Deepening and strengthening CLIL: Parents’ beliefs in the Valencian Community

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Defining Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

Broadly speaking, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is an educational approach where certain subjects are taught in English to improve learners’ proficiency. In some cases, CLIL is defined as a program of instruction while, in others, it is considered as a pedagogical activity using a different language other than the regional one. Even though there is a growing interest in implementing this method in order to enhance second language (L2) teaching, the definition of CLIL is controversial and resists clear definition.

The term was originally launched in Europe back in the 1990s by a group of professionals belonging to the educational context and practices (Marsh, 2002). It was Coyle (1999), one of the most relevant scholars of CLIL, who expanded the scope of the term by stating four guiding principles upon which a CLIL program should be built: content, communication, cognition and culture. In CLIL settings, content is essential because the main objective is not to learn the language but to teach substantial content from other subject different than languages. However, this does not mean that teachers do not have to pay attention to the speaking, listening, writing and reading skills. This is why communication, cognition and culture can be dealt with in the classroom: if the target language is used as the vehicle for communication, students learn how to reflect upon what they are learning at the same time as they develop language. Thus, there must be a combination of how learners progress in knowledge, how they use language to learn at the same time than they learn the language, how thinking skills are developed and how to share alternative perspectives (See Figure 1).
However, it has been the European Commission and the Council of Europe the institutions that have given importance and support to the program due to the need for enhancing second language education and bilingualism. In fact, it was in 2010 when the European Framework for CLIL Teacher Education (2010: 2) defined CLIL as a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language with the objective of promoting content and language mastery to pre-defined levels.

Although the objective was to provide a definition in order to delimit the scope of the program, the fact of advancing CLIL as a dual-focused approach resulted in potential disagreements among scholars due to its similarities to immersion education. On the one hand, its main advocates defend that CLIL is a program comprising a unique methodology whose objectives are divergent to immersion (Coyle, 2007, 2008; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2010; Marsh, 2002; Wolff, 2007). On the other hand, researchers on the field argue that CLIL is just an umbrella term that covers different fields as immersion or bilingual educational programs (Beardsmore, 2002; Mehisto et al., 2008). Finally, in the middle of this controversy there are scholars who have emphasized the difficulty to provide a clear definition (Alejo and Piquer, 2010) and those who identify CLIL merely as a fashionable trend (Dalton-Puffer et al., 2010).

In the first place, scholars who view CLIL as an interchangeably conceptualization argue that the main point against this controversy is the language of instruction. According to Lasagabaster & Sierra (2010), the distinctive feature is that the language used for instruction in CLIL is not a local language to which students can be exposed besides formal instruction. In the same line, Marsh (2002) and Wolff (2007) pointed out that this local language previously defined should be any "additional" language that is not included in the student’s linguistic repertoire on a daily basis. This is the main reason why Canadian immersion programs, which served as a basis to enhance the acquisition of other languages, should not be identified as CLIL methodology. In these programs, students were exposed to French in formal instruction and once they left school since it was an official language.

Another difference between CLIL and immersion programs lies in the command of the language regarding teachers. According to Coyle (2008), the vast majority of teachers in immersion programs are native speakers who undoubtedly master the language whereas this is not the case in CLIL contexts. While the former ones emphasizes the importance of the proficiency level of students, CLIL teachers’ professional profiles reveal experts in terms of content but people who have to undertake specific programs in order to overcome skill deficiencies. Accordingly, a widespread criticism to immersion programs conducted by these scholars has been the fact of egalitarianism. On the one hand, scholars such as Wolff (2002: 48) state that “CLIL is not an elitist technique to language learning; it functions in all learning contexts and with all learners”. On the other, immersion programs entail high tuition fees that not every single family can afford.
In the second place, some scholars opt for relating immersion programs and CLIL by the premise that they are very similar and there is no clear divergence between them. Beardsmore (2002) refers to both approaches as one due to the fact that, despite being immersion more egalitarian, parents choose both approaches for their children to command the language they are exposed to in instructional settings. Similarly, Hondris et al. (2007) identified methodologies such as language showers, students’ exchanges, local projects, partial immersion, total immersion and double immersion as variants of CLIL. For these researchers, there is no distinction between the two learning styles since the final objective of both is that students achieve an accurate level of proficiency in the language.

Last but not least, statements on the difficulty to catalogue and delimit the scope of both approaches have arisen. Due to the similarities and differences above-mentioned, researchers such as Alejo and Piquer (2010: 220) mentioned that it is unattainable “to pin down the exact limits of the reality this term refers to” since there are innumerable differences in pedagogical implications. Dalton-Puffer (2010) went a step further and claimed that CLIL is seen as an innovative and a forward-looking approach due to the spread of English. The researcher clarifies that if it was not because of the relevance of English in instructional and academic fields, the CLIL learning technique would have never been so controversial as well as fashionable.

There are several similarities and differences that have not been explained due to space constraints, but the following table (Table 1) includes the main aspects to be considered when defining both educational approaches (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2010):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CLIL APPROACH</th>
<th>IMMERSION PROGRAMS</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>OBJECTIVE</strong></td>
<td>Proficiency in L1 and L2 without detriment to academic knowledge.</td>
<td>Language spoken locally</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Daily exposure out of instructional contexts</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION</strong></td>
<td>Additional language</td>
<td>No exposure in society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non exposure in society</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEACHERS</strong></td>
<td>Non-native speakers</td>
<td>Majority of native speakers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experts in content</td>
<td>Experts in language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EGALITARIANISM</strong></td>
<td>Openness to all students</td>
<td>Private funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Selection of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STARTING AGE</strong></td>
<td>Later (Secondary Education)</td>
<td>Earlier (children)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEACHING MATERIALS</strong></td>
<td>Abridged materials</td>
<td>Aimed at native speakers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LANGUAGE OBJECTIVE</strong></td>
<td>Command the language</td>
<td>L2 proficiency similar to native speakers</td>
</tr>
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Table 1. **Similarities and differences between CLIL and Immersion programs.**

As can be observed in Table 1, CLIL and immersion programs have more differences than similarities. They share the objective, which is fostering the acquisition of a language other than the students’ mother tongue. However, regarding the language of instruction, teachers’ profile, age and the materials designed, they should not be defined as equal educational approaches since they are two completely different approximations to language learning.
Having clarified the differences, the scope of CLIL has been modified and developed parallel to the growth of language acquisition research. As students learn an additional language, psycholinguistic principles of language learning must be considered. Hence, the field of second language acquisition has been influenced as scholars started to report the benefits from the point of view of learners (Krashen, 1985; Schmidt, 1990; Swain, 1995).

Thirty years ago, Krashen (1985) defended the argument that exposure to abundant input was necessary for the acquisition of a second language. This input must be comprehensible so learners can progress in the process of learning and understanding the new features of the language. However, learners’ input is not sufficient to guarantee that students use the language in different contexts and with a communicative purpose. In this regard, the contribution of noticing as a requirement to learn reinforced previous findings (Schmidt, 1990). Schmidt argued that for input to be intake, learners have to notice the target forms in order to become aware of the patterns and schemes they are exposed to. Nevertheless, it was Swain (1995) who advanced the last essential component of learning, which is production. Thanks to his Output Hypothesis, the scholar stated that learners could be provided with abundant input but limited opportunities to produce their own verbal productions. Also, the fact of giving them chances to produce linguistic messages may help learners be aware of the errors or mistakes they make.

These hypotheses and contributions show that, in a CLIL context where attention is focused on language reception and production, learners are exposed to all the necessary components and conditions to learn and progress in language. The additional language is used as the vehicle for communication, what provides learners with abundant and comprehensible input at the same time that they are required to contribute by producing language. According to Muñoz (2007: 20), CLIL contexts meet the requirements since “learners have numerous and varied opportunities to speak and write, in different contexts, and with different aims”. Along these lines, the combination of language acquisition research and the learning through a language determines a CLIL class as an appropriate framework due to the following facts described by Muñoz (2007):

1. It provides real and abundant input with reference to content and language.
2. It integrates a focus on form and a focus on meaning, what clearly distinguishes it from traditional methodologies in which attention was only paid to form.
3. Learners do not only produce linguistic messages but also interact with the teacher and classmates on a daily basis, what makes this approach cooperative.
4. The linguistic landscape is richer than in a regular language classroom: learners face different subjects and fields of study such as mathematics, biology, arts, technology and music among others.
5. It is a proper context to introduce projects and tasks rather than exercises: as the language is the vehicle and not the target, more motivating and creative methodologies should be applied.

