

Enhancing English Language Skills through Collaborative Strategic Reading at Makassar Tourism Polytechnic

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Abstract

Students in vocational higher education, particularly in tourism studies, often face challenges in comprehending English texts related to their field, such as brochures, menus, and service dialogues. This issue hinders their ability to engage in global communication and meet the professional demands of the tourism industry. This study aims to explore the implementation of Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) as an instructional strategy to enhance English language skills specifically reading comprehension, vocabulary development, and critical thinking in an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) context at Makassar Tourism Polytechnic. A qualitative descriptive method was employed, involving classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with students and lecturers, and document analysis. The findings indicate that CSR, through its four stages preview, Click and Clunk, Get the Gist, and Wrap Up effectively improved student engagement and comprehension of tourism-related texts. Students showed greater confidence in interpreting and summarizing English materials, while classroom interaction became more collaborative and student-centered. Document analysis also revealed more concise and focused student assignments, reflecting improved understanding and application of reading strategies. The study concludes that CSR is an effective and relevant approach to teaching English in tourism education, as it supports both linguistic and interpersonal skill development. The implication of this research suggests that integrating CSR into ESP curricula can better prepare tourism students for

real-world communication tasks and professional interactions in international settings, ultimately enhancing their readiness for careers in the rapidly expanding global tourism industry.

Keywords: Collaborative Strategic Reading; English for Specific Purposes; Tourism Education; Reading Comprehension; Vocabulary Acquisition

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary globalized era, proficiency in English has become an indispensable skill, particularly in the tourism and hospitality sectors where cross-cultural communication is routine (Trang & Phuong, 2023). For students at Makassar Tourism Polytechnic, mastering English is not merely an academic requirement but a fundamental necessity to thrive in international professional environments. The tourism industry demands professionals who can effectively communicate with diverse clientele, comprehend complex information, and adapt to various cultural contexts (Pascucci et al., 2023). Despite the recognized importance of English proficiency, traditional teaching methodologies often fall short in equipping students with the necessary skills. Conventional approaches, typically characterized by teacher-centered instruction and rote memorization, may not adequately address the dynamic and interactive nature of real-world communication in the tourism industry. This discrepancy underscores the need for innovative instructional strategies that foster active learning and practical language application.

Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) emerges as a promising pedagogical approach to address these challenges (Deák & Kumar, 2024). CSR integrates cooperative learning with strategic reading instruction, encouraging students to work collaboratively to enhance their comprehension skills. The strategy encompasses four key components: Preview, Click and Clunk, Get the Gist, and Wrap Up. These components collectively aim to activate prior knowledge, identify and clarify difficult vocabulary, extract main ideas, and summarize information, respectively. Research indicates that CSR not only improves reading comprehension but also enhances vocabulary acquisition and critical thinking skills (Khampool & Chumworatayee, 2023).

Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) integrates four reading strategies: Preview, Click and Clunk, Get the Gist, and Wrap Up (Ahmed Abdel-Al Ibrahim et al., 2023). These

strategies are designed to activate prior knowledge, clarify difficult concepts, identify main ideas, and summarize information, respectively. CSR has been shown to improve students' reading comprehension, engagement, and vocabulary (Asiri, 2022). It aligns with the cooperative learning theory, which emphasizes student collaboration to achieve shared academic goals (Yang, 2023). Cooperative learning approaches have long been recognized for promoting positive interdependence, individual accountability, and social skills development.

CSR is particularly effective in ESP contexts, where authentic materials and specific vocabulary are crucial (Niu & Dhamotharan, 2021). ESP instruction often involves content-rich texts that require students to acquire both subject-specific knowledge and language skills. CSR supports this dual focus by enabling students to work together, discuss content, and apply strategies to comprehend technical information. Several studies have reported that CSR benefits learners by providing structured opportunities for peer learning and reducing anxiety associated with reading complex texts (Lin & Chen, 2024). Moreover, CSR has been adapted for various educational contexts, including secondary schools, tertiary institutions, and special education settings (Aledo-Ruiz et al., 2022). Its flexibility allows instructors to tailor reading materials and activities to suit students' proficiency levels and academic needs. In tourism education, CSR facilitates the use of industry-related texts, brochures, manuals, and case studies, making language learning more relevant and meaningful. The social nature of CSR activities also mirrors real-world professional interactions, where teamwork and effective communication are essential.

