading session, which showed pupils how to master it for simple text comprehension. According to a study conducted in an Iranian high school, pre-reading is an effective practice for improving pupils' reading comprehension.(Azizifar et al., 2015).

CONCLUSION

Students' reading comprehension abilities must be strengthened using the appropriate learning approaches. Using a VLP strategy during the pre-reading activity is one method. Furthermore, the students will better comprehend the terminology used in the significant reading activity, notably the vocabulary used in maritime education and training institutions and in Maritime English.

The VLP approach increased students' reading performance by increasing their motivation to study and building their confidence in English learning. Students also learned how to appropriately enunciate English words, indicating the usefulness of this method. The students were then able to join in the class discussion and express their thoughts. The following researcher is advised by the teacher-researcher to apply the VLP technique in a mixed learning setting in higher education for vocational fields.

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