Having reviewed the theoretical background of CLIL, the following section (1.2) reflects on the positive evidences from research conducted over Europe regarding CLIL approaches and methodologies. Accordingly, the section has been divided into different subsections that deal with results from different countries.

2. Evidence from research

The following section explores findings where research has been conducted in order to examine the actual practice of CLIL. As the implementation of this program is growing rapidly throughout Europe, recent evidences are discussed in order to show the effectiveness of this methodological approach.

2.1. CLIL in Spain

Due to the linguistic and cultural diversity proposed by the European Commission back in 1995, support for CLIL programs has increased as European citizens are expected to be competent in at least two languages besides their mother tongue. Therefore, there has been a proliferation of research publications, which can be observed in more than 900
projects that are currently being taken along Spain (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2010). These projects are being implemented mainly in Andalusia, which holds the first position, followed by the Basque Country, Catalonia, Galicia and La Rioja. Regarding Andalusia, Lorenzo et al (2010) attributed significant differences with respect to language proficiency to the effectiveness of CLIL projects. This research compared primary and secondary students being part of the CLIL group to students who did not belong to the CLIL stream with the aim of analyzing which group fulfilled the process of communication with more immediate needs. As the authors state, “when the results of the linguistic evaluation had been compiled, it emerged that the CLIL learners were clearly outperforming their mainstream peers” (Lorenzo et al, 2010: 426). In fact, the scores were 62.1 per cent for the CLIL group in comparison with 38 per cent achieved in the control groups. In other words, this research project contributed to the literature by reporting clear advantages in communication regarding the CLIL initiative.

This contribution to the literature has recently been supported by another research that reported that CLIL students surpassed monolingual ones regarding English language competence as well as subject content. Madrid & Hughes (2011) conducted an authentic ambitious research in Granada that was developed over the course of three years in order to provide information on the effects of CLIL in Primary and Secondary learners. Results showed that CLIL learners outperformed monolingual ones in Primary and Secondary Education regarding English proficiency. However, the preposterous finding was that there was also a significant difference in Natural and Social Sciences proficiency level regarding Primary Education. Thus, this research revealed that CLIL might not only enhance the acquisition of the second language but also the knowledge on specific content.

Based on the positive results regarding scientific content, a completely recent research was conducted in Catalonia in order to contribute new evidences over one academic year under the Content and Language Integrated Learning methodology. Vidal & Roquet (2015) conducted a classroom-based exploratory study in which participants were 13 and 14 years old and had been enrolled in English-Medium Science programs since the age of 10. The other group consisted of students who were taking English as a regular subject. In this sense, participants conducted a rich variety of tasks: a productive task based on a written composition, two receptive tasks based on a reading, listening and a lexico-grammatical task in which students had to complete sentences while doing grammatical judgments. Results revealed relative gains in the reading, listening and grammar tasks over non-CLIL instruction. As the researchers claimed, this research contributed to the field of literature by demonstrating that “CLIL immersion context seems to have provided learners with the large amount of meaningful practice necessary for automatization to take place” (Vidal & Roquet, 2015: 9).

The positive effects in writing were also approached in the Basque country regarding five categories in written production. Ruiz de Zarobe (2010) conducted a longitudinal research to establish a positive relationship between the amount of English exposure and the language proficiency regarding the written skill. The study was conducted in two schools that included the CLIL initiative, and one school where students took English as a foreign language three times a week. After conducting different tasks such as writing a letter, scores were given in terms of content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics such as punctuation, spelling and the use of capitalization. As reported by Zarobe (2010: 201), “the general evaluation of both programs, CLIL and non-CLIL as regards written production confirms the effectiveness of the CLIL approach”. Also, the results also supported previous research on vocabulary acquisition that confirmed the benefits from CLIL (Jiménez Catalán, Ruiz de Zarobe & Cenoz, 2006; Ruiz de Zarobe & Jiménez Catalán, 2009; Moreno, 2009).

The area of CLIL is actually being expanded, as more recent evidences are provided. In April, González (2015) analyzed the repercussions on academic performance in Galicia regarding the introduction of CLIL in primary schools. For this, 747 students from 13 primary schools were under analysis during two school years. Classrooms were divided into two main groups: 13 classrooms enrolled in CLIL programs with at least one subject being taught through CLIL, and 44 classrooms in which no subjects were taught in English. The instruments used in order to measure the outcomes were the evaluations carried out by teachers regarding their academic performance. Even though results did not show a significant difference in performance, the positive effects of CLIL over non-CLIL were again suggested.

Last but not least, research on attitudinal factors has also been conducted in order to explore the connection between motivation levels and receptive vocabulary size regarding CLIL instruction. This is the case of La Rioja, where Fernández (2014) analyzed motivation and proficiency of a CLIL group of 5th grade primary learners and a non-CLIL group of 2nd grade secondary learners. Results showed that both groups presented similar patterns of motivation but it was the CLIL group that showed the highest levels.
2.2. CLIL in Germany

The political necessity of multilingualism has also led Germany to adapt its educational system to the communicative era. However, the situation in Germany presents more complexity due to the society’s linguistic repertoire. Even though the majority language is German, two minority languages, Danish and Sorbic, are officially recognized. Still, there are two languages that children have to begin learning in third age, French and English. Within this linguistic landscape, working as a teacher in high school becomes more demanding than in other countries. As stated by Wolff (2011: 93), “to become a state school teacher you have to have studied two subjects (English and Economy), while other will study English and German”. This is the academic profile that secondary school teachers must have in order to be competent in more than 300 schools in Germany that are currently offering the CLIL initiative, 80 out of which use French as the vehicle for communication. In this regard, research on CLIL has become very important in order to analyze language-learning outcomes.

Despite the growing influence of CLIL in Germany, little contributions were made until 2002 when the DESI study started. The DESI study (Assessment of Student Achievements in German and English as a Foreign Language International German English Study) was originally concerned with the competences of students. That is why, in a sub-study (Nold et al., 2008), the performance of 985 students in CLIL programs was compared to 987 students who were not enrolled in CLIL methodologies. Following the task-based language teaching approach (TBLT), tasks such text reconstructions, listening comprehension, reading comprehension, socio-pragmatics and written compositions were conducted. The results from this ambitious project confirmed the effectiveness of CLIL over non-CLIL subjects regarding proficiency level.

These results were in line with the findings previously obtained by Zydati (2007). The researcher compared the English written performance of 180 learners with students who studied English as a regular subject. Besides having a higher language proficiency level, participants enrolled in CLIL programs showed significant differences regarding tasks that were based on previous readings. Thus, the study did not only contribute by confirming the benefits of CLIL to achieve higher proficiency level but also the effectiveness of TBLT in these contexts.

As in Spain, motivation and students’ interests in the English language as a school subject and language of instruction have also been addressed. Rumlich (2014) conducted a quasi-experimental study on 858 German learners of English who took English as a regular school subject or were enrolled in CLIL programs to measure individual preferences regarding English as a future subject. Results reported that CLIL students were more motivated than students who attended regular lessons of English due to their ambitions as far as their future jobs were concerned.

2.3. CLIL in Sweden

It was in 1977 when CLIL programs where firstly introduced in Sweden. As acknowledged by Aseskog (1982), the Swedish government did not give autonomy to the state schools to incorporate CLIL programs into the curriculum until 1992. As a matter of fact, from ten to fifteen programs started every year once the schools and municipalities established national objectives and guidelines. Due to the variety of programs, some schools began to consider CLIL compulsory at primary levels regarding some subjects such as social science (44 schools), history (25) and music (23) (Nixon, 2000). Accordingly, different subjects through English may be found in upper secondary level such as history (58), mathematics (42) and social science (39). Despite of the fact that CLIL is being implemented in a wide range of schools throughout the country (almost 300), scarce research has been conducted in order to analyze relative gains in language production and proficiency.

