

Developing Reading Comprehension Skills in an ESP Course through a Theme and Task Based Learning Model

M.A. GONZALO ROMERO MARTÍNEZ

Faculty of Education –B.A. in Foreign Languages

Unidad Central del Valle del Cauca - Uceva

Carrera 27 A No. 48-144, Tuluá – Valle del Cauca

COLOMBIA

gromero@uceva.edu.co <https://gromero37.wixsite.com/researcher>

Abstract: - This paper shares a qualitative study that aims at proposing an implementation of a new strategical model for improving reading comprehension skills in an English Specific Purposes process in Bachelor Degree program in a Colombian university, which has shown low results in the standardized national tests. After a literature review about the current models to develop communicative competence in major students, the models Theme Based Learning and Task-Based Language Learning were put into consideration since they share some important principles and complement each other. Findings showed that the reading comprehension skills are related to the main core of the content based instruction model by developing High Order Thinking Skills. The Task Based Language Learning relates a core of active methodologies to be considered as the backbone in the classes planning that let students be involved in meaningful communicative activities.

Key-Words: - English for Specific Purposes, Theme Based Learning, Task-Based Language Learning, reading comprehension skills, Content Based Instruction, High Order Thinking Skills.

1 Introduction

This implementation proposal for an English Specific Purposes (hereafter ESP) in Higher Education in Colombia corresponds to a Master Degree final project that shows an analysis of the theoretical framework about interesting methodologies for teaching English as a foreign language and a contrastive work with the current situation of a Bachelor Degree program in a Colombian university [1].

The policies and plans for making South American countries bilingual (Spanish-English) have become an important topic in the last two decades because of globalization phenomena. This situation has made the public policy makers in Colombia design and implement different methodologies to reach the communicative proficiency at all the stages of education: primary, secondary and tertiary. Nonetheless, the results have been mainly negative; the country has a very low level of English by showing the evidences through the quantification of the learners and the teachers without a bilingual proficiency, in addition with the adverse results of the national and international standardized tests [2].

The most concerning results show how Colombian students at school or university have not reached their required level of competence in the additional language. Some studies show that just 11% of students at university reach the intermediate

level in CEFR in Pruebas Saber Pro [3]. These results come along with the results of Pruebas Saber 11 that shows that just 2% of bachilleres (seniors) reach an intermediate level of English (B1 in CEFR) and 1% in a high level (B+ in CEFR). This situation about students failing tests comes along with a bigger one: Colombia was 61st among 65 countries in the PISA test where 85.0000 (9.000 Colombian) 15-old-year learners around the world were evaluated [3].

These Pruebas Saber Pro are regulated by law 1324 of 2009 [4] and includes English into the basic competences evaluated among the other competences that measures learners' attainment of the nine compulsory subjects [5]. It is very important to take into account that this English proficiency test is structured by different texts that students must comprehend in order to answer some questions that aims at evaluating the whole communicative competence. It is to say that reading comprehension skills take a big importance in the national evaluation process.

In order to face the previous situation, the Ministry of Education in Colombia has made much effort for students to reach the required levels according to the Common European Framework for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment CEFR [6], adopted as a way to guide students and learners in the foreign language learning process in the National Bilingual Program [7]. As it is possible to

see in the learners' results in the national and international tests, this policy has failed, however *el Programa Colombia Bilingüe 2014-2019* has established different strategies to support schools and universities in the bilingual commitment. For instance, the level required for the future English teachers is C1, and other teachers B2 according to the CEFR [8].

As it is seen before, there is a current difficult situation about bilingualism in Colombia which deserves multiple researching processes. In the light of these ideas, this article reports a study that focus on the situation of the Physical Education Bachelor Degree program at Unidad Central del Valle del Cauca – Uceva, which belongs to the Faculty of Education. The results of this program in English in the Pruebas Saber Pro tests, have been under the national average for the last five years.

