

Investigating best practices for teaching reading recount text in the context of ESP

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the implementation of best practices in teaching reading recount texts within the context of Social Care education at a vocational high school. Recognizing the challenges in conventional learning materials for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) students, this research aims to explore how an English teacher's innovative approach to teaching reading recount text in the field of Social Care. A descriptive qualitative design was employed to describe how the teacher implemented the best practice in teaching reading recount text in the Social Care major. Data collection involved observation and interviews with the English teacher responsible for the Social Care major. The study was conducted at SMK Roudhatul Jannah, chosen for its newly introduced Social Care major in the Indonesian vocational education system. The analysis of the data collected revealed that the teacher's best practice involved focusing on biographies of notable figures in Social Care. The manual creation of biographies allowed the teacher to address the specific needs of the students, fostering engagement and practical application of knowledge. The research concludes that the teacher's proactive approach in manually creating biographies of notable figures not only addresses the limitations of conventional learning materials but also demonstrates a commitment to providing relevant content aligned with the student's major. The findings underscore the importance of ESP teachers adopting innovative teaching methods that resonate with students' specific needs, so it can be beneficial for their future careers.

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INTRODUCTION

Reading is central to the process of learning language skills that must be mastered by students. Reading is a tool for learning a language, communicating, and exchanging information (Kondrashova, 2020; Sihombing, 2020). Reading is important since it forms the basis of literacy, it is the process by which the reader understands the intention of the purpose or message of the writer. Additionally, Suryaningrat and Syahrial (2021) explained reading as a process of identifying, interpreting, and understanding ideas that rely on the development of an individual's language background experience cognitive abilities, and attitudes. In reading, there must be a comprehension. Husni and Wati (2021) define reading comprehension as the ability to comprehend written texts effectively. It includes a range of cognitive functions like vocabulary, decoding, and background

knowledge in addition to metacognitive strategies like connection-making and monitoring (Iswati & Ridha, 2023). In short, the ability to read text, understand it, and comprehend its content is what is meant by reading comprehension.

To achieve the purpose of reading, which is to obtain effective or in-depth information from the text, students must be able to understand the text to fully comprehend the content. In order to enhance a student's reading abilities, a variety of texts can be used. They include report texts (Yulianti & Setiawan, 2019), recount texts (Zahro & Rachmawati, 2021), narrative texts (Handayani et al., 2020), descriptive texts (Usman & Baihaqi, 2020), and procedural texts (Daniarti et al., 2020). Recount texts are among the reading resources that inform the reader of a specific experience, action, or activity that took place in the past. Husna and Multazim (2019) stated that a recount text is used to narrate historical events or experiences in a clear and comprehensive way. Recount texts are a kind of text where historical events are recalled to the reader to clarify what happened and when it happened (Salawazo et al., 2020). Furthermore, Theriana (2020) claimed that a basic recount text form consists of an orientation (opening), a series of events, and a reorientation (closing). The social function of a recount text is to retell events for the goal of knowledge or entertainment.

One of the most crucial English language skills that students should acquire is reading, although certain students still struggle with it, particularly when it comes to reading recount text. According to Mustika (2020), there are a few problems with reading recount texts. Firstly, students frequently have trouble understanding what they are reading. It is challenging for them to identify language elements, comprehend the structure, and determine the primary concept of the text. Second, students often lack the vocabulary needed to translate and understand words in the text. Lastly, some students are less motivated to learn English because they have limited knowledge and the teaching process relies too much on textbooks. Moreover, Suriani and Yeni (2023) discovered that students misunderstood the material provided since they were not engaged in listening to their teacher's explanations when reading recount texts. Because they were unfamiliar with the texts' form and content, students found it challenging to read recount texts (Lesmana & Resmini, 2020; Prayitno et al., 2021). Additionally, there is a connection between the role of the teacher in the classroom and the students' passivity during reading activities (Virdaus & Rifa'i, 2021). These statements suggest that teachers have to use their creativity to engage students and engage them with the subject matter.

