



A STUDY ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF SKIMMING SKILLS IN INTERMEDIATE STUDENTS VIA CONTENT-BASED LEARNING

Keruenbaeva Amina Muxammad qizi

*Uzbekistan State World Languages University
3rd-year student of English faculty 2*

Khayrullayeva Dilorom

*Uzbekistan State World Languages University
senior Teacher*

Abstract. This research project aims to improve skimming skills among intermediate (B1) level students using a Content-Based Learning (CBL) approach. The topic of climate change was chosen to integrate meaningful content into reading instruction, enhancing student motivation and comprehension. The study investigates how CBL, by embedding skimming strategies in content-rich texts, can improve students' reading speed, ability to identify main ideas, and overall reading fluency.

Keywords: Skimming skills, Content-Based Learning (CBL), strategies, English language teaching, reading comprehension, language instruction.

Introduction

In the modern era of rapid information exchange, the ability to read efficiently and critically is crucial for academic success and informed citizenship. Among various reading strategies, skimming plays a vital role in helping learners quickly identify the main ideas of a text without reading every word. However, many intermediate-level (B1) students still struggle with this skill, often approaching reading tasks word-for-word, which reduces their efficiency and comprehension.

To address this issue, the present study adopts a Content-Based Learning (CBL) framework, which emphasizes language learning through meaningful subject matter. As Brinton, Snow, and Wesche explain, CBL allows learners to acquire language while exploring relevant topics, making the learning process both effective and engaging [Brinton, Snow, and Wesche, 2003, p. 2].

By aligning language instruction with engaging content, this study aims to determine whether CBL can significantly improve students' ability to skim texts more effectively. It also seeks to provide practical insights for language teachers on integrating reading strategies with content-based lessons.

Literature Review

To provide a solid theoretical foundation for the present study, several key works were reviewed, focusing on reading instruction, the development of skimming skills, and the implementation of Content-Based Learning (CBL) approaches in language



education. These sources offer essential insights into effective teaching strategies, curriculum design, and the integration of language and content learning. The literature reviewed below reflects both methodological guidance and practical frameworks relevant to the research objectives.

Harmer emphasizes the importance of integrating reading strategies like skimming into engaging and student-centered activities [How to Teach English, 2007]. He advocates for varied reading tasks that help learners process meaning quickly and efficiently.

Nation discusses reading fluency and stresses that strategies such as skimming and scanning are essential for developing automaticity in reading. He notes that regular practice with graded materials builds both speed and comprehension.

Brinton, Snow, and Wesche, in their foundational work on Content-Based Instruction, argue that language is best acquired when taught through meaningful content [Brinton, Snow, and Wesche, 2003, p.2]. They emphasize the role of topic-based lessons in motivating learners and building academic literacy skills.

Coyle, Hood, and Marsh present the CLIL framework, which aligns closely with CBL principles. They argue that integrating subject content with language instruction promotes deeper understanding and supports the development of both cognitive and linguistic skills.

Richards and Rodgers categorize Content-Based Instruction as an effective communicative approach [Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching (3rd ed) Cambridge University Press]. They highlight that it encourages interaction and contextualized language use, which in turn enhances learners' ability to apply strategies like skimming in real-world settings.

Harmer further elaborates on how structured reading activities, such as guided skimming tasks, can scaffold learner development [Harmer, J. (2007). The Practice of English Language Teaching (4th ed)]. He underlines the need for strategy training within communicative and purposeful reading lessons.

Taken together, these resources advocate for a comprehensive approach to teaching skimming. They emphasize the value of scaffolding, explicit strategy instruction, and authentic content to foster both linguistic and cognitive development. Through formative feedback, engaging materials, and repeated practice, intermediate-level learners can gradually master skimming and apply it as an essential tool in their broader reading repertoire.

Research Methodology

This study was designed to investigate the role of Content-Based Learning (CBL) in improving skimming skills among B1-level learners of English. The following research questions were developed to guide the inquiry:



1. What is skimming, and how does it support reading comprehension at the intermediate level?
2. What difficulties do the teachers face in teaching skimming reading skills for B1 level students?
3. How effective is it to use content-based learning (CBL) strategies in improving skimming skills for intermediate-level students?

To explore these questions, I employed a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, following a structured sequence of steps:

Step 1 – Lesson Observations;

Step 2 – Interviewing teachers;

Step 3 – Learners' Pre-test;

Step 4 - Lesson organization

Step 5 – Learners' Post test

Step 6 – Learners' questionnaire

Needs Analysis

To determine what kind of support students required in developing skimming skills, I first conducted a needs analysis. This involved observing online lessons from a language learning centre that delivers English instruction through digital platforms. The goal was to better understand how reading skills, especially skimming, are addressed in virtual classroom environments.