Although English is mandatory in all the academic programs at Uceva, the subject is not included into the official curriculum, there is a Language Department that offers 4 levels of English for students in all different faculties in order to achieve the Ministry of Education's goal of developing the Independent User Level (B2) in the CEFR in all students. The current methodology used in these levels, which are called modules, is English for Specific Purposes, where learners get their basic communicative skills in the two first semesters, then they start developing technical vocabulary in the third and fourth semesters. According to a brief observation in syllabi, there is no any compulsory guide to follow and it is necessary to include active methodologies. That is how this study becomes useful to improve results in the English subject in Saber Pro tests.

Consequently, the integration of two important models in the English teaching theoretical framework is presented in order to improve the previous situation. On the one hand, Theme Based Learning is probably the most popular model of Content Based Instruction approach – CBI, which has become widespread because its success by using the current learning content related with language skills in a content driven curriculum [9][10]. CBI shares its principles with Content and Language Integrated Learning - CLIL [11][12] that is a trendy approach in Europe to develop plurilingualism in all the citizens through the integration of the curriculum content with the linguistic competences [13]. On the other hand, Task Based Language Learning is a spin-off approach from Communicative Language Teaching – CLT and it has become popular for its modeling structure of lessons where the learners are engaged to develop a

set of activities in which negotiating of meaning is the clue to develop the communicate competence [14][15][16].

The concept of Theme and Task Based Language Learning model has been implemented before [17]. However, this was only a general proposal to develop an ESP curriculum through the usage of themes and tasks as a core to develop communicative competences in major students. Hence, this study focuses on the reading comprehension skills and its relationship with the integration of the joint models, as well as their shared principles and the big opportunity for complementing each other.

2 Method

This research is established under a qualitative approach that tries to propose a guide to implement CBI approach through the Task and Theme Based Model in the monolingual context of the Physical Education school. Firstly, the bibliography of the models and previous implementations in similar contexts are analyzed. Secondly, the TTL model is presented by showing the complementing items between the two studied models. Then, the current situation of the syllabi is analyzed. Finally a course is designed in the light of the model proposed.

3 Theoretical Framework

Although the history of language teaching started centuries ago, it was in the twentieth century that it had an extensive development. For more than a hundred years there has been discussion towards theories and approaches about how to teach language [18]. The scientific disciplines like psychology, sociology, linguistics and psycholinguistics among many others have provided background to take the risk to innovate in the curriculum and in the classroom itself.

In the light of these ideas, it is possible to say that trying to establish a sequential state-of-art of the different approaches, methods and models that have been used to teach a second or foreign language through history is a wide entrepreneurship to research. Some principles have been established to study each set of those strategies [18][19][20]. This is a very interesting subject to discuss, but it is not the aim of this paper to estimate all the approaches, in contrast this paper focuses on two models Theme-Based Learning and Task-Based Language Learning.

3.1 Theme-Based Learning

Theme-Based Learning (TBL) is one of the models of the Content-Based Instruction (CBI) which has been one of the most prominent trend in the last two decades. CBI is not a new paradigm for teaching, it is a “spin-off approach which derives from the evolution of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)” [10], which became a paradigm whose foundations arose after the interdisciplinary development of communicative competence as a concept in the 70’s and 80’s and covers all the approaches that implies the “practice and experience in an increasingly wide range of communicative contexts and events... [to] expand their communicative competence” [21].

CBI is also seen as an umbrella term that includes models which aim at providing educational strategies that let “students get “two for one”- both content knowledge and increased language proficiency” [9]. This is achieved by “emphasizing the incidental internalization of new knowledge by the learner from rich target language data, while focusing on the meaning being communicated” [9].

This approach has been studied since their successful results in immersion programs in Canada in the 1960’s and has taken different connotations according to the context. For instance, in Europe it is called Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) [13]. It has been object of hundreds of researches, moreover by the European Union which has adopted it as a successful model to make European citizens real plurilingual people [22]. CBI shares its principles with Content and Language Integrated Learning approach (CLIL) [11], the only difference for some authors it is the context by which both of them were conceived. On one hand, as it is said before CBI started with the Canadian immersions programs in the 1960s, on the other hand CLIL was coined in Europe after European Union’s interest on improving the plurilingual competence in the citizens [11]. Both of them are educational dual focus approaches where content and language are integrated and nowadays they are understood as umbrella terms that involve different models of CBI in a continuum where it is interesting to know where exactly Theme-Based Learning is located.