To address those challenges, implementing best practices in teaching reading recount texts within the ESP framework can significantly enhance students' engagement and comprehension, particularly in specialized fields such as Social Care. As Oktariyani et al., (2023) stated that in teaching reading, one of the main priorities of the teacher is how to enable students to comprehend the reading material and participate more actively in the process of reading English texts. In order to effectively impart the skills to students through the use of appropriate teaching methods, teachers of ESP must have a significant amount of relevant practical experience (Godstime & Joseph, 2016). Since ESP teaching is specific to the needs of the students, general English (GE) instruction and the English material utilized in ESP instruction should be completely different (Candra & Khoiriyah, 2024). Further, Mahbub (2018) stated that the term "general English" describes a setting that is more all-encompassing and gives equal weight to the teaching of all four language skills to students. Meanwhile, English for Specific Purposes is a language teaching strategy that places a strong emphasis on the needs and interests of the students in terms of both content and methodology (Asrifan et al., 2020). Furthermore, Sarmiento and Bocorny (2018) stated that the ultimate goal of ESP is to allow students to use English to fulfill their needs in specific fields. This means teachers are required to fulfill the needs of the students by creating some materials related to their major. In short, ESP teachers are required to be creative in designing the teaching material so that it can meet the needs of the students.

Unfortunately, the conventional teaching materials used in vocational high schools in Indonesia contain the same content as General English (GE), whereas English for Specific Purposes (ESP) includes specialized vocabulary tailored to meet learners' specific needs. According to Sari et al., (2021), the English learning resources utilized in VHS are similar

to those used in GE and do not take into consideration the specific needs of the students. Furthermore, [Asmin \(2019\)](#) stated one of the hot issues that are being talked about in Indonesia is related to the quality of vocational schools, especially in the teaching and learning process where teachers still struggle to provide students with content that meets their needs. The main reason for that was the fact that the written material included in the instructional materials had little impact on the students' daily lives ([Dianti et al., 2023](#); [Oktarina et al., 2022](#)). In conclusion, the use of generic learning materials without modification to the needs of the ESP students prevents teaching effectiveness. Which results in a lack of interest and inefficiency in achieving learning objectives despite the lack of a specific reading strategy.

Given the problems listed above, some previous studies related to designing English materials and developing interactive multimedia used for teaching reading in ESP. [Puspita et al., \(2016\)](#) developed ESP reading materials by using authentic materials in the form of a booklet. Based on the findings, the students were happy and interested in learning ESP reading materials because they felt the vocabulary would be very helpful for their future jobs. [Noho et al., \(2018\)](#) also developed supplementary English reading materials for ESP students. The findings demonstrated that students preferred reading materials that were particular to their field over those that were generic. Additionally, [Sari et al., \(2021\)](#) developed interactive multimedia material for reading recount text in the ESP school. The finding shows that the material had a potential effect on students' achievement.

Prior research has shown the benefits of interactive materials in enhancing ESP students' engagement and learning outcomes. Furthermore, developing the reading materials for ESP students has the potential to increase the students' reading achievement concerns the development of knowledge of their educational background, which also supports their job in the future ([Sari & Atmanegara, 2018](#); [Mohammadzadeh, et al., 2015](#); [Fauzi & Hanifah, 2019](#)). However, there is still a lack of empirical investigations on how ESP teachers implement best practices in teaching reading recount texts to students majoring in Social Care. A Social Care major is newly invented in the vocational high school in Indonesia. Therefore, this current study aims to investigate how the ESP teacher majoring in Social Care implemented best practices in teaching reading recount text in the field of Social Care. Thus, with the best practice from the teacher, this study contributes to the theoretical understanding of ESP education by providing insights into effective teaching practices for reading recount texts in the Social Care major. It highlights the role of context-specific teaching strategies and materials that cater to the unique needs of Social Care students. Moreover, the result of this study can be as reference for ESP teachers in different field of study.

METHOD

Research Design

This research used a descriptive qualitative method, as it focused on a specific teaching and learning process in a school environment ([Cresswell, 2018](#)). Descriptive-qualitative studies are used for describing and exploring the depth and complexities of a phenomenon, problem, or subject. This kind of research can provide answers to specific questions relating to individuals' responses (experiences, knowledge, attitude, feelings, and views) to an event, and its facilitators and barriers ([Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022](#); [Kim, et al., 2017](#)). In this research, this descriptive qualitative research provides in-depth insights into the teaching and learning processes, highlighting individual experiences and identifying facilitators and barriers to best practices in ESP education.

Research Subjects

This research was done at SMK Roudhatul Jannah, Gondanglegi majoring in Social Care grade X. SMK Roudhatul Jannah was chosen because it has a Social Care major that was newly invented in the Vocational Highschool in Indonesia. Therefore, the teacher was chosen as the research subject as she is the only English teacher who handled the Social Care major in SMK Roudhatul Jannah.