Kerstin & Ohlander (2014) revealed that CLIL groups outperformed non-CLIL groups as regards as vocabulary acquisition. This study was based on previous investigations from the large-scale, longitudinal CLISS project (Content and Language Integration in Swedish Schools), which pays attention to students’ proficiency in written academic English. The project run from 2011 through 2014 in order to measure the linguistic gains with different instruments in order to increase the accuracy of the results obtained. Thus, 221 15-year-old students in eight groups from different schools took part in the study. Even though a rich variety of instruments were used, among which reading tasks, argumentative texts and interviews can be found, the Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT) was the instrument that justified quantitative results and it was based on the 2000 most frequent words in English up to the 10000 level as time passed by. The final version included 150 test items taken from the 2000 level and 21 from the 10000 level, and it was administered twice during the CLISS project. Once data were analyzed, results confirmed the initial hypothesis since CLIL students overcame non-CLIL students in written performance and there was a significant difference regarding vocabulary gains.
Swedish International Baccalaureate (IB) students have also been examined due to the close similarities to CLIL contexts. As a matter of fact, students “write extensively in English, possibly to a higher extent than students in most other forms of CLIL in Sweden” (Kjellén, 2009: 103). In this regard, Kjellén (2009) examined the level of CLIL students’ proficiency in English by identifying low-frequency vocabulary items and frequency of tense shifts. Results revealed that IB students used a wide variety of low-frequency items and that there was a statistically significant difference in tense shift in comparison to regular students facing three hours of English per week. Even though the control group successfully met the objectives, IB students did better on the compositions as well as oral production regarding interviews. Finally, the researcher distributed a questionnaire in order to complement the investigation with insights from motivational attitudes. The questionnaire revealed that motivation was a factor that could have affected the previous outcomes since IB students were oriented to a higher degree, had long-term academic goals and were willing to practice their language in foreign countries. What is more, IB participants were voluntarily enrolled in the CLIL methodology while the rest of students had to take English as an obligatory subject.

In line with the previous results (Kjellén, 2009), Sylvén & Thompson (2015) have recently explored a possible connection between language learning motivation and CLIL in students in the first year of high school. Out of 177 participants, 148 were native speakers of Swedish while 29 had a different mother tongue. Students had to complete the Motivational Factors Questionnaire (MFQ) previously created by Ryan (2009) besides a questionnaire on their L1, gender and the importance and actual status of CLIL methodological approach. As previous investigations have also indicated, CLIL students were more interested in languages, had more English self-confidence and a higher willingness to communicate (WTC). As a matter of fact, none of them reported to have anxiety when using the language in contrast to non-CLIL students, who also presented a negative tendency towards languages. This research did not only confirm previous findings on attitudes but was part of the CLISS project, which has gained importance as more research has been conducted.

2.4. CLIL in Norway

Norway is a homogeneous language community where Norwegian has been established as the first language even though Sami and Finnish are two minority languages that are not officially recognized. As in the rest of Europe, English was considered a compulsory subject since 1959, and CLIL interest has focused on the lingua franca (Svenhard et al., 2014). However, the situation differs from Sweden, Germany and Spain regarding policies. On the one hand, the support for CLIL methodologies is mainly the result of countries, schools and teachers’ initiatives. On the other hand, the government is starting to acknowledge the advantages of this methodology, and some schools are incorporating tasks and English medium instruction into the curriculum. Thus, thanks to personal initiative and the effort that the government is making in order to establish the approach, “Norway countries have a disproportionately high number of schools with CLIL programs” (Svenhard et al., 2014: 140).

When dealing with how the CLIL methodological approach is implemented in Norway, Drew (2013: 71) asserts that even though CLIL reports indisputable benefits, “there is a strong tradition in Norway for relying heavily on the textbook as the primary source of texts and medium of teaching”. And that is what inspired the researcher to conduct a relevant research on CLIL in Norway: providing the opportunity and offer multiple materials and sources to assess CLIL to English teaching.

Bearing in mind the idea of approximating the assessment in CLIL classes from a different perspective, Drew (2013) conducted a research where data was collected through a questionnaire answered by 25 9th grade pupils and semi-structured interviews with the corresponding teacher. In order to collect data, participants worked on a project for more than 12 weeks being exposed to English all the time. Among the multiple materials and sources, the researcher asked subjects to watch films, write factual notes, read silently and aloud, interpret and discuss scenes from the excerpts. The final project consisted of researching a given topic and conducting oral presentations in front of the class. So, findings from this research project were not based on comparing the benefits regarding CLIL versus non-CLIL students but on drawing conclusions on how pupils experienced working on the project and the authentic materials created. Findings showed that participants enjoyed working on the project and that they preferred the materials chosen to the traditional. As a matter of fact, “four out of five of the pupils either agree or partly agree that they would like to work on more projects of this kind” (Drew, 2013: 72). However, the research project let light to one of the biggest challenges of CLIL methodological approaches, which is discussed in section 1.3: finding enough time to create and choose motivating, enhancing, and accurate materials.
In the same year, Brevik & Moe (2013), departing from a research project initiated by The Norwegian Centre for Foreign Languages in Education, conducted an investigation on classroom practice, teaching goals and educational decision-making. The participants were 4 CLIL schools, 2 in Oslo and 2 in Bergen, one of which had had CLIL in social science the previous year. The control group consisted of 10 classes from 9 different schools who did not receive any treatment. Participants conducted text reconstruction tasks, choosing topics for written compositions and oral discussions. In this regard, qualitative and quantitative data supported CLIL subjects and the approach itself since “CLIL seems to have a positive effect on pupils’ language outcomes” (Brevik & Moe, 2013: 215). However, the researchers acknowledged that the project considered a small sample of participants and that more research is needed before being able to make generalizations on the field.

2.5. CLIL in Turkey

The establishment of CLIL in the Turkish educational system did not happen until 1970. From that moment onwards, every subject was taught in English with very successful learning outcomes. However, it was in 1990 when the national education system changed and CLIL was left aside, surviving only in prestigious universities during several years (Arslan & Saka, 2010). Fortunately, as CLIL flourished in Europe, CLIL experienced an unexpected turn, and its implementation became a reality.

A very appropriate, well-founded research project conducted by Arkin (2013) explored the impact of English-medium instruction (EMI) on disciplinary learning in a Turkish university. The exploratory study was made through a survey given to undergraduate students in order to analyze their attitudes, and how the learning process was perceived. Despite confirming that EMI was seen as beneficial for future opportunities, participants also reported to be limited regarding their language skills. Observing these results, the researcher decided to further investigate those attitudes that emerged in the survey and conducted two case studies. In order to observe how the instruction took place, videotaped classrooms observations and interviews with participants for them to feel free when speaking were also included. Finally, two parallel tests were distributed in English and Turkish to assess subjects’ proficiency level. Results, however, showed that students had difficulties to understand the content that the instructor covered in every class. Not only that, participants also displayed disadvantages when answering questions in English. As we know, there is a clear distinction between EMI and CLIL: EMI does not have the aim of developing the language as CLIL does, where there is a balance between content and language learning. This is the reason why the researcher claims that “based on the findings, the study proposes [..], calling for a shift from English-medium instruction to content and language integrated learning” (Arkin, 2013: 144).

Focusing on the perceptions of learners, another project was conducted in order to address attitudes towards CLIL in young learners. Yilmaz & Şeker (2013) researched the opinions of 31 students between the ages of 10-11 who were working with the CLIL platform prepared for the project, European CLIL Resource Center for Web 2.0: Early-to-Longlife Languages Learning. After attending CLIL lessons to study subjects such as the solar system for 2 hours during 5 days, they were asked to complete a questionnaire that included open and closed questions. Findings revealed that 100 per cent of participants found the materials used great to understand the content. As technology was also considered to study the subject matter, participants reported not having problems in managing the platform and that it was a very good combination to use language and technology. Last but not least, their attitudes’ toward learning English through CLIL were very positive since 81.8% agreed. This research, however, attributed these positive results to the authentic and innovative material chosen for the CLIL program such as technology since it “provided children not only with opportunities to develop independent learning skills but also a rich learning environment that is completely in touch with students’ own realities and lives” (Yilmaz & Şeker, 2013: 46).

2.6. CLIL in Greece

Greece is possibly one of the few countries where CLIL has recently been implemented. In fact, the Eurydice claimed that Greece was one out of three countries that have not adopted this mainstream:

In nearly all European countries, certain schools offer a form of education provision, according to which, non-language subjects are taught either through two different languages, or through a single language which is “foreign” according to the curriculum. This is known as content and language integrated learning. Only Denmark, Greece, Iceland and Turkey do not make this kind of provision (Eurydice, 2012: 39).
This situation has slightly changed since some research projects can be observed in the literature. Even though there are scarce contributions from this country, some insights can be drawn from three research projects that have recently been conducted: Chostelidou & Griva (2014), Kollatou (2013) and Mattheoudakis et al. (2014).

As commented a minute ago, it was in 2012 when the Eurydice further explored the educational system of Greece and confirmed that no projects of CLIL had been implemented yet. Accordingly, and with little expertise due to the scarce knowledge and practical experience, Kollatou’s (2013) research acted as a benchmark for ongoing and future investigations. It was thus the first attempt to explore the CLIL field bearing in mind that “there is no official policy for the introduction and implementation of the CLIL approach in Greece” (Kollatou, 2013: 5).