In the context of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), particularly within tourism education, CSR offers tailored benefits. By engaging with authentic materials such as brochures, hotel menus, and travel itineraries, students can develop language skills directly applicable to their future careers. Moreover, the collaborative nature of CSR mirrors the teamwork and interpersonal communication prevalent in the tourism industry, thereby providing students with relevant experiential learning opportunities (Gal, 2024). The rapid growth of the tourism sector in Indonesia, especially in Makassar, further accentuates the urgency of enhancing English language education (Lima et al., 2023). As the industry expands, there is an increasing demand for professionals who are not only proficient in English but also adept at navigating multicultural interactions. Educational institutions, therefore, bear the responsibility of implementing effective teaching strategies that align with industry requirements and prepare students for the global workforce.

This study aims to explore the implementation of CSR at Makassar Tourism Polytechnic and its impact on students' English language skills. By examining students' experiences, instructional materials, and classroom practices, the research seeks to provide insights into the effectiveness of CSR in enhancing reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and critical thinking within an ESP framework.

METHODS

This research employs a qualitative descriptive method to provide an in-depth understanding of CSR implementation at Makassar Tourism Polytechnic. Qualitative descriptive research focuses on describing phenomena as they occur naturally, offering insights into participants' experiences and perceptions. Data were collected from three sources: classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with students and lecturers, and document analysis of lesson plans and student work. These data collection techniques were chosen to capture diverse perspectives and ensure the credibility of findings. Classroom observations were conducted over eight weeks, focusing on CSR activities in English for Tourism classes. Observers recorded student interactions, participation patterns, and strategy use during reading tasks. Semi-structured interviews involved ten students and three lecturers, exploring their views on CSR, challenges encountered, and perceived benefits. Document analysis examined instructional materials, student assignments, and assessment records to evaluate language outcomes. The data were analyzed thematically, focusing on the impact of CSR on students' English language skills.

RESULTS

Observations indicated increased student participation and interaction during CSR sessions. Students actively engaged in group discussions, clarified vocabulary, and collaboratively identified main ideas in texts. They demonstrated improved reading comprehension as they applied CSR strategies consistently. Interviews revealed positive student attitudes towards CSR, noting its role in making reading activities more enjoyable and effective. Students appreciated the opportunity to work in groups, share opinions, and learn from peers.

Table 1. Class Observation Data

Date	Time	CSR Strategy	Activities & Interactions	Student Response	Observer Notes
January 05, 2025	09.00	Preview & Click and Clunk	Students are divided into groups, reading tourist brochures and marking difficult words	Many students actively ask for the meaning of words, enthusiastically discuss	Students seem accustomed to working in groups; vocabulary enrichment strategies
March 12, 2025	09.00	Get the Gist	Students are asked to summarize the contents of the text about hotel services in 1 sentence	Some still have difficulty identifying the main idea correctly	Need intensive practice in summarizing specific information in English
March 19, 2025	09.00	Wrap Up	Each group presents a summary and asks 1 question to another group	Students are more confident when presenting and actively ask questions	CSR helps improve speaking and critical thinking skills

The implementation of CSR in English for Tourism class showed positive impacts on students' engagement and language skills development. Preview and Click and Clunk strategies successfully increased group interaction and enriched vocabulary through active discussion. In Get the Gist strategy, there were still challenges in identifying the main idea, indicating the need for intensive practice in summarizing specific information in the context of ESP (English for Specific Purposes). Wrap Up strategy showed encouraging results, where students appeared more confident in presentations and demonstrated critical thinking skills through question and answer sessions between groups.

