

## CONTENT-BASED INSTRUCTION IN COLOMBIAN UNIVERSITIES

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**Abstract:** In the last decades, English learning has become the interest of most people in Colombia, especially of students in higher education, who consider this language as a requirement to be a successful professional. Therefore, universities are using different language teaching approaches and methods to provide learners with the necessary English communicative skills. One of these teaching approaches is named Content-Based Instruction (CBI), an approach that combines the learning of a second language and the specific content of the discipline. This paper presents a definition of CBI, the description of CBI models used in higher education, and its implementation in Colombian universities. The information was gathered through several databases and documents from different universities; thus, as a main result, this paper describes how effective the implementation of CBI has been and the models used in different contexts.

**Keywords:** Content Based Instruction, CBI Models, Higher Education.

**Resumen:** En las últimas décadas, el aprendizaje de inglés se ha convertido en el interés de la mayoría de las personas en Colombia, especialmente de los estudiantes de educación superior, quienes consideran este idioma como un requisito para ser un profesional exitoso. Por lo tanto, las universidades están utilizando diferentes enfoques y métodos de enseñanza de idiomas para proporcionar a los estudiantes las habilidades necesarias de comunicación en inglés. Uno de estos enfoques de enseñanza se denomina Instrucción Basada en Contenido (CBI por su sigla en inglés), un enfoque que combina el aprendizaje de un segundo idioma y el contenido específico de la disciplina. Este documento presenta una definición de CBI, la descripción de los modelos utilizados en la educación superior y su implementación en las universidades colombianas. La información se recopiló a través de distintas bases de datos y documentos de diferentes universidades; por lo tanto, como resultado principal, este escrito describe cuán efectiva ha sido la implementación de CBI y los modelos utilizados en diferentes contextos.

**Palabras clave:** Instrucción Basada en Contenidos (CBI), Modelos de CBI, Educación superior

### Introduction

Before heading to the main topic which is Content Based Instruction, it is important to know the definition of the approach. In language teaching, an approach is the process in which all the theories, assumptions and beliefs about language teaching and learning are specified with the intention of facilitating or describing the subject, topic or content that is going to be taught (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Another definition is presented by Harmer (2007) as he states that:

An approach describes how language is used and how its constituent parts interlock – in other words it offers a model of language competence. An approach describes how people acquire their knowledge of the language and make statements about the conditions which will promote successful language learning (p. 62).

Based on the previous concept, the term Content Based

Instruction, (henceforth CBI) is introduced; it was developed in the 1980s and it has been found as an effective approach for learners who want to develop not only foreign language skills but also to acquire academic content and overcome some gaps that may appear in the foreign language learning process (Tsai & Shang, 2010). Additionally, CBI can be differentiated from other approaches in the sense that this one is focused more on the subject matter (Larsen-Freeman, 1986).

In CBI the language teaching is centered on how the information is treated in order to make it meaningful in text or discourses and not separated from each other (Heo, 2006); In other words, teachers must prepare several tasks that promote learners' critical thinking and be focused not only on the language, but also on the content (Kamhuber, 2010). Additionally, CBI can be used in a variety of contexts and educational fields thanks to its suitability; for that reason, there are some models that have been developed in order to take advantage in each context and make the learning process easier. Such models are: theme-based courses, adjunct/linked courses, sheltered subject matter instruction, second language medium courses (Dueñas, 2003), and a recent model called Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) (Echevarría & Short, 2011).

Now, from this starting point it is important to know what methods or approaches are the most suitable for foreign language teaching in Colombian higher education; thus, a literature review was performed, focusing on how higher education institutions teach English and content in different subjects, in order to identify what CBI models they are implementing and what the perceptions of teachers and students are, regarding these models. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to analyze the implementation of Content Based Instruction in Colombian Universities.

### Methodology

For the proper development of this research, a documentary review was conducted, studying some documents written in Colombian universities in order to analyze how CBI has been implemented in each university context. Regarding the sources that helped to gather the necessary information were databases such as REDALYC, EBSCO, DIALNET and GOOGLE SCHOLAR. Some key words such as Content-Based Instruction, CBI in Colombian universities, CBI models, and CBI models in Colombian universities were used to find the target information through research papers, articles and books that do not surpass the last decade.

