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Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL):
An analysis of its success and relevance in present
and future education in English at primary school

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Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL): An analysis of its success and relevance in present and future education in English at primary school. Raquel Peña Ponce de León

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation analyses the teaching method known as “Content and Language Integrated Learning” (CLIL), which is being increasingly used in today’s education. The main differences between how to learn an additional language through CLIL and how it is learned in a more traditional environment are dealt with in this dissertation.

In the introduction, I outline some of the most significant theoretical aspects of CLIL, as they will help me to elaborate on the methods used for my study, which include two questionnaires administrated to a group of students and parents knowledgeable about CLIL. Then, I set out the results of the questionnaires and an example of a CLIL learning unit, paying attention to the fundamentals which form CLIL methodology and its main differences with a traditional approach. Finally, I take into consideration the weaknesses of CLIL to put them on scale with its strengths, thus concluding that CLIL has a valuable potential for fostering the progress on the learning of a second language.

RESUMEN

Este estudio analiza el método de enseñanza conocido como “Aprendizaje Integrado de Contenidos y Lenguas Extranjeras” (AICLE) que está siendo cada vez más utilizado en la educación actual. En este trabajo se han observado algunas diferencias entre cómo se aprende un idioma adicional a través de AICLE y cómo se aprende dicho idioma en un entorno más tradicional.

En la introducción, se da una idea general de algunos de los aspectos teóricos más importantes de AICLE, ya que contribuirán a la elaboración de los procedimientos usados para mi estudio, que incluyen dos cuestionarios administrados a un grupo de alumnos y padres relacionados con el método. A continuación, se exponen los resultados de los cuestionarios y un ejemplo de una unidad didáctica AICLE, prestando atención a los fundamentos que forman su metodología y sus principales diferencias con un enfoque tradicional. Finalmente, se consideran las debilidades de AICLE para ponerlas en balance con sus fortalezas, llegando así a la conclusión de que AICLE tiene un valioso potencial para fomentar el progreso en el aprendizaje de un segundo idioma.

CONTENTS

1. Introduction.....	4
2. The Development of CLIL.....	5
3. Theoretical framework	
3.1 Essential features.....	6
3.2 4Cs Framework and the Language Triptych.....	8
3.3 Teacher assessment and student expectations.....	11
4. Methods.....	13
5. Results	
5.1 Questionnaire results.....	15
5.2 An example of a CLIL didactic unit.....	20
6. Discussion and conclusions.....	25
7. References.....	28
8. Appendix.....	30

1. Introduction

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is a teaching method or an educational approach which has a dual aim: the learning of the subject matter (content) and the learning of the additional language. An additional language may refer to a second language, a community language or a learner's foreign language. The main idea of this method is that the focus is not only on the content, and not only in the language. Coyle, Hood and Marsh (2010) make this distinction clear in the definition of this approach as "a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language"

The present dissertation aims to analyse whether CLIL is a successful and relevant method in current and future education in English at primary school in an EFL environment, taking into account both its strengths and its weaknesses. My interest in this topic arose from my own experience of private tutoring with ten students under this method. During the private tuition lessons from this year, I began to notice some differences between my students' knowledge and their way of acquiring English as a foreign language, and the way in which some previous students who were learning a second language in a more traditional approach had acquired the same knowledge. Therefore, I set out to collect and summarize firstly the fundamentals and principal features of CLIL, with the aim of providing later real data about its (relative) success through two questionnaires, and then, in the third place, a learning unit with the purpose of illustrating in detail the actual functioning or operation of the CLIL method.

2. The Development of CLIL

Education in a language that it is not the learner's first language is not something new. During centuries there has been an increasingly interest in multilingual societies which has reached the 21st century with different methods. Bilingual education has been used for years as well as content-based instruction or immersion teaching, and they have been successful in many countries, for example in Canada. CLIL undeniably shares some aspects with these methods, but its most important principle (and difference) is that "it operates along a continuum of the foreign language and the non-language content without specifying the importance of one over another" (Coyle, 2008).

Globalization is a recurrent theme nowadays and CLIL appears as a convenient response to the rapid changes and demands in our society. The Eurydice Report on European developments for CLIL (Eurydice, 2006) states:

"The CLIL methodological approach seeking to foster integrated learning of languages and other areas of curricular content is a fast developing phenomenon in Europe... Aware of this challenge, national policy makers are taking a greater interest in CLIL and offering a wide variety of initiatives consistent with the different circumstances facing them".

In the 1990s people across Europe began to have more access to learn a second language. CLIL was adopted within the European Union, with the express support of the European Commission, so as to consolidate a specific form of educational innovation (Marsh, 2013, p.45). Then, in Europe CLIL has different variations due to the social and cultural differences including linguistic diversity. It mostly handles the teaching of a foreign or second language for a specific community such as French in Austria; French, German or Spanish in the UK; and English or German in Spain.

3. Theoretical framework

3.1 Essential features

CLIL as a concept embraces very different aspects. It goes from intensive programs to a few hours per week, from primary education to adults and it may imply project work, investigations, group works and self-learning. In short, CLIL is flexible and versatile. An essential feature is that it places both language and content at the same level without denoting predilection or control of one over the other.

A traditional and still very widespread model of education that has been used for many years and in many societies is the transmission of knowledge, skills and information that the teacher banks into the learner. This has been called “banking model” or “teacher controlled model”. The major shift CLIL brings is, therefore, a revision of the role played by the language seeing that the learning of the second language is no longer based on grammatical progression. CLIL students need to discuss, explain, describe and differ by using a language much more complex than the one used in traditional foreign language lessons. As Maggi (2011, p.4) explains in *“Assessment and Evaluation in CLIL”*:

“In a “traditional” language course students study the language; the focus is on forms and language skills. In CLIL, students use the language to learn content. The focus is on meaning, so language is not regarded as a set of rules and the ability to separate and study on their own, but as a resource for creating meaning in a communicative context”.