Additionally, I gathered input from teachers through semi-structured interviews. These interviews focused on identifying learners' common struggles, such as lack of familiarity with skimming techniques, difficulty identifying main ideas, and limited confidence when reading longer texts.

I also analyzed existing syllabi and instructional materials to evaluate whether they supported the development of reading efficiency. This allowed me to identify content gaps and adjust instructional strategies accordingly.

Comparative Analysis

To evaluate the outcomes of the intervention, I compared learner performance in the pre-test and post-test. The comparison helped measure the extent of improvement in students' ability to locate key information and summarize texts after skimming. I also examined various instructional resources, including authentic reading texts and digital content, to determine their alignment with B1-level learning objectives.

The comparison focused on three core questions:
a) Are the texts and tasks level-appropriate and engaging?
b) Do the materials support explicit development of skimming techniques?



c) Are learners able to transfer skimming strategies to different types of texts?

Analytical Method

A short instructional module titled “Improving Skimming Skills through Content-Based Learning (CBL)” was developed using climate change as the thematic focus. The materials included environmental texts, infographics, and reading tasks aimed at enhancing learners’ ability to extract key information efficiently.

Each lesson in the module was designed to promote skimming through structured activities such as timed readings, headline analysis, and summarization tasks. Harmer highlights that “developing students’ ability to find specific information quickly is a key reading skill in modern curricula” [Harmer, 2007, p. 107], supporting the emphasis on skimming in the tasks. The lessons also integrated content and language, reflecting the CBL approach, which “allows learners to acquire language through meaningful content and task engagement” [Richards & Rodgers, 2014, p. 118].

Observations, teacher feedback, and learner outcomes were analyzed to assess the module’s effectiveness. This triangulated analysis confirmed that CBL strategies can successfully improve intermediate learners’ skimming abilities while keeping the learning process engaging and content-rich.

Observation results

Overall, Mashrapova S demonstrates strong teaching practices with a well-organized and engaging classroom environment. The development of learning objectives is clear, with objectives given at the start and revisited at the end of the class, ensuring alignment with the lesson. Instructional materials, including audiovisual aids, are used purposefully, supporting the lesson’s goals effectively. The teacher’s enthusiasm is evident, fostering an engaging atmosphere for both students and themselves. However, there are opportunities to improve by incorporating more student names in interactions and encouraging quieter students to engage more in class discussions.

The lesson is well-paced, with clear explanations and ample opportunities for student participation. The instructor ensures that the physical, intellectual, and emotional needs of students are met, making the classroom an inclusive space. The use of humor is appropriate, and the instructor’s availability for questions and feedback after class is commendable. While the instructor is responsive to student feedback, a greater focus on integrating students’ prior learning and providing more individualized support could further enhance the experience. Additionally, some students’ engagement could be increased by diversifying methods to boost motivation.

In conclusion, Mashrapova S’s teaching is effective, but small adjustments in student interaction and more individualized approaches could take the learning experience to the next level.

Interview results

The interview with Miss Sevinchoy highlighted the importance of skimming as a



strategy for intermediate-level students to quickly grasp main ideas without focusing on every word. She emphasized modeling the technique, addressing challenges like skipping unknown words, and using timed tasks to promote focus. Skimming works best with informational texts, and success is assessed through general comprehension questions. Miss Sevinchoy advised new teachers to be patient, use short texts, combine skimming with scanning, and celebrate small progress. I also acquired new knowledge and methods that I can use in my future lessons.

Questionnaire results

Most students enjoy learning new vocabulary through topics, emphasizing the effectiveness of integrating vocabulary into meaningful contexts. Discussing interesting content is another favored activity, showcasing the importance of engaging and thought-provoking materials. In contrast, group activities and individual reading tasks are less preferred, suggesting that these elements may need adjustments to align better with student interests.

All respondents agreed that using real-life topics significantly enhances their learning. This highlights the value of connecting lesson content to practical and relatable scenarios, making learning more relevant and impactful. Group work is highly appreciated, with most students enjoying collaborative activities. However, a small number prefer working alone, suggesting the need for flexibility in lesson design to accommodate varying preferences. Motivation to participate in reading activities is remarkably high, indicating that the materials and tasks provided are engaging and effective. This enthusiasm underscores the success of CBL in fostering active participation.

When it comes to explaining reading tasks, most students prefer step-by-step instructions, while others appreciate practical examples. Few prefer figuring out tasks independently, highlighting the importance of clear teacher guidance to support comprehension.

The results demonstrate that CBL lessons are successful in engaging students, particularly through real-life topics and vocabulary-focused activities. However, there is room for improvement in group activities and individual reading tasks. To ensure continued effectiveness, teachers should provide clear instructions, maintain context-driven content, and create a balance between group and independent activities. This approach will enhance learning experiences and meet diverse student needs.

