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A Pedagogical Contribution of Digital Corpus-Based Instruction in ESP: Classroom Activities for Public Administration Students

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ABSTRACT

This article makes a pedagogical contribution to English for Specific Purposes (ESP) by integrating Digital Corpus-based Instruction (DCI) model: Discovery (exploring authentic corpus data), Connection (engaging with QR-based multimedia resources), and Creation (producing meaningful texts through mobile-based tasks). Two classroom activities illustrate how the model can be applied for public administration students. The first activity (Unit 1: Public Administration Concepts) introduces key terms such as policy implementation, governance, and accountability. Students examine concordance lines from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), match them with expressions used in a video on good governance, and then write a short paragraph using the vocabulary learned. The second activity (Unit 2: Public Service and Bureaucracy) targets vocabulary such as public service, citizen satisfaction, and bureaucratic delay. Students analyze collocations from corpus data, compare them with language found in public service videos and audio recordings of citizen complaints, and then write a formal complaint letter applying these expressions. The findings suggest that corpus-based tasks raise students' awareness of authentic language patterns and support the development of formal writing skills in ESP contexts. In addition, the DCI model offers a practical, adaptable framework that requires minimal resources, making it suitable for classroom implementation.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the landscape of teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in higher education has undergone a significant transformation, mainly driven by the integration of digital technology and the increasing accessibility of authentic language resources (Misnawati, 2021; Misnawati et al., 2022). Within the field of public administration, English proficiency has evolved beyond a mere academic requirement; it is now a critical professional competency. Graduates are expected to navigate complex policy documents, engage in international governance discourse, and manage bureaucratic communication with precision and formality (Misnawati, Anwar, et al., 2024; Misnawati, Atmowardoyo, et al., 2025). Consequently, the demand for pedagogical approaches that can bridge the gap between classroom instruction and professional reality has never been higher.

However, a persistent challenge in ESP instruction remains the scarcity of learning materials that reflect the true nature of administrative language (Misnawati, Atmowardoyo, et al., 2024). Lecturers and students often face limited access to authentic vocabulary and the specific collocations used in bureaucracy. Traditional commercial textbooks tend to present vocabulary in isolation or through contrived dialogues that lack the complexity of real-world usage (Misnawati, 2024a). As a result, students often memorize definitions but fail to grasp the "semantic prosody" or the appropriate context of words, leading to pragmatic failures when they attempt to communicate in actual professional settings.

To address these limitations, th corpus linguistics approach has emerged as a robust theoretical and practical solution (McEnery et al., 2006; Sinclair, 1991). By using large-scale databases such as the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), educators can provide students with "Data-Driven Learning" (DDL) experiences, allowing them to observe how terms like policy implementation, administrative reform, or bureaucratic delay naturally co-occur with other words (Liontas et al., 2023). Scholarly literature confirms that exposure to these authentic lexical bundles is superior to intuition-based instruction for developing professional register awareness (McEnery et al., 2019; Misnawati, Yusriadi, et al., 2025).

Despite its potential, the direct application of corpus data in the classroom presents significant pedagogical hurdles. Research indicates that "raw" concordance lines can be overwhelming, abstract, and overly technical for novice students, particularly those with lower English proficiency (Misnawati, Yusriadi, et al., 2025). Without adequate scaffolding, the cognitive load of analyzing corpus data can deter students rather than empower them (Akbaş & Başal, 2024; Ayyat, 2024). Furthermore, recent studies in Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) suggest that for technology to be effective, it must be integrated into the students' digital ecosystem, such as social networking tools, to foster engagement and autonomy (Ali et al., 2021; Misnawati et al., 2022). There is a clear need for an instructional design that combines the authenticity of corpus data with the accessibility of multimodal and mobile support.

