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A task-based Framework proposal for teaching reading comprehension at the Medical School

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DECLARATION

I declare that I worked on this thesis on my own and used only sources mentioned in the list of references.

.....

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DEDICATION

To my family and all those who somehow helped me throughout this project

Thank you very much!

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I would like to take advantage of this opportunity and thank all the professors from the Department of English Language who have influenced my opinions about foreign language teaching methodology.

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ABSTRACT

English reading comprehension in integration with the rest of the language skills is a tool for the professional work and the scientific development of future health professional in medical universities. That is why English discipline has been playing a relevant role since 1984 in the curriculum of medical sciences. However, there are inadequacies in the development of reading comprehension skills, among other factors, exercises that appear on the textbook are far from the task-based approach so they are basically reproductive exercises in which students are not expected to complete authentic reading tasks. These aspects have a negative influence on the development of the mentioned language skill in the second year medical students. So it is necessary to find some new ways of teaching reading comprehension to second year medical students at "Lidia Doce" Medical University Branch. This situation allows stating the following **research question**: How to develop reading comprehension skills in the teaching of English for general purposes at "Lidia Doce" Medical University Branch? Systematic evaluation of findings in the pedagogical practice showed the need of designing a framework for applying the task-based approach to the teaching of reading comprehension in second year medical students at "Lidia Doce" Medical University Branch.

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INTRODUCTION

The teaching of English as a foreign language has reached a great level of development all over the world, thanks to its constant improvement when looking for a way of satisfying necessities and being placed in a higher position. According to Jack C. Richards (2006), language teaching has suffered many changes in ideas about the syllabus design and methodology in the last fifty years. He groups language trends into three phases: Phase 1- Traditional approaches (up to the late 1960's), Phase 2 - Classic communicative language teaching (1970's to 1990's), and Phase 3 - Current communicative language teaching (late 1990's to the present).

Nowadays many people demand a teaching of English whose main objective is communicative competence. In the 1950's Noam Chomsky defined communicative competence as abilities and dispositions to understanding and acting. Later on, in 1970, Dell Hymes widened the concept by saying that communicative competence involves linguistics, sociolinguistics, discursive and strategic aspects. This concept has to do with verbal and pragmatic aspects of language, but it does not take into consideration the process of meaning production. In 1980, Canale and Swain retook the aspects Dell Hymes dealt with and they considered communicative competence as a complex of competences that interact in daily communication. Communicative competence facilitates communication among people worldwide.

The process of cooperation and friendship among countries, as well as the process of globalization, are growing rapidly and, because of that, to have a good command of at least one international language becomes a basic competence in the training of a professional. Hence the importance of developing reading comprehension skills as one of the basic components of communicative competence.

In Cuba, the teaching and learning process of foreign languages has reached a great level of improvement. The Ministry of Higher Education was created in 1976 and a year later, curriculum A for all university studies was proposed, where

English was still based on structuralism, in some cases with a situational approach, and in some others with an audio-lingual approach. Then, in 1982, curriculum B was introduced where the teaching of a foreign language was focused in the development of reading comprehension skills. In 1986, the communicative approach was suggested to the teaching of English as a foreign language, with the aim of skills integration to achieve a better communication. After eight years, in 1990, curriculum C was introduced. Then, the teaching of English at medical universities is aimed to develop language skills allowing students to communicate fluently. Reading is one of these language skills and it allows students to obtain scientific information through updated bibliography. This updates the students in their specialties, helps them prepare for collaboration missions, for participating in international scientific events, or for publishing articles in journals.

At the early 90's a new curriculum design of English discipline was established in most of the different years of medical studies. Textbooks to work with in the different subjects were distributed as follows: Kernel I: English I and II (First year), Kernel II: English III and IV (Second year), Kernel III: English V and VI (third year), Practical Medicine: English VII (Fourth year, first semester), Practical Surgery: English VIII (Fourth year, second semester) and Medically Speaking: English IX and X (Fifth year). In the course 1999-2000, in medical universities, a new set of textbooks (the Changes series) was introduced to substitute Kernel series.

As a result of the educational improvement in the National Health System in the course 2004-2005 all syllabi were changed and the use of the new technologies with a renewal of syllabi in CDs and video conferences was introduced. The contents of the Changes series were taken into consideration for the teaching of General English in first, second, and third years of medical studies and the creation of CDs considering the main texts of Practical Medicine, Practical Surgery, and Medically Speaking textbooks to the teaching of English for Specific Purposes in fourth and fifth year of medical studies.

In 2006 the economic situation of our country was not good and it was not possible to import books, so in the course 2006-2007 the textbook Vision One (published by

Cuban authors) was introduced as the first book of the set of Vision books that has been incorporated in the first three years of medical studies where Vision I is the textbook of the subjects English I and II taught in the first year of medical studies, Vision II is the textbook of the subjects English III and IV taught in the second year of medical studies, and Vision III is the textbook of the subjects English V and VI taught in third year of medical studies. The rapid growth of technical and scientific development has forced man to use reading comprehension as one of the most effective ways to learn about modern progresses related to life in society. That is how the comprehension of written language has become the main way, by means of which, man gets in contact with the knowledge obtained by sciences. When a person reads, he/she tries to relate the new information in the text to what is already known. The reader must make connections between what the text is about and external absent objects, ideas and people. When the reader focuses primarily on what is already known to comprehend a text, this strategy is called a concept driven or “top-down” mode. On the other hand, when the reader relies primarily on textual information to comprehend, this strategy is called a data-driven or “bottom-up” mode (Rumelhart, 1977).

The development of reading comprehension has been treated by different authors in many research papers all over the world including Cuba. Most of the strategies used in those papers were based on planned activities in the different stages of a reading lesson (before, during, and after reading) and the development of reading skills by means of scientific text. Ignacia Rodríguez Estévez PhD. (2012), worked English language reading comprehension for first year medical students but she did not take into consideration the task-based approach.

Nowadays, teachers are using new approaches to improve the teaching and learning process, and here is where the task-based approach takes place. “A task-based approach sees the learning process as one of learning through doing; it is by primarily engaging in meaning that the learner’s system is encouraged to develop”. (Skehan,1996: 20)

The task-based approach focuses on the use of authentic language and on asking students to do meaningful tasks using the target language. Such tasks can include visiting a doctor, conducting an interview, or calling customer service for help. Assessment is primarily based on task outcome (in other words the appropriate completion of tasks) rather than on accuracy of language forms. This makes task-based approach especially popular for developing target language fluency and student confidence. In Cuba Juana Idania Perez PhD. (2007), worked the task-based approach aimed at the evaluation of English learning.

Reading comprehension is a vital skill in the conception of English III in the second year of medical studies, but the majority of reading activities present in the textbook do not contribute to the development of reading skills because they are designed at a reproductive level therefore, the second year medical students of "Lidia Doce" Medical University Branch are not able to infer meaning from a text, neither to make comments about it nor to give their viewpoint. This can be observed in the results that are obtained after each written exam and it can also be checked by asking to the professors who teach this subject. So it is necessary to find some new ways of teaching reading comprehension.

The texts and exercises that appear on the books do not have a task-based approach so they are basically reproductive exercises in which the students are not expected to complete authentic reading tasks.

This situation allows stating the following **research question**: How to develop reading comprehension skills in the teaching of English for general purposes at "Lidia Doce" Medical University Branch ?

The **scientific object** is the reading comprehension process and the **field of study** is the use of the task-based approach to develop reading comprehension skills in the teaching of English for general purposes at "Lidia Doce" Medical University Branch.

Overall aim: To propose a framework for applying the task-based approach to the teaching of reading comprehension skills in English for general purposes at "Lidia Doce" Medical University Branch.

Specific objectives:

- To determine the theoretical and methodological considerations that support a framework for applying the task-based approach to the teaching of reading comprehension skills in English for general purposes at "Lidia Doce" Medical University Branch.
- To diagnose the real situation in the application of the task-based approach to the teaching of reading comprehension skills in English for general purposes at "Lidia Doce" Medical University Branch.
- To elaborate a framework for applying the task-based approach to the teaching of reading comprehension skills in English for general purposes at "Lidia Doce" Medical University Branch.
- To evaluate the proposal by specialists

Scientific questions

- What are the theoretical and methodological considerations that support a framework for applying the task-based approach to the teaching of reading comprehension skills in English for general purposes at "Lidia Doce" Medical University Branch?
- What is the real situation in the application of the task-based approach to the teaching of reading comprehension in English for general purposes at "Lidia Doce" Medical University Branch?
- Which framework to use for the application of the task-based approach to the teaching of reading comprehension in English for general purposes at "Lidia Doce" Medical University Branch?
- What are the criteria of the specialists about the framework?

Population and Sample

This research work was carried out at “Lidia Doce” Medical University Branch, located in Sagua la Grande, Villa Clara. The population consisted of sixty one medical students who were in the second year, and twelve professors who teach English at “Lidia Doce” Medical University Branch. The sample was taken intentionally. The sample of students consisted of twenty one students representing 34.4% and the sample of professors coincided with the total studied population.

Methodology

In the development of the research questions different methods and procedures of empirical, theoretical and statistical levels were combined in the searching and processing of information. A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods based on dialectic materialism was used.

Methods from Theoretical Level

Analysis and synthesis: It was present in the analysis of the consulted documental sources.

Inductive-deductive method: It was worked throughout the research paper when going from the general to the specific details and vice –verse.

Historical-logical method: It was used to make a logical overview of pedagogical background in the teaching of English.

Modeling: It was used to model the framework proposal for applying the task-based approach to the teaching of reading at medical universities

Structural systemic method: It guaranteed the structure of the framework for applying the task-based approach to the teaching of reading comprehension skills at “Lidia Doce” Medical University Branch.

Methods from Empirical level

Observation: It was aimed to verify the methodological treatment that is given to the achievement of reading comprehension skills as well as to check the professors' skills in applying the task-based approach to the teaching of reading comprehension skills.

Participant observation: It was carried out to check the level of motivation towards the English language learning

Document analysis: Documents were analyzed to know the approach suggested in the syllabus (objectives, methods, teaching aids, way of organization and evaluation) for developing reading comprehension skills in the second year medical students.

Vision II textbook, was also analyzed to verify the amount of exercises found in it to develop reading comprehension.

Specialists' evaluation: Some specialists were interviewed in order to evaluate the proposal.

