L1 content adaptations and English language teaching at tertiary level: Case of EFL learners at Tlemcen University

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Abstract

The Algerian reforms in higher education have shifted from the communicative approach towards the Competency-Based Instruction and the role of the teacher has changed to someone who caters to his learner's needs. On the other hand, the Englishization process of Algerian higher education obliged subject matter teachers in different fields to learn English, which is considered a foreign language in Algeria. This exploratory research paper strives to present the findings of a study measuring the success of English Medium lectures relying on L1 content adaptations. In other words, this study examines the adapted English lectures' content taught to students belonging to the Department of Political Sciences studying at Tlemcen University, to investigate which changes, if any, accompany the linguistic shift from L1 to English-medium teaching. It takes into account our target population, which is represented by 50 Master One Public Administration students who belong to the University of Tlemcen. Two research instruments were used in this study: an achievement test and a questionnaire. The analysis revealed the learner's good quality output and positive response to the Learning Oriented Assessment (LOA) model.

Keywords: Content adaptations; Englishization; integrated content and language; learning-oriented assessment ; political sciences.

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1. Introduction

Good teaching necessitates skilled teachers who can employ a variety of ways of language teaching and learning to raise their students' levels and competencies. Although there are several approaches, methods, and strategies for teaching languages, we know that none of these ideas can be utilized in their entirety to get the intended outcomes. As a result, language pedagogy specialists have always had to modify their techniques of teaching a foreign language by integrating the most important features of several methodologies (Kunene & Mthethwa, 2020). A great teacher is always looking for new methods to encourage students to take risks to advance their learning (Noben et al., 2022). Teachers should make the classroom a relaxing place to study by emphasizing learner-centeredness and encouraging students to participate in the selection of content, themes, and activities.

Finding appropriate instruments for helping students acquire relevant language skills is one of the most difficult experiences in teaching English for specified purposes (ESP), especially for ESP learners who encounter distinct challenges in interacting with the language. Teachers working in the ESP sector must be aware of their student's particular requirements and devise solutions that will function in the ESP classroom (Ye & Sun 2022).

Teaching in the field of ESP constantly attempts to introduce students to the essential skills and subject knowledge to meet their requirements. As a result, the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education continues to make strides toward promoting the language of scientific research. Thus, the Algerian universities witness a change in the level of teaching practices by introducing English as the language of instruction in different specialties. This shift is called English Medium Instruction hereafter (EMI). Thus, one could admit that the Algerian authorities started implementing the Englishization process in higher education to ensure any teaching/learning progress. As a result, the Integrated Content and Language in Higher Education Program has been launched henceforth (ICLHE), which is a four-way partnership among the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, the United States Department of State, the Columbia University Global Center in Tunis, and the Applied Linguistics/TESOL Program at Teachers College, Columbia University. Moreover, this program, which is aimed at strengthening English language teaching and learning in the Algerian Higher Education context, has been designed for Algerian English Language Educators (e.g., teacher trainers, language instructors, and subject matter instructors from universities, ENSs, and CEILs).

1.1. Purpose of study

Therefore, the present paper strives to find empirical answers to the following questions guiding this research:

1. To what extent L1 Content Adaptations in EMI at Tertiary Level is considered to be successful?
2. What is learners' attitude towards the Learning Oriented Assessment framework?

1.2. Conceptual framework
1.2.1. English Medium Instruction and L1 content adaptations

English as a Medium of Instruction, hereafter (EMI) is a form of communication in which participants utilize English as a shared language, despite it being a non-native language for them. Ernesto Macaro and Shuangmiao Han stated that EMI means "the use of the English language to teach

academic subjects (other than English itself) in countries or jurisdictions in which the majority of the population's first language is not English" (Macaro & Shuangmiao, 2020). EMI, in its essence, unfolds within the discipline of teaching and learning English as a foreign language. Yet, its purpose transcends the mere acquisition of the English language itself, instead focusing on the impartation of knowledge in various academic disciplines.

In the context of EMI, classroom learners are faced with the challenge of mastering both the subject matter and the language used to convey it. Effective instruction involves guiding students in understanding the meaning of the content while also developing their English language proficiency. This process requires a focus on both the substance of the material and the language used to express it, all within the framework of a specific academic discipline. Ultimately, the goal of EMI is to equip students with the ability to effectively communicate their ideas in English, both orally and in writing. By creating an environment that fosters comprehension and expression, EMI helps students develop the skills they need to succeed academically and beyond. For this reason, L1 content adaptations best serve EMI to be adopted because they help the students to learn new concepts and reinforce their linguistic knowledge starting from their background knowledge.