CLIL is not, however, expected or proposed to replace traditional language teaching. It is just a different approach as well as bilingual education or immersion. The term “bilingual education” is used alongside with “immersion” to refer to an additional language taught at school in which students are educated in whole or in part through this

second language. These terms are closely related to CLIL but one of the main differences is that in “bilingual education” and “immersion programmes” the student aim is just related to achieve a proficiency in the second language, while in CLIL the learning of the content is equally important. Moreover, they differ in the amount of time since many (perhaps most) forms of CLIL do not amount to anything approaching the 40% of ‘early partial’ immersion, and a CLIL programme does not necessarily last for more than one year, though some (possibly many) do (Dobson, Murillo, Johnstone, 2011, p.7).

CLIL and linguistic diversity go hand in hand and it supports an impact on the education of language in the future. It is an innovative approach of learning which may be carried out in a variety of ways and in very different situations. It also aims to achieve an improvement in the learning language and a development of knowledge through this language. There are several reasons for CLIL being so outstanding. Probably the most important one is the fact that learners are immersed in an environment very much similar to that of a non-native student at a foreign school during typical lessons (Wojtowicz, Stansfield, Connolly, Hainey, 2011). It also allows learners to familiarize themselves with the culture and the context of the language. Furthermore, children learning a second language in this immersed environment become not only fluent and literate, but they also learn to work with advanced cognitively subject matter (by acquiring the ability to think in different languages). Some evidence suggests that increasing quality time spent in a foreign language, for example on the topic of environment, where students use the language to learn as well as learn to use the language in a variety of situations, can lead to an increase in linguistic competence (Coyle, 2008). Learners use the foreign language to comprehend non-language content and it requires a depth of processing which leads to an improved language acquisition.

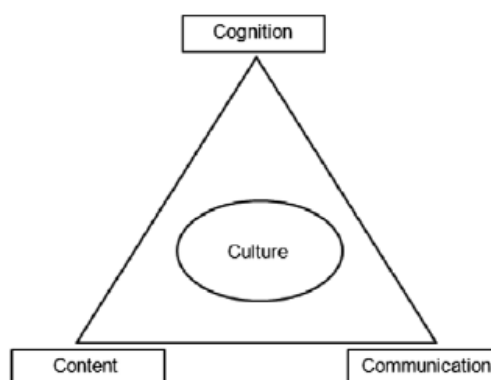
Finally, CLIL relies on intrinsic motivation and the learners want to be involved in activities related to use the target language since they satisfy immediate needs. In other words, CLIL provides plenty of opportunities for incidental language learning; the kind of learning which occurs when the learners' attention is focussed on something different from what is being taught. Incidental language learning has been shown to be very effective, deep and long-lasting (Pavesi, Bertocchi, Hofmannová and Kazianka, 2001).

3.2 4Cs Framework and the Language Triptych

The 4Cs conceptual framework was developed by Coyle to bring together different aspects of CLIL and in order to support the improvement of CLIL pedagogies. This framework, rather than considering subject matter (content) and language (communication) as two independent elements, brings them together with the knowledge for learning (cognition) and the understanding of global citizenship (culture) – which establish the four Cs.

For CLIL to be effective, it must challenge learners to create new knowledge and develop new skills through reflection and engagement in higher-order as well as lower-order thinking (Coyle, Hood and Marsh, 2010). Then, the important idea in cognition is to allow students to construct their own knowledge and to be challenged.

Therefore, this approach is not based on the transmission of knowledge or skills from an expert to learner as it has been mentioned above and CLIL teaching must be supported by the cognitive engagement of the student in order to have an effective learning process. As

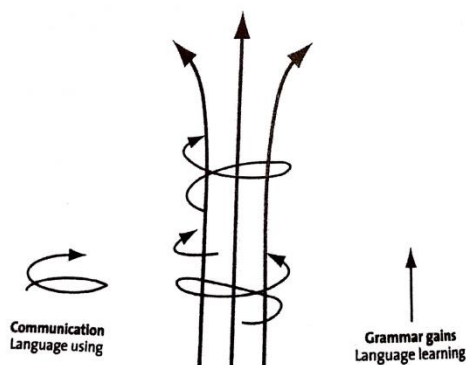


for culture, it is related to the self and the 'other' awareness. It is important in our globalized world with a wide variety of cultures to demand for understanding and

tolerance since culture nowadays determines how each individual see the world and everyone uses language to express this perception. Thus, through a CLIL approach, students may have access to intercultural experiences that would not be possible in a traditional approach.