Research Instrument

In collecting the data two types of instruments were used, they were observation and interview. Firstly, the observation checklist was used to make sure the data that the researcher obtained during the activities was perfectly matched according to the information that was given by the data source. Fraenkel et al., (2012) stated that it is better to observe how people act or how objects appear in order to provide answers to some types of research questions. The use of an observation checklist ensures a methodical approach to the observation process and facilitates the researchers' comprehension of the steps and activities related to teaching reading recount text. The observation checklist note includes statements of activities, a yes or no checklist, and space for additional notes. Secondly, an in-depth interview is the next instrument that is used to get deeper information about how the ESP teacher majoring in Social Care, implemented best practices in teaching reading recount text. An in-depth interview involves conducting extensive one-on-one interviews with a small group of respondents to obtain their opinions on a specific topic, program, or issue (Showkat & Parveen, 2017). The in-depth interview allows the researcher to get a detailed exploration of the teacher's strategies, challenges, and experiences in delivering effective reading instruction that is appropriate to the needs of Social Care students.

Data Collection

The information was collected through observation and in-depth interviews about how the ESP teacher majoring in Social Care, implemented best practices in teaching reading recount text with the use of Biography related to some figures in the field of Social Care. The observation was focused on observing the best practices used by the teacher and the overall classroom environment. Detailed field notes were taken to write about activities, the types of questions asked by the teacher, the learning activities, and feedback given by the teacher. Additionally, in-depth interviews were done with the teacher to get deeper information about the best practice of using Biography related to figures in Social Care in teaching reading recount text.

Data Analysis

In this research, the data analysis was conducted by following the four components of the Miles and Huberman (2014) model: data collection, data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions. Firstly, data collection involved gathering observations and interview responses from the participants. Secondly, data reduction focused on selecting, focusing, and simplifying the gathered data to make it more manageable. Thirdly, data display involved organizing the reduced data to facilitate easier interpretation. Lastly, drawing conclusions involved summarizing the insights and patterns observed in the data to form the final research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the best practice used by the teacher to teach reading recount texts in the Social Care major. A teaching and learning strategy in the context of education includes activities to meet particular educational objectives, particularly for an ESP classroom. For students to get engaged and enthusiastic in learning, especially while learning to read recount texts, teachers must play a crucial role in improving learning activities based on the needs of the students. Teachers must take into account a variety of factors while developing the best practice of practical learning activities based on the major, in this case, Social Care.

Best practices of teaching reading based on the classroom observation

The researcher did the observation by systematically documenting the sequence of instructional activities and interactions in the classroom. This included noting how the teacher initiated the lesson, engaged with the students, presented new material, facilitated group activities, and provided feedback. The activities were depicted in the Table 1.

Table 1. The teaching and learning for reading ESP

Step	Activity	Description
1	Introduction	The teacher asks questions to remind students of previous materials.
2	Learning Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Identify the structure text and language elements of a historical recount. – Explain the social function of a narrative text. – Tell the important things of a historical recount.
3	Recount Text Explanation	The teacher explains the structure of the text, language elements, and the social function of recount text. Then, she gives the students several reading texts about recount text related to the Social Care major.
4	Grammar Explanation	The teacher explains the use of present perfect continuous tense and simple past tense in recount texts.
5	Individual Activity	Students memorize and write examples of verbs in simple past and present perfect continuous tense.
6	Group Activity	Students form groups and analyze biography texts, focusing on grammatical structures and social functions.
7	Group Discussion	Each group discusses their analysis and prepares a presentation.
8	Presentations	Groups present their findings to the class, focusing on grammar, social functions, and comprehension.
9	Feedback	The teacher provides feedback on students' presentations and comprehension.

Based on the observation results, the teacher started the class by asking the students in order to remind the previous materials that students had learned before and followed by telling them the materials that they were going to learn. Then, the teacher started to give some questions and answers to the students related to the reading recount text, examples of recount text, the structure of the recount text, and so on. In order for the students to later use the social functions based on the reading of the recount text, the teacher additionally provided them with some motivational strategies related to the social functions of the recount text and connected them to their major in social care.