### What is Content Based Instruction?

Content-based instruction is an approach in second language teaching which is focused on the content or information that the students will acquire, rather than language itself (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Krahnke (1987) also defines CBI as “the teaching of content or information in the language being learned with little or no direct or explicit effort to teaching the language itself separately from the content being taught” (p. 65).

In this case content is the information, topic, or subject matter to be learned through language, rather than the language used to be transmitted, and evidently any class or course involves content independently if it is a grammar class, a reading lesson or any other kind of lesson (Richards, 2005). Now, implementing content and language is not something new in L2 classes, but still the idea of using approaches that suit this purpose is something that has increased over the past years; some of the goals that this approach has are not only related to improve language skills and acquire academic content, but also to prepare people for life in a more realistic way. This is where CBI plays an important role, since content is taught through the use of a foreign language (Kang, 2007).

This approach is considered to be effective due to the possibility of being implemented in different contexts; CBI can be used in various ways depending on the language skills and the learners' necessities. This can be more beneficial for students because it can provide a language learning environment full of cognitively demanding tasks that can enhance the students' output (Pessoa, Hendry, Donato, Tucker & Lee, 2007). Accordingly, it is necessary to take into consideration our students skills and abilities because “CBI can be used in various ways depending on the skills being taught and includes not only traditional teaching methods such as grammar-based instruction or vocabulary development but also contemporary approaches such as communicative language teaching and humanistic methods” (Crandall, 1999 as cited in Heo, 2006, p. 25).

In the last decades, the use of CBI has significantly increased in the educational field, and it has certainly brought positive effects in higher education as it is focused on meaningful content for the students, which at the same time motivates them to keep up with the lesson. Learners must receive meaningful input, which at the same time has to be rich and comprehensible in the target language.

Teachers can achieve this goal through negotiation, which is basically the exchange of information in this case between the student and the teacher, as they try to establish communication and work towards mutual comprehension (Musumeci, 1996). Now, CBI does not only concern about academic topics or a grammar lesson; this approach can be used even in a particular lesson without any purpose at all, but at the same time be well applied in courses such as English for Specific Purposes, English for Academic Purposes, English as a Second Language, English as a Foreign Language, among others. The only requirement is that the content must be of interest for students, which can range from music, movies, sports, culture, etc. As a matter of fact, in the United States CBI was used in several public schools in order to help immigrants to acquire the proficiency level to communicate in society (Jaramillo, 2014).

In CBI classes, all the efforts made by the teacher are focused on making the lesson comprehensible for the students, which means that in almost every CBI class there must be a pedagogical modification to the course, taking into considerations some aspect such as: language competence, students' needs and interest, and previous knowledge of the

subject. With that in mind, the teacher can rely on a supportive and language-rich classroom environment (Dupuy, 2000).

Recently CBI has been used in several languages learning contexts worldwide such as: ESP programs, second language immersion programs, L2 workplaces and EAP programs, which allows the teachers to adapt or adopt the approach to students' convenience (Grabe & Stoller, 1997). This allows teachers to organize any kind of subject matter receiving support from some models such as: theme-based courses, adjunct/linked courses, sheltered subject-matter instruction, and second language medium courses in order to make the class meaningful for students.

### Models of Content Based Instruction

Currently, CBI has gone through different modifications in order to find the best way in which this approach could be implemented to suit infinite numbers of contexts. As a result, some models for its implementation have appeared in order to make the language teaching-learning process easier. According to Bedoya (2012),

Content-based instruction proposes three different models that can be applied in second/foreign language classes, those models are: Theme-based model, sheltered model, and adjunct model; these models are implemented depending on the population, needs, context, and interests of the learners and the teachers. (p. 25)

These models have been proposed in order to fit the students' needs in the process of learning the content of any subject matter and acquiring a second language at the same time. For the purpose of this paper a short description about each model is given:

**1. Theme-Based Courses:** This is one of the most common CBI models, it is well known for being an easy model for beginners in second language classes, thanks to the way in which it can be developed or applied depending on the students' needs or goals for the course (Dueñas, 2003). This model is highly based on students' interest while at the same time tries to incorporate the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing), the topics are focused on the language, not on the content, and this leads to cover a variety of topics per lesson or a single one more deeply (Brinton, 2007). As Dueñas (2004) explains, the syllabus of this model is organized around different topics associated to a central discipline or theme. "Themes are the central ideas that organize major curricular units selected for their appropriateness to student needs and interests, institutional expectations, program resources, and teacher's abilities and interests" (Snow, 2001, as cited in Dueñas, 2004, p. 84).