1.2.2. Learning Oriented Assessment

Purpura (1994) with his article emerged as a pioneer in the learning-oriented assessment, delving into the intricacies of developing ICL learning or assessment tasks that possess the ability to adapt to various stages of the learning journey, meticulously defined in the realm of information processing. Drawing inspiration from Input processing and grammar instruction: Theory and research (VAnPatten, 1998), one could artfully craft learning or assessment tasks that possess the power to:

1. enhance the understanding of recently acquired information, with a focus on assessing the intake of knowledge.
2. encourage the gradual progression of new learning objectives, with an emphasis on assessing the development of skills and knowledge.
3. stimulate the application of newly acquired learning objectives in situations that resemble the ones in which they were initially learned, with an emphasis on assessing the output of knowledge and skills.
4. encourage the utilization of newly acquired learning objectives in contexts that differ from the ones in which they were initially learned, with an emphasis on assessing the transferability of knowledge and skills.

The LOA framework is designed to structure the utilization of language, teaching methods, and evaluation based on the identification of separate or interconnected tasks and activities. These tasks and activities aim to elicit performance indicators related to intercultural communicative language (ICL) proficiency. Furthermore, these indicators are situated within a specific sociocultural context, which often imposes limitations on the performance.

Nowadays, the LOA framework conceptualizes the learning or assessment activity in terms of eight interrelated moderators that are categorized into various dimensions (Leung et al., 2018), including instructional, socio-cognitive, affective, social-interactional, and technological. The instructional dimension pertains to the input and assistance provided during the learning process, while the socio-cognitive dimension relates to the processing of this input or assistance. The affective

dimension highlights the role of emotions in task engagement, and the social-interactional dimension emphasizes the impact of social factors and interactional practices on language use. Additionally, the framework underscores the importance of considering the role of technology in language use, teaching, and assessment. Finally, the framework encourages us to recognize the synergies among these dimensions to gain a comprehensive understanding of language learning and teaching. Figure 1 best explains the LOA framework.

Figure 1
The learning-oriented assessment cycle.
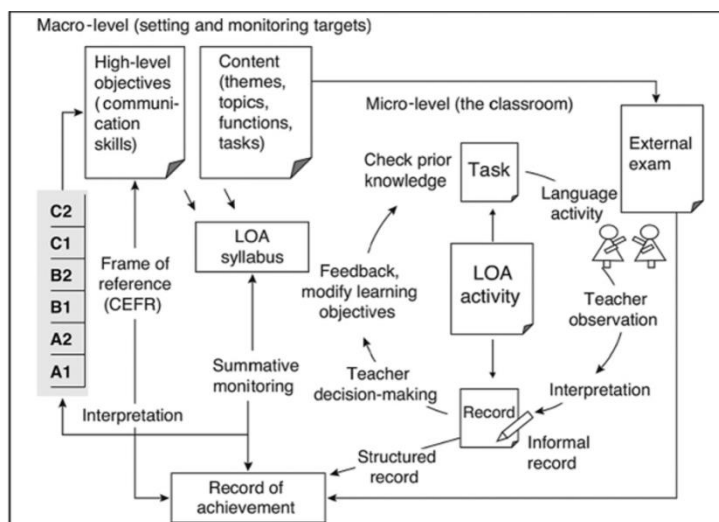
Source: Jones et al., (2016).

1.2.3. Integrated Content and Language (ICL)

In Algeria, the concept of competency-based education is not new and to meet the demands of globalization, Algerian authorities administered new directives aiming at modernizing and developing the sector of higher education. As a result, stakeholders insisted on integrating both the content of different specialties and domains and the English language, which is considered the language of instruction. In addition, they have also focused on the quality of ICL English courses designed for students who need to be well-trained and have a good level of skills in both language and knowledge related to their fields of study. However, integrated content and language instruction cannot be done randomly as it is "a task based-instruction and assessment of knowledge, skills, and academic language with a content area"(Sherris, 2008)

Since the majority of ELT teachers shift from general English to teaching field-specific English, they find difficulties in satisfying students' needs and in developing their skills and competencies, mainly when we consider the students' linguistic proficiency level which oscillates between A1- and B1. In this vein, Basturkmen claims that: "language is learned not for its own sake or for the sake of gaining a general education, but to smooth the path to entry or greater linguistic efficiency in academic, professional or workplace environment"(Basturkman, 2005).