At the heart of the learning process lies successful content or thematic learning and the related acquisition of new knowledge, skills and understanding (Coyle, Hood and Marsh, 2010, p.53). Content may be seen as the knowledge, skills or understanding the student is going to learn. Moreover, in this framework language and communication are used interchangeably and they focus on interaction and on the progression in language using and learning. The main aim is *learning to use the language and using the language to learn* (Coyle, Hood and Marsh, 2010). Thus, communication is not based on traditional language lessons and it is not just developed by grammar and

Figure 2: The spiral of language progression

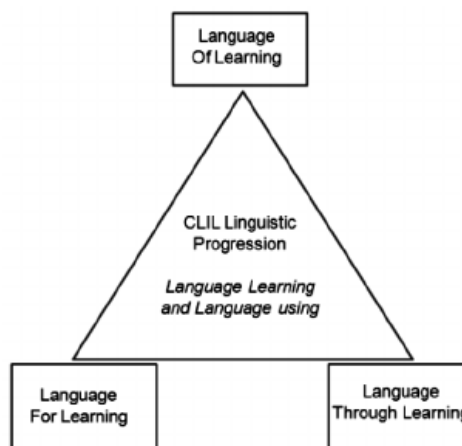


lexical progression but it is also focused on the acquisition of knowledge and content through this language. Then, it is important here to make a distinction between language learning (which is linked to grammatical progression) and language using (with an emphasis on interaction and communication). The goal in a CLIL class is

language learning and language using since practice is an important part of language learning. Coyle, Hood and Marsh (2010) argue that “students have to be able to use the vehicular language to learn content *other* than grammatical form otherwise this would not be CLIL” and that “ignoring progressive language learning in a CLIL setting is ignoring the fundamental role played by language in the learning process”.

Consequently the challenge for students is to engage in dialogic learning (teacher or learner-learner dialogue) using the target language since they must not be able to express themselves as they do in their first language.

The language triptych supports this progression in language learning and language using from three interrelated perspectives which involve teacher and learners using and developing: language *of* learning, language *for* learning and language *through* learning. Firstly, language *of* learning is an analysis on language



needed for learners to access basic concepts and skills related to the subject theme or topic (Coyle, Hood and Marsh, 2010). Then, the use of tenses will not be determined by grammatical difficulty but by the practical need required by the content. If, for example, students use the past tense in a CLIL classroom, they learn how to use it in a meaningful and more naturalistic way which can be further remembered because it is related to learning acquisition or incidental learning. Language *for* learning is the kind of language the students are going to need to operate successfully in a foreign language environment. In a CLIL setting, this means that students must develop skills such as those required for asking questions, debating, memorizing, thinking, and to be able to work in pairs or in groups. Research has shown that cognitively undemanding work, such as copying or repetition, especially when there is little or no context to support it, does not enhance language learning (Smith and Paterson, 1998). Thus, students tend to acquire the appropriate language by involving them in an active role and work in communication in CLIL classroom. Finally, language *through* learning is based on the principle that effective learning cannot take place without active involvement of

language and thinking (Coyle, Hood and Marsh, 2010). Students need to be encouraged to develop their own understanding and a deeper level of learning will take place. Students will expand their language knowledge by learning new language if for example they need to look for information in a dictionary or by the teacher support.

3.3 Teacher assessment and student expectations

The assessment issue is a difficult theme and sometimes a controversial area among CLIL teachers due to the level of language-content integration. Assessment processes can be broadly divided into *summative* and *formative* and this division forms a major distinction (Coyle, Hood and Marsh, 2010). Summative assessment is associated with the learner's capability and a traditional setting with a final result or mark, whilst formative assessment is related to monitor the learner's next steps. It is more complex and the teacher must focus on the learner development of learning in order to structure a future improvement. Thus, in principle, a CLIL assessment or evaluation has the same objectives as a traditional one and, apart from the summative and formative assessments, other objectives are: verify that the objectives have been completed, try to improve education by analysing results, guiding learning and create a positive attitude about the learner's aptitudes.

CLIL does not guarantee efficient teaching and learning by itself and it is obvious that teaching a subject in a foreign language is not the same as an integration of language and content... language teachers and subject teachers need to work together... [to] formulate the new didactics needed for a real integration of form and function in language teaching (Coyle, 2008). To achieve this, the content teacher must adapt subject-specific methods so as to accommodate an additional language focus. It does not mean changing his or her role to the one of a language teacher but leaving the door open to alternative ways. As for the language teacher, his or her role is to support content

teachers and help students to obtain the language needed to manipulate content and develop learning skills. Then, a CLIL teacher has the opportunity to scaffold new content through familiar language, or to scaffold new language through the use of familiar content (Coyle, Hood and Marsh, 2010). In addition, even though the teaching of the content takes place through the medium of a second or foreign language, it is also important that the teachers have some knowledge of the student's first language in order to adjust more quickly and in a better way. As Dobson, Murillo and Johnstone (2011) defend "it is important that supernumerary teachers have a very high level of competence in English, but it does not follow that they must always be native speakers". In summary, CLIL teachers should have a good knowledge of the first language to appreciate the learners difficulties, should be experts in content and a good level of the foreign language and finally they should have a deep sense of the cognitive and sociocultural elements for language learning.