3.1.1 A continuum of language/content integration

CBI is an umbrella term that involves some models that can be classified into a continuum whose ends or limits are related to the priority on content on the one hand and language on the other [23][24] as it is seen in the Figure 1. Thanks to this classification it

is easy to find what model is more appropriate according to the aims of the courses.

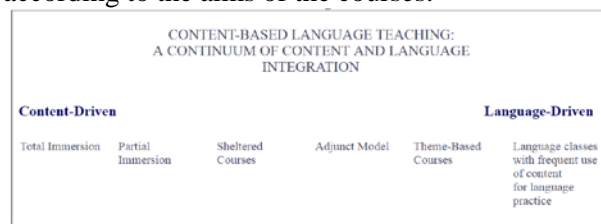


Fig. 1

Theme-Based Learning lies close to the language-driven end of the continuum, even it has been pointed out as “probably the most popular prototype of CBI” [10]. In this way, it is shown that it is applicable in an English as Specific Purpose course in higher education due the circumstances that are involved the Colombian tertiary educational programs, such as the lack of content teachers at university that challenges students to read texts in a foreign language, the importance of success the standardized test that measures in a judgmental way the level of foreign language proficiency, mathematical thinking, critical thinking, among other competences.

3.1.3 Why a content-based model?

As it is seen before, Theme-Based Learning is a CBI model that becomes an interesting proposal for an ESP course. In this chapter, three different referential sources are studied to summarize the benefits and the main cores of a content-based model in Table 1 [25][18][26].

Table 1. Benefits of CBI models [1]

BENEFITS	Crandall	Richards and Rodgers	British Council
Language Learning	According to Krashen, language learning is more successful if it is closer to the acquisition process of L1.	It offers excellent conditions for language acquisition increasing the exposure to the FL (foreign language).	Students can use the language to fulfil a real purpose, which can make students both more independent and confident.
Cognitive development	“Cummins (1981) argues that individuals develop two types of language proficiency: basic interpersonal language skills [B.I.C.S.] and cognitive academic language proficiency	It provides pedagogical accommodation to different levels and skills.	Students can also develop a much wider knowledge of the world through CBI which can feed back into improving and supporting their general educational needs.

	<p>[C.A.L.P.S.]... Integrated language and content instruction... offers a means by which foreign language students can develop fuller proficiency in the foreign language they are studying.” (pág. 2).</p>		<p>Taking information from different sources, re-evaluating and restructuring that information can help students to develop very valuable thinking skills that can then be transferred to other subjects.</p> <p>CBI is very popular among ESP teachers as it helps students to develop valuable study skills such as note taking, summarizing and extracting key information from texts.</p>
<p>Affective factor</p>	<p>Language learning is successful when it is engaging in a meaningful usage of language in a relatively anxiety-free environment.</p>	<p>It reflects the interests and needs of the learner.</p> <p>It provides meaningful and real materials for students.</p>	<p>It can make learning a language more interesting and motivating.</p>

As it is seen in Table 1, there are three significant major benefits in CBI models: it allows students to develop communicative competence by engaging them to meaningful and authentic activities; it lets learners to develop not only communication but also demanding cognitive activities through authentic content; it helps to engage students by material about their real interests and academic needs.

3.2 Task-Based Language Learning

Task-Based Language Teaching has a wide theoretical framework which foundations are based on the Communicative Language Teaching and many successful results have been showed [14][15][16][26]. It is one model to materialize the idea of creating a meaningful negotiation of meaning through a real language activity. Students learn by carrying out specific tasks or projects: for example, "doing science" and not just reading about it. In other words, the main goal of this model is to make learners use language into a meaningful activity. In this approach, appropriate contexts are provided for developing thinking and study skills as well as language and academic concepts for students of different levels of language proficiency [25].