Data Analysis

This analysis presents the results of a study aimed at improving the skimming skills of 12 intermediate-level students through the implementation of a Content-Based Learning (CBL) approach. The thematic focus was on climate change, integrating language learning with meaningful content to enhance students' academic reading abilities.



	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Azizov A	4	5
Boltayev J	4	5
Malikov S	5	5
Masharipova U	4	5
Qahorova A	5	5
Umarov D	5	5
Xoshimov D	5	5
Yoqubov T	5	5
Shodiyev A	4	5
Murtazayev U	5	5
Nuritdinova L	4	5
Kengesbaeva K	4	5
RESULTS	4,5	5

Before the intervention, students took a pre-test designed to assess their existing skimming skills. Scores ranged from 4 to 5 out of a maximum of 5 points. Specifically:

- 6 students (50%) scored 4 points, indicating they had some grasp of skimming but needed further practice to efficiently extract main ideas and key details quickly.
- 6 students (50%) scored a perfect 5 points, demonstrating a good level of proficiency in skimming strategies even before the intervention.

The average score for the pre-test was 4.67, showing that while the majority of students were fairly proficient, a significant minority required additional support to reach the highest level of skill.

Following the pre-test, an instructional program grounded in the Content-Based Learning (CBL) methodology was implemented. Climate change was selected as the thematic focus to provide meaningful, real-world content that could enhance learner engagement while developing skimming skills. CBL “creates conditions for meaningful communication by immersing learners in topics that extend beyond language form” [Brinton, Snow, and Wesche 2003.p. 17]. The reading materials included authentic environmental texts that aligned with B1-level objectives, allowing learners to simultaneously access subject knowledge and refine their reading strategies.

Throughout the module, students practiced key skimming techniques such as identifying headings, topic sentences, and keywords, often through structured, time-limited reading tasks. Collaborative activities and follow-up discussions reinforced understanding and encouraged reflective learning. Coyle, Hood, and Marsh support



this integrated approach, noting that “language learning is more effective when content drives communication and learners focus on understanding meaning in context” [Coyle, Hood, and Marsh 2010, p. 29]. The intervention not only improved learners’ skimming efficiency but also highlighted the value of CBL in promoting both linguistic and cognitive development. -Post-Test Results

After completing the CBL-based instruction, students were re-assessed using the same skimming test. The post-test results showed a clear and significant improvement:

- All 12 students (100%) achieved the highest possible score of 5 points.
- The class average increased from 4.67 to 5.0, reflecting a uniform enhancement in skimming ability across all learners.

The transformation is particularly notable for the students who initially scored 4 points. They were able to improve their skills to match those of their higher-performing classmates, closing the gap and creating an evenly skilled group.

-Analysis and Implications

The results underscore the effectiveness of the Content-Based Learning approach in enhancing skimming skills. The method proved successful not only in raising lower scores but also in maintaining the high standards of already proficient students. This suggests that CBL’s focus on meaningful content and relevant subject matter can motivate learners and provide contextual support that strengthens academic reading strategies.

Furthermore, the consistent post-test scores indicate that the intervention was inclusive and adaptive, addressing individual learning needs while promoting collective achievement. By embedding language instruction within a content area like climate change, students were exposed to authentic material that increased their engagement and facilitated deeper cognitive processing.

Conclusion

This study confirms that integrating Content-Based Learning (CBL) into reading instruction significantly improves students’ skimming skills, helping them to identify key information more quickly and effectively. As Harmer (2007) highlights, engaging learners with meaningful content enhances their motivation and language acquisition process [How to Teach English, p. 235]. Furthermore, the targeted use of CBL addresses individual learning needs, promoting equal achievement among students. The improvement in skimming skills observed in this study aligns with Nation’s [2009] assertion that skill-focused instruction combined with contextualized content leads to better reading outcomes [Teaching ESL/EFL Reading and Writing, p. 102]. Besides academic progress, this approach fosters learner autonomy and confidence, essential factors for long-term language development. Overall, the results suggest that carefully designed, content-rich



instruction not only advances technical reading skills but also encourages students' engagement and critical thinking. This supports the broader pedagogical goal of preparing students to navigate complex texts in academic and real-world contexts.

REFERENCES

1. Brinton, D. M., Snow, M. A., & Wesche, M. B. (2003). Content-Based Second Language Instruction (2nd ed.). University of Michigan Press.
2. Coyle, D., Hood, P., & Marsh, D. (2010). CLIL: Content and Language Integrated Learning. Cambridge University Press.
3. Harmer, J. (2007). How to Teach English (2nd ed.). Pearson Longman.
4. Harmer, J. (2007). The Practice of English Language Teaching (4th ed.). Pearson Longman.
5. Nation, I. S. P. (2009). Teaching ESL/EFL Reading and Writing. Routledge.
6. Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.