



TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING IN LANGUAGE AND CONTENT CLASSES

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INTRODUCTION AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE CHOSEN TOPIC

In a global context such as the one in which the Economic phenomenon of "globalization" is provoking greater interaction between countries, especially in matters of a commercial nature, it is important not only to speak and write, but also to understand another language other than the mother tongue. This additional language is, without doubt, English.

In Spain, although English is a compulsory subject in primary and secondary education, people do not show a good command of English. It is frequently observed students' rejection to learn the language and many students see learning a language as something useless and unprofitable.

The Educational Community has to understand that if we want to be competitive and provide many more professional opportunities to our students, learning English is a key issue that must be taken care of and ensure its improvement. Nowadays, English, the universal language as we have already pointed out, is a basic skill to have access to jobs in which knowledge of English is a requirement.

The English language should have a greater presence in our Education programs, treating it as a tool, both for academic and for everyday life. English can offer students a more complete curriculum and better opportunities for life. For this reason, among other ones, teachers, families, and the rest of the educational community should make an effort to emphasize the importance of languages, including English, in the curriculum.

We also acknowledge that the learning of a new language, among other advantages, promotes respect and interest of the students towards the rest of the world's cultures and languages. Thus, learning English as an international language can be useful to interact in an increasingly globalized world.

The question is how learning languages can be promoted at school. The history of language teaching methodology shows that there have been different methods and approaches to teach languages. Nowadays, everybody agrees that there is not a single method that guarantees language learning, while there seems to be an agreement that the communicative language teaching may provide learners with opportunities to engage learners in task performance, language use, and learning.

In addition, multilingualism is the norm rather than the exception in the world, and bilingual education has been encouraged recently in Spain (Safont, 2015). As suggested by Cenoz (2015), bilingual proposals, including Content-based instruction, also emerged as a response to transform a school in which the teaching of English in classrooms must be adapted and combined with the teaching of other languages. In so doing, bilingualism may promote respect for the cultural and linguistic diversity all present nowadays in schools.

The aim of this paper is to analyze how language and content classes in a bilingual school use tasks and follow the principles of communicative language teaching that they claim to use. According to the school, they focus on the development of communicative competence in the four basic skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Language and content learning is approached through communicative tasks allowing students to link learning to its closest environment and their real-life experiences. They also claim that a task based approach encourages students' motivation and a desire to learn.

Once I have exposed the aim of this paper, I will talk about my personal motivation when deciding to carry out the present study. The fact of studying a career also gives you opportunity to know the world. In September 2014 I had the opportunity to study a semester in the United States, where I could observe how the primary classes were like in a continent such as America. In 2016 I study a semester in South East Asia, where I could see and know different cultures. Finally I had the luck of being able to do my last internship in a European School in Oxford.

All these experiences have helped me to grow as person academically and personally. But above all, every time I have had the chance to observe primary classes I have asked myself about the best way to teach English to children. These are some of the questions that I keep on thinking about: How could we avoid falling into the transmission of rules and grammatical structures which are not meaningful for them? How can they learn and enjoy at the same time? So, with all these questions in mind, I decided to observe a different educational system from the one we are used in Spain. The opportunity of an internship in a bilingual European school was ideal for me to find new ideas and observe the link between how educational models work in practice.

1. APPROACHES TO LANGUAGE TEACHING: AN OVERVIEW

Before considering the principles of communicative language teaching as the theoretical framework we use for teaching languages nowadays, it is necessary to consider the history of language teaching methodology (Howatt, 1984; Richards and Rodgers, 1986 and Sánchez, 1997): its origins and how through its evolution we have reached to a general agreement on how languages are best acquired. Thus, we will first discuss the evolution of approaches and methods for teaching languages, how pedagogical trends and methods evolved, and in what educational situation we were when this happened.

Starting in the XVIII Latin had a great demand and acceptance, but the teaching of other languages started to be introduced. Additional languages were introduced as subjects of the curriculum and their teaching focused on the learning of structures and grammatical rules, leaving aside the pronunciation and use of language (Brown, 1993). This method was known as the Grammar-translation method.

At the end of the nineteen century the natural method arose, being Gouin, Sauveur and Berlitzits main precursors. The objective of these authors was to develop oral interaction of the second language. It was thought that it was possible to learn a language without the need to translate into the mother tongue, using only action or demonstrations. One of the main objectives of this method was that students were able to use the L2 spontaneously. Another peculiarity of this method was that attention was paid to pronunciation. This method was the precursor of the direct method.