Teachers who specialize in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in Algerian higher education are constantly occupied with various responsibilities and functions. They frequently participate in the design of courses and the development of materials. There is a belief that English teachers lack the necessary qualifications and training to effectively teach ESP students in their respective fields. Therefore, subject specialists have consistently been more successful in handling and overseeing situations than language teachers. Nevertheless, English language instructors continue to strive towards effectively teaching subject-specific content and finding solutions to the persistent obstacles they face in their English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classes.

Indeed, the majority of ESP instructors in higher education acknowledge that the primary cause of difficulties faced by students in their courses is related to "the challenge for teachers to design and deliver lessons that make content comprehensible and that facilitate language acquisition" (Sherris, 2008).

Thus, ESP teachers need to acquire sufficient understanding in line with the academic disciplines of their students. Frequently, they must assist their students in acquiring subject-specific knowledge in the domain using the English language. Furthermore, educators need to promote their students' real-world competencies and encourage their growth of various communication abilities by providing them with authentic materials relevant to their chosen fields (Bojović, 2006). In the same vein, Purpura maintains that "it also necessitates topical, disciplinary, or more generally, content resources, and the ability to coordinate these resources to achieve simple and complex tasks that may transpire over time in a social context" (Purpura, 2021).

Nevertheless, we cannot fail to notice the fact that the process of integrating content and language in Algerian higher education continues to encounter difficulties and reveal practical shortcomings. These issues primarily include in classrooms where English for Specific Purposes is taught. The initiation of the Algerian Integrated Content and Language in Higher Education (ICLHE) program is a response to the numerous points that require emphasis and prioritization in ESP classes.

This program is specifically created for educators in Algeria who teach English (including teacher trainers, language instructors, and subject matter instructors from universities, ENSs, and CEILs). Its goal aimed at strengthening English language teaching and learning enhancing the effectiveness of using English as a Medium of Instruction in the Algerian Higher Education context.

1.2.4. *Learning Oriented Assessment (LOA)*

Learning-oriented assessment is viewed as a method that places importance on assessment as a key factor in encouraging learning within educational settings. According to Beltrán (2019), LOA is a method of evaluating students in the classroom that emphasizes the importance of assessment and recognizes its changing nature. The utilization of Learning-Oriented Assessment allows for the integration of both content and language instruction. This framework serves as a guide for considering various factors when individuals need to respond to tasks or real-life situations and interactions. An individual who cannot seem to keep their focus, is easily distracted, and is constantly losing interest in tasks is exhibiting signs of attention deficit disorder.

The LOA approach emphasizes the importance of learning goals, evaluating performance, providing feedback, and how they contribute to an individual's development of a learning presentation

(Wang & Li 2022; Yu et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2024). Moreover, in education, students must employ their linguistic abilities and understanding of grammar to effectively communicate their thoughts. To effectively share their knowledge in a particular scenario and effectively remember and retain information, individuals may require teaching skills and cognitive abilities (Purpura, 2021).

The factors mentioned above can be organized and understood within a framework that is relevant to the context of assessment instruction. This framework can help identify the factors that should be considered when creating instructional assessment tasks. Additionally, it may be beneficial to identify additional factors that can influence learning outcomes through students' performances.

The approach of Learning-Oriented Assessment also aims to enhance learning promote interactions in classrooms and improve writing skills (Derakhshan & Ghiasvand 2022). Additionally, its goal is to fulfill language requirements and evaluate achievements in various educational activities. LOA is an assessment method that is integrated into the learning process. It focuses on the student and is composed of eight interconnected components known as dimensions: contextual dimension, interactional dimension, affective dimension, Proficiency dimension, social-interactional dimension, learning dimension, elicitation dimension, and technological dimension.