The contexts were Senior High Schools who collaborated due to academic or personal initiatives where different projects had already been introduced in 2011. During 12 sets of 3 forty-five-minute-teaching periods, students had to form subgroups and start investigating about a topic they wanted to learn by being provided with all necessary information about methods to do research. Through the sessions, participants learned how to use accurate journals, how to search the net, how a research paper was organized and how all resources such as books and encyclopedias were distributed in the library. They were asked to write entries in their corresponding diaries in order to self-assess their experience with the CLIL methodology. On the end, they were also asked to discuss in groups all the aspects they liked and did not like about the methodology, where the researcher could analyze language code swift, attitude towards foreign languages and the CLIL approach. On the other hand, results showed that it was a big challenge for participants to know when to alternate the group in terms of reading skills was 3.9 times more effective” (Chostelidou & Griva, 2013: 2172). Regarding learners’ attitudes, “it was revealed […] that CLIL instruction was perceived as more effective and developed a more positive attitude towards learning English as a L2” (Chostelidou & Griva, 2013: 2172). Again, the educational system implicitly asked for a changed in education since students’ attitudes and statistical results seemed to suggest that the reading competence was enhanced by CLIL.

Mattheoudakis et al. (2014) conducted a research on 3rd Primary School, being the first official attempt to introduce the approach in state education. Taking Geography as the subject to be studied, the purpose of the study was to explore the effect of CLIL on students’ competence regarding the English language and their content-subject proficiency. The participants were 51 sixth-grade students divided in two groups: 25 non-CLIL learners and 26 experimental CLIL learners. As it was a longitudinal study, the investigation took 9 months since 3 Geography tests were provided to students in order to assess their subject knowledge as well as one language test in order to assess their reading and listening skills. Consequently, tests were completed at the beginning of the course and once CLIL instruction had taken place. CLIL groups were tested in English while non-CLIL were tested in Greek. Results were in line with Kollatou’s (2013) since “CLIL learners did better in two out of the three Geography tests” (Mattheoudakis et al., 2014: 225), and when analyzing language tests “findings indicate higher language gains for the CLIL group” (Mattheoudakis et al., 2014: 228).
2.7. CLIL in the Czech Republic

The Czech Republic is characterized by a stable linguistic situation due to the fact that Czech has always been recognized as the official language. In fact, Czech is the language of instruction to which students are exposed in all state schools (Novotná & Hofmannová, 2007). However, Slovak is also present in society even though it is considered the minority language. Within this linguistic landscape, bilingual programs emerged back in 1989, but they have not been implemented to a great extent due to legislation and bureaucratic constraints. These limitations to conduct an educational reform make impossible to change the system since “only that which exists through law can exist at all” (Novotná & Hofmannová, 2007: 41).

Despite teachers’ motivation to introduce the teaching of subjects through foreign languages, it was not until 1990 when the first educational program was conducted. This project was launched by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, and it was so relevant that professionals became interested in the CLIL initiative and started to promote the creation of new materials and investigations at the same time that the government started to reward and give allowance to those projects. As CLIL started to grow in Europe, evidence from this country began to appear.

Slezáková made an important contribution in 2010 by examining the effectiveness of teaching using CLIL approach to learn Informatics on the secondary level. The research was divided into two parts: the first one lasted one school year and the second one three school years. During the time of the experiment, topics such as windows, excel, painting, WordPad, computer hardware, computer software, word and power point were covered. While the handouts were provided in English to the experimental group, the control group received them in Czech. Due to the completion of pre-test and post-test regarding content knowledge, statistical results could be interpreted. Regarding the contribution of CLIL to the development of the knowledge of the target language, Slezáková (2010: 189) emphatically assured that “CLIL contributes to the development of the target language without questions”. On the other hand, the answer for the question about the gains in Informatics content and differences between CLIL and non-CLIL groups, the answer was that there were benefits for the CLIL respondents due to the deep explanation of tasks and good level of students.

Even though the field of literature in the Czech Republic is increasingly rising, only 11 research articles have been conducted from 2000 until 2014. Due to the limitations already commented on behalf of official support, qualitative researches on how students feel when being taught a regular subject such as mathematics or biology through English are on the rise. On this subject, Laitochová & Wossala (2014) explored pupils’ motivation in mathematics, which was a relatively new trend to study in the Czech Republic. In order to select the most appropriate context, questionnaires were sent to the directors of schools to be aware of the dominant languages and if CLIL was actually being implemented. The researchers could observe that despite the low levels of participation, there was a general fear of integrating subjects such as History or Natural Sciences into the CLIL curriculum due to their presumable difficulty. This may be the reason why “findings indicate that the CLIL method is not completely integrated” (Laitochová & Wossala, 2014: 112). The second part of the study was focused on the effect of the CLIL method when teaching mathematics. In so doing, 79 respondents were asked to complete a questionnaire based on the climate in classes, the popularity of mathematics and if they valued CLIL to progress in the educational system. The average showed that they enjoyed the classes, they did not fail the mathematic subject and saw a clear advantage in using a foreign language, in this case English, to cover content due to their prospective studies abroad and opportunities in the near future.

2.8. CLIL in Portugal

Despite being Spain its neighbor country where CLIL is increasingly gaining attention, CLIL is still sparse in Portugal. As a matter of fact, only few schools have decided to implement this initiative. The main reason for this scarcity is the inexistent teacher training programs in order to help teachers to be prepared to work and adapt themselves to this new panorama (Coonan, 2003).

Pavón & Ellison (2013) justified this situation by claiming that CLIL requires specific competences on content-knowledge and teaching methodologies. The main disadvantage in Portugal is that the first decision to be made is who is going to teach content thorough a specific language. The authors advocate for the introduction of a federal certification that determines if a teacher possesses both the necessary linguistic level and accurate content knowledge. As Wolff (2012: 112) assures

The future content-subject and CLIL teacher will have to acquire basis knowledge of how learners learn languages in a CLIL context. She needs to be acquainted with the developmental stages of learner
language, with the main SLA theories, with the factors influencing second language learning, and with the differences between first and second language learning.

Simões et al. (2013) also argued about the inadequate preparation of Portuguese teachers to face this new methodological era. However, the researchers decided to investigate a Portuguese school that developed the project English Plus in a 7th grade class by combining History with English as Foreign Language (EFL). The initiative was taken from previous results reported by the Francophone European Section based on the collaborative work between an English and History teacher. Thus, the aims were to promote the intercultural knowledge, a more rapid language learning and to develop oral comprehension and speaking among others. Consequently, the CLIL treatment was undertaken in the History subject, being 45 minutes per week in English and 45 in Portuguese. As the teacher insisted on vocabulary items considered fundamental in order to understand content issues, other activities could also be implemented due to learners’ progressions. Thanks to the collaboration between the English and History teacher, new materials were thus created to achieve the aims of the project. The researchers investigated the opinions of students, parents and teachers in order to know if they understood CLIL as an efficient program to be further implemented. In general terms, results showed that students and parents considered “that the CLIL project has been important to the improvement of students’ language development, particularly in terms of communicative skills” (Simões et al., 2013: 45). In other words, the involvement of students in the project was regarded as satisfactory. Regarding teachers, they also claimed that the initiative was positive in terms of personal and professional development. However, what they reported to have enjoyed the most was the contributions made by collaborative groups of teachers. Thus, the importance of collaborative work aiming at a common pedagogical outcome was reinforced (Pavón & Ellison, 2013).

2.9. CLIL in France

Despite living in a multilingual world, France has only one official language, which is French. Since its implementation of compulsory education in the 19th century, schools share this official language throughout the whole territory (Bertaux, 2013). As a matter of fact, CLIL was established in France for the adaptation for the French culture. However, despite the fact that its origins show CLIL as a program aimed at the elite, it is being increasingly incorporated into the educational system. In what follows, insights from research conducted regarding different contexts are further explained. As Bertaux (2008: 233) claimed, “sharing experiences is a deeply-felt need among the CLIL community in our common search for solutions to widely different situations”.

Sections Européennes et de langue orientale (SELO) are the institutions that promote and favor the implementation of CLIL in the French educational system. In fact, they were originally created in order to open French schools to the multilingual communities that were starting to emerge. Thus, SELO were integrated by French and other foreign teachers such as Japanese and Chinese who wanted to implement the teaching of content through language. It was astonishing to look for information and see that countries such as Arabia, England, China, Germany, Italy, Japan, Spain and Russia among many others took part in the SELO initiative. Since 1992, when SELO were first established, different subjects have been taught in these foreign languages such as History, Geography, Maths and Sciences. The main difference between SELO and the current CLIL approach is that learners are encouraged to choose any subject in order to receive formal instruction through an additional language (Bulletin Officiel de l’Education Nationale, 2010). In this way, and being opened with the authorization of the ministry, SELO were established in the last two years of school (age groups 14-15) and as a minimum of one hour per week in upper secondary levels. However, the problem with SELO is that teachers are only qualified in content rather than having linguistic expertise. Instead, the program became so spread that it was integrated into schools across the country, and what is more important, it marked the beginning of the implementation of CLIL in all levels of education.