The direct method emerged in France and Germany at the beginning of the 20th century, as an evolution of the natural method. If there is something that sets it apart from its precursor is that it emphasized oral expression and oral comprehension, and new concepts are introduced orally and grammar is learned inductively.

This natural method has a weakness: it is in the teacher who is in charge of classroom interaction and the main problem is that not all teachers of a language, natives or not, have the necessary competences for language development. In spite of the great acceptance that this method had in the United States, in 1925 it received a lot of criticism due to lack of teachers' preparation and skills.

It was during the Second World War when a new language method emerged. In 1950 with the help of the linguist Charles Fries, the audio-lingual method appeared. The

characteristics of this method were listening to dialogues recorded by natives, focusing on pronunciation and comprehension of contextualized situations. It is worth pointing out that at the same period of time, the situational approach emerges in England as an alternative to the audio-lingual method. It differs from the previous one in the importance given to the situation.

Finally, in the 70s the communicative approach emerged. The main objective of this method is to enable students to interact in real situations with other speakers of the target language. To achieve this, it was necessary to create in the classroom real communicative situations that the students themselves use in their daily communication. In other words; this approach is intended to be significant.

Examples of communicative language teaching can be found in content and language integrated learning (Frigols *et al.*, 2008) and task-based language teaching (Ellis, 2009). In this project I will focus on the use of task-based language teaching (TBLT) in a bilingual school. In TBLT the unit of analysis is the task which may cover the four fundamental skills of language. One of the most important premises of TBLT is that students will learn a language better if they participate in activities during authentic interaction, that is to say, it is necessary to use the language in the same way which is done outside the classroom.

Besides it should be noted that the fundamental objective of this approach is that students participate in authentic acts of communication in the classroom, giving relevance to fluency versus correction. In addition, TBLT pays attention to diversity, since task implementation can always be negotiated with the students.

In summary, within the communicative approach, the task-based approach is claimed to be useful for teaching a second language, and conversation is understood as a vehicle for language development. In what follows I will refer first to the principles of communicative language teaching, followed by main characteristics of task based language teaching, since these two aspects are the theoretical framework of the present study.

2. PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

Communicative language teaching (CLT) is an approach towards language teaching and learning. Its goal is to make use of real-life situations to stimulate language use. In the communicative approach, the student is the protagonist of the teaching-learning process, and the teacher becomes a mediator whose function is to guide the student to improve their communicative skills.

In CLT we not only must take into account the communication itself, but attention must also be paid to the sociocultural aspects where this communication takes place, the relationship between interlocutors or the purpose of the conversation. Besides, this approach seeks fluency rather than grammatical correction, and one of the methodological techniques most used by this approach is the group activities

According to Brandl (2008) we can consider eight principles of communicative language learning:

Principle 1: Using tasks as an Organizational Principle.

For decades traditional methods of language teaching have used grammar as a basis for organizing syllabus. Using CLT methodologies, grammar is no longer the principal issue. In other words, the development of communicative skills is place at the forefront, and grammar is only used to support language use in real life simulated situations.

Principle 2: Promoting Learning by doing

A task-based approach to learning implies the notion of learning by doing. It is based on the theory that a hands-on approach positively enhances learners' cognitive engagement. In addition, the principle of "learning by doing" is strongly supported by an active approach to using language at the early stages.

Principle 3: Input needs to be rich

Considering input, we are exposed to input while we develop our native tongue. We can see that we are exposed to phrases in numerous contexts and situations over many years. Needless to say, there is no way we can replicate this rich input in the classroom in order to develop native-like language skills. However, input needs to be rich. This is one of the most obvious needs in teaching a foreign language: students' needs oral and written input from the teacher, the teaching material, the multimedia resources, or from real life interaction.

Principle 4: Input needs to be meaningful, comprehensible, and elaborated

One essential thing for learning to occur is that the information we process needs to be meaningful. In fact, the information which is being presented must be clearly related to the existing knowledge that the learner already possesses. I would like to emphasize that the knowledge learners already know needs to be organized in such a way that the new information is easily assimilated to the learner's cognitive structure.