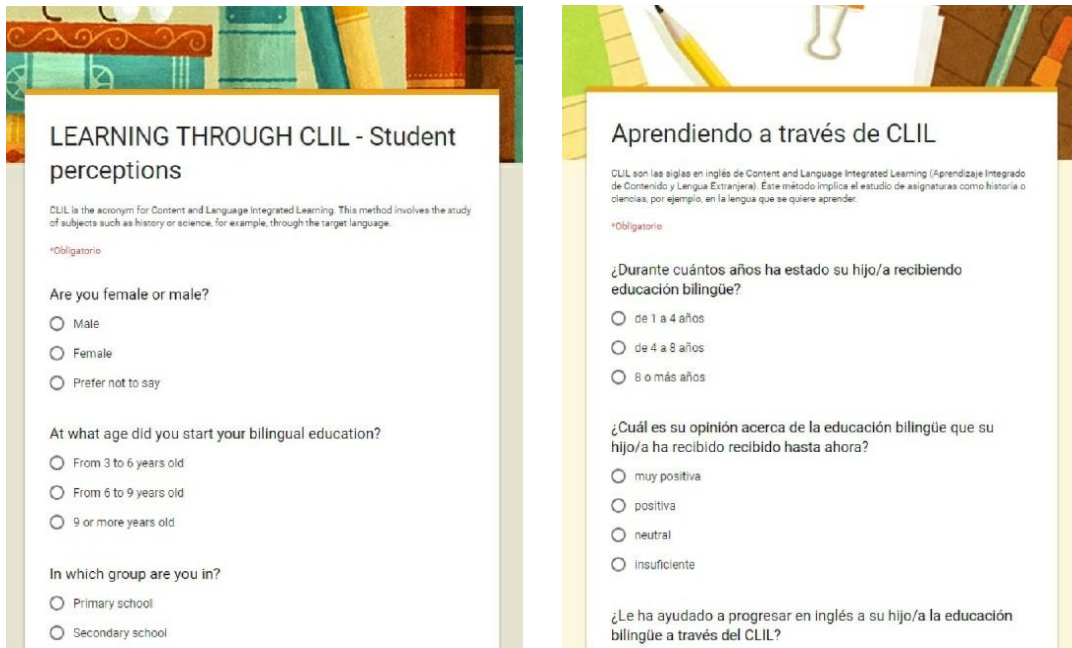
This is connected with another important point to be made: the role of the teacher is certainly an aim for CLIL successfulness, but learners must be firmly engaged too. CLIL offers some advantages to learners such as the exposure to more authentic contents which contribute to greater involvement, the interactive nature of working in a CLIL environment which helps to them to become more independent, the greater number of hours dedicated to the second language which helps them to enhance their proficiency and the integration of content and language which leads to encourage cognitive processes. Motivation is also an issue since if students practice the additional language voluntarily; it enhances the overall learning and motivation towards the subject. Coyle (2008) points that "student expectations often increase in response to the challenges of CLIL". Students may feel that they are learning at a level that is appropriate to their age rather than learning in regards to their linguistic level.

4. Methods

My study of CLIL began by administering a questionnaire to 10 students under this method as well as to their parents. These questionnaires include a basic definition of the CLIL method in order to introduce the theme and forestall any doubts from them where necessary. The questionnaires provide real data about CLIL and their structure aims to examine if the essential features of the theoretical framework mentioned above are already present in CLIL education. The one intended for students has sixteen questions that can be divided into four sections according to their theme: the first part are three general questions which are planned to organize the student's response according to their gender, age and school course ('are you female or male?', 'at what age did you start your bilingual education?' and 'in which group are you in?'). The next section consists of the following three questions which help us to understand how they feel about studying through CLIL ('How happy or otherwise are you about having received a bilingual education in Spanish and English?', 'How useful or otherwise has your bilingual education been for you?' and 'Has it helped you to become a more confident person?'). This section is important because it is intended to examine the notion of students' motivation in a CLIL environment since previous theory defends motivation as an important issue. Then, a third section was included to reveal their opinion about their own second language progress and it includes five questions such as 'Your progress in speaking English', 'Your progress in writing English' and so on. In this section, the important idea is to reveal if they are aware of their own progress in the second language through CLIL since in a traditional approach progress would simply be centred on grammatical progression while in a CLIL environment students learn language and content at the same time and they learn language *of, for and through* learning (as was explained in the theoretical sections of this dissertation). The final

(fourth) section consists of four questions that are related to more specific features of the method. While in the previous section it is language and content that are introduced, now I introduce the other two "C's" (culture and cognition) of the 4Cs conceptual framework explained in the former theoretical part of this dissertation. ('Has it helped you to become more aware of people and ways of life in other countries?', 'Has it helped you to become more aware of subjects you are learning at school, e.g. science, history?', 'Has it given you the confidence to feel you could study or work successfully abroad, at some point in the future?' and 'For the past three years, how often have you had the opportunity to speak English with people whose first language is English?'). This short questionnaire ends up with a direct and open question about their personal opinion and whether they would recommend this teaching method.

As for the parents' questionnaire, it was developed in Spanish and it followed the same structure as the one made for their children. Most of the questions are exactly the same as those in the questionnaire for students but focused on the education of their children. It is meant primarily to know their opinions and to determine if they are for or against the method. It introduces some questions such as '¿Le ha ayudado a progresar en inglés a su hijo/a la educación bilingüe a través del CLIL?' and 'Desde su punto de vista, ¿el método CLIL o la educación bilingüe tienen siempre éxito?'. And it is also closed by a direct question related to particular advantages or concerns about their children education.



5. Results

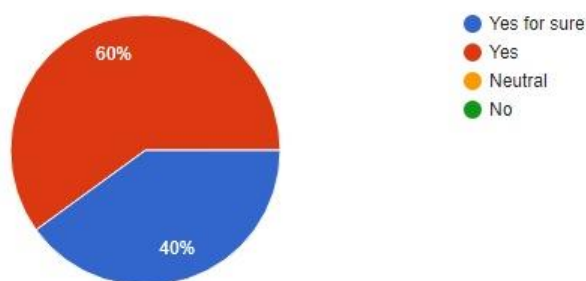
5.1 Questionnaire results

The results of these questionnaires help us to build up a picture of the students' and parents' opinions since a total of 10 students and 9 parents took part. Even though not many people were able to answer the questionnaire, their responses clearly show a wide variation of responses among them. In general, the students do not seem to have had any doubts about the questions, but interestingly some of them reacted to one of the questions on their progress in the Spanish language since they thought it has no relation to being learning through a second language while just 30% believed that it is useful because it forces them to make comparisons between both languages. In addition, one of the most important advantages of the CLIL method is its approach to cultural awareness and its demands for understanding and tolerance. The graph below shows that all students (60% answered 'yes' and the remaining 40% 'yes for sure') believed that studying through a second language is useful for knowing other cultures and they also made some comments on the activities they were able to do to learn about different

countries such as activities related to St. Patrick's Day in Ireland or the Thanksgiving Day in the United States. The cognitive aspect was also important since they constructed their own knowledge and learned how and why these days are celebrated and they realized it wouldn't be possible in a traditional environment of learning languages in schools.