Entry test: To know about the difficulties of the students according to their reading comprehension skills.

Interviews to professors: to check the professors' knowledge for applying the task-based approach to the development of reading comprehension skills in the English language in the second year medical students.

Methods from Mathematical-statistical Level

Percentage analysis: It was carried out to process the information and it made possible the qualitative valuations.

Practical contribution

A framework proposal for applying the task-based approach to the teaching of reading comprehension skills at "Lidia Doce" Medical University Branch that helps

students to improve their reading skills and gives them the possibility of understanding texts.

Scientific Novelty

Language skills, specially reading comprehension, have been widely researched by pedagogues; however, there are still problems that have not been solved within the educational practice in schools. Due to the importance that comprehension of written texts has for the competent performance of health professionals it is compelling to find new methods and strategies that guarantee its efficient development. The starting point for the formation and development of these skills is to propose a framework for applying the task-based approach to the teaching of reading comprehension skills at medical universities. This research work assumes the developing of reading comprehension by means of the task-based approach based on the theories of Jack C. Richard, Jane Willis and David Nunan and the dialectic conception of the formation and development of knowledge and abilities as a unique process.

Structure of the thesis

The thesis consists of Introduction, three chapters, conclusions, recommendations, references and annexes. Chapter I describes the theoretical and methodological rationale that make possible the development of English language reading comprehension skills in medical students at “Lidia Doce” Medical University Branch. The bases of the communicative approach are theoretically explained making references to its historical evolution, principles, the communicative competence and the teaching of reading comprehension. Chapter II deals with needs analysis of the second year medical students at “Lidia Doce” Medical University Branch, according to their reading comprehension skills. The results of the detected needs by means of the diagnoses, as well as the problems that hinder the development of reading comprehension, are shown in this chapter.

Chapter III explains the framework proposal as the scientific result of the investigation, and also offers the evaluation of the framework by specialists. This

chapter is followed by conclusions, recommendations and finally the bibliography and the corresponding annexes.

CHAPTER I. THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

1.1. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) can be understood as a set of principles about the goals of teaching, how students learn a language, the kinds of classroom activities that best facilitate learning, and the roles of professors and students in the classroom.

While the goal of grammatical competence refers to the knowledge we have of a language that accounts for the ability to produce sentences in a language, communicative competence includes knowing how to use language for a range of different purposes and functions, knowing how to vary our use of language according to the setting and the participants, knowing how to produce and understand different types of texts and knowing how to maintain communication despite having limitations in one's language knowledge.

At present, language learning is seen as resulting from a process of interaction between the students and users of the language, collaborative creation of meaning, creating meaningful and purposeful interaction through language, negotiations of meanings as the learner and his or her interlocutor arrive at an understanding, learning through attending to the feedback students get when they use the language, paying attention to the language one hears (the input) and trying to incorporate new forms into one's developing communicative competence and trying out and experimenting with different ways of saying things.

Five principles of Communicative Language Teaching were stated by Morrow K. and Keith J. (1981). They summarized the aim of this approach and reads as follows:

1. Know what you are doing
2. To learn it , do it
3. The whole is more important than the sum of the parts

4. Processes are as important as forms: information gap, choice and feedback.
5. Mistakes are not always mistakes.

The communicative approach is considered by Celce-Murcia, Dorneyei, and Terrell, (1997) an indirect approach to second language (L2) instruction and is also viewed as a learner-centered approach (Nunan,1988). Communicative Language Teaching is in line with sociocultural theory (SCT) stated by Vygotsky (1978), it views language as a tool in a socially mediated process and as a central tool for the development of thought processes or the crucial means of mediation for one's cognition.

Task-based approach is a communicative approach to L2 instruction where the features of Communicative Language Teaching can be found. Nowadays, there are two main second language acquisition (SLA) theoretical accounts for task-based approach; the psycholinguistic also known as the cognitive approach of language learning (Skehan, 1998) and the socio-cultural approaches (Ellis, 2003). Skehan (1998) pointed out that the cognitive approach to task-based approach for language learning has to do with psycholinguistic factors such as fluency, accuracy, and complexity of language production when students engage in meaning-making oriented tasks related to language learning processes that take place in the readers' mind in line with the cognitive information processing of SLA. According to the sociocultural theory of SLA, tasks in task-based approach constitute the co-construction of meaning (e.g., Donato, 2000) via students' participation, self-regulation through private speech, mediation, imitation, internalization, and assisted interactions within a learner's ZPD or zone of proximal development (e.g., Ellis, 2003).

1.2. Current Trends in Communicative Language Teaching

The communicative approach describes some general principles based on the notion of communicative competence as the goal of second and foreign language teaching, and a communicative syllabus and methodology as the way of achieving this goal, hence communicative language teaching is evolving in correspondence

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with the development of second language learning process. A number of different educational paradigms and traditions supplies current communicative language teaching theory thus, communicative language teaching today is based on principles that can be applied in different ways, taking into consideration the teaching context, the age of the learners, their level, their learning goals, and so on. Ten core assumptions of these principles (Richards, 2006) read as follows:

1. Second language learning is facilitated when learners are engaged in interaction and meaningful communication.
2. Effective classroom learning tasks and exercises provide opportunities for students to negotiate meaning, expand their language resources, notice how language is used, and take part in meaningful interpersonal exchange.
3. Meaningful communication results from students processing content that is relevant, purposeful, interesting, and engaging.
4. Communication is a holistic process that often calls upon the use of several language skills or modalities.
5. Language learning is facilitated both by activities that involve inductive or discovery learning of underlying rules of language use and organization, as well as by those involving language analysis and reflection.
6. Language learning is a gradual process that involves creative use of language, and trial and error. Although errors are a normal product of learning, the ultimate goal of learning is to be able to use the new language both accurately and fluently.
7. Learners develop their own routes to language learning, progress at different rates, and have different needs and motivations for language learning.
8. Successful language learning involves the use of effective learning and communication strategies.
9. The role of the professor in the language classroom is that of a facilitator, who creates a classroom climate conducive to language learning and provides

opportunities for students to use and practice the language and to reflect on language use and language learning.

10. The classroom is a community where learners learn through collaboration and sharing.

The second principle that states that effective classroom learning tasks provide opportunities for students to negotiate meaning, expand their language resources, notice how language is used and take part in meaningful interpersonal exchange allows the author to reflect on the use of tasks for developing reading comprehension skills at “Lidia Doce” Medical University Branch.

Current approaches to methodology draw on earlier traditions in communicative language teaching. However, they continue making reference to some extent to traditional approaches bringing as a result classroom activities that:

- Seek to develop students’ communicative competence through linking grammatical development to the ability to communicate.
- Create the need for communication, interaction, and negotiation of meaning through problem solving, information sharing, and role play.
- Provide opportunities for both inductive as well as deductive learning of grammar.
- Make use of content that connects to students’ lives and interests.
- Allow students to personalize learning by applying what they have learned to their own lives.

Approaches to language teaching today are based on language and language learning assumed by Communicative Language Teaching. Taking this into consideration, Jacobs and Farrell (2003) in Richards, (2006) suggest eight major changes in approaches to language teaching which read as follows:

1. Learner autonomy: Giving learners greater choice over their own learning, both in terms of the content of learning as well as processes they might employ. The use of small groups is one example of this, as well as the use of self-assessment.

2. The social nature of learning: Learning is not an individual, private activity, but a social one that depends upon interaction with others. The movement known as cooperative learning reflects this viewpoint.

3. Curricular integration: The connection between different strands of the curriculum is emphasized, so that English is not seen as a stand-alone subject but is linked to other subjects in the curriculum. Project work in language teaching also requires students to explore issues outside of the language classroom.

4. Focus on meaning: Meaning is viewed as the driving force of learning. Content-based teaching reflects this view and seeks to make the exploration of meaning through content the core of language learning activities.

5. Diversity: Learners learn in different ways and have different strengths. Teaching needs to take these differences into account rather than try to force students into a single mold. In language teaching, this has led to an emphasis on developing students' use and awareness of learning strategies.

6. Thinking skills: Language should serve as a means of developing higher-order thinking skills, also known as critical and creative thinking. In language teaching, this means that students do not learn language for its own sake but in order to develop and apply their thinking skills in situations that go beyond the language classroom.

7. Alternative assessment: New forms of assessment are needed to replace traditional multiple-choice and other items that test lower-order skills. Multiple forms of assessment (e.g., observation, interviews, journals, portfolios) can be used to build a comprehensive picture of what students can do in a second language.

8. Professors as co-learners: The professor is viewed as a facilitator who is constantly trying out different alternatives, i.e., learning through doing. In language teaching, this has led to an interest in action research and other forms of classroom investigation.

A single model of Communicative Language Teaching that can be applied in all settings has not evolved yet. However, a number of different language teaching approaches have emerged implementing the issues identified above. A language syllabus today must include systematic coverage of the many different components of communicative competence, including language skills, content, grammar, vocabulary, and functions. Communicative orientation to language teaching provides to different syllabus with routes to develop communicative competence. In this research we will deal with one of the different approaches that are currently in use around the world and which can be viewed as falling within the general framework of communicative language teaching: Task-Based Approach.

1.3 Communicative Task-Based Language Teaching

Communicative Task-Based Language Teaching (CTBLT) is a form of Communicative Language Teaching in which tasks or activities are viewed as central to meaningful language learning (Nunan, 2004; Skehan, 1998). “Tasks are believed to foster processes of negotiation, modification, rephrasing, and experimentation that are at the heart of second language learning” (Richards and Rogers 228). “A task is a piece of work or an activity, usually with a specified objective, undertaken as part of an educational course, or at work” (Crookes, 1986). Prabhu (1987), defines task as an activity which requires learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought, and which allows professors to control and regulate that process. Willis (2000), stated that it is a goal oriented activity with a specific outcome, where the emphasis is on exchanging meanings not producing specific language forms. According to Nunan (2004), a task is a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form. It should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right.