Principle 5: Promoting cooperative and collaborative learning

In general education, cooperative and collaborative learning has longer been recognized as a strong facilitator of learning. Students work together in small cooperative teams, such as groups or pairs to complete activities. In second language learning students also work cooperatively on language-learning tasks, or they even achieve collaboratively language learning goals through communicative use of the target language.

Principle 6: Focusing on form

One of the debates about grammar teaching is on the issue of whether to make grammar explicit or whether to have the learners figure out the rules themselves.

A focus on forms approach represents a fairly traditional approach to teaching grammar where students spend much of their time in isolated linguistic structures in a sequence predetermine and imposed on them by a syllabus designer, while meaning is often ignored. In Contrast, a focus on form approach to grammar teaching emphasizes a form-

meaning connections and grammar is taught within contexts and through communicative tasks.

Principle 7: Providing corrective feedback

Feedback can be categorized in two ways: positive feedback and negative feedback. On one hand positive feedback is when it confirms the correctness of a student's response. Teachers demonstrated this behaviour by showing understanding, agreeing etc. On the other hand, negative feedback is known as error correction, which has a corrective function on a student's language behaviour.

Principle 8: Recognizing affective factors of learning

Over the years, consistent relationships have been demonstrated between language attitudes, motivation, performance, anxiety and achievement in second language learning. One characteristic of language learning that has received a great deal of attention over the past years is the role of anxiety during the learning process. Anxiety manifests itself in many ways such as self-belittling, feelings of stress, nervousness and even bodily responses such as faster heartbeat. There seems to be a clearly negative relationship between anxiety and learning success.

3. TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING

As we have already mentioned, communicative Language teaching is the general approach used nowadays, and task-based language teaching is a branch of it.

One problem about language teaching and learning in our educational system is that students leave compulsory education without being fluent and competent in English after ten years studying it. One of the possible reasons is that most of the exercises have focused on teaching grammar combined with activities that elicit more practical activities.

The traditional education does not give enough importance to interaction and real communication. Considering the traditional language teaching methods, there are several aspects that need to be changed. First of all, the material to be used in the classroom needs to be carefully selected in order to ensure their appropriateness.

Secondly teacher's information needs to be update. Last, but not least, the methodology we use to teach a second language needs to be modified.

One attempt to change the way languages are learned and taught has been the implementation of CLT. One of the approaches within CLT has been the task based language teaching approach (TBLT), frequently used in foreign language and content based learning contexts. In what follows, I will refer to TBLT. First, I will define the concept of task. Then, I will refer to task based syllabus design and to the implementation of TBLT, in content-based instruction.

3.1 Defining task

Various definitions of 'task' has been provided. *Skehan (1996) defines a task as "an activity' in which meaning is primary; there is some sort of relationship to the real world; task completion has some priority; and the assessment of task performance is in terms of task outcome.*

In a similar vein, Ellis (2003) proposed that for an instructional activity to satisfy the criteria of a task it must satisfy the following criteria:

- 1) The primary focus should be on meaning
- 2) There should be some kind of " gap"
- 3) Learners should largely rely on their own resources
- 4) There is a clearly defined outcome other than the use of language

Furthermore, when performing a task, learners are not primarily concerned with using language correctly, but rather with achieving a communicative goal.

The difference between "task" and an "exercise" seems clear. Exercises are activities designed to practice specific language items. Besides, there is no focus on meaning. During an exercise learners manipulate the language provided in the exercise rather than using their own linguistic resources. Finally, there is no other outcome than that of practicing language. On the contrary, the aim of tasks is not to practice language, but to use language in contexts to achieve particular communicative outcomes.

3.2 The task-based syllabus

According to Ellis and Shintani (2013) Language teaching involves decisions about: (1) what content to teach, and how to teach the content. These involve making decisions at the level of syllabus design and methodology.

Distinguishing syllabus design and methodology is controversial in the case of TBLT. According to Ellis (2003), he distinguished two types of task-based syllabus: one based entirely on unfocused tasks, and one based on focused tasks. In the former, the development of a syllabus requires only a specification of the tasks to be included in the syllabus. In the case of the latter, however, it is necessary to specify both the tasks and the linguistics content to be taught.