Has it helped you to become more aware of people and ways of life in other countries?

10 respuestas



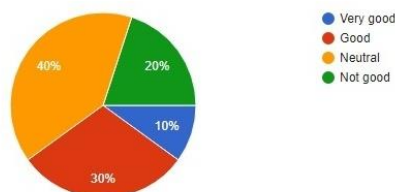
Another two questions which had a really good response are linked to the notion of student's motivation. CLIL theories defend that learning through a second language enhances the students' motivation towards the subject since they feel they are learning at a level that is appropriate to their age and the responses in the questionnaire support these theories. 100% of students stated that they see their education through a second language 'very useful' and 90% indicated that they are 'very happy' because of receiving this kind of education. Their motivation and future expectations are also very positive since 60% answered 'yes for sure' and 40% 'yes' to a question about their confidence for studying abroad at some point in the future. The questionnaire also included some questions about their progress in English as the second language they are learning through CLIL. The students consider that they have had an adequate progress in understanding and speaking English (80% and 70% of positive responses) while they

consider their progress in writing and reading unsatisfactory (50% and 40% of positive responses). According to their answers, it seems that they are aware of their progress in the second language, but they do not seem to perceive any differences between their CLIL situation and a traditional approach. If they were studying English by means of traditional approach, their listening or speaking progress, for example, would be less significant since this approach does not offer the same opportunities to practise those two skills in the second language. I have explained above that CLIL offers opportunities for both language learning and language practice, while a traditional approach focuses more on language learning. Nevertheless, this is something the students do not seem to be aware of.

Writing and reading:

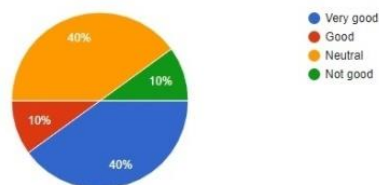
Your progress in writing English:

10 respuestas



Your progress in reading English:

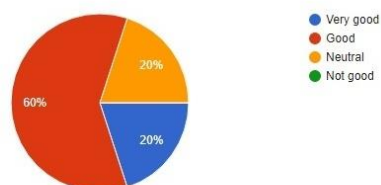
10 respuestas



Listening and Speaking:

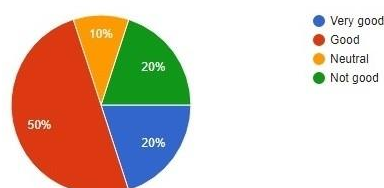
Your progress in understanding people when they speak in I

10 respuestas



Your progress in speaking English:

10 respuestas

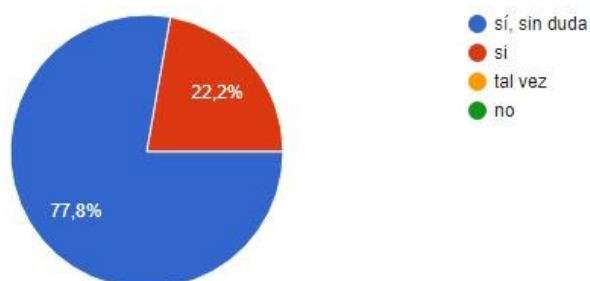


Finally, as it was mentioned above, this questionnaire ended with a short and direct question in order to write their personal opinion. 5 students refused to answer this question while the other 5 wrote that they would recommend learning through CLIL. They wrote answers like ‘I recommend this education method because I think that people who are not very good at English can reach a higher level’ and ‘I think it is a very good method because we learn a lot of English although our first language is Spanish’.

Similarly, the questionnaires that were completed by parents also had favourable views on the CLIL principles. When they were asked about their opinion in their children’s education, 44.4% answered ‘muy positiva’ and 66.6% ‘positiva’. From the responses to this questionnaire it appears that there is a high interest in CLIL across parents since they see that it helps their children to achieve very good results in the second language level. Thus, there was another question about their children’s progress in English through CLIL, and 77.8% answered ‘sí, sin duda’ and 22.2% answered ‘sí’.

¿Le ha ayudado a progresar en inglés a su hijo/a la educación bilingüe a través del CLIL?