The primary goal of Communicative Task-Based Language Teaching is to prepare students with language that matches their needs (Long & Crookes, 1993) and is suited to their context and familiarity (Ellis, 2003). Students are problem solvers in

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teaching and learning activities under Communicative Task-Based Language Teaching. They have to fulfill a specified real world task in relation to the instructional objectives or learning outcomes such as making travel arrangements with a travel agent (Crookes, 1986; Prabhu, 1987). In using Communicative Task-Based Language Teaching for the teaching of L2 reading, students have to process and comprehend data in the reading text, as part of cognitive information processing (linguistic and textual), and also to fulfill an assigned task-based on text information, via meaningful interaction (Nunan, 2004). There are some advantages when the cognitive information processing of text is situated within task-based communicative activities as part of a problem solving process (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). They read as follows:

- Readers collaborate to negotiate text meaning in order to build a mental representation of the text as intended by the author.
- Learners are also simultaneously positioned as the monitors of their own learning by attending to the grammatical forms that are highlighted in the tasks.
- Learners become risk-takers who have to attempt the target language by devising language innovation such as paraphrasing, restating, using paralinguistic signals and so forth due to their lack of control or knowledge of the L2.

This feature contrasts the Communicative Task-Based Language Teaching (CTBLT) with traditional reading instructional approaches such as the Grammar Translation (GT) method. GT is developed based on the SLA structuralism theory which concerns with individual form-focused tasks instead of collaborative meaning-focused tasks as the CTBLT (e.g., Griffith & Parr, 2001). GT is also developed based on bottom-up L2 reading theories which regard the reading process as text-driven in nature with the emphasis on lower level text processing such as phonological processing, word recognition, and word identification (e.g., Nassaji, 2003) whereas the CTBLT is based on top-down L2 reading theories

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which perceives reading as a process of constructing meaning from whole to part (e.g., Bergeron, 1990). The approach used in GT commonly results in the design of learner role in the form of individual pattern of learner grouping which is in the contrary to the pair and group pattern of learner grouping promoted by the Communicative Task-Based Language Teaching.

Interactive theory of L2 reading is a combination of reader driven and text-driven processes which integrates both lower level and higher level processes (e.g., Bernhardt, 1991; Nassaji, 2002) taking into account readers' background knowledge of content, text structure, and cultural factors (Roebuck, 1998). By linking social context and cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1987), L2 reading researchers have shown the importance of having students to be actively motivated with the text. The interactive theory of L2 reading in line with the sociocultural theory has been expanded to include the interaction between the reader, the text, and the reading context. Discourse competence around text information is promoted by the interactional theory of L2 reading where language is used as a tool in a socially mediated process (Vygotsky, 1978) and also as a central tool for the development of thought processes.

Communicative Task-Based Language Teaching promotes real-time communication and learning is meaning-centered (e.g., Basturkmen, 2006; Fotos & Ellis, 1991; Wesche & Skehan, 2002). Hence many L2 researchers have recommended it as a suitable and practical instructional approach for second and foreign language learning.

Communicative interaction with others via pair and group reading tasks assists in developing better understanding of text meaning, and in the development of the linguistic aspects of the second language (Hatch, 1992), issues that the author of the current research will take into consideration when planning the reading activities with a task-based approach.

Task-based approach was developed by Dave and Jane Willis and "it is based on the use of tasks as the core unit of planning and instruction in language teaching"

(Richards and Rogers, 223). Willis and other proponents present it as a logical development of Communicative language teaching as it draws of some of its principles:

- Activities that involve real communication are essential for language learning
- Activities in which language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks promote learning
- Language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process

In the 1970s the British applied linguists conducted an experiment which challenged traditional notions of language teaching. He theorized that if the language professor uses to manage activities is directed exclusively at involving the learners in solving communication problems in the target language, then language learning will take care of itself.

As task is the key element of task-based approach, task types are important, because they should reflect types of situations in which language might be used by the students and also types of activities in which students practice certain functions of language. According to Willis (1996) there are six types of tasks as the basis for task-based approach. They read as follows:

1. Listing tasks. For example students might have to make up a list of things they would pack if they were going on a beach vacation.
2. Sorting and ordering. Students work in pairs and make up a list of the most important characteristics of an ideal vacation
3. Comparing. Students compare ads for two different supermarkets.
4. Problem-solving. Students read a letter to an advice columnist and suggest a solution to the writer's problems.
5. Sharing personal experience. Students discuss their reactions to an ethical or moral dilemma.
6. Creative tasks. Students prepare plans for redecorating a house.

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Willis said “it takes time for language to develop. The first treatment of a new form or forms will not lead to mastery. It may aid development in that the learner will be more likely to notice the new form in future once it has been highlighted. But the form will not become a part of students’ spontaneous repertoire until they have had time to assimilate it” (2007: 18). In task-based approach students have many opportunities to practice and recycle the vocabulary or structures that they have just been 'taught'.

Here are some of the main features of task-based approach (Skehan, 1998):

- meaning is primary
- there is some communication problem to solve
- there is some sort of relationship to comparable real-world activities
- task completion has some priority
- the assessment of task is in terms of outcome

On the other hand, tasks:

- do not give students other people’s meaning to regurgitate
- are not concerned with language display
- are not conformity oriented
- are not practice oriented
- do not embed language in materials so that specific structures can be focused on

Task-based approach is advantageous to the student because it is more student-centered, allows for more meaningful communication, and often provides for practical extra-linguistic skill building. Although the professor may present language in the pre-task, the students are ultimately free to use what grammar constructs and vocabulary they want. This allows them to use all the language they know and are learning, rather than just the 'target language' of the lesson. Furthermore, as the tasks are likely to be familiar to the students (eg: visiting the

doctor), students are more likely to be engaged, which may further motivate them in their language learning.

In short, task-based approach is an approach which seeks to allow students to work somewhat at their own pace and within their own level and area of interest to process and restructure their interlanguage. It moves away from a prescribed developmental sequence and introduces learner freedom and autonomy into the learning process. The professor's role is also modified to that of helper.

Adopting task-based approach has some advantages because it provides a range of learning opportunities for students of all levels and abilities, tasks encourage learners to activate and use whatever language they already have, both for comprehension and for speaking and writing. Task-planning-report cycle stimulate a natural desire in the learner to improve upon that language. On the other hand, tasks based on texts and recordings of spoken language provide learners with a rich exposure to spoken and written language in use. This provides an environment which aids natural acquisition. Besides, the texts and recordings used in task cycles form a pedagogic corpus, which provides a clear and familiar context for the teaching of grammar and other language features.

Task-based approach can be applied in a number of different ways in language teaching:

- As a sole framework for course planning and delivery: this seems to be the strategies proposed by Willis and Nunan
- As one component of a course: A task can serve as one component of a course in order to develop general communication skills.
- As a technique: Professors who find the procedures outlined by Willis and or Nunan unrealistic and unmanageable over a long period could still use task-work from time to time as one technique from their teaching repertoire.

1.4 Framework. Reference

According to The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, “the framework provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. It describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively. The description also covers the cultural context in which language is set. The Framework also defines levels of proficiency which allow learners’ progress to be measured at each stage of learning and on a life-long basis”.

“The Common European Framework is intended to overcome the barriers to communication among professionals working in the field of modern languages arising from the different educational systems in Europe”.

The author of this research project has taken into consideration what the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages has stated about Framework.

Different authors (Jane Willis, 1996; David Nunan, 1999 and Willis and Willis 2007) have elaborated several effective frameworks for creating a task-based activity or a learning lesson. Some examples of them are given below.

1.4.1 Framework proposed by Jane Willis (1996).

1. Pre-task

In the pre-task, the professor will present what will be expected of the students in the task phase. Additionally, the professor may prime the students with key vocabulary or grammatical constructs, although, in "pure" task-based learning lessons, these will be presented as suggestions and the students would be encouraged to use what they are comfortable with in order to complete the task. The instructor may also present a model of the task by either doing it themselves or by presenting picture, audio, or video demonstrating the task.

2. The task Cycle

Task

During the task phase, the students perform the task, typically in small groups, although this is dependent on the type of activity. And unless the professor plays a particular role in the task, then the professor's role is typically limited to one of an observer or counselor—thus the reason for it being a more student-centered methodology.

Planning

Having completed the task, the students prepare either a written or oral report to present to the class. The instructor takes questions and otherwise simply monitors the students.

Report

The students then present this information to the rest of the class. Here the professor may provide written or oral feedback, as appropriate, and the students observing may do the same.

3. Analysis

Here the focus returns to the professor who reviews what happened in the task, in regards to language. It may include language forms that the students were using, problems that students had, and perhaps forms that need to be covered more or were not used enough.

4. Practice

The practice stage may be used to cover material mentioned by the professor in the analysis stage. It is an opportunity for the professor to emphasize key language.

1.4.2 Framework proposed by David Nunan (1999)

I- Focus on meaning

-Plan activation or control

-Controlled practice

-Receptive skills

II.- Focus on form

- Language focus

III.- Task

- Planning and task development

IV.- Feedback

- Feedback and reflexion on the task

FOCUS ON MEANING

- **Schema activation/building:**
- Professor outlines the task they will be completing
- Professor presents language (often vocabulary)
- Modelling/controlled practice.
- Practice is provided in a meaningful context which will help students to memorize language and use it in a natural way
- Authentic receptive skills work: A piece of reading or listening which will provide a model for the task students will complete later on

FOCUS ON FORM

- **Language focus**

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- Students are encouraged to use the reading or listening done previously to extract useful language for use in the task
- Professor highlights meaning, form and pronunciation at this stage

CORE TASK

- **Planning and execution of the task:**
- Students work in small groups and decide how they will go about the task
- Cooperative work is a characteristic of this stage
- Professor monitors and feeds in language if necessary
- Reporting back or presenting information to the class
- Skehan emphasises on the value of reporting back

FEEDBACK REFLECTIVE LEARNING

Feedback and reflection task:

- Students are given feedback by peers and the professor
- Students also assess each other's performance and their own performance

1.4.3 Framework proposed by Willis and Willis (2007)

Priming: you might begin by telling learners about a very busy day of your own and encouraging them to ask you questions about it

Preparation: Ask learners to make written list of all the things they did in their busy day. They may use dictionaries to help them with the task

Target task: Put learners in group of three or four. They should tell each other about their busy days, and decide which person in the group had the most difficult day.

Planning: Groups are asked to help the person with the most interesting story to prepare to tell the whole class what they have done.

Target task: two or three learners are asked to give their account to the class, who listen and then vote on who had the busiest or hardest day.

1.4.3.1 Framework proposed by Willis and Willis (2007) of designing prediction tasks in written texts

Stage 1: **Priming for prediction:** to speculate on what could have happened and how it could have happened from the story headline.