In foreign language contexts, the selection of tasks in a syllabus involves a consideration of the thematic content of the tasks and the types of the tasks. The choice of thematic content will depend to a considerable extent on whether the pedagogic purpose of the task-based course is to develop general proficiency or the ability to perform some specific uses of the L2. Once the tasks have been selected they will need to be sequenced. This will involve “grading” the tasks so that they pose a steadily increasing challenge for the learners. Ellis (2003) suggested that grading should take account of:

- 1) Input
- 2) Task conditions
- 3) Process factors
- 4) Task outcome

Such grading criteria, however, only provide general guidelines for the sequencing of tasks. It is important to observe tasks as they are implemented in particular language learning contexts. As Prabhu (1987) pointed out, no syllabus of generalized tasks can identify or anticipate all the challenges to particular learners.

3.3 Implementation of TBLT

The participatory structure of a lesson concerns how the teachers and student's contributions to the performance of the task are organized. In TBLT the teacher's role needs to shift from that of knowledge-provider to that of facilitator (Gatbonton and

Segalowitz, 2005), while students' role changes from "language learners" to "communicator". Ellis and Shintani (2013: 143) suggested how teachers can facilitate learner's performance of input-based tasks carried out in a whole-class context. Teachers can:

- 1) Scaffold learners' participation in the interactions that arise out of the performance of a task
- 2) Orientate learners to focus on meaning by making the task outcome clear from the beginning
- 3) Make use of the L1 to support the learner's comprehension but gradually shift to the use of L2
- 4) Encourage learners to keep going when they fail
- 5) Encourage learners to use of L2
- 6) Give clear feedback to learners' verbal and non-verbal responses

The authors also claim that students need to function primarily as "communicators" rather than as "learners". However, is it unlikely that students will totally abandon the learner's role when performing a task, as they recognize that the ultimately aim is to improve their L2 proficiency. Perhaps, what is needed is for learners to move backwards and forwards between these two roles. One case would be when students work collaboratively in groups, assisting each other with linguistic problems when they arise.

3.4 Tasks in language and content-based instruction

Plurilingualism is defined in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001: 168) "as the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent, has proficiency of varying degrees, in several languages, and experience of several cultures. This is not seen as the superposition or juxtaposition of distinct competences, but rather as the existence of a complex or even composite competence on which the user may draw".

It has also been claimed that bilinguals are more creative and they develop more learning skills. This may explain why multilingualism is encouraged and supported in Europe and foreign language instruction has been gradually replaced by content based

instruction in Europe. The question is how can we promote language and content at the same time? As suggested by García-Mayo's (2015), it is important to analyze the interface between tasks and content based instructional. From this perspective, the aim of this TFG is to explore the integration of content with language by means of tasks in a content based instruction setting.

Content based instruction (CBI) is an approach in language education that combines language and content learning. The main characteristics are:

The syllabus is organized around the content

Meaningful Tasks are performed while content and language are learned

Methodology follows the principles of Communicative Language teaching

4. THE STUDY

4.1 Rationale for the study and research questions

The increase of content-based instruction programs and the importance of TBLT in the area of education have motivated the present study. I will explore whether content and language are addressed in content based instruction, while learners engage in task performance in the class. The following questions are the ones that guided this study:

- Do language and content classes follow the principals of CLT?
- Is there any difference in content and language classrooms with regards the participatory structure and teachers' and learners' role during task performance?

4.2 Method

4.2.1 Participants

Twenty-seven students, ten females and seventeen males, participated in the study. They were six years old. Participants were all enrolled in the class 1EE (Español- English) at the Europa School Uk. They were instructed half of the week in Spanish and the other half in English. Teachers followed a communicative language teaching approach, which involved using language to achieve communicative outcomes. Students performed

different tasks in pairs, small groups, or in lockstep (i.e., teacher-students interaction) during the observation sessions.

For the present study I observed twenty seven students while they engaged in task-performance during ten different classes: Five Spanish session and five Math sessions as a content class.

Eleven of the participants had English as a mother tongue and the rest of the participants had the following linguistic background:

- One boy whose parents were both Spanish
- One girl whose dad was English and her mother from Ecuador
- One boy whose dad was French and her mother from Canada
- One girl whose parents where both from Prague
- One girl whose dad was from Egypt
- Two children were Portuguese
- One girl whose mother was from India
- A boy whose parents were from Poland
- A boy with parents from Italy
- A girl whose parents were from Croatia
- A girl whose dad was from Spain and her mother from Japan
- A boy whose dad was Arabic
- A girls whose mother was from Finland
- A boy whose mother was from America
- A boy from Hungary
- A girl whose parents came from Brazil

Most of the students did not have English as a mother tongue, but they spoke English at school. The level of the children in the class was quite high, there were also three children who were above the average and normally they had extra and more difficult work than the others. On the other hand, there were a few of them whose level was lower and got less work.