9 respuestas

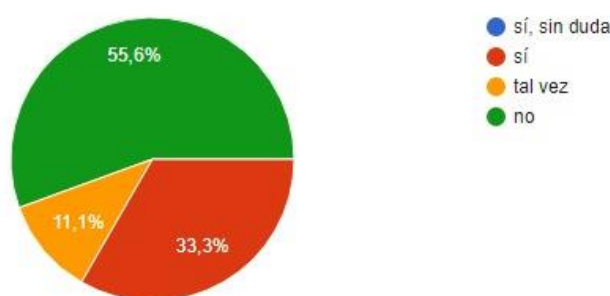


Interestingly, there were two questions that had responses in agreement with their children's views. One of them is related to the idea of progressing in the Spanish language, and as is the case with the student's questionnaire, the parents see no relation between the learning and progress in their mother language and those of the second language. 55.5% of them answered 'no' to this question and just 11.1% answered 'sí, sin duda'. The other question which had similar responses is about the cultural approach of the method. It seems that parents are also aware that their children had access to some cultural learning that would be not possible with a traditional approach. They were asked if CLIL had helped their children to learn about other countries customs and lifestyles and 77.7% answered positively. Nevertheless, not all the answers denoted a positive feeling over the teaching method. The questionnaire also included one question about teachers and its aim was to know if according to the participants these teachers should be native in the second language or not. Most of them (66.6% answered 'sí, sin duda' or 'sí') indicated that teachers should have a native level in the second language while just one answer was 'no'. As I have explained above, CLIL experts defend that teachers should have a high competence in the second language but they do not defend the idea of just native teachers. In addition, CLIL theory also defends that it is better for teachers to have some knowledge about the students' first language since they may appreciate the learners' difficulties in a more efficient way. In a CLIL context, teachers should be experienced and skilled both in content and language level and they should collaborate with each other to have successful results. Moreover, in the first two questions most of the parents had a good opinion about the method and they confirmed that it has contributed to the improvement in the second language level. However, the last question was about the ultimate results or benefits of CLIL. They were asked if

CLIL methodology is always successful and 55.6% answered ‘no’ versus 33.3% for ‘yes’.

Desde su punto de vista, ¿el método CLIL o la educación bilingüe tienen siempre éxito?

9 respuestas



Finally, as was the case with the other questionnaire, the one for parents also included an open question to include any free comments, concerns, or advantages of their children education. The most interesting answers were: ‘Considero que el aprendizaje de un idioma desde temprana edad es muy importante para una real inmersión lingüística’, ‘actualmente la educación bilingüe o a través del método CLIL no es posible sin un buen apoyo en el hogar’ and ‘pienso que tener una educación bilingüe es algo muy positivo y muy beneficioso para los niños y para su educación pues los puede ayudar mucho en el futuro’.

5.2 An example of a CLIL learning unit

Considering that the results of the questionnaires are, on the whole, favourable regarding the use of CLIL in the classroom, I deem it appropriate to give an example of what a learning unit normally looks like in this methodology which students and parents seem to regard as being highly effective. Therefore, my applied analysis is based on my own production of a CLIL learning unit, which I shall now proceed to explain. A CLIL learning unit should be divided into different sections. These sections are meant as a

guide for planning and monitoring processes in a CLIL teaching environment. They are not meant to be rigidly applied but to be explored and reformulated. Therefore, in my case, this CLIL learning unit has been divided into 8 sections which are: learning outcomes, subject content, language content or communication, contextual (cultural) elements, cognitive (thinking) processes, tasks, methodology and evaluation.

In a CLIL learning unit, the content is the starting point of the planning process. However, in considering the content, it is important to think about the learning outcomes too (section 1). These learning outcomes are the aims or objectives that the teacher wants to achieve and they should be focused on what learners should be able to do and know at the end of the teaching unit. Then, my learning unit includes some learning outcomes based on these principles such as “increase student’s knowledge on nutrition”, “to learn about the body system”, “To develop students’ knowledge of content-related grammar with some phrasal verbs” and so on. Moreover, as it has been explained above in this dissertation, the 4Cs conceptual framework is one of the essential features of CLIL and, in order to support this theory, the next four steps correspond to each of these “Cs”. Subject content (section 2) is the first of them and, as Coyle, Hood and Marsh (2010) defend, “comprehension should always involve real decisions based on concept understanding and not on other elements, such as linguistic forms”. So in thinking about the content, it is important to define what you want to teach, what students will learn and what would be the teaching objectives. I decided to base my learning unit in a natural science class that would be focused on nutrition and that is why the aims of the subject content are: “understanding of nutrition”, “circulatory system”, “excretory system”, “respiratory system” and “digestive system”.

The next step is to link content with communication, so I included the language content section (3) which is subdivided into vocabulary, grammar, linguistic skills and

type of discourse. This section is a conduit for communication and for learning and, therefore, it takes account of the formula “*learning to use language and using language to learn*” in its design. In a traditional approach, the learning of the second language is focused on grammatical progression and the aim is to achieve proficiency in this second language. In a CLIL context, students must feel that they are learning in an appropriate level which is not based on their linguistic level. In addition, it is important to respect the principle of “the acquisition of content through language” when producing a CLIL learning unit since the learning of the content is equally important. In the vocabulary subdivision, comes into play another important theoretical aspect of the CLIL which is the language triptych and, in order to support this progression in language that this triptych defends, I have included its three interrelated perspectives in the unit. For the “*language of learning*” I took a content text and analysed it:

Nutrition

The process of nutrition includes the circulatory, respiratory, digestive and excretory systems.

1. The circulatory system

The circulatory system consists of the **heart**, **blood vessels** and **blood**. It moves blood through the heart and this blood goes down and moves around the body. Moreover, this system takes over the function of giving our cells the **oxygen** and **nutrients** they need. Blood also collects **waste products**, such as carbon dioxide, and takes them to the parts of the body which expel them.

2. The excretory system

The excretory system excretes waste from our body. Two organs called **kidneys** clean waste up from our blood. The waste combines with water to make **urine**. Urine travels down two tubes called **ureters** and collects in a bag called the **bladder**. When the bladder is full, the urine leaves the body through the **urethra**. **Sweat** is a liquid composed of waste products which our body also eliminates but through the skin.