Stage 2: **Prediction task:** Students are given some words and phrases from the article. They should appear in the same order as in the article. Prediction task involves speculative discussion and can be regarded as target task since it involves the kind of speculation and discussion which takes place in the real world outside the classroom.

Stage 3: **Preparing for report:** The purpose of this stage is preparation. Learners pool their ideas to produce polished version of their story.

Stage 4: **Report:** A member of the group tells the story to the whole class who listen in order to compare stories.

Stage 5: **Reading:** Students read the story. Again there is a target task. After the previous stages learners should be curious to read the story to find out if their guesses are accurate.

Stage 6: **Focus on form:** It comes at the end of the task sequence

Stage 7: **Evaluation:** Learners' reactions will be monitored at each stage of the process outlined above.

1.5 Language skills in learning English language

A man, when acquiring knowledge and skills in a certain activity is developing his capacities because that develops processes and psychic properties that the activity demands and he becomes a more capable person. On the other hand, the

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potentiality of the psychic development reached by a person can constitute a premise and condition for the acquisition of knowledge, habits and skills.

The skill as a way of developing the activity, bear an order of actions, a domain and it means to know how to do with quality and creativity.

Language skills are developed through exercises where students can carry out activities of all types, using techniques as the group work and consequently, the collaborative learning, integrating the four skills whenever possible

The domain of a foreign language requires the professors to train their students in the practice of the four language skills. Only with the systematic practice of the four skills, we will be able to achieve a successful communication.

The new communicative approach in the teaching of languages is a methodological principle based on the Marxist-Leninist Theory which establishes the social nature of the development of the language, but this communication process does not take place in isolation in each of the previously mentioned skills. This truly happens, in real life situations where they are in integration.

In "real life" language skills are used in diverse orders or together, if you see an announcement on a newspaper about vacations, you discuss it with somebody or maybe call him/her to look for more information or it is simply written to obtain more information. Another simple, but effective way, of assuring skills integration is to ask students to collaborate in pairs or group work.

The importance of skills integration is that:

- Give opportunities to use the language in a natural way and not simply to practice.
- Most pairs work and group work need skills integration to involve all students.
- Students learn more when they work in activities where more than one skill is needed.

Through skills integration students are given a chance to diversify their efforts in more meaningful tasks.

The four language skills are:

Speaking: It is a productive skill that belongs to oral communication. The goal of teaching speaking is oral fluency; that is, the ability to express oneself intelligibly: reasonably accurately and without too much hesitation.

Writing: It is much more than the presentation of oral language in a written form. Writing is a communicative process, which involves the writer in decision concerning the expected reader of the text.

Listening: It is the most frequently used language skill in everyday life. It is a receptive skill. In the process of listening, the listener is not passive but active since while listening we are involved in a process of decoding and interpreting as we get the gist of what we hear.

Reading: It is a communication skill aimed at understanding information as efficiently as possible. It is also an active process in which there are two participants interacting: the writer and the reader who use a written text as channel of communication.

This research deals with the teaching of reading at medical universities, however skills integration is not neglected since this is one of the purposes of the Communicative Language Teaching.

1.6 Reading Comprehension in English language

Over the last decade, one can notice a growing interest in the application of task-based approach in different realms of second and foreign language teaching. The enthusiasm is mixed with some confusion particularly regarding the design and construction of tasks based on learner variables such as age and level of language proficiency (Ellis, 2003). One can assume that, similar to the case of adults, task-based approach can require children to engage in interaction when fulfilling a task which would in turn develop their underlying language system. Among different

tasks, reading tasks seem to be more promising since they can involve students in perhaps the most basic yet essential activity of their academic life. What is reading then? Grellet 1981 puts that reading is a constant process of guessing, and what one brings to the text is often more important than what one finds in it. This is why from the very beginning, the students should be taught to use what they know to understand unknown elements, whether these are ideas or simple words. Reading is more than an interaction between a reader and a text. It is a complex behaviour which involves conscious and unconscious use of various strategies, including problem-solving strategies, to build up a model of the meaning which the writer has assumed to have intended". According to Kenneth S. Goodman cited by Emilia Ferreiro and Margarita Gomez (1982), reading is interpretation and what the reader can understand and learn from it. María Eugenia Dubois (1986), states that reading is a process of interaction between thought and language. To Marina Parra (1989) it is an intralingua translation of the speaker's code to the listener's. Reading is a process whose principal goal is to find a meaning or to understand what is read, so a good comprehension of a text can lead to critical points of view, to make comments about the reading or about the author so as to establish a relationship among the content of the text with others, either written by the same author or not, and with our own experiences. Manuel de la Vega (1994) defines comprehension as a cognitive process of a high level that requires of the intervention of the system of memories as well as of perception and codification processes. Guillermo García (1985) states that comprehension is a process that takes the rules of meaning production present in the text. On the other hand, Francisca Martínez (1993) points out that to understand what we read means that those signs that are decoded are in correspondence with the previous knowledge a person has. Although all the given definitions are in somehow interrelated, the author of this work assumed the one given by Manuel de la Vega since the development of reading comprehension skills through task-based activities encourages students to do real life tasks using the language being learned integrating the different processes mentioned by this author.

Researchers have defined reading comprehension as the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. They use the terms extracting and constructing meaning to emphasize both the importance and the insufficiency of the text as a determinant of reading comprehension. Nevertheless, most people learn to read in their native language without difficulty, and hence many, but not all, learn to read as children. Some children and adults need additional help. Yet, others learn to read a second, third or additional language, with or without having learned to read in their first language. Reading instruction needs to take into account different types of learners and their needs. Investigations have shown that there is a great deal of transfer from learning to read in one language to learning to read in a second language. Considering that reading comprehension is a complex process many authors like F. Grellet (1981) Greenwood (1985), Finocchiaro, M. and Cristopher, B. (1987), Parra (1989), Florín (1992) and Gassó (1999) have established methodological instruments to facilitate the development of this skill.

F. Grellet (1981) states that people use four types of reading, which are:

- 1) **Skimming:** The eyes run quickly over the text to get the gist of it (what it is about, to discover its main ideas, etc.) e.g., the reader looks quickly at the content on the page of a book, or at the chapter headings, sub-headings, etc., or when someone glances quickly through a newspaper to see the main items of the day.
- 2) **Scanning:** Quickly going through a text to find a piece of information (rejecting irrelevant information), e.g., finding a telephone number in a telephone directory.
- 3) **Extensive reading:** Fluency reading for global understanding. It is used with longer texts usually for pleasure.
- 4) **Intensive reading:** Reading shorter texts to extract specific information. This is more an accuracy activity involving reading for details.

J. Greenwood (1989) states eight cognitive sub-skills, which are the first listed below, other four were included because of their importance in reading in a foreign

language. They are:

1. To anticipate both the form and the content.
2. To identify the main idea(s).
3. To recognize and recall specific details.
4. To recognize the relationship between the main idea(s) and their expansions (examples, etc.).
5. To follow a sequence e.g., events, instructions, stages of an argument.
6. To infer from a text (read between the lines).
7. To draw conclusions.
8. To recognize the writer's purpose and attitude: persuade, explain, inform, describe, argue.
9. Transcode information to diagrammatical display.
10. To infer the meaning of words: through cognate words, word formation or context.
11. To summarize and take down notes (relevant points).
12. To use the dictionary effectively.

Greenwood (1985), organized the reading activities into three stages: **before**, **while** and **after reading**.

1. Before reading stage

The tasks of this stage should be aimed at:

- Motivating the students towards the reading materials.
- Activating their prior knowledge of the topic as well as the language related to it.
- Anticipating the form and/or the content of the text.

2. While reading stage

The tasks of this second stage should be aimed at:

- Focusing the students' attention towards the relevant information,
- Developing particular reading skills and strategies.

3. After reading stage

The main goals of this stage are:

- To check the results of the reading tasks.
- To make some other language work (like writing, speaking, etc).
- To know the students' reactions towards the reading material (to evaluate critically the information).

In order to acquire the target language effectively, learners need to engage actively in processing the meanings of what they hear and read. A variety of tasks can be designed to motivate and give learners a purpose for processing the meaning and accomplishing a desired end or product (Willis, 1996). Unlike grammar exercises that are focused directly on the structure and comprehension questions that may become boring and senseless, task-based approach provides students with both a framework of structures, forms and/or words to be used and a good reason/purpose for doing the activities. That is why task-based reading activities may prove to be a good means of integrating the four skills and fostering effective language learning because such activities are done with the purpose of comprehending something, reaching a conclusion and/or creating a whole picture of something within a pre-set frame (Nunan, 1989). Although such activities are done in order to improve the learners reading skill, they are expected to help improve the other skills as well. Of course, these ideas are just theoretical assumptions that the author of this work hopes to confirm.

1.7. Partial conclusion

The presented frameworks are intended to follow a task-based curriculum design and their objective is to teach the four language skills in integration for general purposes. Doctors need to develop the four language skills to achieve communicative competence; however they need to make a special emphasis in the development of reading comprehension skills as they will need to read as competent professionals even after they complete their medical studies. The frameworks outlined so far do not prepare the doctors to keep on learning throughout their lives and they do not take into consideration the stages of a reading lesson as it is established in the teaching of reading comprehension in

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Cuban medical universities so this confirms the need to create a new framework that summarizes the previous characteristics aimed at developing reading skills in medical students.

CHAPTER II. NEEDS ANALYSIS

In order to carry out any research work it is important to know about the condition of the studied object, this could be possible by means of a diagnosis.

The diagnosis is based on the information that is obtained through different methods; among them we have observation, interview, document analysis, and others. This allows the researcher to determine how the object is, and why it is that way, followed by a process of reflection to find possible solutions or to change it.

In this work the diagnosis of needs is aimed at determining why the second year medical students of “Lidia Doce” Medical University Branch have not developed their reading skills, so as to find out the needs that may help them and to identify up to what degree the professors of English are prepared to apply the task-based approach to the development of reading comprehension skills.

Characterization of the population and sample

This research work is going to be carried out at “Lidia Doce” Medical University Branch located in Sagua la Grande, Villa Clara. The population consists of sixty one medical students who are in second year, and twelve professors who have taught general English. An intentional sample was selected consisting of twenty one students that represent 34.4%. The selection was made keeping in mind that these students are assisted by the researcher, indispensable requirement to carry out the diagnostic study and the systematizing registration. The sample of professors coincides with the total population to be studied.