This model can be implemented in several academic or regular English courses, depending on the students' skills. In second language courses, it can be defined as a course in which a topic is selected and developed through vocabulary and linguistics tools (Grabe & Stoller, 1997). Since this model is based on topics, there are no specific materials; they can be books, newspapers

or articles used as authentic materials due to the variety of topics implemented in a particular class (Davies, 2003). As a result, the students' motivation will increase thanks to the fact that they will feel more confident and they will be actually learning something rather than just studying the language.

**2. Adjunct Courses:** The objective of this model is to prepare students in an ESL class to take regular classes with L1 native speakers; to do that, the Adjunct courses connect a specially designed language course with a regular academic course (Dueñas, 2003). These courses are more commonly offered within second language contexts rather than in foreign language ones.

This model follows a pattern of connecting language class and an academic regular course between two courses that are linked, and a teacher focuses on the academic concepts, while the other instructor emphasizes on the language skills using content background (Tsai & Shang, 2010).

Some adjunct classes may coincide with EAP (English for academic purposes) and ESP (English for specific purposes), where the students are prepared to learn certain language for a specific context; therefore, classes are focused on a specific lexicon that students have to know in order to comprehend their content classes (Syananondh, 2008). In order to achieve a better understanding of these classes, students develop some cognitive and metacognitive learning strategies such as: listening comprehension, note-taking, and scanning and skimming texts, which might be helpful for them.

**3. Sheltered Subject-Matter Instruction:** Sheltered courses began and took part in a variation of secondary and postsecondary studies. The term sheltered is developed from the separation of second/foreign language students from native speakers of the target language with the purpose of teaching the language through content (Snow, 2001). For that reason, these courses are taught in a second language by a content specialist to a group of learners who have been segregated or 'sheltered' from native speakers.

In the sheltered model, language and content courses are taught separately but they are carefully coordinated; the goal of the teachers using sheltered CBI is to enable their second language students to study the same content material as regular classes taught through the native language (Davies, 2003).

The most important part is team work, considering that this model suggests classes with two teachers who work together to give instruction in a specific subject. One of the teachers is a content specialist and the other an ESL specialist, however, the teacher in this course will receive a special training in sheltering techniques in order to apply the lessons (Brinton, Koester & Orr, 2007). Something to keep in mind while teaching is that the shelter matter model is taught in a simplified way to improve the current level of the students. To achieve this goal they provide scaffolding to learners during the process until they complete their objective (Syananondh, 2008).

**4. Second Language Medium Courses:** This is an advanced regular academic course with some particular disciplines (history, economy, psychology, etc.). Language aims are not

contemplated as part of the curricular formulation of the given courses; in fact, classes of this kind normally proceed without specific instructional emphasis on language analysis and practice (Dueñas, 2003). These subject matter classes attempt to develop content due to the importance that it has for the curricular elements of the courses, but keeping the language features (Dupuy, 2000). Therefore, students are exposed to a higher amount and complexity of subject-matter material, and they will need to have already achieved an intermediate level that can help them to understand and accomplish any task in the lessons.

##### **5. Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP):**

SIOP is the latest model of CBI that integrates language development with content teaching; it provides teachers with a guide of how to plan and deliver a successful lesson. This model has been applied to several grade levels and contexts, and additionally it is integrated by eight components that have their own supportive study (Echevarría & Short, 2011).

This model aims at helping the learners to master academic content while at the same time they are acquiring advanced language proficiency; it also provides a framework that make the content more comprehensible for students (Howard, Sugarman & Coburn, 2006). SIOP model can be described as a framework for teachers to help them to organize strategies and techniques that make the knowledge easier for students to understand, while they acquire proficiency in the language in an advanced level (Short, Echeverría & Richards, 2011).