3. The respiratory system

The respiratory system is made up of a group of organs that help us to breathe. We breathe in **oxygen** and breathe out **carbon dioxide**. Air enters our lungs through the **nose**, **mouth**, **trachea** and **bronchi**. Oxygen then passes into our blood through **alveoli**. Carbon dioxide from our blood passes into our lungs, also through the alveoli. When we breathe out, the carbon dioxide leaves our lungs. The **diaphragm** is a strong muscle located below the lungs.

4. The digestive system

The digestive system takes on the function of obtaining the nutrients our body needs. Digestion begins in the mouth. The food then travels down the **oesophagus** and into the **stomach**. The **small intestine** separates the nutrients from waste and the waste passes to the **large intestine**. This waste leaves the body through the **anus**.

This text has in orange colour the vocabulary or the “language *of* learning” that students would have to learn. Now I had to add the “language *for* learning”, so I considered the activities or tasks that can be associated with the text and I wrote in my learning unit vocabulary related to comparing, classifying and asking questions such as “what do you know about...?” and “the different systems serve to...”. And in the third place it is the “language *through* learning” which is related to the second subdivision of this third section of my unit (grammar). A CLIL didactic unit should not be composed around a grammatical progression but it will always going to include some grammar issues that students are going to learn and understand unconsciously. Thus, this “language *through* learning” or the grammatical words they will retain are the phrasal verbs which are underlined in the text. It is also important here to differentiate the way of learning new language in a CLIL environment, since in a traditional approach the learning units are based on copying or repetition of the language although research shows that this methodology does not help to enhance language learning.

The next step involves exploring the kind of thinking skills that students could develop according to the previous content and vocabulary, so I incorporated a section about cognitive (thinking) processes (section 4). The important idea in cognition is to allow students to construct their own knowledge and to be challenged. By learning in this immersion learning environment, students acquire the cognitive ability to think in different languages which is not possible in a traditional approach in which students tend to translate from their mother tongue to the second language that they are learning. Then, I introduced in the learning unit a question to hypothesize about their knowledge: “What’s the point of...?”. This question should be related to the content and it may help them to compare and to understand how the systems relate to each other and that they are able to explain it in the second language. Finally, to end with the 4Cs conceptual

framework, I added the contextual (cultural) elements (section 5). Culture should be seen as a circle which wraps up the content. The difference with a traditional approach is that, in CLIL approaches, students are immersed in a learning environment that is very similar to that of a non-native student at a foreign school during typical lessons (as I mentioned in the theoretical part of this dissertation), which allows them to have access to intercultural experiences which are not possible in traditional lessons. Therefore, I thought about the cultural implications of the content which would be mainly to become aware of the importance of the body functions and how our body develops them.

This learning unit continues with the task section (6), which is subdivided into general work, sessions and main activities. Both general work and main activities are a summary of what would be practised (“practice reading and writing activities with vocabulary and grammar activities through cooperative work”) and a summary of the steps of these activities. As regards sessions, it is a more detailed description of the activities that would be carried out. CLIL activities usually differ according to subject and the age of the student, and as I have designed this unit for a 4th grade primary, the activities are adapted to them. It is also important to build activities that supply students with natural opportunities to use the second language. In addition, these sessions have been produced to ensure that the learning outcomes are achievable and to ensure a progressive learning. The sessions are linked to all four basic language skills using activities based on speaking and listening (session 1), reading and writing (session 2) and vocabulary and grammar (session 3). For example, students can share new knowledge and produce simple sentences by using the new vocabulary in session 1, or they can develop co-operative work while writing a summary in pairs in session 2. When producing a learning unit, methodology must never be forgotten, which is the

topic of the following section (7). This section is also subdivided in three parts: organization and timing, resources or materials and key competences. Organization and timing refers to the duration of the sessions and how the students will be grouped. As regards materials or resources, the most important is to prepare appropriate materials and I have chosen some materials like the text on nutrition, some worksheets and visual aids which are intended to help them in their learning progress. The key competences are the skills or aptitudes that the students will acquire through these sessions as for example “competence in linguistic communication” or “social competence: working in pairs”. Lastly, the final section (8) is about assessment. In principle, CLIL assessment and traditional assessment share more or less the same objectives. In this context, it is important to keep in mind the idea that CLIL ensures that both language and content contribute to the learning experience but, in a process of assessment, content should have priority over language accuracy. With the type of activities described before both content and language are practiced and, later on, both are assessed. Thus, assessment includes some elements related to content such as “identify the main organs that from each system”, or to vocabulary such as “use the new vocabulary when writing and speaking”.

6. Discussion and conclusions

During this dissertation I have explained the features and opportunities that CLIL offers. This final section is a discussion which aims to analyse critically both the strengths and weaknesses of the method. As it has been explained above, CLIL appears as a favourable educational response to the rapid changes our society is undergoing. It has been shown to be a versatile method which can be adapted in terms of age (of the students), and amount of time and way of performing (individual, groups...). Therefore, CLIL, diversity and innovation are closely associated since it offers the progress in the

second language while this progress is also being made in the content. It allows learners to become acquainted with the culture of this second language they are leaning, and it challenges learners to create their own knowledge. These aspects are confirmed by both the theoretical framework of this dissertation and by the results of my survey above. Nevertheless, CLIL does not ensure efficient teaching and learning by itself. This method is a challenge for students since they must be able to express themselves and engage in learning through a language they do not master. So, students need not only to understand the topic, but to be able to use language in a way which communicates that understanding (Coyle, Hood and Marsh, 2010). Section 6 (tasks) in my learning unit is an example of how to overcome this difficulty, since the teacher has the role of introducing new language and new vocabulary gradually. In this way, students are able to express themselves first with his or her help ("hypothesising by interacting with the teacher"), then in groups ("write a summary in pairs") and at the end individually ("individual activity: fill in the gaps"). Another weakness that the method has is that teachers are sometimes not well qualified. They need to be able to demonstrate understanding of the content as well as master the second language. In addition, they must be able to control the input in order to ensure the learners understanding; and they should support learner's motivation by providing relevant learning opportunities. This aspect is not corroborated by the results of my survey above but the role of the teacher is certainly an aim for CLIL successfulness and some mechanisms are already in place to overcome these weaknesses as for example the promotion of team teaching, regular meetings of the staff or developing a website for the school that serves as an informative tool for both teachers and learners. Moreover, in some European countries teacher training is already available for teachers who want to become involved in CLIL (Pavesi, Bertocchi, Hofmannová and Kazianka, 2001).