Students who are registered at the medical studies at “Lidia Doce ” Medical University Branch in Sagua la Grande have different academic backgrounds. These students are characterized by their wide educational and cognitive diversity, situation that makes more complex the teaching and learning process.

English professors at this Medical University Branch are all Bachelors of Education. Most of them have the teaching rank of assistant professors but not all of them are acquainted with the current communicative language teaching trends.

The consent of both professors and students who were able to participate in the investigation, was asked, those who did not want to participate were excluded. (Annex I)

2.1 Needs analysis. Dimensions and Indicators

Dimension 1

- The teaching and learning process of the English language for the development of reading comprehension skills in students of the 2nd year of medicine studies.

Indicators

- Approach suggested in the syllabus (objectives, methods, teaching aids, way of organization and evaluation) for developing reading comprehension skills.
- Methodological treatment that is given to the achievement of reading comprehension skills.
- Level of motivation of second year medical students towards the English language learning.
- Difficulties and potentialities of second year medical students according to their reading comprehension skills.

Dimension

- The application of the task-based approach to the teaching of reading comprehension skills in the English language.

Indicators

- Professors' knowledge for applying the task-based approach.

- Professors' skills in applying the task-based approach to the teaching of reading comprehension skills.

These dimensions and indicators show the personal and non-personal components of the teaching-learning process: objectives, contents, methods, means, organization form, evaluation, the student's role and the professor's function, although the fundamental emphasis is centered in the methods and means that are used in the process. They are aimed at the diagnosis of the reading comprehension skills of the 2nd year medical students as well as to the methodological competencies of professors on the reading comprehension methodology, to develop the reading comprehension skills in English language as process and product, on which the methods and instruments of the present research were determined.

2.2 Research methods. Objectives

These methods are used indistinctly during the different stages of the process, combining the quantitative and qualitative approaches from a dialectical-materialistic vision starting from the concrete needs of the research.

2.2.1 Document analysis (Annex II)

Documents were analyzed to know the approach suggested in the syllabus (objectives, methods, teaching aids, way of organization and evaluation) for developing reading comprehension skills in the second year medical students.

Vision II textbook, was also analyzed to verify the amount of exercises found in it to develop reading comprehension.

2.2.2 Class observation (Annex III)

Two guides were used in this class observation.

Guide 1: To verify the methodological treatment that is given to the achievement of reading comprehension skills.

Guide 2: To check the professors' skills in applying the task-based approach to the teaching of reading comprehension skills.

2.2.3 Participant observation (Annex IV)

It was carried out to check the level of motivation towards the English language learning and the development of reading comprehension skills.

2.2.4 Entry test (Annex V)

This test was sat to know about the difficulties of the students according to their reading comprehension.

2.2.5 Interviews to professors (Annex VI)

This interview was guided to check the professors' knowledge for applying the task-based approach to the development of reading comprehension skills in the English language in the second year medical students

2.3 Findings analysis and discussion of the diagnosis

2.3.1 Analysis of reading comprehension skills in the syllabus (objectives, methods, teaching aids, way of organization and evaluation)

The document analysis allowed knowing that the syllabus of English III subject was based on the Communicative Language Teaching approach **aimed** at the development of the four language skills (Annex II Guide to analyse the syllabus of English III). Reading comprehension skills are vital in this subject because reading current materials and information helps to keep health professionals updated. The syllabus suggested the use of activities that may help students to extract total or partial information of a text, students only had to process and comprehend data in the reading texts, which is part of the cognitive information processing. It did not take into consideration the fulfilment of an assigned task-based on text information, via meaningful interaction reflecting real-world uses of language. As the syllabus was based on a traditional approach to language teaching, grammar, texts, skills, functions etc. were the starting point in planning the lesson or the textbook and

after these decisions had been made, content was selected. This way of selection of the content does not allow using language as a means of acquiring information.

The **methods** that were oriented in the syllabus were partially in correspondence with the principles of task-based approach because they promoted pair work and group work participation but not in activities that involved real communication or in which language was used for carrying out a meaningful task promoting learning as in task-based approach.

The principal **teaching aids** of the subject English III was Vision II textbook. It was oriented to develop communication through skills integration following the communicative language teaching approach but as far as the author went deeply into the book, it was noticed that this approach was not the principal one because among other aspects treated in this research about communicative language teaching, there was not an integration of skills as such in the book and grammar was not taught communicatively. Due to the importance of the textbook activities for the objective of this research, a more detailed analysis of the textbook structure will be presented later in this paper.

The main **way of organization** of the teaching and learning process, oriented in the syllabus was by Integrated English Practice where the professor had the role of facilitator, advisor, and evaluator and students were taken as performers of the action but students were not conceived like risk-takers, aspect that has a negative influence on the development of their autonomy in the classroom activities.

The **evaluation** of the subject was divided into quantitative and qualitative evaluations. In the case of the first one, it enclosed systematic evaluations to verify the daily improvement of students, two partial controls (oral first then written), a project work, and a Final test (written and oral evaluation). One of the purposes of the written evaluation was to test the level of development of reading comprehension skills of students. Qualitative evaluation took into consideration the formative aspects. When checking a written final test the activity planned there to check comprehension was comprehension questions where students had to look

for the answer in the text, copy and paste; so instead of checking comprehension, professor was assessing finding answers.

2.3.2 Texts and activities of the textbook

The book was checked in order to verify the amount of exercises found there to develop reading comprehension skills (Table1). As can be seen from a total of twenty one texts found in the textbook only four activities of familiarization were applied representing 19.04%. Comprehension questions were applied in nine texts representing 42.85 %. Activities that had to do with comparing, matching, sorting and ordering were found in only two texts representing each 9.52%. True or false activities were found in three texts representing 14.28%. Filling the blanks activities were found in five texts representing 23.80%, while sharing personal experience was found in only one text representing 4.76%. Neither pre-task nor problem solving activities were found in the texts activities. These results show the lack of reading comprehension tasks in the textbook and the necessity of implementing tasks that help students to activate language in real-life situation.

Table1. Amount of exercises found in Vision II textbook to develop reading comprehension skills.

Units		I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	Total	%
No. of texts		2	3	4	2	2	1	3	4	21	100
ACTIVITIES	Familiarization		1		1		1		1	4	19.04
	Pre-task										
	Comprehension questions	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	9	42.85
	Comparing		1			1				2	9.52
	Matching		1				1			2	9.52
	Problem solving										
	True or false	1						1	1	3	14.28
	Sorting and ordering	1				1				2	9.52
	Filling the blanks		1	1			1	2		5	23.80
	Sharing personal experience								1	1	4.76

When continuing the analysis of the textbook it was observed that there were few authentic texts, some of them were too long and some others were so simple that they lack of particular elements of a text like intentionality, situational and informative character. Although there were exercises that deal with the grammatical aspects of the text, they were always out of context and there was not a logical idea among exercises. They were mostly based on substitution drills.

According to these findings it is evident that the textbook is not in correspondence with the task-based approach because content was selected after planning the textbook and the activities that were found there did not contribute to develop reading comprehension skills properly.

2.3.3 Methodological treatment that is given to the achievement of reading comprehension skills

Ten lessons were observed based on an observation guide (Annex III Observation Guide 1), to verify the methodological treatment that is given to the achievement of reading comprehension skills showing the following results: In most lessons the texts were descriptive-narrative ones reflecting real-life aspects and in correspondence with the content but they were so long that too many activities were planned affecting the pleasure of reading. (See table 2).

Table 2: Type of texts that were used in the observed reading lessons

Type of texts	Total of Lessons: 10
Dialogue	3
Advertisement	
Letter	
News	
Cards	1
Descriptive-narrative	6
Others	

Reading comprehension activities were organized in stages. The subskills that were used in most lessons were anticipating, predicting, inferring from the text, drawing conclusions, recognizing and recalling specific details, identifying the main idea, and recognizing the writer's purpose and attitude (See table 3), but the type of activities was the same in each lesson and they were not task-based. They all consisted on brainstorming, filling in the blanks, matching and giving opinion; professors did not provide a variety of tasks-based activities when covering the different skills.

Table 3: Subskills that were used in the observed reading activities

Subskills	Total of lessons: 10
Anticipating	8
Predicting	7
Inferring content and / or form.	
Discerning relevant information	
To identify the main idea(s)	6
To infer from a text (read between the lines)	7
To draw conclusions	6
To recognize the writer's purpose and attitude	4
To recognize and recall specific details	6
To recognize the relationship between the main idea(s) and their expansions (examples, etc.)	

2.3.4 Level of motivation of 2nd year medical students towards the English language learning

A participant observation was developed to check the level of motivation (Annex IV). It was observed that students were always active in the English lesson but they did not concentrate easily when performing activities, the professor had to call their attention several times. The level of participation when predicting or anticipating content was intermediate. Both the Level of interest and the level of cooperation

when carrying out reading activities were low, students were not playing their roles properly. Sometimes when there was a doubt students asked for explanation but the professor was the one who always asked for understanding. Students sometimes referred to enjoy discussion after the activity because it did not last too much. Sometimes at the end of the lesson few students were interested on learning more about the topic of the lesson and asked the professor where to find more information about the topic but the rest did not care about it.

These results show the lack of motivation of the students towards the English language learning specifically in reading lessons, hence the importance of finding a new way to increase this important aspect for the development of reading comprehension skills.

2.3.5 Difficulties of the students according to their reading comprehension

An entry test was applied to know about the difficulties of the students according to their reading comprehension skills (Annex V). The text was a reading about Bahamas. It consisted of six different questions. In the first question only six students out of twenty one could get the main idea representing 28.6% showing that they are not able to go quickly through a text to get the gist of it. The second question was a right, wrong activity with five items, where only three students out of the total, obtained five points representing 14.3%, six of them obtained four points representing 28.6%, five of them representing 23.8% obtained three points and 33.3 % of the total obtained two points showing lack of skills in matching ideas from the text. In question three about completing statements according to the text, only five students representing 23.8% obtained five points; three obtained four points representing 14.3%, eleven students obtained three points representing 52.3%, while 9.5% obtained two points. These results show that students have difficulties in reading for details what limits them from extracting specific information from a text. In question four, students were asked to read the text and complete a chart with information about Bahamas. From a total of twenty one students four of them obtained five points representing 19.0%, six students obtained four points representing 28.6%, eight representing 38.0% obtained three

points and three obtained two points. These results show that it is difficult for students to find a piece of information in a text.