Figure 1
LOA Framework
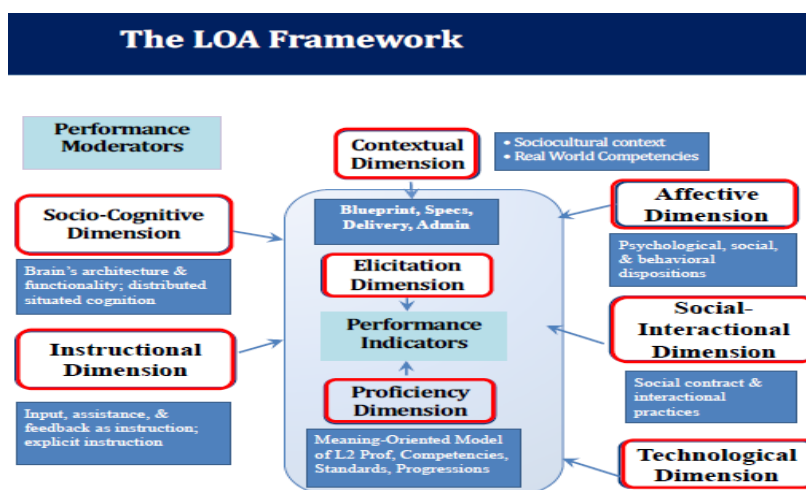
Source: adapted from Leung et al., (2018)

1.2.5.   L1 Content adaptations and Specialized Vocabulary building

Taking into account the fact that nothing can be conveyed without vocabulary, more precisely specialized vocabulary, identifying the appropriate specialized vocabulary has become of crucial importance in the area of integrated content and Language in Higher Education. In the same respect, Krashen asserts that "When students travel, they don't carry grammar books, they carry dictionaries" cited in (Lewis, 1993).

Pegged to this claim, we believe that learning the appropriate vocabulary is vital in learning a new language in general and a foreign language in particular. As a result, corpus linguistics has emerged as

a tool for developing learning in an ESP setting. Furthermore, corpora are an unrivaled source of quantitative data for linguists, and they can be found in a variety of shapes, sizes, and modes and they typically mirror either written or spoken language or a combination of both written and spoken language that reflects very specific communities of language users. Linguists have so confirmed that corpora are indicative of distinct language users who interact in various ways.

Thus, preparing adequate corpora for every domain must respect the following sequential procedure.
1. Data collection.
2. Data computerization.
3. Data annotation.
4. Data analysis of a completed corpus, which is organized and accessible written.

As a result, "the most frequently used words will be the more easily learned" (Palmer, 1917). In this regard, my specialized vocabulary was built via the use of different corpus linguistic tools which helped us in creating the appropriate glossary with a wordlist that is unique in the field of public administration. This procedure has confirmed that English Corpus Linguistics is a step-by-step guide to creating and analyzing linguistic corpora. Besides, these useful resources should be based on real, rather than contrived data. In this respect, Chen & Huang, (2017) affirmed that "Exploring a corpus of English can suggest which language items and processes are most likely to be encountered by language users, and which therefore may deserve more investment of time in instruction."

Moreover, I consider the generated specialized corpus to be an electronic format collection of selected texts that are specific to the domain of public administration. For this reason, text selection is of paramount importance, which requires the consideration of some criteria, namely: suitability, exploitability, and readability. Thus, the aforementioned steps help identify words known as collocations and n-grams, which helped me, design lesson plans, materials, and evaluation rubrics based on L1 content. Furthermore, creating data-driven learning tasks based on L1 content helps the center of the learning process promote their linguistic competence and make them feel more confident in using their L1 background knowledge in English.

2. Method and materials

2.1. Participants

This exploratory research paper has examined many aspects of integrating content and language in higher education. It takes into account our target population, which is represented by 50 Master One Public Administration students who belong to the University of Tlemcen. Thus, L1 content adaptations helped me tailor full instructional units for the aforementioned target students to provide them with basic political specialized vocabulary in the field of Public Administration. Then, I aimed to deliver an online ICL achievement test, which was engineered to be learning-oriented following the Learning Oriented Assessment (LOA) model (Turner & Purpura 2016). I can say that this test allowed me to measure the students' level and get authentic results on whether English Medium lectures relying on L1 content adaptations are successful or not. A semi-structured questionnaire was administered to the focus group and the data obtained were used to investigate extremely of the research results.

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2.2. Data collection instruments

This study relied on using two research instruments, namely: a questionnaire and an achievement test. The first research tool, comprised 16 close-ended questions. The first four questions about gender, age range, last degree obtained, and the student's proficiency level in English aimed at collecting data to build the students' profile. However, the remaining questions focused basically on students' attitudes towards acquiring new knowledge in English similar to their background knowledge in their specialty. Besides testing students' attitudes, some questions wanted to get learners' attitudes vis-à-vis integrated content and English language in higher education.