Many advantages of using TBLT are established after successful studies around the world. In this paper the advantages considered [14] are:

- It offers the opportunity for ‘natural’ learning inside the classroom.
- It emphasizes meaning over form but can also cater for learning form.
- It affords learners a rich input of target language.
- It is intrinsically motivating.
- It is compatible with a learner-centered educational philosophy but also allows for teacher input and direction.
- It caters to the development of communicative fluency while not neglecting accuracy.
- It can be used alongside a more traditional approach.

3.2.1 What is a task?

There are misunderstandings of TBLT due to the different perceptions the word task has [14][27]. Task as a term has been worked by many scholars [14][16][26]. In this paper, the concept focuses on the activities that engage learner into a meaningful negotiation of meaning where the reading comprehension plays an important role as a center of the task. Thus, there is not a unique meaning for task, but there are some criteria [14] that any activity in class should satisfy to be taken into account as a task as Fig. 2 shows:

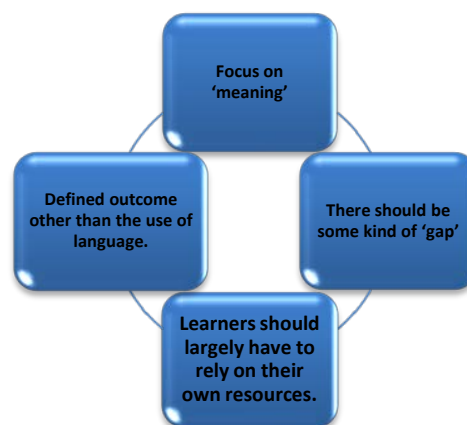


Fig. 2

- The primary focus should be on ‘meaning’. It means that learners do not only develop merely linguistic knowledge but they should be mainly apprehensive of the semantic and pragmatic meaning of expressions used in the process of the task. In this case, it is presented the difference between a grammatical exercise and a task.
- There should be some kind of ‘gap’. The learners should not produce utterances without negotiation of meaning, they need to convey

information, to express their own opinion, to judge, to evaluate or to infer meaning. Cooperative learning plays an important role here, grouping is an important fact for achieving a task.

- Learners should largely have to rely on their own resources (linguistic and non-linguistic) in order to complete the activity. Language is complex, it is not only letter to be interpret, but also extra linguistic factors are important to develop in English classes. For instance, the learners must be able to recognize pragmatic evidences in the texts in order to understand the author's intentions, to do so linguistic elements are not enough.
- There is a clearly defined outcome other than the use of language. Although one of the most important goal in language learning is the language system itself, the use of language works as vehicle of learning, as it is seen in the CBI models. In this case, there should be outcomes that integrate content, real-life competence and language.

As it is seen before, TBLT could bring a well-structured way to develop a course through many different teaching styles by the correct planning of meaningful activities that allow learners to fulfill real task in class while learning a foreign language. Although this approach is much flexible with teachers' decisions about activities, there has been a very clear pattern that offers some specific moments in the class [16] shown in Fig. 3.

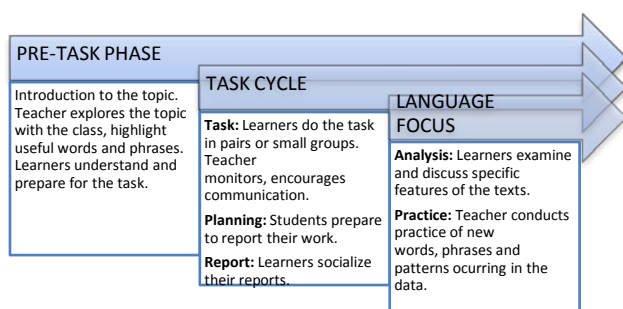


Fig. 3

3.2.1 Reading Comprehension Skills

The reading comprehension skills are indeed directly related to the increasing of challenging cognitive processes in learners. As it is visible in both Theme Based and Task-Based models, cognition plays an important role in the language learning process. For instance, CBI models have established cognitive processes as a core in their methodological framework through developing outcomes that integrate content and cognition, taking into account the Bloom's taxonomy revision of learning objectives [28] shown in Fig. 4, which is

a hierarchical classification or continuum. It starts with less challenging cognitive processes called Low Order Thinking Skills (L.O.T.S) and advances to more challenging practices or High Order Thinking Skills (H.O.T.S).