Five comprehension questions ordered by items from a) to e) were asked in question five. The results read as follows: Four students obtained five points representing 19.0%. Six obtained four points representing 28.6%, seven students representing 33.3%, obtained three points and four students representing 19.0% obtained two points. In items a) and b) students had to extract specific information from the text and all of them did it without difficulties. Items c) and d) were about making comparison between Bahamas and Cuba regarding the climate and finally they had to find similarities between the two countries. Students had difficulties in these two aspects. They could not find in the reading the correct information to give reasons in order to justify their answers. In item e) students had to give their opinion about living in Bahamas, only 5 students gave their own opinion based on the information of the text, the rest wrote parts of the text that had nothing to do with the question they were asked.

These results of the pedagogical test show that students have some difficulties in their reading skills, specifically in the selection of the main idea. It is difficult for them to establish similarities between given sentences and ideas of the text. They also have problem when completing and extracting information from the text. According to the comprehension questions the most affected skills were comparing and students' opinions about the text, so it is important to apply a new approach in order to develop the reading comprehension skills in the second year medical student at "Lidia Doce" Medical University Branch. After analysing the results of the entry test, the author could reach the following regularities:

- 1- Students had many difficulties when facing a text. They were not able to extract information from a text to complete chart neither to select the main idea.

- 2- Students were partially motivated to the learning of English because they did not concentrate easily when performing activities and they did not ask for clarification.
- 3- The only activity students are asked to do after reading is drawing conclusion.

2.3.6 Professors' knowledge for applying the task-based approach

Twelve English professors at "Lidia Doce" Medical University Branch were interviewed to check their knowledge for applying the task-based approach (Annex VI). Six of them representing 50 % could define the concept of task meanwhile 100% gave the correct definition of reading comprehension. In the second question, only four professors representing 33.3% established the differences between the Task-Based Approach and more traditional approaches. 100% of professors knew the difference between a pedagogical task and a real-world task but only three of them representing 25% could give an example of a real-world task applied to their reading lessons, the rest of them representing 75%, explained that the organization of the syllabus did not allow them to apply real-world tasks in their reading lessons. From a total of 12 professors, only three of them mastered some of the key characteristics of a task and referred to have them into consideration in their reading lessons. Only two professors representing 16.6% knew about the six types of tasks as the basis for task-based approach proposed by Willis.

2.3.7 Professors' skills in applying the task-based approach to the teaching of reading

Ten reading lessons were observed to check the professors' skills in applying the task-based approach (Annex III Observation Guide 2). The types of tasks used in nine of these lessons were educational ones representing 90%. The six types of tasks as the basis for Task-based approach were applied as follows: listing tasks and sharing personal experience in two lessons representing the 20%, sorting and ordering in three lessons representing 30%, comparing and problem-solving in four

lessons representing the 40%, and creative tasks in only one lesson representing 10%.

In nine lessons representing 90% the professor helped students to understand the theme and objectives of the task. In 100% of lessons the professor gave students preparation time to think on how to do the task. In seven lessons representing the 60%, professors walked around and monitored, encouraging in a supportive way everyone's attempt at communication in the target language when students were completing the task. In only four lessons representing the 40%, professors helped students to formulate what they wanted to say, without intervening to correct errors of form when they were preparing the task. In eight lessons representing 80% professors asked some pairs to report briefly to the whole class so everyone could compare findings. In only two lessons representing the 20%, professors conducted practice activities as needed, based on the language analysis work already on the board.

When comparing the professors' knowledge and skills to apply the task-based approach to the reading lessons, the author could reach the following regularity: The professors know about the task-based approach but they do not have the necessary skills to apply it to the teaching of reading comprehension skills.

2.4 Partial conclusions

The overall findings allowed confirming the real situation of the reading comprehension skills as well as the inadequacies and potentialities of students. In the syllabus tasks reflecting real-life situation are not taken into consideration. There is an insufficient use of language as a means of acquiring information. The textbook is not in correspondence with the task-based approach. Texts lack of intentional, situational and informative character.

Students are not motivated to the learning of English. They have a low development of reading comprehension skills because they are not given a variety of activities that may help them to develop reading skills.

Professors know about the methodological treatment for reading comprehension but they do not use a variety of reading activities. Reading activities are not planned in form of tasks and they are very simple. They are not identified with the task-based approach so they do not have their skills developed in this area.

CHAPTER III. FRAMEWORK FOR APPLYING THE TASK-BASED APPROACH TO THE TEACHING OF READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS AT “LIDIA DOCE” MEDICAL UNIVERSITY BRANCH

3.1 Need for a framework

Doctors do not only need to read in English as part of their medical studies. A doctor will probably have to read more in English after completing his/her studies than what he/she reads while studying. This research has proved that doctors do not fully develop their reading comprehension skills in English while they study at medical universities. This confirms the need to propose a new framework to develop reading comprehension skills. On the other hand, the use of the task-based approach has proved to be effective for the development of communicative competence but so far as the author has been able to research there is not a specific task-based framework to develop reading comprehension skills. Based on the frameworks proposed by Willis, J (1996), Nunan, D(1999) and Willis and Willis (2007) and the stages of reading lessons stated in Communicative Language Teaching and the conclusions of the research about the projection of the teaching and learning process of the English language for the development of reading comprehension skills in second year medical students and the application of the task-based approach to the teaching of reading comprehension skills in the English language, the author has been able to present the following framework for applying the task-based approach to the teaching of reading comprehension skills at “Lidia Doce” Medical University Branch as a scientific result.

3.2 Theoretical foundation of the framework for applying the task-based approach to the teaching of reading comprehension skills at “Lidia Doce” Medical University Branch

The proposed framework is based on a materialistic, dialectical, philosophical foundation that links English III subject of the medical studies with the goal of Cuban education; on a sociological foundation that establishes the link between the subjects and the social context that determines the need of learning the English language; on a psychological foundation that allows the link between the affective and the cognitive and the identification of general and individual educative needs of second year medical students and on a didactical pedagogical and methodological foundation aimed to prepare a competent professional, when providing them the necessary tools to master the language at an elementary level and they are summarized in the selection of linguistics and sociolinguistics contents that are shown in an integrated way in the reading comprehension to achieve the development of English communication.

3.2.1 Philosophical foundations: The framework is based on a materialistic-dialectical conception as a guide to be followed in practical activities and allows understanding and organizing the goals of reading comprehension process in the teaching of English as the foreign language of second year of medical studies. This is summarized in the application of its principles: universal concatenation, movement and development, concrete historical analysis, multilateral analysis and flexibility and they are expressed in the union of the linguistic and sociolinguistic elements as a system that in integral way, they are interrelated through the different units, which involve aspects of general culture and of the future profession of medical students leading them to the spiral development of conceptual, procedural and attitudinal concepts.

The components of the teaching and learning process with its dynamic character make it keep in constant movement, looking for adequate via and alternatives that under the principle of flexibility allow to reorient and reorganize the process

according to the concrete situation of contents and the designed activities in each case, what lead to a development of English III subject that together with the rest of disciplines promote the preparation and development of the students.

3.2.2 Sociological foundations: These foundations are in correspondence with the dialectic materialistic philosophy that is summarized in the education as social phenomenon determined by society and determinant because of its influence on the development of it, the system of relations that are established among the agencies and agents, the social function of the school, the role of professors and the process of socio individualization of the students in and outside school.

The individual is taken as the center of social development, transforming society in concrete historical conditions and transforming himself. Materialistic dialectic is applied in the interpretation of individual-object relation in the teaching and learning process, as well as in the interpretation of individual-individual in the communicative process, where there is an interchange among students and professors, students and students, and the group in general through the different tasks that are assigned.

It is also necessary to see the dialectic unit between socialization and individualization that allow the student to develop linguistic skills with the use of different texts, that besides learning the English language, are interrelated with other subjects and general aspects of reality, contributing to the development of personality; his individuality and integral preparation, in which English language play an important role preparing him to be scientifically and technically updated facilitating his contribution to society where the role of the professor as organizer and guide is essential.

3.2.3 Psychological foundations: It is assumed a historical- cultural approach where the teaching and learning process is the center of attention from which some via are used to motivate students and achieve a greater level of personal involvement in the learning tasks where thought and language relation play an important role being reading the process of interaction between them.

The reader needs to recognize the letters, words, phrases, infer meaning , and find different elements and apply them in real-life situations. The principle that states that teaching precedes the development is assumed where student is taken as a product of teaching, the activity and communication, basic elements of the teaching and learning process, in this case ,of a foreign language.

The development of linguistic skills is achieved in the communicative process where students and the professor play different roles sending and receiving information, and group work or collaborative work takes place through practical activities, discussions, and opinions where the learned linguistic contents can be used and applied to new situations facilitating communication, taking into consideration the Zone of Proximal Development to develop individual potentialities.

3.2.4 Pedagogical foundations: They constitute the theoretical-methodological sustenance of the proposed framework. The teaching and learning process is the basis of formation and development. English III subject, as well as the rest of subjects, is a mean to achieve the integral formation in the individual.

The principles of the direction of the pedagogical process (Addine, Gonzalez and Recarey, 2006) stated by Cuban pedagogy are also the sustenance of this framework.

- Principle of the union of the scientific and ideological character of the pedagogical process.
- Principle of the linking of education with life and work, in the process of education of the personality.
- Principle of instructive, educative, and developing union in the process of education the personality.
- Principle of affective and cognitive union in the process of education of the personality.
- Principle of the collective and individual union of the education and respect to the personality of the learner.

- Principle of union among the activity, communication and personality.

Teaching is an instructive process by means of which students get knowledge and develop habits, skills and strengths what make possible to say that it does not take place in isolation but in combination with the learning process which is aimed at students' acquisition of collected cultural heritage and the development of intellectual skills, as well as the development of feeling and convictions that allow them to influence on society so as to transform it and achieve self-development and constant auto perfection.

Consequently, methodology will take into consideration the dynamics of the personal and non-personal components of the teaching and learning process where their dialectical relation can be observed. The role of the problem is highlighted due to the result of the situation of the object and the need to be solved. In this investigation the problem is centered in the reading comprehension process and the object in the use of task-based approach to develop reading comprehension skills in the teaching of English for general purposes at "Lidia Doce" Medical University Branch. Professor acts as the guider of the process he designs taking as the starting point the diagnostic of the students.