To conclude, I would like to highlight that the CLIL has many strengths in comparison to just a few weaknesses that can be fixed. It can be seen as a successful and relevant method for current and future education in English at primary school since it offers the opportunity to strengthen the learners' knowledge of foreign languages, thus maintaining cultural and linguistic diversity and promoting individual plurilingualism (Coyle, Hood and Marsh, 2010). Finally, I would like to point out that I have been aware of CLIL potential by writing this dissertation and that there is a need for a greater awareness of the benefits of this method.

7. References

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8. Appendix

Subject: Natural Science

Language: English

Title of the unit: Nutrition

Course/Level: 4th grade primary

Teachers: Science and English teachers

Global Goal: Learning of a list of 10 phrasal verbs

1. Learning outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- To increase students' knowledge on nutrition.- To learn about the body system.- To be able to identify the different organs in our body.- To develop all four language skills through content-based context.- To develop students' knowledge of content-related grammar with some phrasal verbs.- To help students understand that keeping record of new vocabulary is important.
2. Subject content	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Understanding of nutrition.- Circulatory system.- Excretory system.- Respiratory system.- Digestive system.

	3. Language Content/ communication
Vocabulary	<p>i. Language <i>of</i> learning: (key vocabulary)</p> <p>Nouns: heart, blood vessels, blood, oxygen, nutrients, waste products, kidneys, urine, ureters, bladder, urethra, sweat, carbon dioxide, nose, mouth, trachea, bronchi, alveoli, diaphragm, oesophagus, stomach, small intestine, large intestine, anus.</p> <p>ii. language <i>for</i> learning: (language for asking questions, classifying and comparing)</p> <p>what do you know about...? The different organs are... the different systems serve to... the digestive and excretory systems are related to...</p> <p>iii. language <i>through</i> learning: (retain language and learn new words from activities)</p> <p>Phrasal verbs: consist of, go down, take over, clean up, composed of, made up of, breathe in, breathe out, pass into, take on.</p>
Grammar	- Phrasal verbs.
Linguistic skills	- Reading, listening, writing and speaking.

Type of discourse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exposition (to be aware of the topic), narrative (as a means of communication), descriptive (to develop a mental picture), argumentative (to motivate students) and expressive (to reflect their emotions and ideas).
4. Cognitive (thinking) processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hypothesize: what's the point of? - Understand how the different systems relate each other. - Compare organs and its functions.
5. Contextual (cultural) elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students are in primary grade so a lot of pictures, photos and videos will be used to help understanding as well as co-operative work. - Understand and analyse how human bodies work. - Become aware of the importance of the body functions and how our body develop them.
6. Tasks	
General work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Practice speaking and listening with contextual. (cultural) and cognitive (thinking) activities. - Practice reading and writing activities with vocabulary and grammar activities and through cooperative work. - Learning new content on nutrition.

<p>Sessions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Session 1 (based on speaking and listening) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Introduction (15'): visual aids of organs and systems to let them talk about the topic. - Practice (15'): hypothesising by interacting with the teacher: what's the point of? What can you tell me about...? -Production (15'): photo game and a Yes/No oral activity. -Closure (15'): Sharing new knowledge. - Session 2 (based on reading and writing) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction (30'): reading text on nutrition in groups and in shifts. - Practice/Production (30'): write a summary in pairs of the remembered or memorized ideas and share to complete information. - Session 3 (based on vocabulary and grammar) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction (15'): a video on nutrition to brush up on ideas. -Practice (15'): individual game: underline as much phrasal verbs as can be found in the text. - Production (15'): individual activity: fill in the gaps in sentences about nutrition vocabulary.
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	<p>-Closure (15'): Match phrasal verbs and meaning to make a "map" in order to remember them.</p>
Main activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading the text on nutrition. - Speaking: What's the point of? - Grammar exercises about phrasal verbs. - Vocabulary exercises on nutrition. - Writing a summary about the content. - Evaluation.
	7. Methodology
Organization and timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students will be divided in pairs or in groups depending on the activity - 3 sessions of 60 minutes (they may be adapted depending on the students)
Resources / materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Text. - Worksheets on vocabulary and grammar. - Visual aids. - Student's notebooks.
Key competences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Competence in linguistic communication. - Competence in knowledge and interaction through concepts. - Processing information through vocabulary and grammar exercises. - Social competence: working in pairs.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working individually - Autonomy and personal initiative.
<p>8. Evaluation (criteria and instruments)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognize the role of the different systems. - Identify the main organs that form each system. - To solve activities using what they have learned. - Show the results writing a summary in pairs. - Use the new vocabulary when writing and speaking. - Recognize and understand the meaning of the phrasal verbs used to describe the content. - Be able to get along with the work in pairs. - Evaluation of the activities on an on-going basis.