Based on the aforementioned, SIOP model is a helpful tool for teachers in schools and also higher education contexts. Echevarría and Short (2014) state that

School site administrators use the SIOP as a way to provide clear, concrete feedback to the teachers they observe. The SIOP is also useful to university faculty who teach sheltered instruction strategies, as well as those faculties who supervise field experience. (p. 10)

Accordingly, it is possible to affirm that the SIOP model is preferable to be applied in higher education contexts as it requires an advanced academic language skill, but also certain proficiency level in the target language. The role of the teacher in this model is to acquire experience with certain level of content and skills while they progress through fluency; this happens because at the end of the class the students are expected to put into practice what they acquired during the lesson, and of course this represents a challenge for any teacher (Kareva & Echevarría, 2013).

#### **Implementation of CBI models in Colombian Universities**

Nowadays most professionals in foreign language are thinking about how to receive good education that can fulfill their necessities; this in order to acquire a good proficiency level and be able to express their opinion, not only in their academic field but also in any topic related to the twenty-first century. Most higher education institutions try to focus their English programs on developing the English proficiency level first, with

the intention of having a better performance at the moment of production. They also try to implement classes in which academic language and content is taught at the same time due to the necessities from their learners. For this reason, some universities in Colombia have developed some courses that contain these characteristics and they are based on the CBI models; the universities have implemented the CBI models in their programs in order to achieve general goals and fulfill students' needs. In The following paragraphs, it is explained how the CBI models were implemented in different Colombian universities.

One of those Universities is Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana (UPB), a private institution that offers 32 undergraduate programs and 105 graduate programs. Some of those programs are: engineering, architecture and design, and education and pedagogy; this private institution implemented English for specific purposes at the school of engineering, which is a good project to start implementing CBI. Monsalve, Montoya, Posada and Serna (2005) affirms that

The collaborative nature of this project was to be reinforced by the establishment of common understandings between language teachers and content-experts. Throughout the experience, the language teachers persistently contribute to the bridging of content and language through strategies that would allow content-expert teachers to meet their cognitive requirements. (p. 140)

Based on the aforementioned, it is determined that the chosen model in UPB is a sheltered model due to the fact that a content specialist and a language teacher had to work together in order to arrange a lesson that has a balance between the necessary language and content for the learners' necessities. The sheltered model used in UPB is similar to the adjunct model, but it is slightly different in the sense that adjunct models have two different classes, one for the content and the other for the academic language required to attend the content class; the sheltered model, on the other hand, offers a class that is planned by two teachers, a content specialist and a language specialist, in which they can teach in the same class or divide the time of the lesson if it is needed.

This project helped professors that were part of it, to reflect on the importance of engaging students in content and language learning while taking into account their different learning styles; those goals were reached due to proper investigation and an adequate model chosen, which fit the students' needs. Another proof of the effectiveness was the competent work between the language specialist and the content teacher, and how that work helped students to be aware of strengths and weaknesses in their learning process.

Another institution that is implementing CBI classes is Universidad de Antioquia, which implemented a model for their academic curricular classes. Since 1997, this university, fosters the learning process of different languages such as English, French, German, Italian and others; but the demand is English, which is developed through a course of 5 semesters,

with approximately 80 hours per semester. Since the university offers English courses, the undergraduate and postgraduate students have to demonstrate competences in the foreign language; for that reason, in order to help the learners to obtain an adequate academic level, they started a project for the Molecular Microbiology program and for the Physiology of animal reproduction course. It was a collaborative work between the content teachers from those courses and a language specialist from the English course. González and Sierra (2008) explain that the model was efficient for the necessities and the context of the learners:

Al poder contar con un grupo de docentes con un uso adecuado del idioma inglés y pertenecientes a varios programas académicos de la universidad, establecimos el primer contacto de motivación para trabajar con docentes de otras dependencias en un proyecto colaborativo enmarcado en el modelo adjunto simulado (Simulated Adjunct Model) (Brinton y Jensen, 2002) que nos permitiera enseñar, en inglés, cursos de las áreas de contenido de los diferentes pregrados. Para ello, ambos grupos de docentes se pondrían de acuerdo en una agenda común de trabajo para diseñar el curso, planificar las actividades, seleccionar los materiales de instrucción y diseñar las formas de evaluación de manera colaborativa. (p. 131)