This article proposes the Digital Corpus-based Instruction (DCI) model as a response to this multifaceted need. The DCI model provides a structured framework integrating three cyclical stages: Discovery, where students explore authentic corpus data; Connection, which uses QR-based multimedia to contextualize vocabulary; and Creation, where students produce language products via mobile platforms. The primary objective of this article is to present a pedagogical contribution by detailing the application of the DCI model through two specific classroom activities for public administration students. By moving beyond theoretical discussion to practical implementation, this article aims to demonstrate how corpus-based pedagogy can be adapted in simple yet effective ways in resource-constrained ESP contexts, transforming students from passive recipients of knowledge into active language researchers.

METHODS

This study adopts a descriptive instructional design approach, focusing on the practical framework and classroom implementation of the Digital Corpus-based Instruction (DCI) model. Unlike empirical studies that emphasize quantitative data collection from specific population samples, this article aims to describe in detail the pedagogical procedures, materials, and student engagement strategies. Therefore, the methodology section describes the instructional phases and activity structures rather than traditional data analysis techniques.

Design of the Instructional Model

The pedagogical framework applied in this study is the Digital Corpus-based Instruction (DCI) model. This model integrates corpus linguistics with multimodal and mobile learning approaches to address the lack of authentic vocabulary in ESP instruction. The DCI model operates through three cyclical stages as illustrated in Figure 1:

1. Discovery (Corpus-Based Input): Students explore authentic data from the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (COCA) to identify collocations and authentic usage patterns rather than relying on isolated definitions.
2. Connection (QR-Based Multimodal Input): To mitigate the abstract nature of corpus data, students scan QR codes to access audiovisual materials (videos/speeches). This stage links text-based corpus findings with real-world communicative contexts.
3. Creation (Mobile-Based Output): Students produce relevant professional texts (e.g., short reports, complaint letters) using mobile applications like WhatsApp or Telegram. This stage encourages active language production and simulates professional digital communication.

The corpus-based approach in ESP teaching has a significant strength in that it can provide authentic input (Boulton & Tyne, 2015; Frıgınal et al., 2020). Through corpus data, students are introduced to language as it is used in honest communication, rather than just textbook definitions (Crosthwaite et al., 2023). For example, collocations such as public service delivery, reduce red tape, or voter registration show how key public administration and bureaucratic vocabulary are used in a professional context. Thus, students not only memorize terms but also understand the relationships between words and more natural usage patterns.

The next stage, QR-based multimodal input, allows students to link corpus expressions with everyday communication practices (Misnawati et al., 2023). Videos, speeches, or public service announcements (PSAs) accessed via QR codes allow students to see and hear professional vocabulary used in real situations. This reinforces the connection between the language forms they find in the corpus and their context of use in public interactions, such as in public services or in the delivery of policy information.

Meanwhile, mobile-based output serves as a means for students to apply the vocabulary and expressions they have learned (Misnawati et al., 2022). At this stage, students produce texts relevant to professional needs, such as writing formal emails, brief reports, or letters of complaint related to public services. These mobile learning-based tasks encourage students to create in language while simulating professional communication situations they are likely to encounter in the workplace.

By integrating these three stages, the Digital Corpus-based Instruction (DCI) model not only emphasizes vocabulary comprehension but also comprehensively develops students' language skills, from exploring authentic input to strengthening through multimodality to producing meaningful output. This approach aligns with the principle of student-centered learning, where students become active subjects in discovering, understanding, and applying language in contexts relevant to their field of study.

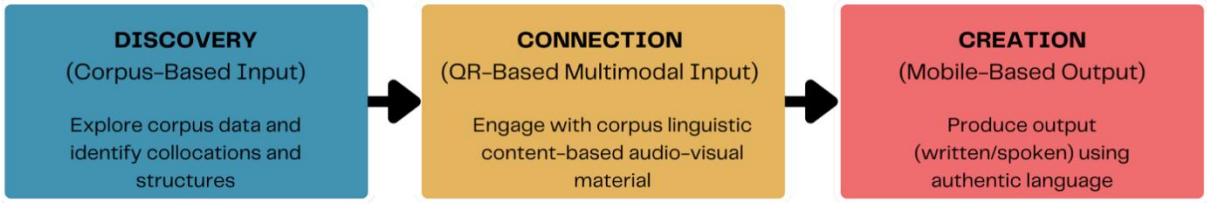


Figure 1. Digital Corpus-based Instruction (DCI) Model

Classroom Implementation and Procedure

The model was implemented through two specific instructional units designed for Public Administration students. These units were selected to represent core vocabulary relevant to the field.