The teacher started to go over the grammar in the recount text. In recount texts, the present perfect continuous tense and simple past tense are frequently utilized. The teacher explained the grammatical structure and how to apply it in real-world scenarios related to the Social Care major. The students are required to memorize and write another example of verbs that are typically used in a simple past tense and present perfect continuous tense using the Grammatical Translation Method. The teacher gave the students some verbs and sentences based on the grammar structure and translated them into Bahasa Indonesia.

After some explanation and approach related to the reading recount text and its grammatical use, the teacher asked the students to make a group consisting of 3-4 students in each group. There, the teacher gave them a Biography text that did not follow the textbook given in the class, such as the Biography of *Kartini*, *Florence Nightingale*, *Rufaidah Al-Islamiyah*, and *Oscar Yura Dompas*. The teacher provides background information on the figures before conducting the biography text, including information about their identities and the impact they had on social care. In their groups, students were tasked with reading and analyzing these biographies, applying their grammatical knowledge to understand the texts better by identifying the simple past tense and present perfect continuous tense structures used in the text. Also, about what they got after reading the Biography text regarding the social functions, the meaning of the story, and also the recount text structure in the text. This group activity aimed to enhance their comprehension skills and connect the grammatical concepts to the content relevant to their major in Social Care.

As a result, each group's discussion outcomes are presented in front of the class by the students. Each group read aloud, presenting the grammatical structure, social functions, and meaning of the story, and asked the students questions about what they had learned from the text and requested them to write down some vocabulary words they had learned from the text. This exercise helped reinforce their understanding of the material and allowed them to practice their reading and comprehension skills in a collaborative setting. The teacher provided feedback on their pronunciation and comprehension, further supporting their learning process. Through these activities, students were able to connect grammatical concepts with practical reading skills, enhancing their overall proficiency in English within the context of Social Care.

Best practices of teaching reading based on the teachers' perspective

Teacher's Efforts in Using Social Care Biographies

Based on the interview with the teacher which aims to get deeper information about the best practice of using Biography related to figures in Social Care in teaching reading recount text. The teacher stated:

"The reason why I choose Biography like Kartini and Rufaidah is because Kartini and Rufaidah are already known as Social Care figures. Kartini with her emancipation movement for women, and Rufaidah is the first Islamic nurse in history. It is hoped for students that someday, they can apply the knowledge, the messages and suggestions, and the social functions that are conveyed through the Biography text in their Social Care life".

The teacher prefers to give the students a biography of a figure in the field of social care rather than following the book which is a biography of an artist or well-known person because this allows the students to apply what they learn about social functions and meaning to the field of social care according to their major. Moreover, the teacher also had some reasons why she tried to deliver a Biography text of some figures in Social Care, rather than using the Biography that has been already conducted in the book. The teacher stated:

"Maybe it is because our school does not have enough media technology and only uses textbooks given by the school. That is why I chose to make the Biography text on my own, even if it is from Google but I conducted it in a traditional way, printed the material, and then shared it with each group. It takes more effort but as long as it is related to the students' needs, I will always try to do my best to deliver the material and teaching strategies that are really fun for the students so that they will not get bored in the class".

Through these efforts, the teacher aims to provide a more relevant and engaging learning experience, ensuring that the material is not only educational but also aligned with the student's future professional needs in Social Care.

Connecting Theory with Practice

In teaching, bridging theory with practice is essential to ensure that students not only grasp theoretical concepts but also can apply them effectively in real-world situations. Based on the interview with the teacher, she emphasized the importance of integrating relevant material, such as biographies of figures like Kartini and Rufaidah, to help students retain and build on their prior knowledge. It can be seen from the teacher's answer:

"I start by reviewing previous lessons and introducing new material such as biographies of figures like Kartini and Rufaidah to ensure that students build their prior knowledge based on the text. Then, I engage students in discussions, ask questions about recount text structures, and apply grammatical concepts to real-world Social Care scenarios. To assess the practical application, I have them work in groups to analyze biographies of Social Care figures, identifying grammatical structures and social

functions. Each group presents their findings, which reinforces comprehension and communication skills. Connecting these activities to real-world scenarios helps students see the practical relevance of their lessons, essential for their future roles in Social Care."

The teacher starts by reviewing previous lessons and introducing new material, such as biographies of figures like Kartini and Rufaidah, which are highly relevant to the students, ensuring retention and building on prior knowledge. Students engage in discussions, answer questions about recount text structures, and apply grammatical concepts to real-world Social Care scenarios. To assess the practical application, students work in groups to analyze biographies of Social Care figures, identifying grammatical structures and social functions, and presenting their findings. Moreover, connecting theoretical concepts to real-world applications helps students see the practical value of their learning, enhancing their engagement.