The authors explain that the model that was chosen for the project was the most suitable one considering the programs that the University already had. It was a good decision for them to link the English courses to the content lessons in order to help students to reach a desirable level or to understand the content itself. Thus, implementing an Adjunct-linked model brought some comments that were positive toward the results students obtained with this new methodology. Gonzalez and Sierra (2008) present these comments from the teachers involved in the project:

Para mí este curso fue una experiencia excelente. Me pareció muy agradable tener la oportunidad de juntar la enseñanza del inglés con temas específicos... Me pareció una manera de estar practicando el inglés porque muchas veces uno pierde esas oportunidades y va perdiendo agilidad y la automatización del proceso. Soy consciente que tengo limitaciones. La actitud que yo tenía siempre era de defenderme con lo mínimo. Pero como soy perfeccionista, ahora quiero defenderme en un ambiente académico internacional con un inglés estándar. Este trabajo me dio el empuje adicional. (pp. 141-142)

These comments show how the use of the Adjunct model was satisfactory; as teachers state, it was an excellent experience and they became aware of their weaknesses; with their research group and the other teachers they were able to surpass any doubt and develop new strategies to fulfill students' needs and reach the university goals.

Some universities choose their model based on the most

suitable improvement for their students and the programs that the university offers. That is the case of Institución Universitaria Colombo Americana (UNICA) in which the goal of the institution is to train bilingual teachers into different paths in society, so that they can contribute to improve the quality of English instruction in the country.

UNICA students receive preparation in a variety of subjects such as language, culture, research, administration and linguistic; in the latter students receive a SIOP course about phonics and phonology in order to keep improving those components that are part of the linguistic classes. Dimas (2011) explains that the main goal for UNICA is that professors work with their students with the recent approaches or models to support their academic needs. For that reason, the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model was chosen because it has all the characteristics this university seeks for the students' necessities. Also, it is a guidance to lesson preparation, building background for students, helping them to gain comprehensible input and also to prepare reviews and assessment. Some of the activities that were part of the project helped the researchers to know if the model used in the program was effective or not, as researchers made specific questions based on the activities that guided them to know the students' opinion of the program.

Dimas (2011) stated that in one of the activities, which was a Study notebook, students had to write and answer some activities related to phonemes; learners described the process as a good way to assess their learning processes. With the new methodology professors also stated how careful and serious the lessons had to be planned; but at the same time, it was also easier and helpful to take into account students' needs and the necessary content for them.

This project is not the only evidence that UNICA has for the use of this model. Chavez (2013) explains how a group of professors took part in an investigation of this model and how it was good for the development of their courses:

In 2008, faculty teachers created a special research team. The University, as a bilingual institution, wanted to investigate the viability of the adaptation of the SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) model Making Content Comprehensible for English Learners, an innovative constructivist program created to help second language learners to enhance their target language abilities through the content curriculum. (pp. 38-39)

It is perceived that most of the universities choose their models in order to fulfill the learners' needs, or to have a guide that would help them to accomplish the general goals established by the institution in order to keep increasing their quality. UNICA not only developed projects, in which the model was used and observed to know how good it was, but research was conducted to know more about the SIOP model, and how professors can work with it; how they can plan a lesson, build background, and provide comprehensible input.

After some SIOP lectures of lesson planning, building background and input, and comparing some regular classes

videotaped by teachers, some questions were established to know the teachers' opinion and if this model was suitable for their future classes. Salcedo (2010) shares one of the professors' opinion regarding the process of analyzing some components of the SIOP model, "In the research meetings and in some of the reflections, professors recognized that using the lesson planning component helped them to think about teaching techniques for guiding students to reach measurable language and content objectives" (p. 91). Professors were conscious about how these components help students and how by implementing, practicing and meeting with other colleagues, the preparation can be more effortless.