Table 1. The Classroom Activities of Digital Corpus-Based Instruction

Unit	Objective	Procedure
Public Administration Concepts	To introduce basic terms such as *policy implementation*, *governance*, and *accountability*	In the **Discovery** stage, students searched for concordance lines and collocations (e.g., *effective policy implementation*). In the **Connection** stage, they watched a video on "Principles of Good Governance" via QR code to contextualize the terms. Finally, in the **Creation** stage, students wrote a short formal paragraph (4–5 sentences) on topics like "The Importance of Policy Implementation" using mobile apps.
Public Service and Bureaucracy	To distinguish between positive and negative expressions in public service delivery.	Students identified collocations for terms such as *bureaucratic delay* and *citizen satisfaction* in the corpus. They then compared these with audio recordings of customer complaints (**Connection**). The activity concluded with students writing a formal complaint letter (150–200 words) addressed to a fictional public service office (**Creation**).

The activities presented in this model are designed with high flexibility, allowing instructors to adapt the text length, the quantity of target expressions, and the supporting media to match students' proficiency levels. To enhance contextual relevance, the audiovisual materials accessed via QR codes can be substituted with local content, such as public service videos specific to Indonesia. Furthermore, integrating mobile applications such as WhatsApp or Telegram is recommended, as these platforms not only facilitate collaboration and peer feedback but also accustom students to writing in professional communication formats.

FINDINGS

The implementation of the Digital Corpus-based Instruction (DCI) model in the Public Administration classroom yielded specific learning outcomes across the two instructional units. The results are categorized by the tangible outputs produced by students during the *Discovery*, *Connection*, and *Creation* stages.

Findings from Unit 1: Public Administration Concepts

In the Discovery stage, students successfully utilized the COCA corpus to identify authentic collocations for abstract administrative concepts. As detailed in Table 2, students moved beyond simple definitions to identify lexical bundles. For instance, they found that *policy implementation* is frequently modified by adjectives such as '*effective* ' or '*successful*,' while *governance* is strongly associated with the concept of '*good governance*.'

Table 2. Example of Corpus Search Results in Unit 1: Public Administration Concepts

Keyword	Example Sentence from the Corpus	Collocations Noted
Public administration	Public administration plays a vital role in implementing government policy.	Public administration system, modern administration
Governance	Good governance is essential for sustainable development.	Good governance, corporate governance
Policy implementation	Effective policy implementation requires strong leadership.	Effective policy, successful implementation
Administrative reform	The new law aims to accelerate administrative reform in local offices.	Accelerate reform, reform agenda
Accountability	Transparency ensures accountability in government decisions.	Ensure accountability, public accountability

The next stage is Connection, where students watch a video titled *"Principles of Good Governance"* via a QR code. From the video, they write down at least five relevant expressions, such as the right people, transparency in decision-making, or responsibility to citizens. These expressions are then compared with the corpus exploration results, so that students can see the connection between the use of language in written texts and in audiovisual media. The QR code used is as follows:

Figure 2. A QR video of "Principles of Good Governance"

In the Creation stage, students are assigned to write a short paragraph (4–5 sentences) on each of the following topics: "*The Importance of Policy Implementation," "Why Civil Servants Matter,"* and "*The Role of Public Administration in Daily Life*." The writing is typed through a mobile application (WhatsApp or Telegram). It must include at least three expressions from the corpus: effective policy implementation, public administration system, and ensuring accountability. These expressions are underlined to make them easily identifiable in the peer feedback process. An example of a short paragraph in accordance with Unit 1 activities is as follows:

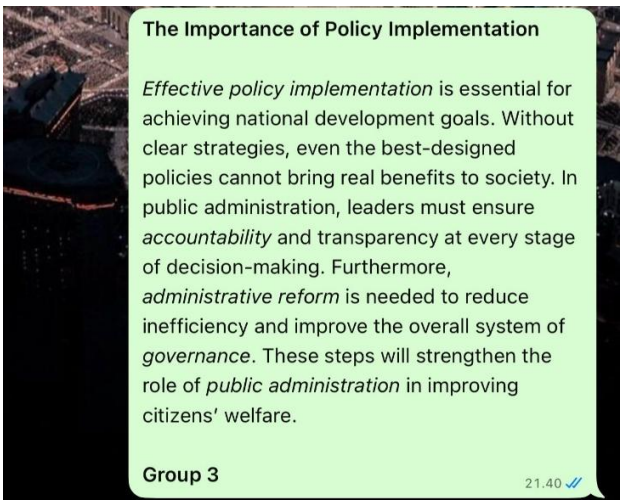


Figure 3. A Short Formal Paragraph about "Importance of Policy Implementation" Collected by Students

Findings from Unit 2: Public Service and Bureaucracy

The results from Unit 2 indicate that students were able to distinguish between positive and negative semantic prosodies in professional vocabulary. During the corpus exploration, students successfully categorized collocations based on service quality contexts. For example, they identified *improve* and *enhance* as collocations for positive service contexts (e.g., improve public service, enhance citizen satisfaction), while associating *bureaucratic delay* with negative descriptors like *serious* (e.g., serious bureaucratic delay, poor service quality). These findings are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Example of Corpus Search Results in Unit 2: Public Service and Bureaucracy

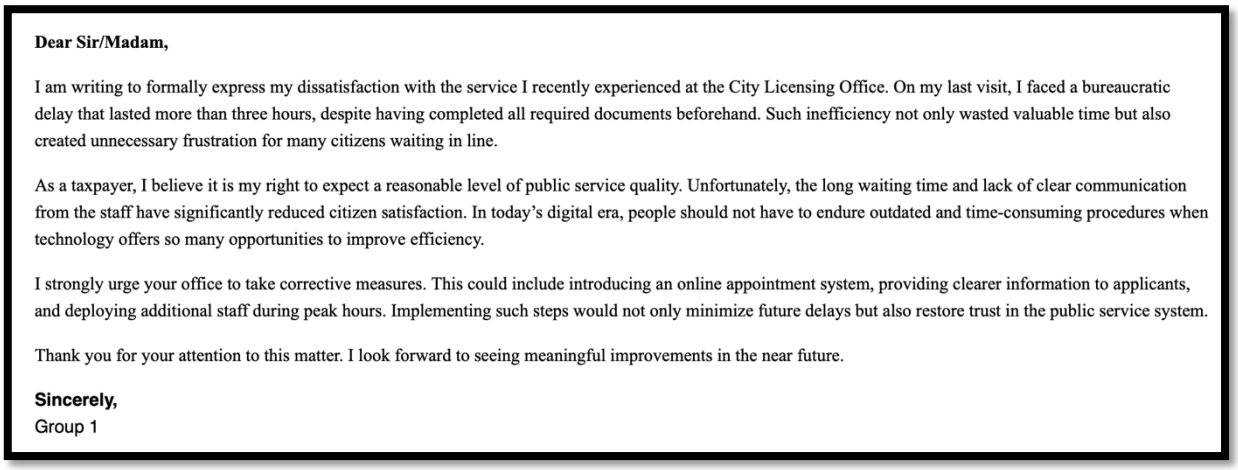
Keyword	Example Sentence from the Corpus	Collocations Noted
Public service	The ministry is working to improve public service delivery.	Improve service, quality service
Citizen satisfaction	High citizen satisfaction reflects the success of government programs.	High satisfaction, measure satisfaction
Bureaucratic delay	Licensing procedures often face serious bureaucratic delays.	Serious delay, reduce delay
E-government	E-government initiatives increase efficiency in public administration.	E-government initiative, digital governance

In the Connection stage, students watch the video *"What Is The Public Employment Service Office?"* and listen to audio recordings of customer complaints. From this material, they note expressions that reflect service quality, such as long wait times, friendly staff, or delayed responses. Next, students compare expressions from the media with corpus findings to understand how the same terms can be used in different contexts. The QR code used is as follows.