lower order thinking skills			higher order thinking skills		
remember	understand	apply	analyze	evaluate	create
recognizing • identifying recalling • retrieving	interpreting • clarifying • paraphrasing • representing • translating exemplifying • illustrating • instantiating classifying • categorizing • subsuming summarizing • abstracting • generalizing inferring • concluding • extrapolating • interpolating • predicting comparing • contrasting • mapping • matching explaining • constructing models	executing • carrying out implementing • using	differentiating • discriminating • distinguishing • focusing • selecting organizing • finding coherence • integrating • outlining • pairing • structuring attributing • deconstructing	checking • coordinating • detecting • monitoring • testing critiquing • judging	generating • hypothesizing planning • designing producing • constructing

(Table 2 adapted from Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001, pp. 67-68)

Fig. 4

It is necessary to think about how we can teach some of these areas of the unit through hands-on activities that activate LOTs (remembering and understanding through receiving audio and visual input and mostly passive) and HOTs (critical and creative thinking skills, actively participating through analyzing, evaluating, applying and creating).

In order to facilitate the selection of tasks in these implementation, a study [29] about strategies to develop H.O.T.S in reading skills is taken into account. According to them, following learning strategies could make learners to reach high levels of reading:

- Activating students' background knowledge. This is one of the most important pedagogical strategy nowadays. It is seen in the different methodologies for teaching. The reason to consider the students' background comes from the theory of existing cognitive structures in which new information anchors through meaningful exposure to devices [30] that allow that connection as the constructivism theories state.
- Making predictions. More than literacy is important in order to make learners develop H.O.T.S, it is necessary to interact with the texts in challenging activities as making predictions. This kind of exercises about predicting are located in the inferential level, which is higher than merely literal or reorganizational level [31]. Thus, making predictions should be one of the meaningful activities for learners to develop reading comprehension skills in class.

- Completing graphic organizers. These devices are commonly used in the CBI models because of their aim at enhancing student's creative thinking skills through mind maps, brainstorming, lotus blossom, sequencing charts, among other strategies that make learners evaluate and create their own references of the texts worked in class.
- Answering questions. Inquiry learning has shown great results in models such as Project- Based Learning where questions are the center of the lessons. At the moment learners are asked for open or close questions, they are able to start challenging cognitive processes in order to solve that inquiry.

Successful conclusions are presented about the use of those strategies to develop reading comprehension skills [29]. It is a good reference to consider when planning themes and tasks in the proposal. At the same time, it supports the relationship between reading comprehension skills and the TBL and TBLT models, thus their focus on the development of H.O.T.S through meaningful and interesting topics and tasks. However it is necessary to explain how to integrate TBL and TBLT in the following section.

4 The Theme and Task Based Learning Model - TTL

In order to establish the main cores of the proposal model it is necessary to find the similarities between the approaches that conform it according to the previous literature review. Therefore, it is a must to define the complementarity of the content-based instruction model with the communicative teaching strategy, whose core are tasks. Figure 5 summarizes the shared principles of the Theme-Based and Task Based Learning models and how they complement each other.

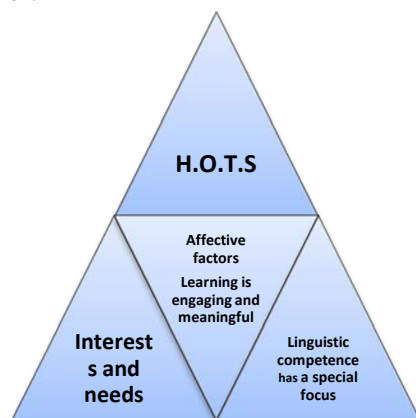


Fig. 5

As seen in Figure 5, the center of the model is to bring meaningful and engaging activities in class. On one hand, the content and process integrate the learners' interest and needs as an English for Specific Purposes course demands and the High Order Thinking Skills that theme-based model provides. On the other hand, these activities should focus on the linguistic competence that is structured by the Task-based pattern (pre task, task and language focus).