In order to acknowledge the relevance of SELO programs, the Pilton Community Colleges teachers identified CLIL programs in French schools in order to deliver a number of lessons of their subject through French to a class of 7-year-old pupils. As the curriculum areas were regarded to specific vocabulary, the language teachers introduced and further explained the concepts to learners. The most relevant findings were observed in History lessons. Learners learned relevant vocabulary of the Battle of Hastings with the French teacher in order to recognize specific vocabulary when covering the History subject. In this regard, those verbs already approached were used to understand the context and sentences from the Battle. In this particular project, power point presentations were employed throughout the project for students to know the structure of the units and the vocabulary employed. Results showed that “pupils successfully read and understood phrases about the Battle of Hastings”, “71% of pupils found it easy or very easy” and “78% of pupils found it
interesting or very interesting” (Pilton Monnuiy College, 2013: 5). In the same line of project, Chulmleigh Community College, Ilfracombe Arts College also presented positive results.

In this section, in spite of proving more evidences from empirical research, I decided to include the experiences narrated by Suzanne Dijon (2014), a teacher in favor of CLIL who has implemented the teaching of Geology and Biology in English during three years. Her pupils were aged 15 to 18 and chose her course optionally, which was named “European Section”. Suzanne introduced the content of the subject through videos, plays and oral reports about what students had learned after the whole process. It is interesting to see how she reaffirms the importance of cooperative work by claiming “so as not to repeat what they do in French courses, I cooperate with my colleagues to find complementary examples [...]”. Accordingly, she states, “I try to keep them informed of the topics I teach, so they can make links with theirs”. Thus, it seems that the issue of cooperation has been given more importance in France than in the rest of countries analyzed.

2.10. CLIL in Finland

Broadly speaking, Finland is said to be the potential education leader due to students’ high attainment in PISA results. This enviable performance might be caused by the effort put into teacher training programs in order to provide them with the necessary methodological, behavioral and level of expertise.

Even though the goal has always been developing students’ abilities, it was in 1992 when the Commission for the development of language teaching included CLIL by enhancing “a plan for improving the quality of language teaching using innovative ideas such as immersion teaching and content based language teaching” (Finnish Board Education, Committee Report 1992:16). These innovative ideas suggested by the committee were approached once it was made evident that 92% of children decided to study English as the first foreign language. Consequently, Finland has taken seriously the fact of improving the proficiency level of their students (Kovanen, 2011). Even though teaching through a foreign language was experienced already in the 1980s, it has explored its expansion during the last decades. Large quantities of schools have implemented CLIL due to its presumable effectiveness when teaching content and language at the same time. Among the 25 pioneering areas in Finland, we can find schools placed in Espoo, Heinola, Helsinki, Hämeenlinna, Imatra, Joensuu, Kokkola, Kotka, Lathi, Nokia, Oulu, Pello, Pori, Rovaniemi, Rauma, Salo, Tampere, Turku, Vaasa, Vantaa and Varkaus (European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe, 2014). Besides, CLIL programs are not only useful to help students in Finland be more international and linguistically competent but also for foreigners to be able to study in any country (Virtala, 2002).

Within this context, research in Finland has mainly focused on the assessments practices of class teachers in order to test the progression of students within CLIL contexts. Just to take one example, Wewer (2014) investigated the evaluation conducted in CLIL classrooms as well as the visions of language assessment in primary levels. Results, however, showed that assessment was not neither coherent nor an established practice. After analyzing teachers, students and parents’ views on the program, testing was not regarded as a part of the curriculum but an infrequent practice. Accordingly, the instruments used by teachers in order to test students’ progression and developments were observation and bilingual tests. Thus, based on the data provided, parents also reported in the interviews to be willing to learn more about the programs in which their children were enrolled. The general challenge identified in this project was that “assessments should be re-evaluated from its fundamentals, and sustainable, informative, resource-efficient and flexible assessment schemes need to be contemplated” (Wewer, 2014: 234).

2.11. CLIL in Italy

The last country to be analyzed is Italy due to the linguistic variety as well as the vast influence of minority languages. As a matter of fact, the law 483 already recognized Albanian, Occitan, Sardinian, Slovene, Greek, French-Provençal, Croatian, French, Catalan, Friulian, Ladin and German as official languages that coexisted within the Italian territory with the majority one, Italian (Langé, 2007). Since 2008, the bilingual education approach was employed in order to refer to any language teaching involving the acquisition of two different languages. The educational system in Italy presents two distinct paths regarding the introduction of foreign languages teaching. Thus, various projects may be found in Italian state and non-state schools: Liceo Linguistic Europeo, Liceo Classic Europeo, and International classes in some upper secondary schools (Licei). For instance, Liceo Linguistic Europeo emerged as an experimental project where students had to choose a non-linguistic subject in order to be taught in English. In the same vein, the second modular approach asked students to choose subjects to be taught through a second foreign language during two whole semesters. Actually, these experiments
were the predecessors of the CLIL implementation, which have been only implemented in a scarce number of federal schools. In 2002, there were 100 schools and 300 teachers involved in voluntary CLIL experiences. This number changed to 105 schools only in the Northern Italy due to the fact that teachers became increasingly interested in the CLIL initiative as the government started to finance the projects (Infante et al., 2008). What is more, state high schools were obliged to teach at least one subject through a foreign language and deal with the content included in the curriculum (Infante et al., 2008). Even though more schools have adopted this methodological conceptualization, there exists the concern of poor evidences from all levels of education as well as teacher training.

Concerned about teacher training regarding the CLIL revolution, Di Martino & Di Sabato (2012) conducted a survey in order to approach teachers’ expectations and concerns and how instruction through a foreign language had changed their daily practices. After collecting 52 surveys, which were sent by email to teachers, researchers realized of the fact that 22 of them were more than 40 years old, showing an inconvenience regarding the acquisition of a new language and further training. Broadly speaking, younger people are easy to be introduced to tasks and technological features due to the fact that they have been born and even experienced these revolutionary techniques. However, it does not mean it is impossible, as we know that the key feature in teaching is continued training. In the second part of the study, 108 teachers were asked about their concerns about the English instruction they were performing in their corresponding classes. Results revealed that only 61 teachers claimed to have a proficiency level between B1 and C2. The rest of teachers, considering other languages than English, did not consider themselves competent enough to teach any subject in English or through any other foreign language. As far as the answers about their opinions on the introduction of CLIL as obligatory in the secondary level were concerned, half of them did not answer the question and two of them reported that they had no clue about what CLIL was. Despite addressing more questions, researchers reported that the most relevant answers were found in the question dealing with the most useful training for them to progress in CLIL classes. The majority of them claimed that foreign language courses, study abroad and investing in younger teachers were the key aspects for CLIL to continue growing. As it has been observed in the rest of the countries above-mentioned, the need for specific training as well as CLIL methodology was again reinforced. Besides, these results were in line with the research conducted by Favilli, et al (2013) to mathematics CLIL teachers in a state school where suggestions to further improve the materials, teacher training and language deficiencies were also identified. All these common limitations about teacher training are considered in the following section, which deals with the main constraints of CLIL.

3. CLIL shortcomings

Broadly speaking, CLIL presents several limitations that do not allow this methodological approach to be further implemented. As we have seen in the previous sections, some shortcomings such as the lack of appropriate teacher training, the future of English teachers as linguistic experts and the difficulty of assessment have also been identified by research. Despite presenting advantages such as fostering internalization, enhancing communicative skills and strengthening plurilingualism, CLIL advances some challenges that must be addressed in order to overcome the existing deficiencies.

The main criticism of CLIL has always been its presumable promotion of English, which has been defined as cultural imperialism. It was Crystal (1997) who already addressed the power of English in education due to its establishment as a lingua franca in academic fields. As CLIL gained importance and relevance around the world, its implementation was mainly conducted through English, as it is the language that has been recognized in many countries of the European Union. In this regard, it may seem that the CLIL methodological approach is mainly aimed at enhancing and fostering the learning of English. However, if the goal of the European Commission is to promote multilingualism, tolerance and understanding towards other languages are desired characteristics to celebrate a plurilingual world (Coyle et al, 2010). As a matter of fact, CLIL does not only aim at learning language but enhancing culture, environment, language and content. Even though English is the ultimate universal language, the methodology and how its implementation is conducted vary across countries. Accordingly, some researchers claim that imperialism cannot be justified by the fact of seeing English as the only variable affecting CLIL since “there is no single blueprint of content and language integration that could be applied in the same way in different countries” (Ravelo, 2014: 75).