4.2.2 Setting

The study was conducted at Culham European School United Kingdom and it offers a broad and balanced education for 4 to 19 year-olds. This school is a Free School which means it is an all-ability state-funded school, set up in response to what local people say they want and need. In the Europa School children's cultural awareness and linguistic confidence is supported and one of its aims is that students become fluent in two languages: English as well as German, French or Spanish.

Concerning the staff of the school and the material resources, they are truly impressive and unmatched. The facilities are shared by two different and independent schools Europa School (Primary) and European School (Secondary School). This study was conducted at the primary Europa school.

4.3 Data collection instruments

Data was collected during 10 regular Spanish and Maths sessions where students engaged in the performing of tasks such as counting tens and units to know how much items cost; describing dimension shapes in order to locate and describe the shapes in the classroom; describing animals in a farm or telling the time in their daily schedule.

I designed three observation schemes. One Observation scheme included the principles of communicative language teaching (see Table 1).

Table 1: Principles of Communicative language Teaching (CLT)

Principles of CLT					
	U1	U2	U3	U4	U5
Principle 1: Use tasks as an organizational principle.					
Principle 2: Promote learning by doing					
Principle 3: Input needs to be rich.					
Principle 4: Input needs to be meaningful, comprehensible, and elaborated					
Principle 5: Promote cooperative and collaborative learning					
Principle 6: Focus on form					
Principle 7: Provide error corrective feedback					
Principle 8: Recognize and respect affective factors of learning					

In addition, two observation schemes were designed to observe whether the participatory structure (peer and whole class task performance) had an impact on attention to language and content. These observation schemes also allowed me to observe if the participatory structure facilitated the use of L1 and L2, collaborative work and the provision of feedback in language and content sessions (see Table 2 and Table 3)

Table 2: Task performance in peer interaction

Peer Interaction

SUBJECTS	Math					Spanish				
	U1	U2	U3	U4	U5	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10
Learners' collaborative work										
Focus on meaning										
Focus on form										
Use of L1										
Use of L2										
Assist each other with feedback										

Table 3: Task performance during whole class interaction

Whole class interaction

SUBJECTS	Math					Spanish				
	U1	U2	U3	U4	U5	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10
Scaffold learners' participation										
Orientate learners to focus on meaning										
Orientate learners to focus on form										
Make use of the L1 to support the										

learner's comprehension										
Encourage learners to use of the L2.										
Give clear feedback to learners										

4.4 Results and Discussion

As I mentioned before, I observed five sessions where the subject was Spanish as a foreign language and five more classes where students had Math as a content subject. In relation to question one, that addressed whether language and content classes followed the principals of CLT, Table 1 shows findings for the language sessions and Table 2 show the results related to the content sessions

Table 1 Principles of CLT in language sessions

Principles of CLT

SPANISH					
	U1	U2	U3	U4	U5
Principle 1: Use tasks as an organizational Principle.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Principle 2: Promote learning by doing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Principle 3: Input needs to be rich.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Principle 4: Input needs to be meaningful, comprehensible, and elaborated.	X	X	X	X	X
Principle 5: Promote cooperative and collaborative learning	X	X	X	X	X
Principle 6: Focus on form	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Principle 7: Provide error corrective feedback	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Principle 8: Recognize and respect affective factors of learning	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 2 Principles of CLT in content sessions

Principles of CLT

MATHS					
	U1	U2	U3	U4	U5
Principle 1: Use tasks as an organizational Principle.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Principle 2: Promote learning by doing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Principle 3: Input needs to be rich.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Principle 4: Input needs to be meaningful, comprehensible, and elaborated.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Principle 5: Promote cooperative and collaborative learning	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Principle 6: Focus on form	X	X	X	X	X
Principle 7: Provide error corrective Feedback	X	X	X	X	X
Principle 8: Recognize and respect affective factors of learning	X	X	X	X	X

When we compare findings in Table 1 and 2, we can see that the language (Spanish) and content (Math) sessions follow the following principles of CLT: promote learning by doing, input is rich, tasks are used to organize the lesson. It is clearly observed that children learn language and content by means of tasks. Teacher has an excellent knowledge of the language and also of the content, so a rich input is observed.