In other cases, the models are chosen due to an evidence of discomfort by the learners in the actual methodology, for that reason a new model is selected; this is the case of Universidad Del Norte in one of its programs, the Medical English program. There, a focus group and some interviews to professors and learners allowed to observe that they expressed their discomfort towards the current methodology that was used in the program and wanted to make a change. For that reason, a need analysis was applied to know about the changes that were needed in order to satisfy the learners' needs. According to Corrales and Maloof (2009), the results of the needs analysis show this:

The new program has two basic stages. The initial stage includes levels one, two, and three, during which students are expected to acquire general English communicative competencies. The second stage includes levels four and five. These last two levels are based on communicative and content-based instruction where students continue to develop their communicative competencies in the language while at the same time building the academic language skills needed to be successful medical science professionals. (p.15)

The results of the needs analysis helped to choose the model that would be more suitable for the new Medical English Program. Corrales and Maloof (2009) highlight the Theme-based model as one of the traditional models of CBI; such model is based on a topic or theme with subtopics that can follow the requirements of a new proposal. Thus, in order to notice the results or comments that showed the implementation of the Theme-based model, the researchers applied some surveys to collect data from English learners' experiences. Two men and two women were chosen from a focus group to know their opinion regarding the implementation of the model. Some other data was collected through observations and interviews. By collecting information from those sources, Corrales and Maloof (2009) came to this conclusion:

The results obtained from the analysis of the data revealed that the use of CBI had a positive impact on affective areas such as motivation, interest, lowering of anxiety levels, building their confidence, and meeting learners' specific present and future needs. (p. 20)

Another program at the same university - the English program of International Business - also used the Theme-based model to teach vocabulary; it was necessary to select the proper vocabulary that could help learners to develop their input in the subject matter they are studying. The International Business program aims to take students to a C1 level according to the Common European Framework. Gardner (2009) explains how the program is organized:

The Business English program at Universidad Del Norte currently has four content-based business communication courses: Business English 1, Intercultural Communication; Business English 2, Advanced Written Communication; Business English 3, Advanced Oral Communication; and Business English 4, Communication & Professional Development. Professors of the Language Institute, with the assistance of an international consultant, designed each of these courses. (p. 26)

Since there are two programs using the same model, an investigation was developed in order to socialize and express students' perception on how content-based instruction and its models support learners' development in a subject matter through foreign language instruction. The data collected by the researchers and comments regarding CBI are based on the students in the Medicine program as it was a complete program with their different sub-subjects and not a subject matter like Vocabulary instruction in the Businesses English program. The class under study was formed by 16 university students. In order to collect data, students were asked to complete a learning journal at the end of each lesson; some of the questions were related to the classes. They also had to reflect about their progress, how the class helped them to learn English, what they had learned during a period of time, and some other questions. According to Corrales & Maloof (2011) learners expressed how the implementation of a CBI model had helped them in different ways:

I am very motivated, as I told you, I mean, a person studies a book that is teaching you medicine also, which is what you are doing and that motivates you. *You want to read the book and you want to learn new things* (Interview AK, *emphasis added*). (p. 46)

Now it is more interesting because I am seeing medical things in English and that helps me with my major and it helps me with what I am studying... now, really, I learn new things in each class... topics that will really help with what you are doing today (Interview AK). (p. 46)

It has helped me to study English because I feel more motivated and interested in learning English because it doesn't leave the area of my major (Journal 2). (p. 46)

Another university that implemented CBI courses is Universidad de la Sabana. In two professional programs, a different model was chosen to work based on the learners' needs and to achieve the mission of the university. In one of the programs the model is mentioned but not in the other; we were

able to identify the model by some structures and characteristics that are well known from the way that it is developed in the program.

The first program in Universidad de la Sabana that was selected for this purpose was Financial Analysis; a research group developed a project to teach content and at the same time to implement CBI with one of the models; the idea was to obtain some results about how students perceive this new type of methodology. Restrepo (2007) describes some general implications such as the language being contextualized with relevant content, and some others that have to be clear in order to develop CBI classes; some of those implications helped the professors to organize the components and thematic for the class. The collaboration of the foreign language department was also needed in order to formulate the language that would be necessary. Accordingly, it is possible to say that the model being implemented was the Sheltered model because they required not only a professor to select the content, but also the language department to arrange the program.

In order to measure students' perceptions toward the course, the researchers applied a special attitude survey at the end of the semester. The survey tried to gather the students' point of view in regards to the strategies and methodology used when implementing CBI. Some of the results revealed that 88% of the students believed it was an advantage to receive instruction of a subject-matter in English, and having the course in English provided a broader access to material that would be relevant for the development of the course.