Firstly, Theme based model has been successful around the world by showing the advantages of "emphasizing learning about something rather than learning about language" [32], thus "the goal is to assist learners in developing general academic language skills through interesting and relevant content" [25].

Secondly, TBL is a suitable model to use in an English for Specific Purposes arose as a need for training learners for particular contexts and events according to their academic matter and interests. "The English for specific purposes (ESP) movement likewise begins not from a structural theory of language but from a functional account of learner needs [18].

Above and beyond, one of the most interesting feature of TBL is its focus on language moment. It supports the idea of Noticing Hypothesis which directly addressed two fundamental issues: the role of the explicit and conscious learning and the explanation about why only a limited input becomes internalized by learner [33].

4.1 Course design

In order to carry out the challenge of designing a course based on the TTL model, it is advisable to follow a guide to elaborate a proposal for content-based instruction [23] that suggests 4 important stages in order to design a course:

- **Selecting Content:** The selection of content may also be determined by the language objectives of the course or curriculum due it is also a source of tasks and activities. In the case of ESP courses this is appropriate to determine the linguistic competence as a core but the point in this step is to use the needs and interest of the learners to practice the linguistic topic, for example, if the language curriculum specifies that students will learn the language of comparatives, they can practice the use of comparatives through geography (comparing relative distances between cities in China) [23].
- **Determining Language Outcomes:** In a proposal with content-based instruction, it is necessary to clarify if the course is content or language driven. Thus, while content may shape the

language learned in content-driven programs, language determines the content in language-driven programs [23]. As it was shown in the continuum of CBI, the Theme-Based model was closer to the language-driven limit that is to say that the linguistic competence is key to develop the content in the program. However, ESP courses are designed to focus on disciplinary content in the last levels in order to bring students the ability to interact with texts about their curricular subjects. In the light of these ideas, in the presented proposal, it was necessary to check the curriculum of Physical Education Bachelor Degree in order to establish what topics are the most convenient to take into account in this course. Afterwards, the possible language outcomes in relation to national standards, which are directly related to the CEFR are determined in Table 3.

- **Assessment:** Assessment should be formative, ongoing, sensitive and constructive according to some authors that point out the importance of changing the paradigm of a traditional judgmental evaluation [33][34][35][36]. In this way, the activities to be planned should foster authentic assessment, which is aligned with the proposal. Some assessment tools that guarantee the previous framework are defined by 4 main methods that contains multiple tools [33]: Observational tools, conversational tools (surveys, interviews, conferences, debates, etc.), self-assessment tools, and learning artifacts (teachers' review of learners' data).

- **Preparing qualified Teachers:** In order to carry out the proposal, it will be important to train the teachers. This training would consider not only the theoretical framework that the model represents, but also the specific skills that it demands. For instance, the teacher should intend to transform any opportunity in class in a challenging learning experience by fostering critical and creative thinking; the reading skills should be taken into account all the time; and formative assessment is not an easy aspect whether traditional teaching is a fossilized methodology for many teachers.

It is important to highlight the importance of the Task-Based Language Learning guides [14][15][16] to be followed in the design of the lesson plans. Tasks are the way active methodologies are structured in the course.

5 Findings

Firstly, thanks to the bibliographical revision it was possible to see how well both models, Theme-based

and Task Based Teaching complement each other. They share some principles as the importance of affective factor and the language learning through a special emphasis on the meaning, rather than on the form. However, there is a need for complementing each other: Theme-based lacks of a clear pattern to develop activities in class and Task-Based misses an important better selection of the material and topics. That is why the TTL becomes a new way to design ESP courses.

Secondly, the analysis of the results of standardized tests and the current syllabus of the third module, where students are supposed to start working on specific content, it lets know the need for a new strategy to develop communicative competence in students, above all the reading strategies. For instance, as Figure 6 shows in 2015 from 35 students that took the Saber Pro test in 2015, 0% reached B+ that is the indicated level for graduated students in Colombia. Just 3 students (8%) reached B1 and 6 (16%) achieved A2. The worst fact is that 25,7% of the students did not reach even A1, which is represented as A-.