However, there are other principles that are not observed. For instance, principle 4, dealing with the use of meaningful tasks was observed in the Math sessions, but not in the Spanish sessions that frequently rely on exercises such as fill in the gaps, and copy and repeat sentences. In addition, the principle of cooperative learning was observed in Math, but not in the Spanish class, where students worked most of the time by themselves.

Focus on form and feedback, two of the other the principles of CLT, are not observed in Math sessions. Most students spoke English while they were doing the tasks between them and the teacher didn't give any feedback on the grammar. This may explain why Principle 7 is not observed in the Math sessions as the teacher does not give language feedback during task performance. Finally, principle 8, recognize and respect affective factors, was an issue that the teacher took into account. The teacher was friendly, open minded and took care of students' affective factors, whereas other teachers in the school did not pay attention to students' individual and affective factors.

Moving to question 2 that explored the impact of the participatory structure during task performance, table 3 and 4 show whether peer interaction and teacher-learner interaction trigger the use of the L1 and L2, the attention to language and content and the provision of feedback in language (Spanish) and content (Math) sessions.

Table 3 Task performance during whole class interaction in language and content sessions

Whole class interaction

SUBJECTS	Math					Spanish				
	U1	U2	U3	U4	U5	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10
Scaffold learners' participation	X	✓	X	✓	X	X	✓	✓	X	✓
Orientate learners to focus on meaning	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	X
Orientate learners to focus on form	X	X	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Make use of the L1 to support the learner's comprehension	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	X
Encourage learners to use of the L2.	X	X	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Give clear feedback to	X	X	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

learners										
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Table 4 Task performance during peer interaction in language and content session

Peer Interaction

SUBJECTS	Math					Spanish				
	U1	U2	U3	U4	U5	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10
Learners' collaborative work	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	X
Focus on meaning	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	X
Focus on form	X	X	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Use of L1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	X
Use of L2	X	X	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Assist each other with feedback	X	X	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 3 shows teacher's role during task performance in language (Spanish), and in content (Math) sessions. In math sessions the teacher didn't pay much attention to the language, most of the words were translated to English to facilitate understanding. Moreover most of the times there was not feedback or attention to grammar. Whereas in the Spanish class it was totally different, the teacher was all the time correcting the students and made them improve their vocabulary with new words. On top of that, if they did not know how to say something in Spanish, they weren't allowed to translate into English and they were pushed to paraphrase the meaning in Spanish.

Differences can also be observed in language (Spanish) and content (Math) sessions during peer interaction (see Table 4). During peer task performance, students frequently use the L1 (English) both in language and content sessions. However, in the Math sessions they just focus on tasks demands (for instance in solving a problem) rather than paying attention to the L2 (Spanish). In contrast, in the Spanish class they frequently try to find words in the L2 while they carry out a meaningful task. For instance, when they were describing a farm we visited in a school trip they focused on the description of the animals trying to say the verb correctly. In this project I have not looked at the use of different language with different functions, but, in line with Portolés and Martí (2017), translanguaging in bilingual schools is an issue that may be further explored.

Conclusions and future directions

The aim of this paper is to analyze how language and content classes in a bilingual school use tasks and follow the principles of communicative language teaching that they claim to follow. In addition, it explores the impact of peer and whole class task performance and attention to language and content.

Findings from the study shows that CLT is the approach followed in the bilingual school where I carried out my study. In addition, it seems that children in bilingual schools learn language and content by means of tasks, paying more attention to form in the language than in the content class.

Our findings suggest some pedagogical implications. On the one hand, two of the principles of CLT need to be reinforced in the Spanish language sessions since meaningful tasks and cooperative learning are not observed. On the other hand, the principles of focus on form and feedback, not observed in the Math sessions, should be included in content based instruction.

Considering findings from my observations and my personal experience in the school, I think that the way of teaching should not change depending on the subject you are teaching. In content based instruction there is a need to find a balance between language and content. Teachers need to find strategies to draw attention to language and content. For instance, in the math sessions errors should be pointed out as well as they do in the Spanish sessions. Besides, in a bilingual school teachers need to encourage the use of the L2. Otherwise, children speak the L1 instead of L2.

A final suggestion for future studies is to extend the sample of classroom observations, including different teachers, different classroom environments and observation schemes.

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