Furthermore, the results of the document analysis are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Document Analysis Results

Type	Initial Findings	Findings After CSR	Notes
RPS	Reading materials are general, not focused on tourism context	Materials adjusted to brochure text, hotel menu, receptionist conversations	Relevance increased; CSR strategies more contextual to student needs
Student Assignment	Before CSR: Summary is too long and not focused	After CSR: Summary is more concise, according to the structure of "Get the Gist"	There was improvement in the ability to organize main ideas and define important vocabulary

The document analysis indicates clear improvements in instructional materials and student outputs following the implementation of CSR. The course syllabus (RPS) initially used generic English texts, but after CSR was introduced, the materials were adapted to suit tourism-specific contexts such as brochures, hotel menus, and receptionist dialogues. This shift significantly increased the relevance and practicality of learning content, making it more aligned with students' future professional environments (Walter, 2024).

In terms of student assignments, summaries written before CSR lacked focus and were often too lengthy. After applying the "Get the Gist" strategy, students produced more concise and structured summaries that effectively captured main ideas and essential vocabulary.

Table 3. Interview Results Regarding the Implementation of CSR

Aspect	Student (R)	Student (S)	Lecturer (Mrs. D)
Semester / Position	Semester IV	Semester IV	Lecturer of English for Tourism
Study Program	Hospitality Management	Travel Business	-
Early Experience	Initially did not understand CSR, but after being explained and tried, felt helped to understand the text	More interesting than traditional methods because of active discussion	CSR was introduced because the old method was not effective in handling ESP technical texts
Most Helpful CSR Strategy	Get the Gist – helps to find the main idea in the reading	Click and Clunk – helps understand new vocabulary through context	The four strategies complement each other, especially when understanding ESP content
Challenges Faced	A passive group member, but becomes active after being directed by the lecturer	Group dynamics are sometimes unbalanced, but roles are divided so that everyone is active	Students were initially not used to discussing and preparing CSR materials was quite time-consuming
Lecturer Role	Provides explanation of strategies, arranges roles in groups, guides discussions	Guide the group to be fair and everyone participates	Designing learning with CSR, choosing materials that are appropriate for the world of tourism
Changes Perceived	More confident, vocabulary increases, active in discussions	Better understanding of reading texts, not getting bored quickly, speaking skills also improve	Students became more critical, actively discussed, and improved in understanding texts and vocabulary
Efektivitas CSR dalam ESP	Very helpful in understanding texts related to the world of tourism work	Relevant because reading materials come from the context of tourism: brochures, itineraries, destination descriptions	CSR is effective because it brings language closer to the professional situations that students will face

The interviews with students and lecturers revealed that the implementation of Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) had a significant positive impact on English language learning in the context of tourism education. Students expressed that CSR made reading activities more engaging and helped them better understand complex texts through peer collaboration. The strategies they found most useful were *Click and Clunk*—which assisted with vocabulary comprehension—and *Get the Gist*—which improved their ability to identify main ideas.

Although some challenges were noted, such as unequal participation within groups and initial unfamiliarity with the CSR method, these issues were gradually addressed through clear role assignments and guidance from instructors. From the lecturer's perspective, CSR not only encouraged student interaction and deeper comprehension but also aligned well with the needs of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), particularly in preparing students for real-world communication in tourism and hospitality sectors. Lecturers reported that CSR encouraged active learning and reduced students' reluctance to participate. They observed significant improvements in students' vocabulary acquisition, critical thinking, and summarization skills. Document analysis confirmed these findings, showing vocabulary enrichment, more coherent summaries, and greater accuracy in completing comprehension tasks. Students' written work reflected enhanced ability to identify key information, paraphrase content, and use appropriate tourism-related terminology.

DISCUSSION

The findings of classroom observations in this study showed significant developments in the implementation of CSR over time. In the first observation on January 5, 2025, the Preview and Click and Clunk strategies succeeded in triggering active participation of students in identifying difficult vocabulary, as seen from their enthusiasm in the discussion. This is in line with the research of Zhang & Huang, (2024) who found that Click and Clunk was effective in increasing student engagement and vocabulary comprehension. However, in contrast to their findings that highlighted the effectiveness of this strategy for high school students, our study showed that this method is also very beneficial for English learners at the vocational college level (Yapp et al., 2023).