The framework contributes to the development of the personality and the integrated education of man taking into consideration the rector character of the teaching process. It has a humanistic essence because diversity in university classes is worked within the proposal.

Other principles that were taken into consideration were the Principle of Communicative Language Teaching stated by Morrow K. and Keith J. (1981)

3.2.5 Linguistic foundations

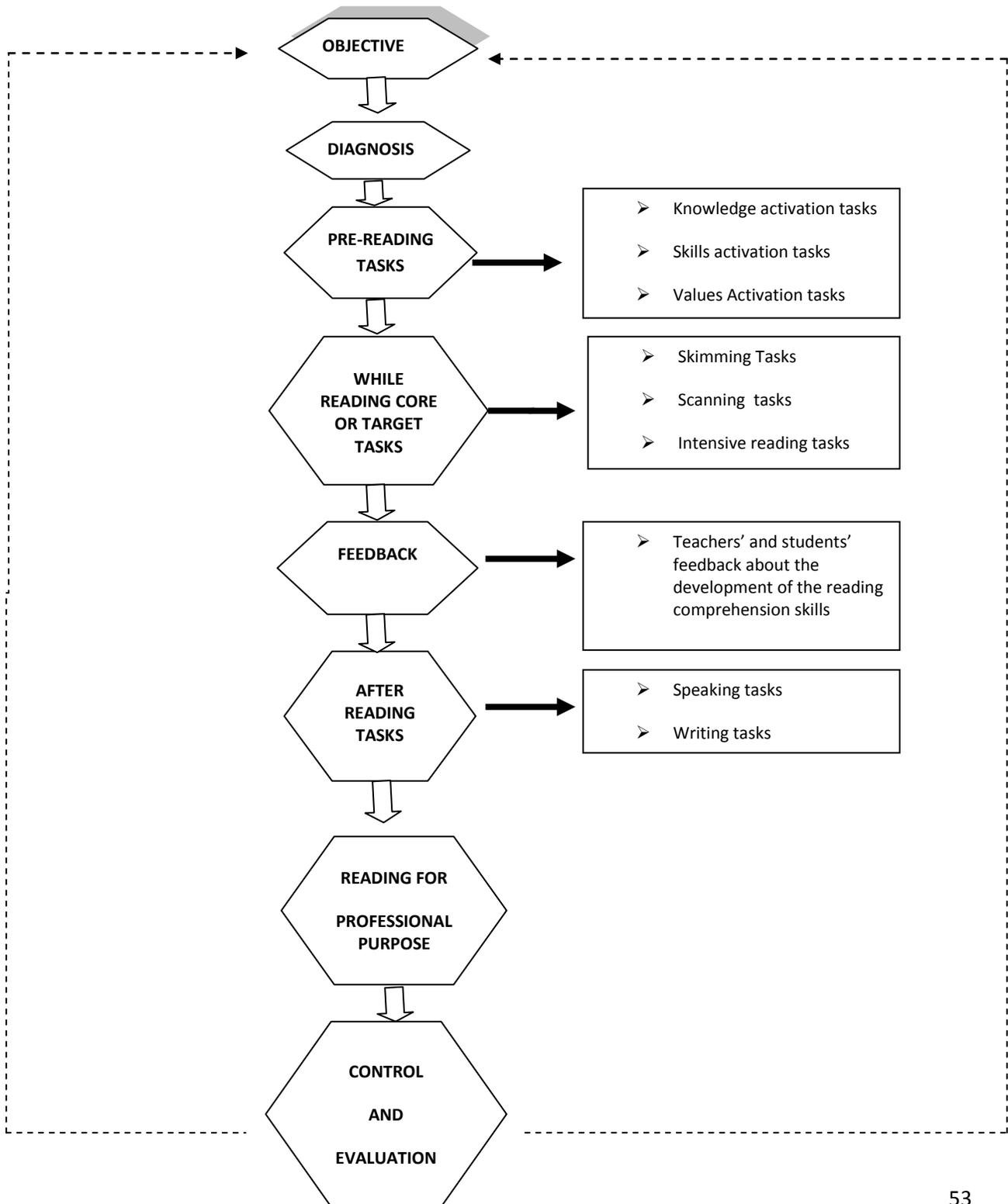
From the linguistic viewpoint the framework is sustained, on a materialist and dialectical comprehension of language, as well as on a linguistic science vision materialized in the teaching of English language in second year medical students. Postulates of linguistic science are interpreted to base the reading comprehension taking into consideration the characteristics of students.

This framework takes into consideration the opinion of Jakobson and Halle (1956) when stating that a given meaningful unit may be replaced by other, more explicit signs of the same code, whereby its general meaning is revealed, while its contextual Linguistic signification and rhetorical value meaning is determined by its connection with other signs within the same sequence.

Texts are produced in a sense that their communicative function has to be interpreted in terms of the concrete situation in which they were produced. And even though human communication takes place in instancial situations which are unique and non-repeatable, in many occasions communication is possible because people have internalized their knowledge of what can be called a generic situation, which is an abstraction of similar instancial situations.

Gregory (1988) stated that a generic situation is a complex configuration of experience relationships, interaction relationships, and medium relationships, which together provide a complex communicative function for the generic situation. The meanings associated with specific social situations find their expression in texts, which are constructed for specific purposes by their speakers. It is from the conventionalized forms of such situations that genres arise.

3.3 Structure of the framework proposal for applying the task-based approach to the teaching of reading comprehension skills at “Lidia Doce” Medical University Branch



3.3.1 Planning Phase

1. - Pre-reading tasks

Knowledge activation tasks: grammar activation tasks and vocabulary activation tasks.

Skills activation tasks: subskills of reading: identify the main idea, the supporting ideas, reach a conclusion

Values activation tasks: system of values from the syllabus

2. - While-reading core or target tasks

Skimming tasks, scanning tasks and intensive reading tasks

3.- Feedback

Feedback as the starting point of productive skills integration

4.- After reading tasks

Integrating reading to productive skills such as speaking and writing to prove reading comprehension and show communicative performance as an evidence of communicative competence.

5.- Reading for professional purposes

Preparing students to read academics texts.

3.3.2 Framework explanation

1.- Pre-reading tasks

While most of the outlined frameworks propose traditional exercises to present and practice grammar and vocabulary, leaving the treatment of values aside and arguing whether to pre teach grammar or not, this framework proposes to present pre-reading activities in the form of tasks that activate grammar, vocabulary and values all together to prepare the students to face the task.

2.- While-reading core or target tasks

All professors are familiar with skimming, scanning and intensive reading as the different types of reading however these are not always presented to the students in the form of tasks. This framework proposes to prepare tasks for skimming when the objective of the lesson is to get the gist the message, tasks for scanning when the goal is to look for specific information in the text. And tasks for intensive reading when the goal is to infer meaning through the text and to prepare students for extensive reading, the kind of reading that they will have to do to be updated in the latest advances of medical sciences.

3.- Feedback

Everybody is familiar with the idea that after the while reading stage there is always a wonderful opportunity for skills integration, that is, reading always paves the way for speaking and writing but this framework emphasizes on the fact that as doctor need to be efficient readers, they should never be asked to speak or write about the reading text until they have received feedback either from their peers or from the professor whether or not they have achieved the goal of the reading activity.

4.- After reading tasks

Many professors mistakenly ask their students to read aloud with the “objective” of verifying their “reading comprehension skills”. Reading aloud has very little value in developing communicative competence, rather than asking students to read aloud, deriving speaking and writing skills are more useful for verifying the students reading comprehension competency. Competency cannot be seen in the abstract, a communicative performance is the way that someone can prove such competency, when the students develop speaking or writing activities for which they have to prove that they have understood what they have read they are proving their reading.

5.- Reading for professional purposes

If the students are taught to read with the objective of completing specific tasks, they develop these reading comprehension skills and they will develop extensive reading skills to get updated about the advances of medicine that are usually published in the English language so that they develop extensive reading skills that allow them to continue reading by themselves as a long life learning process.

3.4 Specialists' evaluation of the proposal

Ten specialists were selected intentionally based on the pedagogical experience and their knowledge about the topic of the investigation Framework proposal for applying the task-based approach to the teaching of reading comprehension skills at "Lidia Doce" Medical University Branch.

Firstly an auto-evaluation was applied (Annex VII) to know: academic degree, number of investigations carried out in the field of English teaching and their knowledge about the topic, then the evaluation form of the framework proposal was applied. (Annex VIII).

The ten professors have the requisites, according to the auto-evaluation, to evaluate the framework.

The group was integrated by three PhD. and seven Masters. Three of them are full professors, five are lecturer professors and two are assistant professors. (Annex IX).

The following table shows the obtained results from the specialists' evaluation about the framework proposal.

No.	Aspects to assess	1	2	3	4	5
1	Pertinence					10
2	Usefulness				3	7

3	Practical value					10
4	Scientific- pedagogical value					10

As can be seen, 100% of the specialists assessed satisfactorily the four aspects prevailing qualifications of five points; only three specialists assessed the usefulness of the proposal of four points, therefore taking into consideration the established criteria, it is approved.

The specialists, when assessing the proposal, gave opinions that allowed the author to improve the results obtaining the framework that is presented in this research. They considered it very useful, pertinent and practical, stating that its value consists on:

Propitiating from the theoretical-practical foundation, a didactical-methodological tool that allows an adequate communicative competence development as well as an improvement of professional competencies in medical students, taking as reference the importance of reading comprehension skills and the task-based approach.

The scientific- pedagogical value is in the designing of a didactical- methodological tool aimed at enriching the quality and development of the teaching and learning process in the formation of Cuban doctors.

Its pertinence in the social field allows offering an excellent teaching and learning process to medical students.

The principal criteria and suggestions of the specialists were:

In relation to the qualification of four in the usefulness aspect:

a) The framework proposal demands of professors' methodological preparation towards the task-based approach in order to be updated and in this way to design good tasks that help students to develop students reading comprehension skills.

b) In order to achieve the practical value of the framework professor should be interested in implementing the task-based approach in the teaching and learning process.

Other opinions that would favor the proposal read as follow:

c) Professors that are updated with the task-based approach should model their performance to the rest of professors.

d) Tasks as the basis for task-based approach should be gradually introduced in the teaching of reading.

After analyzing the difficulties and suggestions pointed out by the specialists towards the framework, the author considered to accept them all.