Regarding the second research tool, I have relied on testing to measure and judge what is the level of language a person commands (Brown & Abeywickrama 2004). Thus, this test aimed to assess my students' linguistic proficiency, understanding, or accomplishment in the field of political science in general and Public Administration in particular. Hence, students were provided an online achievement test to measure their evolution during the first semester, which is composed of fourteen TD sessions, of the academic year 2022 – 2023. In this respect, Bachman & Purpura, (2008) asserted that "the specific uses or decisions for which reason the test is designed, and the consequences of these decisions for different groups of individuals". In addition, the test construct focused on considering test usefulness six characteristics stated by Bachman & Palmer (1996) including validity, reliability, practicality, authenticity, interactiveness, and impact.

3. Results

3.1. Quantitative findings

Analysis of the data obtained from the study was performed with the IBM-SPSS Version 20. Quantitatively speaking, the provided questionnaire was submitted to 50 students where 66% represented female and 34 % represented male. The overall frequency represented by the number of participants is ranked into three categories characterizing the age range. The first category is represented by 9 students whose ages vary between 20 and 30 years old. It stands for students who are preparing for their first master's degree. In the second category, we find 21 students with ages between 31 and 40. As for the last category, it concerns those participants between the ages of 41 and 50. Besides, the second and the third categories stand for students who hold master's degrees in Law, Political Sciences, or Economic Sciences and are preparing for their second master's degree in Public Administration. Moreover, data obtained have shown that 86% which stands for 43 students are employed whereas 14% which represents 7 learners are unemployed. Descriptive statistics related to this study are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Students' Profile

Variable	Final value	N	%
Gender	Male	34	34
	Female	66	66
Age range	20 – 30	09	18
	31- 40	21	42
	41 - 50	20	40
Education	1st Master	09	18

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	2nd Master	41	82
Job	Unemployed	07	14
	Employed	43	86

3.1.1.   Questionnaire

 Aiming at knowing students' attitudes toward L1 content adaptations and teaching English at the tertiary level following the LOA framework and its dimensions, an online questionnaire was administered to the target population.

Table 2

Students Proficiency Level

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Beginner A1-A2	33	66,0	66,0	66,0
Valid	Intermediate B1-B2	17	34,0	34,0	100,0
	Total	50	100,0	100,0	

SPSS frequency analyses have shown that 66% out of 50 respondents have confirmed that their proficiency level in the English language is weak and students are suffering from varied linguistic lacuna. This is due to several reasons that are consistent with the formation of students in the English language starting from the first day their minds receive a lesson in the English language.

Table 3

English Language Course Attitude

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Fair	6	12,0	12,0	12,0
	Good	25	50,0	50,0	62,0
Valid	Excellent	19	38,0	38,0	26,0
	Total	50	100,0	100,0	100,0

Answers provided about students' attitudes towards the content of the given courses vary between Good and Excellent according to the data that are displayed in the above table. In other words, only 12% reported having a negative attitude towards the content. In contrast, more than 50% claimed to have more or less positive attitudes (table 3).

Table 4

Students Needs

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
	No	14	28,0	28,0
Valid	Yes	36	72,0	72,0
	Total	50	100,0	100,0

The above table (4) demonstrates students' instructional needs as far as the content to be taught. 36 students out of the total number with a proportion of 72% asserted that the English language courses fit their linguistic needs of specialized vocabulary. While the remaining 28% declared for one reason or another that it did not fit their requirements.

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Table 5

Content or Language

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Content Only (Administrative sciences)	5	10,0	10,0
	Language Only (English)	15	30,0	30,0
	Both Language and Content	30	60,0	60,0
	Total	50	100,0	100,0

The whole majority interpreted by the percentage of 60% of students agreed on the fact that English language courses were successful in guaranteeing both content and language. While 15 other students mentioned that the lessons focused on language only (Table 5). This may be the cause of their proficiency level in English.

Table 6

Students' Motivation towards Learning Specialized Vocabulary

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Motivated	14	28,0	28,0
	Extremely Motivated	36	72,0	72,0
	Total	50	100,0	100,0

Students have shown a high motivational attitude proportion of 72% towards learning new specialized vocabulary, which reflects the positive aspects of L1 content adaptations. On the other hand, none of the respondents mentioned that learning new specialized vocabulary is not motivating at all. This highly motivational attitude paved the way for students to enhance their linguistic skills and the findings revealed that 52% have improved their writing skills and 16% have upgraded both their pronunciation and reading skills. Besides, 18% have responded that they have enhanced their listening (table 6).