The second program in Universidad de la Sabana was a seminar course designed as an elective subject about geography which met once a week. Bryan and Habte-Gabr (2010) described the thematic students worked on during the elective course in the following way:

The course began by exposing students to the global distribution of population cartographically. Students were exposed to population density maps, population size maps, and aerial photographs showing population concentration. As a result, students were also exposed to interpreting thematic maps, tables and graphs which presented demographic data. Moreover, it also sought to provoke critical thinking on the part of students about issues related to population studies. (p. 5)

This can be interpreted as the Theme-based model due to the fact that students have to be exposed to a main topic and advance in the course by working in different subtopics, participating in debates, and writing essays and different activities that can help them to master the course and to reinforce any topic of their interest.

Another university that has implemented CBI courses is Universidad del Bosque, which worked with the SIOP model in the bilingual education program with a group of 18 students. They explained how the implementation went over the whole group. The results show that there was an integration between the language and the content based on the methodology of

CBI. They also discovered that applying content that is slightly under the academic level of the student, stimulates them to read and give opinion about the topic avoiding higher levels of the affective filter or insecurity at the moment of speaking. Mcdougald (2007) claims that:

Utilizando la unidad didáctica SIOP, hay objetivos específicos para cubrir las necesidades lingüísticas, objetivos del lenguaje, proceso de integración y la aplicación del contenido adquirido. Los organizadores gráficos son herramientas que pueden ser adaptadas a las necesidades de los estudiantes para entender el contenido. (p. 63)

As we can see, the model was effective because they focused more on the students' needs and also, they developed more the academic part rather than the language, so the students felt more motivated on acquiring academic knowledge.

Finally, a research paper was found about the implementation of CBI in Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira, in the faculty of Fine Arts and Humanities with a Bachelor's Degree in English Language. There the participants were a group of 23 people in which 5 of them were the focus of the study. The implementation of the CBI approach was based more on the learners' interests and needs rather than on the academic subject. In classes, they discussed about the following topics: Global warming, UFO records, Facebook, Osama Bin Laden's death, Red meat increasing risk of cancer, among others; furthermore, the CBI model identified in this study was Theme-based due to its suitability for the participants' basic English level and the methodology applied to the course; Bedoya (2012) explains why the model was selected to be implemented within this group:

To begin with, this research project had as a stand a model from CBI called theme-based. The model was selected because, first of all, it is proposed for EFL settings, secondly the teachers did not need to be content specialists, and finally the topics chosen can be selected by the teacher, taking into account learners' interests and needs. Having in mind the reasons why the model was selected, it will be exposed the way how the model was implemented and the necessary procedures during the process. (p. 59)

The result of this course was that most of the learners found the class challenging since they had to pay attention not only to the language but also to the content that was the focus of the course. Secondly, the students expressed to the teacher how they wanted to be guided through the process, and finally, the participants made comments about the activities proposed for the course, so, all of them were satisfied with the strategies planned by the teacher and their performance during the course.

### **Discussion and conclusion**

To conclude this paper, it is fair to say that currently teaching and learning English have become a serious necessity in Colombian higher education due to the requirement of most of the universities around the country. This represents a big

challenge for all English educators in the way of finding an accurate way to fulfill all the academic necessities that this process brings about. Finding a method that suits this situation is not an easy task, and also the context and the conditions are not going to be the same. It is in this part where the approach that we analyzed takes place.

In most of the cases CBI was implemented and positive results were obtained in several studies, due to the versatility of the approach. As we could see in the evidences above, CBI improved the students' proficiency in the language and also the academic knowledge. In addition, different CBI models were identified such as Theme-based, shelter, adjunct, and SIOP model; in some papers, the authors mention the model implemented, but in some others, they do not present that information. Thus it was quite complicated to identify what model was implemented and if it was successful or not.

It is important to take into consideration some factors before designing a course based on CBI models, because this could define if the students' learning process will be successful or not. Additionally, it is necessary to continue proposing and implementing new models to facilitate the language learning process, which is not an easy aim to accomplish with the current goals in our demanding society.

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