SCAN ME

Figure 4. A QR Code for Video: "What Is The Public Employment Service Office?

The final output for this unit, a formal complaint letter (150–200 words), demonstrated the students' ability to transfer these corpus findings into a specific professional genre. As shown in Figure 5, the students constructed a letter that maintained a professional tone while effectively using negative collocations (e.g., *bureaucratic delay*, *long waiting time*) to describe service failures, and positive collocations (e.g., *improve efficiency*) to suggest solutions.



Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to formally express my dissatisfaction with the service I recently experienced at the City Licensing Office. On my last visit, I faced a bureaucratic delay that lasted more than three hours, despite having completed all required documents beforehand. Such inefficiency not only wasted valuable time but also created unnecessary frustration for many citizens waiting in line.

As a taxpayer, I believe it is my right to expect a reasonable level of public service quality. Unfortunately, the long waiting time and lack of clear communication from the staff have significantly reduced citizen satisfaction. In today's digital era, people should not have to endure outdated and time-consuming procedures when technology offers so many opportunities to improve efficiency.

I strongly urge your office to take corrective measures. This could include introducing an online appointment system, providing clearer information to applicants, and deploying additional staff during peak hours. Implementing such steps would not only minimize future delays but also restore trust in the public service system.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to seeing meaningful improvements in the near future.

Sincerely,
Group 1

Figure 5. A Complaint Letter Collected by Students

Overall, the findings from these two examples show that corpus-based activities increased students' awareness of authentic language patterns and promoted formal writing skills in the context of ESP.

DISCUSSION

The implementation of the Digital Corpus-based Instruction (DCI) model, as demonstrated through the activities in "Unit 1: Public Administration Concepts" and "Unit 2: Public Service and Bureaucracy," offers comprehensive pedagogical implications. By integrating the three core stages: Discovery, Connection, and Creation, this model addresses critical challenges in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction. The following discussion elaborates on the benefits of this approach from four distinct perspectives: enhancing lexical competence through data-driven learning, scaffolding comprehension through multimodality, fostering learner autonomy and digital literacy, and providing sustainable solutions for ESP practitioners.

Enhancing Lexical Competence and Professional Authenticity

The primary contribution of the DCI model is its ability to bridge the gap between abstract linguistic data and professional reality. In traditional ESP settings, students often rely on decontextualized vocabulary lists provided in textbooks, which fail to capture the dynamic nature of professional discourse (Misnawati, Atmowardoyo, et al., 2024). The Discovery stage in this model fundamentally shifts this paradigm by exposing students to authentic language patterns via the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) (Liontas et al., 2023).

Through the activities presented, students do not merely memorize the definition of "bureaucracy" or "service"; they investigate how these words behave in real sentences. For instance, in Unit 2, students identified that *bureaucratic delay* is frequently associated with negative adjectives like *serious* or verbs like *reduce*. This process of identifying collocations such as *public service delivery* or *citizen satisfaction* enhances students' lexical precision (Misnawati, Anwar, et al., 2024). As highlighted in the literature, corpus consultation helps students move beyond single-word learning to understanding "chunks" of language, which is crucial for fluency and accuracy in professional settings (Saleh Aluthman, 2017).

Furthermore, the model ensures that this lexical knowledge is not inert. By analyzing concordance lines, students observe that language usage in public administration is highly specific and formal. This direct engagement with authentic input increases students' awareness of the register required in their future careers, confirming that corpus-based approaches provide a more robust input than intuition-based instruction alone (Boulton, 2012).

Scaffolding Comprehension through Multimodal Connections

One of the identified barriers to using corpora in the classroom is the "dry" or overwhelming nature of text-only concordance lines, particularly for students with lower proficiency (Misnawati, Yusriadi, et al., 2025). The DCI model effectively mitigates this issue through the Connection stage. By integrating QR-based audiovisual materials such as the video on "Principles of Good Governance" in Unit 1 or "Public Employment Service" in Unit 2, the model provides essential scaffolding.