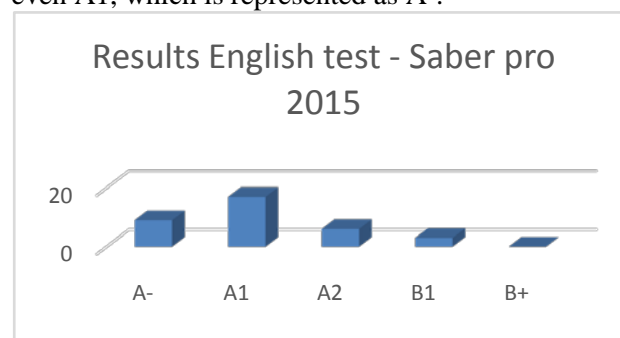


Fig. 6

6 Proposal

6.1 Selecting of content

The selection of content will be coherent with the proposed model. It will be chosen from the general topics in the curriculum of the Bachelor Degree in Physical Education. According to the design of the academic program, the content for this major is divided into big areas of knowledge with a set of subjects: Bio human, human motor skills, pedagogy, teaching practice, research, physical condition evaluation. Consequently, six themes or topics will be considered in this third module of English that represent or integrate most of the areas:

Table 2. Selecting of content

	Name of the Theme	Area of knowledge
Theme 1	Physical Education Specializations	Everyone

Theme 2	Sports and adventure	Human Motor Skills
Theme 3	Teaching experiences	Pedagogy Teaching practice
Theme 4	Rules in the sports	Human Motor Skills
Theme 5	The human body	Bio human
Theme 6	My pedagogical or training project	Pedagogy Human Motor Skills Research

6.2 Language outcomes and assessment

As it is concluded in the literature review, the model proposed is supported in the idea of integrating content and language through challenging outcomes. In the same way, the proposal is designed as language-driven course. These factors represent a twofold objectives design. On one hand the objectives of the Theme and Task Based model to improve reading comprehension skills through the use of curricular content and meaningful tasks, on the other hand the modules have their own aims at developing the communicative competences that the National Bilingual Program requires through the reference of the CEFR.

Table 3. Proposal

Session	Time	Theme	Language outcome	Final Task	Language focus
1-2	12 hours	To diagnose the level of the learners in order to suggest some extra exercises for reviewing the competences for A1 and A2 levels.	To share personal information. To understand frequently used expressions in daily life. To communicate in routine tasks and familiar environments.	A portfolio with the reflection of their own process of diagnosis and autonomous review.	The most important features for A1 and A2 levels.
3-4	12 hours	Physical Education Specializations	To express and read ambitions, dreams and plans about the specializations or other plans for studying in the future.	An oral presentation with students' expectations about their studies.	-Different future forms: will /going to / present continuous. -Would
5-6	12 hours	Sports and adventure	To evaluate and share experiences and anecdotes about the practice of sports.	A video about a role play about the experiences in sports and adventures.	-Present perfect tense. - Have as an auxiliary verb. -Past participle. - Since/for
7	6 hours	SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT			
8-9	12 hours	Teaching experiences	To create and understand texts about the experiences of teaching.	A Blog about teaching experiences.	- Review - Simple Past. - Past perfect - Used to
10	6 hours	Rules in the sports	To describe and explains the rules of familiar sports. To understand the most important descriptions of sports.	A digital presentation about the most interesting sports.	- Modal verbs: should, can, have to. -Comparatives and superlatives.
11-12	12 hours	The human body	To create hypothesis about the possible problems in health.	A blog about health problems and suggestions.	-Zero Conditional. -First Conditional. -Second Conditional.
13		SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT			
14-15	12	My pedagogical	To create a	A	All the topics

	hours	or project	training	pedagogical or training project.	pedagogical or training project.	
16	6 hours	PRESENTATION OF THE FINAL TASK				

6.3 Lesson plan

The number of the lessons, timing and some suggested material is given. The teacher must complement the resources and adapt the text according to the students' needs and progress. The material is seen as an example of resources that could be implemented.

Content, language outcome and final task are presented in the same line in order to see the important relationship they should have in the lessons. The language focus is also visible for clarifying the pacing on the grammar, something it is important in the Task-Based Teaching model.