Another limitation reported by research is the lack of appropriate teacher training since CLIL presumably asks for teachers to be language teachers and experts in content areas. On the one hand, research has revealed that teachers need more training to deliver classes through an additional language. On the other, English teachers complain about their future
as linguistic experts since CLIL requires professionals to be competent in the given language. The pessimistic view of predicting a bleak future for linguists was already held by Graddol (2005) when claiming that

English seems so much in demand in the world today that it may be perverse to suggest that English teachers are an endangered species. This, however, may be one consequence of a global shift towards CLIL... The trend is likely to transform the role of English teachers and their relationship to learners and institutions. As English becomes positioned as a generic learning skill, alongside basic literacy and mathematics, and is taught to ever-younger learners, English specialists may find themselves more marginalized and their professional knowledge and experience less influential in the way English curriculums are designed and delivered. (p. 1-2)

Nevertheless, it seems evident that more training is essential and crucial for teachers to understand what CLIL is and how it is implemented in the classroom. It is not enough to change the educational paradigm if the professionals who are going to put this approach into practice are not familiarized with the objectives, the reasons, the benefits and the corresponding pedagogical implications. However, it is a challenge to train teachers who have never studied a foreign language to deliver their whole lessons through it, and for language teachers to become experts on a specific content field. Furthermore, despite being a challenge, personal opinions are also of great importance. There are teachers who may be open to discussions regarding the incorporation of new classrooms realities, but there are teachers who think that they are experts on a specific content area and there is no necessity to learn an additional language. In this regard, it is also a challenge to deal with professional identities and foster the adaptation to new contexts.

Another main problematic aspect of CLIL is assessment. The challenge thus remains to be further clarified due to the doubt of assessing linguistic mistakes and errors or just content weaknesses. Nowadays, teachers are opting for asking students to perform history, mathematics and biology exams through English or any other language without paying attention to linguistic shortcomings. However, CLIL advocates state that if the goal of CLIL is theoretically balanced regarding content and language, language deficiencies must also be addressed (Ravelo, 2014). There are two types of assessment that may be applied in CLIL lessons, which are language assessment as measurement and assessment for learning (Kiely, 2009). While measurement determines the content that has been learned, assessment for learning evaluates linguistic practices. However, the challenge is to design the materials that will be employed for evaluation. For instance, Kiely (2009) states that linguistic learning might be approached by an interview with the student, but it is also a challenge to determine the aspects to be evaluated and the appropriate framework to elaborate materials.

Similarly, the creation of proper materials that foster both the learning of content and language is also a limitation and a challenge. It is a limitation due to the fact that teachers do not have enough time to create materials from scratch without being helped and guided. Also, individual differences are also challenging. Having a look at second language acquisition research, individual differences should be taken into account in order to find the accurate materials for students to be motivated. Even though CLIL students are presumably motivated, it is demanding to create tasks (following TBLT) with a focus on meaning at the same time that the learning of content and language is promoted. As Ravelo (2009: 79) says, “stepping outside one’s comfort teaching strategies and students learning activities is an essential step in the CLIL journey”. However, besides being a time-consuming responsibility, the lack of expertise on the field or language prevents teachers from making their effort.

Finally, the lack of research worsens the panorama of CLIL implementation. As we can observe, teaching training is merely scarce, but research is a good means of looking for evidences and findings that might be useful in the classrooms. However, the creation of material regarding lessons and assessment are a challenge because teachers do not find references even in empirical investigations. This scarcity of research thus shows the reality that teachers face every day: there are neither benchmarks to depart from nor ideal contexts to investigate how to overcome all the limitations above-mentioned (Cenoz et al, 2013). In the same vein, Banegas (2011: 183) concludes, “Because CLIL shortcomings are not fully addressed, I believe that a rather evangelical picture is offered, implying to teachers that very few problems will emerge”.

4. Objectives of this project

As we have just seen in the previous section, CLIL experienced a rapid growth all over the world as soon as the European Union made evident the necessity of multilingual citizens. Despite living in a multilingual world, it is undeniable that the introduction of foreign languages is still scarce in some areas. That is the reason why rather than thinking of CLIL
as a methodology that could have a detrimental effect on the continuity of official languages, we should take advantage of this new trend in order to enhance the development of language and subject areas.

Bearing in mind that its implementation differs from country to country, investigations conducted in Spain, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Turkey, Greece, the Czech Republic, Portugal, France, Finland and Italy seem to indicate that CLIL presents benefits for students who undertake this methodology. Besides, research also emphasize the importance of teachers’ feelings and attitudes towards this balanced approach in order to understand the point of view of those who really face this methodology in the classes on a daily basis. However, the more I read about CLIL, the more I realized that there was an unexplored area of research in the majority of countries, which is the opinion of parents towards CLIL. It is true that feelings of students and teachers are completely relevant since they directly experience and undergo this methodology, but it is also undeniable that parents must be aware of what CLIL is since they are the responsible of taking the step of enrolling their children in these settings at early stages. By researching their thoughts, I was also able to see if they were aware of the existence of the program, their general opinions and personal experiences of those parents whose children had already experienced CLIL and those who had not.

2. THE STUDY

As I have already introduced in the objectives, the study of this project is devoted to parents’ opinions regarding the CLIL methodology around Castellón, Valencia and Alicante.

1. THE QUESTIONNAIRES

As the purpose of this study was to approach parents’ opinions, this section includes information about the following parts in order to make the process clear: the method, who the participants were, the materials used in order to collect data, a detailed explanation of the two questionnaires designed and the results found.

1.1 Method

The purpose of this section consists of the evaluation of parents’ opinions about CLIL in three main areas of the Valencian Community (Spain). Before presenting the method used to undertake this study, it should be explained that the areas chosen were Castellón, Valencia and Alicante due to the predominant implementation of CLIL in secondary education.

Therefore, in order to achieve the aims of this research, two different questionnaires were designed and distributed among parents whose children had previously experienced CLIL and parents whose children had never undergone the approach (See Appendix 3). Once the questionnaires were responded, data were analyzed through tables in order to facilitate the interpretation of results. Having said this, the following sections briefly explain who the participants were as well as a general explanation of the questionnaires employed.

1.2 Participants

The participants involved in this study were randomly selected around the areas of Castellón, Valencia and Alicante. Before delivering the questionnaires, they were asked if they had children who had attended or were actually enrolled in secondary education. This question was asked because opinions regarding primary education were not appropriate for the study since the master is aimed at secondary education. Accordingly, if they reported to have children under this condition, they completed the questionnaires. A total number of 123 participants completed the questionnaires voluntarily. Specifically, there were 82 female and 41 male participants. Even though the areas where the participants came from have not been deeply analyzed, it should be noted that 51 of them were from Valencia, 43 from Castellón and 29 from Alicante. In order to clarify these data, the following table summarizes the amount of participants of each area as well as their distribution regarding gender.
1.3 Materials

As stated above, participants of the study were required to complete a specific questionnaire according to their children’s exposure to CLIL. Due to this fact, two different questionnaires were created: one for parents of children who have experienced CLIL and one for those whose children had never been exposed to this methodological approach. As the only question I asked was if their children were related to secondary education, participants firstly filled in the first page, in which they reported their age, gender, their own level of education, if they were related to teaching, if they knew what CLIL was, and finally if their children had experienced the approach. If the last answer was no, they had to fill in the second questionnaire whereas they would complete the first one if the answer was positive. It should also be noted that the questionnaires were provided in Spanish since the vast majority of them did not know English, and there were people coming from other countries who did not understand Catalan.

1.3.1 Prior CLIL experience questionnaire

The questionnaire for parents whose children had previously experienced CLIL included thirteen questions, which were divided into two sections: the first 10 comprised ten questions regarding their knowledge of CLIL, if the enrollment in the CLIL course was mandatory or voluntarily, the language through which CLIL was implemented and their degree of satisfaction. On the other hand, the second part was based on three open questions dealing with the advantages and disadvantages of CLIL whereas the last one asked them to say whether CLIL would have a detrimental effect on those students who were not good at languages. The reason to include open questions was to deeply investigate their beliefs regarding CLIL and the effects it may have on learners.