Table 7

Students'attitudes towards EMI Adoption in HE and the use of LOA

EMI Adoption in Higher Education and L1 Content Adaptations	Disagree	4%	
	Neutral	8%	
	Agree	42%	
	Strongly agree	46%	
Students' Attitudes towards LOA	Unsuccessful	14%	
	Successful	86%	
N	Valid	**50**	
	Missing	**0**	

This study strived to answer the aforementioned research questions about the extent L1 Content Adaptations in EMI at the Tertiary Level are considered to be successful and wanted to investigate the learners' attitude by introducing LOA as a novel instructional framework. Thus, the above table

demonstrates that students got the occasion to express their satisfaction and agreement about adopting EMI to instruct adapted L1 Content. Moreover, the inclusion of LOA within the previously mentioned instruction has shown its efficacy. Thus, 86% have declared that LOA is very successful and the following section will support this deduction (table 7).

3.2. Qualitative findings

3.2.1. Achievement test

An online Achievement test via Google form was designed for Master One Public Administration students and aimed at measuring their mastery of both receptive skills (Reading) and productive skills (Writing) in the field of Public Administration. I opted for the analytical scoring where I assigned a separate score for each task.

Moreover, this test contained different three tasks. The first one tested students' understanding, whereas the second, grammatical construct, wanted to test their grammatical knowledge through activities tackling prepositions, concession, and passives to develop general linguistic items, which pushed students to nurture their written performances and assume administrative concepts understanding. As for the last task, it wanted to test the students' productive skills through writing an administrative report. One should admit that this test was engineered to follow the LOA framework as it would tap into several dimensions and was mainly interested in learning and mastering L1-adapted content.

As far as scoring is concerned, my achievement test on both analytic scoring and holistic scoring. Regarding, the first scoring, it incorporates the use of a grading scale by multiple scores designated to the various items found in the test, and the amalgamation of these scores offers the final score. However, holistic scoring entails an overall decision attributed to a separate score mark which is given to the learner's general performance. It is generally used to assess productive skills such as essays taking into account different aspects of the written production and gathering these ratings in an overall impression formulated in one score.

Moreover, students' scores have been analyzed with SPSS to know the Median frequency (N) and decide whether the teaching-learning process following the LOA framework was successful or unsuccessful. Furthermore, the following table represents SPSS 20-generated statistics of grades obtained by students during the first semester of the academic year 2022 – 2023.

Table 8
Students Grades

N	Valid	50
	Missing	0
Mean		14,650
Median		15,250
Std. Deviation		2,6133
Minimum		8,5
Maximum		18,0

From Table 8 above we can deduce that the Median frequency of students' grades is 15,250% which means that the achievement test was successful and the scores average is good enough. If this

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indicates anything, it indicates that the cognitive achievement was largely effective.

4. Discussion

This practical research paper strived to understand L1 Content Adaptations and English language teaching by integrating content and language in higher education. It deals with our target population, represented by Master One Public Administration students with an acceptable proficiency level. Moreover, the designed L1 adapted instructional unit taught during a whole semester for the aforementioned target students provided them with a basic special administrative glossary in the field of Public Administration. Then, I aimed to put the acquired constant theories into practice by delivering an online ICL achievement test after designing a unit with a specialized vocabulary and engineering it to be learning-oriented respecting test usefulness and practicality procedures.

The steps respected in L1 content adaptations challenged my communication and triggered my curiosity as I engaged my students in several integrated content and language activities so that they could then reflect for experience about what was involved in the teaching of these tasks and the learning them.

5. Conclusion

In a nutshell, the results obtained from this study and the median frequency (N) of ICL achievement test grades estimated by 15,250% made us admit that there is an urgent and continuous demand to start making L1 content adaptations and follow LOA framework to nurture our students' needs and develop their competencies. It fosters both teachers' and students' real-life practices and reaches more conclusive and insightful results.

Content-Based Language Teaching (CBLT) has encompassed a variety of models differentiated according to the setting in which they are implemented. The analysis revealed the learner's good quality output and positive response to the Learning Oriented Assessment (LOA) model.

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