The task cycles are defined in order to establish the back bone of the lessons. These activities can be enriched by more multimodal input, differentiated process, advanced organizer or other challenging activities that allow learners to get reading comprehension skills and communicative competence in general.

The assessment is just a set of suggestions to implement. The rubrics should be considered after the first two lessons in order to establish the students' levels, needs and interests. The teacher should create his/her own rubrics and it is advisable to involve learners in the process. This process must be transparent and formative.

An observation space is given for gathering information about the implementation results. This information will be very important for improving the proposal every time is applied. Table 4 is an example of the lesson plans.

Table 4. Lesson plan¹

THEME: Physical Education Specializations					
SESSION	3-4	TIME	12 hours	Materials	
				Texts about specialized studies for Bachelor in P.E [37]. Text about future plans [38].	
Content		Language outcome		Final task	
Vocabulary related to specialized studies for Bachelor in P.E.		To express and read ambitions, dreams and plans about the specializations or other plans for studying in the future.		An oral presentation with students' expectations about their studies.	
Language Focus					

¹ More information about the proposal in <https://gromero37.wixsite.com/researcher>

-Different future forms: will /going to / present continuous. - Conditional Would		
TASK BREAKDOWN		
Pre task	Brainstorming: About the learners' interest for studying in the future. The teacher shows texts or videos about Physical Education specializations. Advanced organizer: Website about a master program for Bachelors in P.E. The teacher shows an example of a power point presentation about future expectations of students. Mind-map: Learners complete a mind map with the usage of the language focus items for videos or texts about future expectations.	
Task	Students prepare an oral presentation with their personal information and their interests to study or work in the future by using the structures recommended with future forms and would.	
Language focus	Learners are corrected after their presentations. Students should take notes about their classmates' ideas.	
ASSESSMENT		
Self-assessment / peer assessment.		
Observations: In case of interdisciplinary courses the teacher can have students search on internet about specializations of their careers.		

7 Discussion and Conclusion

The general objective of this implementation proposal is to present strategies to develop reading comprehension skills in the Physical Education B.A. based on the Theme and Task-Based Learning model. According to the theoretical framework of Theme Based Learning and Task-Based Language Teaching, it is possible to conclude that the combination of their features brings an optimal model to improve not only the reading comprehension skills, but also an integral communicative competence in the students of that academic program due the influence of active methodologies to foster High Order Thinking Skills through authentic material based on students' interests and needs.

The content-centered instruction allows to focus on interesting themes for learners and it offers the development of challenging cognitive actions which become essential for any reading comprehension activity. On the other hand, the tasks let establish meaningful activities where the learners undertake the texts as meaningful source of negotiating sense.

Consequently, the analysis of the results about the current situation in the English program shows the need for implementing interesting proposals that enhance challenging cognitive processes in students. The proposed model has as a core to develop High Order Thinking Skills through the use of meaningful

tasks related to disciplinary themes from the curriculum of Physical Education Bachelor program.

The lesson planning presented for the implementation shows the significant relationship that could exist between content and language. In this way, students' needs and interest play an important role in the achievement of the outcomes. This affective factor is fundamental for the proposal due the impact that engaging and motivating activities have in language learning processes. The language outcomes also represent an important improvement of the current syllabus of the course that do not present integral outcomes, but just isolated linguistic aspects.

Reading comprehension skills are developed by the usage of pedagogical strategies bound to the pre-task cycle in the task breakdown where students read in order to gather information for doing their own task.

As conclusion the model proposed in this paper has a very useful opportunity for collaborating in the institutional goals about foreign language instruction. It is suggested an ongoing process of improvement of this proposal by the consideration of strategic assessment tools that take into account the group of students' characteristics, the material is also necessary to enrich through the innovative ideas of each teacher who executes the proposal.

In order to evaluate the model, the author suggests to take into account that the reading comprehension skills can be measured through different instruments that reveal the internal processes students do before, during and after the reading [39][40]. It is also suggested that continuous material and accuracy in reading comprehension activities used in class could offer enough information about the cognitive processes in students [29].

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