1.3.2 No prior CLIL experience questionnaire

The questionnaire for parents whose children had never experienced the CLIL methodology comprised nine questions to be answered through the Likert scale. Before responding the initial questions on gender, age, level of education and knowledge on CLIL, they proceeded to complete the second questionnaire. The questions included general aspects such as the effectiveness of CLIL, beliefs about good and bad students, the ideal profile of the teacher implementing CLIL in the classroom, the extent to which it is appropriate to have native speakers to implement this methodology and if they would like their children to experience the approach in the future. However, these participants did not have to answer open questions due to the fact that they could not report benefits and disadvantages of CLIL.

2. Results

This section of the paper explores the results derived from the questionnaires completed by parents according to their children’s exposure to CLIL. In order to interpret the results, different figures have been used in order to display them clearly and neatly. Finally, results are going to be examined together in order to avoid areas and policies distinctions or considering personal information. Accordingly, results will be interpreted in terms of percentages in order to see differences in opinions.
2.1 Prior CLIL experience questionnaire

The questionnaire for parents of children with previous exposure to CLIL was undertaken by a total of 41 subjects. Beginning with the first question, 70.7% of them reported being aware of the CLIL program undertaken by the high school their children attended, while 29.3% did not show knowledge on the methodology applied and followed by their children, as illustrated in figure 2.

![Figure 2. Parents’ knowledge of CLIL](image)

This percentage was reinforced by the following question, since 92.7% of parents declared that their children had undertaken CLIL as a mandatory course, while only 7.3% of them had enrolled their children in these courses voluntarily.

From the total amount of parents, 87.8% affirmed in the next question that they were satisfied with the program, while only 12.2% of them disagreed and showed dissatisfaction. This question was followed by the fourth one that dealt with the number of subjects their children had taken through the implementation of CLIL. In this regard, the vast majority of them (75.6%) identified only one subject whereas 24.4% of them claimed that their children had experienced CLIL in two different subjects. As we can see, any of the participants identified more than two subjects.

Following that, question number five concerned the language through which CLIL was implemented. To that, all the participants (100%) answered that English was the language used as the vehicle for communication in the CLIL lessons. This large percentage was repeated again when participants were asked about the improvement of their children regarding language proficiency. On this subject, 100% of them agreed on the benefits for language development, which was similar to the 97.56% obtained in the question dealing with the enhancement of the subject matter.

The last three questions aimed at exploring their personal attitudes regarding the importance of CLIL for their children development. Specifically, question number eight explored the relevance of CLIL for the future education of children with 87.8% of them agreeing. In line with this question, question number nine asked parents if they would like their children to be enrolled in CLIL methodologies in the future. To that, 85.4% of the participants showed their preferences whereas 14.6% of them would prefer not to experience the program again.

As far as their degree of satisfaction, 46.3% of parents declared to be completely satisfied with the program, and 31.7% satisfied in contrast to the 21.9% who were not in favor of its implementation. However, any of the participants indicated dissatisfaction.

The three final questions in the questionnaire, numbers eleven, twelve and thirteen, were open questions in which participants had to state their personal opinions regarding the advantages, disadvantages of CLIL and if the program could have a detrimental effect on those learners who are not good at languages. Even though not all the participants answered the questions, the following table summarizes the answers provided.
Table 3. CLIL advantages and disadvantages according to parents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADVANTAGES</th>
<th>DISADVANTAGES</th>
<th>DETRIMENTAL EFFECT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The promotion of plurilingualism</td>
<td>Inadequate qualifications of teachers.</td>
<td>Not at all. I think CLIL reinforces language and content even for children who have problems at school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning English without focusing on grammar</td>
<td>The teacher did not know how to communicate in English.</td>
<td>It depends on the teacher. He/She has to facilitate the learning of both subjects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning more English</td>
<td>The level of English.</td>
<td>It should not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieving a better learning</td>
<td>If it is not taught by an English teacher, students will never learn the language appropriately.</td>
<td>As long as English is not taught in terms of grammar and vocabulary, it will be effective.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2 No prior CLIL experience questionnaire

On the other hand, the questionnaire for parents whose children had never experienced CLIL was completed by a number of 82 individuals. As I have previously mentioned, this questionnaire was different from the previous one since it was answered through the Likert scale and participants did not have open questions to report their opinions. Due to the wide array of answers, as they vary from I strongly agree to I strongly disagree, and also space constraints, answers are provided in the following table. As you can see, each answer is included in each column in terms of percentages (when the number is higher than 0.5, it is rounded to the next number). After the table, the main results of each question are further examined.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number 1</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number 2</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number 3</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>87.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number 4</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number 5</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>74.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number 6</td>
<td>76.9%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number 7</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>47.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number 8</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>64.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number 9</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Results from the second questionnaire answered by parents.
To begin with, in the first question, 72% of the participants strongly agreed with the statement that assured that CLIL was a positive methodological approach once they had read what CLIL consisted of. The second question clearly said that all students were able to follow CLIL, and results revealed that 35% were completely against while 48.8% of them completely agreed. Despite the fact that almost 16.2% of the participants were undecided or showed different opinions, a large percentage believed that all learners are able to follow the CLIL methodology. In the same line, question number three assured that CLIL was a demanding program since students have to make an effort to combine language with content. Accordingly, 87.8% of parents agreed with the presumable difficulty of CLIL.

Question number four encouraged a reflection about learners’ linguistic proficiency. In this regard, 94% of the subjects strongly agreed with the benefits on language proficiency for students who undertake English or any other language through CLIL. Moving to the professional profile of teachers, 74.4% of the subjects thought that it was the language teacher the one who has to give the lesson, while 13.4% claimed that it was the content teacher.

The following question, number seven, was included in order to determine if native teachers were welcome or not in the schools to implement CLIL. To this issue, results revealed that it was a controversial question since 47.8% of parents did not believe that native teachers should give the lessons whereas 42.3% of them answered that CLIL would have more quality if native teachers were the responsible of the program.

Then, the eighth question focused on the introduction of CLIL into the national curriculum. The majority of parents believed it would be beneficial (79.4%), while there were parents who strongly opposed this idea (9.8%).

Ultimately, the last question intended to identify parents’ predisposition to enroll their children in high schools where CLIL was implemented. To this question, the large percentage of 83% demonstrated that they would be predisposed to apply for high schools following the CLIL trend, whereas 9.7% showed a negative predisposition.

3. DISCUSSION

Once the results of the study have been presented, this section is concerned with the interpretation of the main findings observed in the analysis of the questionnaires completed by parents.

At first, it should be noted that despite being implemented all around Spain, there are still citizens who are not familiar with CLIL and its objectives regarding education. The majority of parents who have children that have undertaken this approach in a state institution reported to be aware of the objectives of the program (70.70%). However, there is still 29.3% of parents who do not have a clear notion of CLIL and the methodological approach their children are actually experiencing on a daily basis.

As formerly commented, the issue of the adequate profile for teachers working in CLIL settings remains controversial. Specifically, 74.4% of the participants assured that it is the language teacher the one who has to give the lessons whereas 13.4% of them reported that it was the content teacher. What’s more, parents in the first questionnaire claimed that the poor English level of teachers is a disadvantage of CLIL since sometimes they are not able to communicate in the target language.

Even with this controversy, results suggest that 47.8% of the participants agreed with the fact of having native speakers of the target language in charge of CLIL programs in the high schools. However, 42.3% of parents claimed that being a native speaker did not represent the professional profile in order to implement CLIL in the classroom. As a matter of fact, this also poses a problem in today’s society since there is a common belief stating that students learn more English if teachers are native due to their accent and appropriate pronunciation patterns. However, as results showed, almost half of all respondents opposed this view.

Examining the detrimental effect that CLIL may have on learners who are not good at languages, parents reported that CLIL should overcome those deficiencies due to the exposure of comprehensible input. Specifically, they claimed that as long as English was employed as the vehicle for communication rather than a code based on rules and vocabulary, learners should not present difficulties in their learning process.

Bearing in mind the results discussed above, the participants who responded the first questionnaire attempted to compile the advantages of CLIL. As expected, they reported benefits as the learning of English in a progressive and effective way, the improvement of learning outcomes and also the promotion of plurilingualism. It was rewarding to see
that parents clearly identified plurilingualism as an advantage of CLIL since it seems to suggest that people are conscious about the importance of sharing and learning from other cultures.

Taking all these aspects into consideration, I would like to conclude this section by emphasizing the large percentage of parents who were satisfied with the program (78%). In the same line, 83% of the parents whose children had already experienced CLIL reported that they would be willing to take their children to a school where CLIL was applied.