CONCLUSIONS

The theoretical and methodological considerations that support a framework for applying the task-based approach to the teaching of reading comprehension skills at “Lidia Doce” Medical University Branch were determined. They allowed among other things to see the student as the center of social development that needs preparation to transform the world.

The diagnose of the real situation in the application of the task-based approach to the teaching of reading comprehension skills at “Lidia Doce” Medical University Branch revealed that there are difficulties in the development of this skill. It also revealed that although professors know about the task-based approach they have not developed skills for applying this approach to the teaching of reading. Students are not able to complete a task in real-life situation.

The framework proposal for the application of the task-based approach contributes to develop the reading comprehension skills at “Lidia Doce” Medical University Branch because it is planned by stages which are based on tasks encouraging learners to activate and use whatever language they already have at their own pace and within their own level and area of interest motivating them to infer meaning from a text, make comments about it and give their viewpoint.

Specialists make a positive evaluation about the framework proposal from the viewpoint of its applicability, scientific and practical value.

RECOMMENDATION

To apply the framework proposal in the different degree courses where English is taught at “Lidia Doce” Medical University Branch.

To propose to the English Language department the possibility of implementing the framework proposal in different medical universities.

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ANNEXES

Annex I

INFORMED CONSENT MODEL

STUDENTS:

By means of this model you are proposed to collaborate in a research about reading comprehension skills in English language. It is intended to know all aspects you considered that have hindered or favored the development of reading comprehension skills so as to improve them by means of a framework for applying the task-based approach to the teaching of reading. The collected information is not going to be used for other purpose rather than for the one explained above. The anonymity is guaranteed by the author as well as the confidentiality of your answers as it is established in the ethical principles for the human beings investigation.

In this way we want to ask you about your personal consent to participate in this investigation and your commitment with a sincere cooperation

_____ I agree to participate in your investigation

_____ I don't agree to participate in your investigation

INFORMED CONSENT MODEL

PROFESSORS:

By means of this model you are proposed to collaborate in a research about English language reading comprehension skills in second year medical student. It is intended to know some aspects about this topic in the class. The principal objective is to analyze the inadequacies and potentialities that have hindered or favored the development of reading comprehension so as to improve them by means of a framework for applying the task-based approach to the teaching of reading. We ask you to feel free when giving answers because they are not going to be used for other purpose rather than for the one explained above.

In this way we want to ask you about your personal consent to participate in this investigation and your commitment with a sincere cooperation

_____ I agree to participate in your investigation

_____ I don't agree to participate in your investigation

Annex II

Document analysis**Guide to analyze the syllabus of English III**

Variables	Indicators
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task orientation • Skills to be developed • Way in which it contributes to the selection of methods.
Contents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of the content (Knowledges,skills and values) • Contents organization • Methodological orientaion
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correspondence with the principle of task-based learnig • Activities in form of tasks • Role of the student • Role of the professor
Teaching Aids (TextBook)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correspondence with the task-based approach • Orientation to achieve specific purposes • Authenticity of texts
Ways of organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IEP(Integrated English Practice)
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kinds of evaluation Quantitative (traditional); Qualitative(formative, summative, so on)

Source: Adapted from Recino Pineda, U. (2008). Curriculum Design to Spanish subject for foreigners in the preparatory formation to medical sciences studies. (Thesis presented in option of PhD). Santa Clara.

Annex III

OBSERVATION GUIDE 1

Class observation

Objective: To verify the methodological treatment that is given to the achievement of reading comprehension skills.

Second year medical students

Academic course: _____

Professor: _____

1- Type of text that is used in this reading activity

	Dialogue	Advertisement	Letter	News	Cards	Descriptive Narrative	Others Which ones?
Reading comprehension							

2- Reading comprehension activities are organized in stages:

Yes _____ No _____

3- Skills that are used in the Reading lessons

Skills	Yes	No
Anticipating		
Predicting		
Inferring content and / or form.		
Discerning main ideas / relevant information		
To identify the main idea(s)		
To infer from a text (read between the lines)		
To draw conclusions		
To recognize the writer's purpose and attitude		
To recognize and recall specific details		
To recognize the relationship between the main idea(s) and their expansions (examples, etc.)		

OBSERVATION GUIDE 2**Class observation**

Objective: To check the professors' skills in applying the task-based approach to the teaching of reading comprehension skills.

Second year medical professors

Academic course_____ Group_____

1-Type of task used in the reading lessons: real-world tasks or educational tasks

2-Number of lessons where tasks as the basis for task-based approach were applied.

Tasks	Total of lessons: 20	
	No. of lessons	%
Listing tasks		
Sorting and ordering		
Comparing		
Problem-solving		
Sharing personal experience		
Creative tasks		
Others		

3-The professor helps students to understand the theme and objectives of the task.

4-The professor gives students preparation time to think about how to do the task.

5-The professor walks around and monitors, encouraging in a supportive way

everyone's attempt at communication in the target language when students are completing the task.

6-The professor helps students to formulate what they want to say, but does not intervene to correct errors of form when they are preparing the task.

7-The professor asks some pairs to report briefly to the whole class so everyone can compare findings.

8- The professor conducts practice activities as needed, based on the language analysis work already on the board.

Annex IV

Participant observation guide

Objective: To check the level of motivation towards the English language learning.

1-Students are active in the English lesson

Always _____ Sometimes _____ Never _____

2-Students concentrate easily in the activities

Always _____ Sometimes _____ Never _____

3-Level of participation of students when predicting or anticipating content

High _____ Intermediate _____ Low _____

4-Level of interest when carrying out reading activities

High _____ Intermediate _____ Low _____

5-Level of cooperation when carrying out reading activities.

High _____ Intermediate _____ Low _____

6- When students are in doubt they ask the professor for explanation

Always _____ Sometimes _____ Never _____

7- Students enjoy discussion after the activity

Always _____ Sometimes _____ Never _____

8- At the end of the lesson students are interested on learning more about the topic of the lesson

Always _____ Sometimes _____ Never _____

Annex V

Entry test for second year medical students

Objective: To know about the difficulties of the students according to their reading comprehension skills

I. Read the following text then follow the orders below.

The Bahamas, officially the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, is a country consisting of 29 islands, 661 cays, and 2,387 islets (rocks). It is located in the Atlantic Ocean north of Cuba and Hispaniola (Dominican Republic and Haiti), northwest of the Turks and Caicos Islands, and southeast of the United States. Its total land area is 13,939 km² with an estimated population of 330,000. Its capital is Nassau. The climate of The Bahamas is subtropical to tropical, and is moderated significantly by the waters of the Gulf Stream, particularly in winter. Conversely, this often proves very dangerous in the summer and autumn, when hurricanes pass near or through the islands. Some settlements have festivals associated with the traditional crop or food of that area, such as the "Pineapple Fest" in Gregory Town, Eleuthera or the "Crab Fest" on Andros. Other significant traditions include story telling.

1- Go quickly over the text and get the main idea.

2-Read the text and say if the following statements are Right, Wrong or I don't know because it doesn't appear. Explain the wrong ones.

- a)_____ Bahamas is a single island.
- b)_____ Bahamas is near Cuba.
- c)_____ The population of Bahamas is bigger than the population of Cuba.
- d)_____ Bahamas has a subtropical climate with heavy rains.
- e)_____ Hurricanes pass near Bahamas in summer.

3-Read the text and complete the following statements

- 1- Bahamas is also known as...
- 2- Bahamas is composed by...
- 3-It has a total area of....

4-The population is about...

5-Bahamas is affected by...

6-Examples of festivals that take place there are...

4-Read the text, complete the following chart

Country	Capital city	Location	Official language	Area/Size	Population	climate	Tradition
Bahamas					330,000 inhabitants		

5-Read the text then answer the following questions.

- a) Where is Bahamas located?
- b) What is Bahamas consisting of?
- c) Is the climate of Bahamas similar to the one of Cuba? Why or Why not?
- d) Do you think Bahamas and Cuba have many similarities? If so, mention them.
- e) What is your opinion about living in Bahamas?

Answer Key:

Question 1: 5 points If the student selects the topic sentence

Question 2: 5 points -----Five correct items and two correct explanations

4 points -----Four correct items and two correct explanations

3 points -----Three correct items

2 points----- Less than three correct items

Questions 3 and 4 : 5 points -----From six to five correct items

4 points -----Four correct items

3 points -----Three correct items

2 points -----Less than Three correct items

Question 5: 5 points, one point each item

Annex VI

Interview to professors

Objective: To check the professors' knowledge about applying the task-based approach to the development of reading comprehension skills in the English language in the second year medical students.

Professor:

A research is being carried out about the application of the task-based approach to the development of reading skills in English lessons. Your opinion about the following topics will help to improve this work.

Thank you.

Interview guide

1. Define the task-based approach and reading comprehension
2. How does TBA in practice differ from more traditional teaching approaches?
3. What is the difference between Pedagogical tasks and Real-world tasks?
4. Give an example of each of them applied in your reading lessons.
5. What are the key characteristics of a task?
6. Do you have them into consideration in your reading activities?
7. Willis (1996) proposes six types of tasks as the basis for task-based approach. Mention three of them.
8. When introducing the topic of your reading lessons do you use these types of tasks?

Annex VII

Auto-evaluation of specialists.

General Data

Name: _____

Profession or post -graduate studies: _____

Teaching Rank: _____

Academic Degree: _____

Investigations carried out: _____

Knowledge about the topic: _____

Age: _____

Workplace: _____

Annex VIII

Indicators to follow in order to evaluate the framework.

PROFESSOR:

Your opinion as specialists is of great importance in this investigation to value the framework. For this reason, it is necessary that you analyze the framework that is given and state your valuation.

No.	Aspects to value	1	2	3	4	5
1	Pertinence					
2	Usefulness					
3	Practical value					
4	Scientific- pedagogical value					

Positive aspects of the framework :

Negative aspects of the framework:

Recommendation:

Annex IX

Specialists' Data

Specialists' Teaching rank	Academic degree	Years of experience	Sex
Philosopher Doctor	Full professor	33	M
Philosopher Doctor	Full professor	32	F
Philosopher Doctor	Full professor	26	F
Master in English Language	Lecturer	27	F
Master in English Language	Lecturer	29	F
Master in Higher Education	Lecturer	32	F
Master in Higher Education	Lecturer	30	M
Master in Higher Education	Lecturer	29	M
Master in Higher Education	Assisstant	31	M
Master in Higher Education	Assisstant	33	F