Connecting these activities to real-world scenarios helps students understand the practical relevance of their lessons, essential for their future roles in Social Care while also enhancing their engagement in learning. By integrating theoretical understanding with practical application, the teacher ensures students are well-prepared for the challenges they may encounter in their professional careers.

Giving Feedback

Providing effective feedback is essential for fostering student growth and enhancing learning outcomes. It can be seen from the teacher's answer:

"Yes, I believe the feedback that I gave was effective. I make sure it is clear, helpful, and given promptly, highlighting what students did well and what they can improve. After group presentations and reading in front of the class, I give detailed comments on their understanding of grammar and their reading skills. I also encourage students to ask questions, which strengthen their knowledge and build their confidence."

The teacher ensures the feedback given is effective by making it clear, helpful, and promptly delivered, focusing on both strengths and areas for improvement. During group presentations, students receive thorough feedback on their comprehension of grammar and reading comprehension. This includes advice on how to improve their pronunciation and grammatical usage as well as how to add more specific social functions that could be relevant to the topic of social care. After that, the teacher encouraging students to ask questions further reinforces their learning and boosts their confidence in engaging with the material effectively.

Based on the findings of the class observation and the teacher's responses to the interview, it can be concluded that the teacher utilized materials in teaching reading recount text by manually creating biographies of significant figures related to the Social Care major. In line with [Godstime and Joseph \(2016\)](#), ESP teachers are required to fulfill the needs of the students by creating some materials related to their major, the findings already showed that the teacher used the Biography of some Social Care figures as the best practice in teaching reading recount text. Moreover, [Sari et al., \(2021\)](#) stated that developing interactive multimedia in the ESP school has a potential effect on students' achievement. The teacher's best practice aligns with the recommendations of incorporating material related to the student's needs to enhance their learning experiences. Although [Asmin \(2019\)](#) stated one of the hot issues that are being talked about in Indonesia is related to the quality of vocational schools where the teachers still difficult to deliver the material suitable for the students' needs, in here the teacher's commitment to providing related content materials highlights an admirable attempt to solve the issue and guarantee that Social Care students are taught in based their needs, not in a general way.

Furthermore, the feedback given after all of the activities were done to ensure the students' comprehension of grammar and their reading comprehension is in line with [Oktariyani et al., \(2023\)](#), that in teaching reading, one of the main priorities of the teacher is how to enable students to comprehend the reading material and participate more

actively in the process of reading English texts. Additionally, students majoring in social care in vocational high schools might benefit greatly from using biographies of social figures in the field. The knowledge, message, and ideas that are sent through the text that the students have read can later be used by the students, as well as the social functions. Finally, it is hoped that the students will be able to apply the social function information they have gained from the biography text to their future jobs or the field of social care.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result and discussion of this research, through the class observation and interview with the teacher in SMK Roudhatul Jannah Gondanglegi majoring in Social Care, the best practices that the teacher used for teaching reading recount text was through the Biography of some figures in the field of Social Care. In order to give students useful and relevant insights into their area of study, the teacher selected biographies of significant figures in the field of social care. This aligns with the philosophy of ESP education which emphasizes the development of resources that address students' major-related needs. Despite some limitations, the teacher traditionally delivered the material demonstrating a commitment to providing vocational school students with relevant knowledge. According to the findings, it is hoped that this specific teaching approach not only increases student engagement but also creates a significant connection between what is learned in the classroom and how social functions and meanings are used in the context of social care, providing students with insightful knowledge that will be useful in their future jobs. Therefore, it is advised that the ESP teacher should create a lesson plan or teaching technique depending on the needs of the students, with the intention that the students would be able to use it in their real-life situations. Additionally, future researchers could explore how the best practice used by the ESP teacher in teaching recount text could have a specific impact on the students' achievement in reading comprehension such as grammatical structures, and their ability to apply these concepts in practical settings.

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CONFLICS OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Rohman, S.F.: Conceptualization (lead), methodology (lead), writing – original draft (lead), review (supporting), editing (supporting), securing funding. **Hartiningsih, S.:** Conceptualization (supporting), methodology (supporting), writing – original draft (lead), review (lead). **Gusdian, R.I.:** writing – original draft (supporting), review (supporting), editing (supporting), review (supporting).

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