4. CONCLUSION

CLIL is approached as an innovative methodology that aims to develop the integrated learning of a language along with curricular contents. As long as the European Union made evident the necessity of multilingual citizens, CLIL started to be implemented around Europe in order to examine its benefits regarding children’s development. Despite being corroborated by research that students undertaking CLIL achieve higher levels of proficiency in both language and content, the correct implementation of CLIL implies further reinforcement in unexplored areas such as teacher training, collaboration between departments, assessment plans and the creation of adequate materials.

All these things considered, the main objective of the present paper was to determine whether parents around three main areas from the Valencian Community were familiar with CLIL and to analyze the personal experiences of parents whose children had experienced the approach in secondary schools. The most significant findings demonstrated that the majority of parents presented positive attitudes towards the approach and that there are some issues that need further clarification such as the issue of native speakers as the ideal teachers and the integration of CLIL into the national curriculum. Still, in their views, there are clear disadvantages such as the poor linguistic level of teachers who impart lessons in the target language and the lack of authentic material.

This poor linguistic level may be overcome by providing teachers with support and teacher training programs that aim at developing their linguistic proficiency in the target language. Despite being conducted in some countries around Europe, it is true that the majority of teachers do not have any support to reinforce their notions on CLIL and how to perform their teaching practices. Besides, professional are not motivated to create new materials since they do not have time and specific knowledge in the majority of cases. In this regard, it has to be the Government the institution that encourages them to adapt their practices into this new approach and facilitate their work. However, collaboration between teachers is also crucial if we want CLIL to be further implemented. Instead of deciding if the language teacher would be the one providing the lessons or not, collaboration should be enhanced and approached as the solution in order to have a balanced product regarding language and content. If the European Union promoted plurilingualism for citizens to learn the others and share their perspectives, it should also be applied to the departments of the high schools in order to share previous experiences, materials and also prepare projects that can be evaluated by both teachers. Collaboration, thus, is a key aspect in order to make CLIL the future methodology of schools.

5. LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER IMPLEMENTATION

Firstly, I will comment on the general limitations that I have found when analyzing the data of this project. It is essential to stress that the objectives of this paper only affected three areas of the Valencian Community, which are the three capitals of the community. The reason to choose them was mainly the high rate of CLIL implementation in high schools. However, as they are three main areas, it would be interesting to see whether inland villages and towns present this rate and if parents are satisfied with the program.

Secondly, the gender factor and age factor have not been taken into account when analyzing the results. As you may have observed, there were more women completing the questionnaires than men, and they were also younger than them. In this sense, further research could also examine if younger parents have more notions of CLIL due to the fact that they are more involved in the education of their first children. Another question could be if younger parents present more awareness about plurilingualism since they are connected to the Internet on a daily basis, which clearly differs from the daily practices of older parents.

Another limitation of this study was the fact of approaching CLIL in secondary levels. Thus, further research could examine the implementation of CLIL in primary contexts and compare the opinions of parents in both contexts. What’s more, I could have also observed if those teenagers attending CLIL in secondary education levels had already experienced the methodology in primary levels and see if they still believed it was a positive approach to education.
6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my appreciation for the support and encouragement provided for this thesis by Marisa Renau, my supervisor. Since the very beginning, she had confidence in my academic abilities to conduct this project and her predisposition and valuable comments helped me develop and complete this research.

As always, I would also like to express my heartfelt thanks to Eva Alcón. In spite of being my Ph.D. supervisor, I am deeply indebted to her not only in providing me with excellent materials, but also in being the person who has always opened my eyes to new realities and opportunities regarding my professional development. Thus, thank you for your guidance throughout all these years.

Thirdly, I would like to thank all the participants who completed the questionnaires and participated in the study. Without their willingness to help, this project would have not been possible.

I am grateful to all my friends for understanding my wishes and being there when I most needed you. Also thanks to my great friends Angels and Miguel Angel, for their patience and time. Thanks for your contributions, confidence and support.

Special thanks to my parents for their everlasting love. There are no words to describe how grateful I am for having them by my side. Thanks for being always busy making sure that I achieve my dreams no matter where, what and how.
7. APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Questionnaire delivered to parents.

CUESTIONARIO PARA PADRES

A) INFORMACIÓN PERSONAL

1. HOMBRE □ MUJER □

2. EDAD:

3. ESTUDIOS CURSADOS

- □ PRIMARIA
- □ SECUNDARIA
- □ BACHILLER
- □ FP (FORMACIÓN PROFESIONAL)
- □ UNIVERSIDAD
- □ OTRO

4. ¿Perteneces al mundo de la educación? Sí □ NO □

5. ¿Sabe en qué consiste el enfoque AICLE? Sí □ NO* □

*Si la respuesta es negativa: AICLE (Aprendizaje Integrado de Contenidos y Lengua Extranjera) es una metodología que consiste en la enseñanza del contenido de asignaturas (Biología, Matemáticas o cualquier otra asignatura que no sea un idioma) a través de una lengua extranjera. Este enfoque puede variar desde la enseñanza de parte del contenido hasta la asignatura entera. Un ejemplo concreto sería la enseñanza de historia en inglés.

6. ¿Han experimentado sus hijos/as docencia de asignaturas en inglés u otro idioma? En otras palabras, ¿han estudiado Geografía, Matemáticas u otra asignatura en un idioma extranjero?
SI LA RESPUESTA ES **AFIRMATIVA**, RELLENE EL FORMULARIO DE LA SIGUIENTE PÁGINA.

SI LA RESPUESTA ES **NEGATIVA**, RELLENE EL FORMULARIO DE LA PÁGINA NÚMERO 3.

**CUESTIONARIO 1**

**PADRES CON HIJOS QUE HAN EXPERIMENTADO EL ENFOQUE AICLE.**

POR FAVOR, RODEE LA RESPUESTA CORRECTA CUANDO HAYA OPCIÓN O CON SU EXPERIENCIA PERSONAL CUANDO SEA UNA PREGUNTA ABIERTA.

1. ¿Conoce el programa AICLE que se lleva a cabo en el centro?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sí</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VOLUNTARIA</td>
<td>OBLIGATORIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sí</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1                    2                      3                     +3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INGLÉS  FRANCÉS</td>
<td>ALEMÁN  OTRO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sí</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sí</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sí</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sí</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. ¿La inscripción a este programa fue obligatoria o voluntaria?

3. ¿Está satisfecho con la forma en la que se desarrolló el proyecto?
4. ¿Cuántas asignaturas cursó su hijo/a bajo este enfoque?

5. ¿En qué idioma se daban las asignaturas?

6. ¿Cree que su hijo/a ha mejorado el nivel de ese idioma desde que sigue esta metodología?

7. ¿Cree que su hijo/a ha mejorado el nivel de conocimientos de dichas materias?

8. ¿Considera importante AICLE para la formación de su hijo/a?

9. ¿Le gustaría que su hijo/a siguiera cursando asignaturas bajo el enfoque AICLE en un futuro?

10. Por favor, marque el grado de satisfacción con el programa.

11. ¿Cuáles son, en su opinión, las principales ventajas de este enfoque metodológico?

   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

12. ¿Y las desventajas?

   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

13. ¿Crees que AICLE perjudica a aquellos alumnos que no son buenos en idiomas?

   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
CUESTIONARIO 2
PADRES CON HIJOS QUE NO HAN EXPERIMENTADO CLIL.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MUY DE ACUERDO</th>
<th>DE ACUERDO</th>
<th>EN DESACUERDO</th>
<th>MUY EN DESACUERDO</th>
<th>INDECISO/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creo que AICLE es un método de enseñanza positivo.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Todos los estudiantes están capacitados para ser instruidos en una lengua extranjera.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AICLE es un método difícil ya que supone un doble esfuerzo.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los estudiantes que sigan este método, aprenderán mejor la lengua extranjera que aquellos que la cursen como segunda lengua.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Las clases deberían ser impartidas por el profesor/a de lengua.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Las clases deberían ser impartidas por los profesores expertos en las materias.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esta enseñanza integrada será de mayor calidad si los profesores son nativos.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AICLE debería ser incluido en el currículo escolar en todos los centros.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Me gustaría que me hijo fuera a un colegio donde se impartiera AICLE.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CLIL: Content and Language Integrated Learning
TBLT: Task-Based Language Teaching
DESI: Assessment of Student Achievements in German and English as a Foreign Language
International German English Study
CLISS: Content and Language Integration in Swedish Schools
IB: International Baccalaureate
MFQ: Motivational Factors Questionnaire
WTC: Willingness to communicate
EMI: English-medium instruction
EFL: English as a Foreign Language
SELO: Sections Européennes et de langue orientale
Bibliography


- Nold, g. et al. (2008): «Reading Comprehension Leseverstehen Englisch», in DESI- Konsortium (Hrsg.), Unterricht und