This multimodal approach serves a dual function. First, it acts as a cognitive anchor. Students who may struggle to grasp the nuance of *accountability* from a single text line can fully grasp the concept when it is visualized and explained in a video context. Second, it validates the corpus data. When students hear a speaker in a video use the exact phrase "*improve public service* " that they previously found in the COCA database, it reinforces the relevance of their research (Zare & Al-Issa, 2024). This alignment between the "Discovery" (textual/data) and "Connection" (visual/auditory) stages creates a richer cognitive pathway for retention, addressing the need for varied input in language learning.

Fostering Learner Autonomy and Digital Literacy

The pedagogical design of the DCI model aligns strongly with the principles of student-centered learning. Unlike traditional lectures, where the instructor is the sole source of knowledge, this model positions students as active researchers. In the Discovery stage, students are responsible for navigating the corpus, selecting relevant examples, and formulating their own understanding of vocabulary usage (Noor & Amir, 2017). This inductive learning process promotes critical thinking and learner autonomy, skills essential to lifelong learning (Morgoun et al., 2020).

Moreover, the Creation stage leverages technology that students are already familiar with—mobile applications like WhatsApp or Telegram to facilitate academic production (Misnawati et al., 2022). By asking students to produce text outputs such as formal paragraphs or complaint letters on mobile platforms, the model transforms social networking tools into educational spaces (Mobile-Assisted Language Learning/MALL) (Beyranvand & Rahmatollahi, 2021). This integration not only makes the learning process more engaging but also simulates the digital communication demands of the modern workplace. Students learn that writing a complaint letter requires a different tone than a casual chat, yet they can perform this professional task using accessible digital tools (Al-Ahdal & Alharbi, 2021).

Practical Adaptability for Low-Resource Contexts

From an instructor's perspective, the DCI model offers a significant advantage in terms of practicality and sustainability. Many ESP programs in higher education, particularly in developing contexts, face constraints regarding access to expensive software or specialized teaching materials (Misnawati, 2024b). The DCI model demonstrates that effective corpus-based instruction does not require a high-tech computer lab.

As shown in the "Notes for Instructors," the framework is highly flexible. The reliance on free online resources (COCA), standard smartphones (for QR scanning and typing), and simple worksheets makes this model easily replicable in various institutional contexts (Misnawati et al., 2023). Teachers can easily adapt the content swapping "Public Administration" terms for "Legal" or "Economic" vocabulary without altering the core pedagogical structure (Misnawati, Anwar, et al., 2024). This adaptability addresses the challenge of limited resources while ensuring that students still receive high-quality, authentic language instruction.

In summary, the benefits of the DCI model extend beyond simple vocabulary acquisition. It creates a synergistic learning environment where authentic data, multimodal reinforcement, and mobile technology converge to produce students who are not only linguistically competent but also digitally literate and professionally prepared.

CONCLUSIONS

This article has made a pedagogical contribution by demonstrating how corpora can be integrated simply yet effectively into teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP), particularly in the field of public administration. Through the Digital Corpus-based Instruction (DCI) model, with three main stages, Discovery, Connection, and Creation, students are not only introduced to authentic vocabulary and collocations. Still, they are also guided to connect them with real-world usage in the media and to apply them in meaningful language products. Two examples of activities presented, namely Unit 1 (Public Administration Concepts) and Unit 2 (Public Service and Bureaucracy), show how corpus data can be processed into practical, student-oriented

classroom activities relevant to professional needs. Through a combination of vocabulary exploration, multimodal reinforcement, and mobile-based assignments, learning becomes more lively and contextual. Furthermore, this approach can be expanded to other ESP topics related to public administration, such as election systems, civil service systems, and governance. Teachers can tailor materials and activities to the class's needs with a flexible framework that requires minimal resources. Thus, this article not only provides concrete examples of corpus-based learning applications but also encourages ESP teachers to explore the potential of DCI further to enrich students' learning experiences across various fields of study.

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