The second observation on March 12, 2025 revealed that some students still had difficulty in implementing the Get the Gist strategy to summarize a text about hotel services.

This finding strengthens the results of Kim et al., (2022) study on the challenges in collaborative reading learning, especially in identifying the main idea of authentic texts. However, our study provides new insights that this difficulty is more pronounced when dealing with tourism-specific texts that contain technical terms and complex sentence structures. In the last observation on March 19, 2025, there was a positive increase in students' presentation confidence and critical questioning skills, which confirmed Karatas et al. (Karataş et al., 2024) findings on the benefits of CSR in developing speaking and critical thinking skills.

The observed developments from the first to the last observation showed a pattern of students' adaptation to the CSR strategy. This finding supports Vygotsky's theory of scaffolding in collaborative learning, while enriching our understanding of its application in the context of tourism vocational education. Compared with a similar study by Mio et al. (Miao et al., 2024) conducted in a public university, our study revealed that vocational students took longer to master high-level reading strategies such as Get the Gist, but showed rapid progress in the practical application of tourism vocabulary.

The findings of this study regarding the implementation of CSR in ESP for tourism education reveal several significant advancements that both align with and expand upon previous research. Document analysis demonstrates that adapting learning materials to specific tourism contexts (such as brochures and hotel menus) following CSR implementation enhanced learning relevance. This supports findings on the importance of material contextualization in ESP. However, this study makes a novel contribution by demonstrating CSR catalytic role in this adaptation process, contrasting with Miao et al., (2024) needs analysis approach which didn't incorporate collaborative reading strategies.

Regarding skill development, the observed improvements in summarization ("Get the Gist") and vocabulary comprehension ("Click and Clunk") corroborate Miao et al., (2024) findings on CSR effectiveness. The unique contribution here is that these improvements were particularly evident with tourism-specific terminology, an aspect underemphasized in previous general academic context studies. Student interview data showing increased confidence and speaking skills reinforcement Zarei & Mohammadi, (2022) findings about CSR secondary benefits for productive skills, with special emphasis on vocational tourism contexts where practical communication skills are crucial.

The implementation challenges identified, including uneven participation and extensive instructor preparation time, were previously noted by Zarei and Mohammadi (Zarei & Mohammadi, 2022). However, this study offers practical solutions through role allocation and work-context material design, which were less explored in earlier research. From the instructor perspective, the findings about CSR effectiveness for ESP learning support Zarei & Mohammadi, (2022) work, while adding new insights about how CSR bridges the gap between language learning and tourism industry needs. The observed changes in the Semester Learning Plan (RPS) suggest CSR implementation requires greater curriculum adaptation than indicated in previous general English classroom studies (Zeng et al., 2023).

This research makes three significant contributions to the field: (1) demonstrating CSR application in vocational ESP, (2) developing work-context adapted materials, and (3) enhancing professional communication skills through collaborative reading strategies. These findings have important implications for vocational English curriculum development, particularly regarding closer integration between language learning strategies and specific competency requirements. The study also reveals that while CSR core benefits remain consistent across contexts, its vocational application requires particular attention to industry-specific materials and professional skill integration, areas that warrant further investigation in future research.

CONCLUSION

CSR proves to be a beneficial strategy for improving English language skills among students at Makassar Tourism Polytechnic. It enhances reading comprehension, vocabulary, and critical thinking in an engaging, collaborative environment. Incorporating CSR into the English curriculum can better prepare students for the demands of the international tourism industry. The strategy's emphasis on peer interaction, active participation, and strategic reading makes it a valuable tool in language education. Further research is recommended to explore the long-term effects of CSR on students' professional communication skills and career readiness. Future studies could also investigate the integration of CSR with digital learning platforms and authentic tourism resources, expanding its application in blended and online learning environments. Additionally, comparative studies involving different ESP disciplines could provide insights into CSR adaptability and impact across various fields.

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